

CULLOMPTON TOWN COUNCIL



COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Revised and adopted: DECEMBER 2015

INTRODUCTION

This policy is based upon the document provided as a template by the Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom:



Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom:
Template – collections development policy

December 2011

This version replaces the template acquisition and disposal policy published by MLA Council on 4 April 2008 (revised January 2010)

Background to the policy

This template sets out the principles that will provide the governing bodies and the workforce of museums with a framework for responsible and ethical acquisition and disposal of collections. It provides clear procedures and decision-making processes common to Accredited museums.

Implementing the policy will enable museums to demonstrate the public benefit in their approach to collections development. It provides a basis for open and transparent decision-making and an informed dialogue between governing bodies, donors, funding bodies and other stakeholders.

This policy applies to material which the museum owns and has accessioned into the collection or intends to own and accession into the collection.

The acquisition, management and disposal of collections will be guided by:

- a museum's constitution and statement of purpose
- the legal basis on which the collections are held
- the public benefit derived from the effective use and management of the collections
- an assessment of the needs of the museum's collections
- the collections held by other museums and organisations collecting in the same or related geographic areas or subject fields

Acquisition and disposals policy or collections development policy?

As part of the review of Accreditation, the acquisition and disposal policy, required by the Accreditation Standard (2004), has been amended to become a collections development policy. This amended template reflects this change. Please refer to *Guidance for requirement three – collections*, page 7 for full details.

Preparing and adopting the policy

Accredited museums with an approved acquisition and disposal policy compliant with the April 2008 (2010 revision) template, and which remains in date at the time of an Accreditation return, do not need to revise their policy in order to retain their Accredited status. An area for improvement will be applied to ensure that at the next review the policy is revised to comply with the Accreditation Standard (2011).

All new applicants for Accredited status should use this policy in order to comply with requirement 2.2 – collections development policy (Accreditation Standard, 2011).

Using the text displayed in **bold** and following the instructions in *italics* will ensure that Accreditation requirements are met. Any variation from the wording given in the outline must not conflict with the sense of the wording. Museums may include more stringent conditions.

Name of museum: *Cullompton Archive Project*

Name of governing body: *Steering Group*

Date on which this policy was approved by the Town Council: *November 2015*

Date at which this policy is due for review: *October 2018*

1. MUSEUM'S STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Cullompton Archive Project has been set up to catalogue and maintain materials and photographs relating to the history of Cullompton.

2. AN OVERVIEW OF CURRENT COLLECTIONS

The Cullompton Archive Project has a large collection of postcards relating to the history of Cullompton, it incorporates photographic material of the town and its community as well as documents relating to the Town and Town Council.

3. THEMES AND PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE COLLECTING

Priority will be given to postcards, photographs and historic documents in relation to the town and Town Council of Cullompton that do not duplicate existing pieces within the Archive collection. Duplicates will not be subject to further acquisition.

4. THEMES AND PRIORITIES FOR RATIONALISATION AND DISPOSAL

Responsible, curatorially-motivated disposal takes place as part of the Cullompton Archive Project's long-term collections policy, in order to increase public benefit derived from museum collections¹.

5. LIMITATIONS ON COLLECTING

The Cullompton Archive Project recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

6. COLLECTING POLICIES OF OTHER MUSEUMS

The Cullompton Archive Project will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

Specific reference is made to the following museum(s):

**The Devon Heritage Centre
The Tiverton Museum of Mid Devon Life
The Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery (RAMM)**

¹ See Museums Association 'Disposals Toolkit' pg 5.

7. POLICY REVIEW PROCEDURE

The acquisition and disposal policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is noted above.

Arts Council England/CyMAL will be notified of any changes to the acquisition and disposal policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

8. ACQUISITIONS NOT COVERED BY THE POLICY

Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the Responsible Officer or the Steering Group of the Cullompton Archive Project itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

9. ACQUISITION PROCEDURES

- a. The Cullompton Archive Project will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the Steering Group or Responsible Officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- b. In particular, the Cullompton Archive Project will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).
- c. In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the Cullompton Archive Project will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The project will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

- d. So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the Cullompton Archive Project will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.**

For all museums collecting archaeological antiquities:

- e. The Cullompton Archive Project will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the Steering Group or Responsible Officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.**
- e. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure as defined by the Treasure Act 1996.**
- f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 9a, 9b, 9c, or 9e will only be because the museum is:**
- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin**
 - acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgement of experts in the field concerned has not been illicitly traded**
 - acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin**
 - in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970**

In these cases the Cullompton Archive Project will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

- g. The Cullompton Archive Project does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.**

10. SPOILATION

The Cullompton Archive Project will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

11. THE REPATRIATION AND RESTITUTION OF OBJECTS AND HUMAN REMAINS

The Cullompton Archive Project's Steering Group, acting on the advice of the Cullompton Archives professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The Cullompton Archive Project will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 13a-13d, 13g and 13o/s below will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

The disposal of human remains from museums in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums'.

12. MANAGEMENT OF ARCHIVES

As the Cullompton Archive Project holds / intends to acquire archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its Steering Group and Responsible Officer will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (third edition, 2002).

13. DISPOSAL PROCEDURES

Disposal preliminaries

- a. The Steering Group and Responsible Officer will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.
- b. By definition, the Cullompton Archive Project has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. The Steering Group therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the Cullompton Archive Project's collection.
- c. The Cullompton Archive Project will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of

an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.

- d. When disposal of a Cullompton Archive Project object is being considered, the Cullompton Archive Project will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.

Motivation for disposal and method of disposal

- e. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs 13g-13s will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.
- f. In exceptional cases, the disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below in paragraphs 13g-13m and 13o/s will be followed. In cases where disposal is motivated by financial reasons, the Cullompton Archive Project will not undertake disposal unless it can be demonstrated that all the following exceptional circumstances are met in full:
 - the disposal will significantly improve the long-term public benefit derived from the remaining collection
 - the disposal will not be undertaken to generate short-term revenue (for example to meet a budget deficit)
 - the disposal will be undertaken as a last resort after other sources of funding have been thoroughly explored

The disposal decision-making process

- g. Whether the disposal is motivated either by curatorial or financial reasons, the decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the Steering Group, only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including the public benefit, the implications for the Cullompton Archive Project's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. External expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.

Responsibility for disposal decision-making

- h. A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the Steering Group of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.**

Use of proceeds of sale

- i. Any monies received by the Cullompton Archive Project from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from the Arts Council England/CyMAL.**
- j. The proceeds of a sale will be ring-fenced so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard.**

Disposal by gift or sale

- k. Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.**
- l. If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.**
- m. The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.**

Disposal by exchange

- n. The nature of disposal by exchange means that the museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The Steering Group will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.**
- o. In cases where the Steering Group wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or unaccredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 13a-13d and 13g-13h will be followed as will the procedures in paragraphs 13p-13s.**
- p. If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.**
- q. If the exchange is proposed with a non-accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will make an announcement in the Museums Journal and in other specialist journals where appropriate.**
- r. Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in the museum's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the Steering Group must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.**

Documenting disposal

- o/s. Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.**