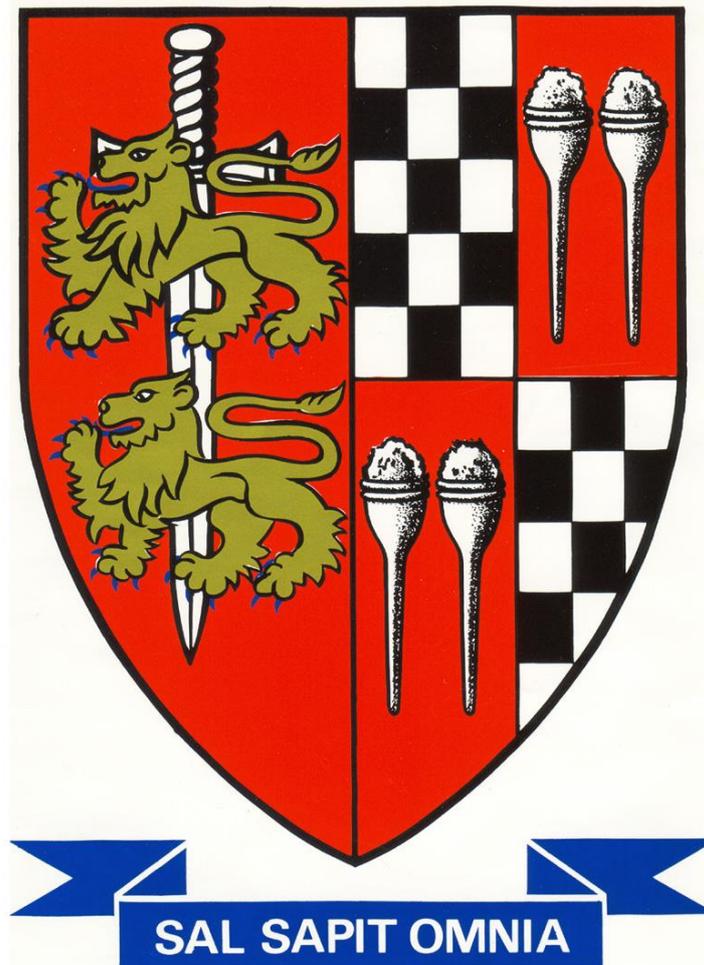


# Collections development policy



**Droitwich Spa Heritage & Tourist Information Centre**

**Droitwich Spa Town Council**

Date on which this policy was approved: 2015

The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least every five years.

Policy review date: 2020

Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of such changes for the future of collections.

## **1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation.**

### 1.1 The museums statement of purpose is:

‘Droitwich Spa Town Councils –Heritage and Tourist Information Centre exists to stimulate the interest of visitors and local inhabitants in the surrounding area through curated displays and the provision of information of local history from the Stone Age to the present day.’

### 1.2 The Town Council will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.

### 1.3 By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The Town Council therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum’s collection.

### 1.4 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.

### 1.5 The museum recognised its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collection will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using UK Museums Collections Management Standard primary procedures for collection management. It will take into account limitation on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements, and finance.

### 1.6 The museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the Town Council or The Town Clerk is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

### 1.7 In exceptional cases, disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons.

The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below will be followed. In cases where disposal is motivated by financial reasons, the governing body 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 budget deficit).

- The disposal will be undertaken as a last resort after other sources of funding have been thoroughly explored.
- Extensive prior consultation with sector bodies has been undertaken.
- The item under consideration lies outside the museum's established core collection.

## **2. History of collection:**

- 2.1 Droitwich Spa Town Council took the decision to purchase a disused Methodist Chapel in the centre of the town in March 1979 to house the numerous items of local artefacts, which were scattered around the Town and beyond. The items were owned by various local people and also gifts given to the Town Council. The Town Council envisaged that the Heritage Centre would serve two purposes.
- 2.2 Part of the Heritage Centre was to house a Museum showing the development of the Prehistoric Droitwich from Stone Age when the natural brine springs were through Roman times to present day spa town. The focal point of the display in the Museum was the development of the salt industry in Droitwich.
- 2.3 The remaining half of the Heritage Centre served as a visitor information centre for the local residents and tourists.
- 2.4 The Heritage Centre first opened its doors on the 6 March 1980 after the conversion of the disused Methodist Chapel. In February 1990, when the Town Council moved its offices, the Heritage & Tourist Information Centre relocated to St. Richard's House where it still remains.
- 2.5 Droitwich Spa Town Council runs the heritage centre and owns St. Richard's House. The Town Council's Community & Amenities Committees remit includes the Heritage & Tourist Information Centre. The committee consists of 9 Councillors, there being 18 councillors on the full Council.

## **3. An overview of current collections:**

- 3.1 The current collection consists of artefacts from the Iron Age to the present day. The museum houses 423 items. The collection is split into two categories, those which belong in the 'Salt Museum' and those which belong to the 'Droitwich Calling' exhibit.
- 3.2 Part of the collection remains on display permanently in the Museum. The rest of the collection is housed within the Museum's two Archive Storage Rooms on the top floor of St Richards House.

## **4. Themes and priorities for future collecting:**

- 4.1 Social history of Droitwich: Any artefacts which provide a social history of Droitwich, which can be made available to the public for private research and used in future temporary exhibits.
- 4.2 Wychbold Transmitting Station/Droitwich On The Dial: Artefacts which relate to the Wychbold Transmitting Station and the BBC Radio Service.

## **5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal:**

5.1 The museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.

5.2 The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.

## **6. Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items:**

6.1 The museum recognised its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.

## **7. Collecting policies of other museums:**

7.1 The museum will take account of the collection 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.

7.2 Specific reference is made to the following museums/organisation  
Worcestershire County Museum.

## **8. Archival holdings:**

8.1 The museum has two archive rooms where it keeps its collection which is not on permanent display. The collection is kept in archival boxes and is used in temporary displays and made available to the public undertaking their own research.

## **9. Acquisition:**

9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is outlined in the museums acquisition and disposal policy.

9.2 The museum 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).

9.3 In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing 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 museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body 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.

#### **10. Human remains:**

10.1 As the museum holds human remains over 100 years old it will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by the DCMS in 2006. Which correlate to the Town Councils Policy on Human Remains.

10.2 The museum does not intend to hold or acquire human remains under 100 years old and therefore will not need to obtain the necessary licence under the Human Tissue Act 2004.

#### **11. Biological and Geological Material:**

11.1 So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the museum 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 the appropriate outside authority.

#### **12. Archaeological Material:**

12.1 The museum will not acquire archaeological material (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.

12.2 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 (i.e. the Coroner for Treasure) as set out in the Treasure Act 1996 (as amended by the Coroners & Justice Act 2009).

### **13. Exceptions:**

13.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:

- Acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin.
- Acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin.

In these cases the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.

### **14. Spoilation:**

14.1 The museum will use 'Spoilation of Works of Art during the Holocaust and World War II period: Statement of Principle and Proposed Actions', issued by the National Museum Directors' Conference in 1998, and report on them in accordance with the guidelines.

### **15. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains**

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

### **16. Disposal procedures:**

16.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the UK Museum Collections Management Standard Primary Procedures on disposal.

16.2 The Town Council will confirm that is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.

16.3 When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum 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.

- 16.4 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, and exchange or as last resort- destruction.
- 16.5 The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the Town Council only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. 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.
- 16.6 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 Town Council acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.
- 16.7 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. 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.
- 16.8 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered 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 a notice on the Museum Associations Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites.
- 16.9 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.
- 16.10 Any monies received by the Town Council from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly 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 to be allocated 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.

- 16.11 The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.
- 16.12 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 UK Museum Collections Management Standard Procedure on de-accession and disposal.

*Disposal by exchange:*

- 16.13 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 Town Council will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.
  - 16.13.1 In cases where the Town Council wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or non-Accredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 16.1-5 will apply.
  - 16.13.2 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.
  - 16.13.3 If the exchange is proposed with a non-Accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will place a notice on the Museum Association Find an Object web listing service, or make an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).

- 16.13.4 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 governing body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

*Disposal by destruction*

- 16.14 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the Town Council may decide to destroy it.
- 16.15 It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.
- 16.16 Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing.
- 16.17 Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.
- 16.18 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, eg the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.