

Gloucestershire Archives @ The Hub

Collecting Policy

1. Policy statement and purpose

This policy explains why and how Gloucestershire Archives gathers collections of archives and publications - and how its role in the Gloucestershire Heritage Hub supports these activities.

2. Scope

The policy applies to archive collections relating to Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire; local and family history resources relating to Gloucestershire that are kept at Gloucestershire Archives; and publications bought by Gloucestershire Archives for those libraries offering local and family history resources.

3. Terminology

Archives are the record of everyday activities of governments, organisations, businesses and individuals. Archives may take many different forms – handwritten, typed, printed, photographic or electronic – and include audio-visual material such as video and sound recordings. As authentic and reliable records, they are preserved permanently because of their evidential and historical value.

Local and family history resources comprise published information about the history of local areas and their communities, for example, newspapers and locality-based books, pamphlets and journals covering a wide range of topics.

Public Records are defined by the Public Records Acts of 1958 and 1967. They include records created by coroners, magistrates courts and health authorities. Under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010, transfers of public records to approved places of deposit will be made once the records are 20 years old.

4. Background

Gloucestershire Archives gathers archive collections and local and family history resources to ensure they are kept secure and made accessible.

We are an accredited archive service recognised by The National Archives as the place of deposit for Public Records relating to Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire.

We are a Gloucestershire County Council service. By agreement, we also provide an archive service for South Gloucestershire Council and are the appointed Record Office for the Diocese of Gloucester.

We are a lead partner in the Gloucestershire Heritage Hub, a network of local people and organisations created in 2017 with a common interest in our historic county's documented heritage. The network benefits from Hub facilities at Alvin Street, Gloucester and a Hub website, and its members support each other to gather, keep and share their personal and community archives.

5. Our archive collections

The collections in our care date from around 1145 to the present. They contain several million records, ranging from parchment to 'born-digital', and are an unrivalled source for the recorded heritage of the historic county of Gloucestershire. They provide unique evidence for a large range of events and activities and a wide cross-section of society.

They include records of:

- Gloucestershire County Council and its predecessor authorities
- South Gloucestershire Council and its predecessor authorities
- district, parish and town councils and other local authorities serving Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire
- coroners, magistrates courts, police, health and other bodies who create Public Records
- a wide range of community groups, charities, organisations, businesses, families and individuals whose activities reflect the history of Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire

- the Diocese of Gloucester and its parishes¹
- other religious communities within Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire
- regional bodies based in or active in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire and for which there is no other appropriate repository (such archives may be acquired if they are at risk from destruction)

6. Our collections of publications

We hold an extensive resource for Gloucestershire, including:

- books and pamphlets on local and family history
- journals and magazines produced by local organisations and groups
- local newspapers
- maps and plans
- postcards and prints

7. We acquire collections by:

- gift and/or bequest (archives and publications)
- deposit on long term loan (archives only)
- transfer as Public Records (archives only)
- purchase (publications, and archives in exceptional cases)²

We clarify ownership and provenance of collections before we acquire them and we prioritise collections at risk from damage or destruction.

We may seek financial contributions from owners towards the costs of preserving their archives.

¹ The diocesan boundary differs from the county boundary so Gloucestershire Archives holds records for some parishes that lie in other counties. Similarly records for parishes within the county but not within the Gloucester diocese are held elsewhere. For details of individual parishes see <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/parish-register-guide/>

² Gloucestershire Archives does not have a purchase fund but relies on fundraising by the Friends of Gloucestershire Archives and interested groups, and/or grant aid.

8. We decide on what to keep by:

- appraising what is offered to us, to ensure that we preserve records of historical importance (see our appraisal policy)
- following national and local guidelines on selection of archives
- liaising with owners and users, including discussing options for keeping the information in communities

We dispose of unwanted material carefully, as set out in our disposal policy, and we may advise owners on more appropriate places for their collections.

Occasionally we may sell printed or published material from our collections where it is owned by Gloucestershire County Council and if it duplicates our holdings or does not relate to Gloucestershire. Any income from such sales will be applied for the benefit of the collections. We do not sell archives.

9. Equalities and diversity

Gloucestershire Archives is firmly committed to the principles of equality and diversity in the workforce and in the service we provide to customers.

We treat all customers, and anyone else we come into contact with, equally and with dignity and respect. We do not discriminate on grounds of age, disability status, employment status, ethnic or cultural origin, gender or gender reassignment, marital status, nationality, religious belief or non-belief, responsibility for dependants, sexual orientation, social background, or any other grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. We will recognise, respect and value difference and diversity.

We have undertaken an equalities impact assessment of our policies. The resultant Due Regard Statement is available on request.

10. Roles and responsibilities

Day-to-day collections management activities are carried out by, or under the direction of, qualified archivists.

The Collections Development Manager and Deputy is responsible for policy revisions, and for ensuring the policy and related procedures are followed.

11. References

Statutory framework:

The archive service is provided under The Local Government Act 1972 and Local Government (Records) Act 1962; the Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978, amended 1992; the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967; and the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010. Access to collections complies with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2005 and current Data Protection legislation.

The local history service is provided under The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 which requires local authorities to maintain a “comprehensive and efficient” public library service for its residents.

Other references:

This policy should be read alongside our other policies, especially our collections development, appraisal and disposal policies, to be found at <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/policies>

Our Terms of Deposit can also be found at <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/policies>

Our depositors and donors’ frequently asked questions can be downloaded at <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/deposit>

National government policy on archives can be found at <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/Archives-Unlocked-Accessibility-Version.pdf>

For details of the archives accreditation scheme see <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/archive-service-accreditation/what-is-archive-service-accreditation/>

Archival ethics underpinning our practices and decisions: https://www.archives.org.uk/images/ARA_Board/2019/Code_Of_Ethics_February_2020_final.pdf and

https://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/ICA_1996-09-06_code%20of%20ethics_EN.pdf

For details of approved places of deposit for Public Records see
<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/our-archives-sector-role/legislation/approved-places-of-deposit/>

12. Review and revision

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

Document Control

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Version History

Version	Version date	Summary of Changes
1.0	March 2006	Original policy approved by Libraries' Senior Management Team
	June 2014	Incorporated into new Collections Development Policy
	Sept 2014	Brief review and minor re-formatting
2.0	Dec 2017	Created as a separate policy from collections development following the creation of the new Heritage Hub partnership
2.1	Oct 2020	Minor review updating links and job roles; footnote about means of purchase and professional code of ethics added

Date of next revision: 2023