

Gloucestershire Archives @ The Hub

Collections Development Policy

1. Policy statement and purpose

This policy explains why and how Gloucestershire Archives develops its collections, and how the Gloucestershire Heritage Hub supports these activities.

2. Scope

The policy applies to archive collections relating to Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire that are kept at Gloucestershire Archives, and to local and family history resources relating to Gloucestershire that are kept at the Archives and at libraries in the county.

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, prisons and health authorities. Under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010, transfers of Public Records to approved places of deposit will be made once they are 20 years old. Gloucestershire Archives is the approved place of deposit for Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire.

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 collecting activities

Gloucestershire County Council's archives service was set up in 1936 to gather and keep 'official' records from public services (such as county, district and parish councils; courts, hospitals and schools). However it also received 'unofficial' records from local landed families, charities and some long-established businesses.

During the 1970s the service became responsible for keeping the archives of the Diocese of Gloucester and its parishes. In 2005 Gloucester City Library's extensive collection of mainly published material for Gloucestershire was transferred to our care.

We want to ensure our collections continue to grow and develop to reflect as fully as possible all communities and all areas within the historic county. To do this we need to reach out to under-represented groups and to meet the challenges of keeping digital archives as well as traditional parchment and paper ones.

The main strands of our current activities are:

- 5.1** ongoing formal arrangements for deposits of county council archives, including developing new procedures for keeping digital records
- 5.2** liaising with creators of Public Records to ensure they are transferred to our safekeeping in a timely way
- 5.3** growing the Gloucestershire Heritage Hub network and delivering a range of activities which raises our profile and encourages people to engage with their documented heritage
- 5.4** delivering advice and support online through the Heritage Hub website to the communities we serve
- 5.5** ensuring we retain our status as an accredited archives service to underpin our trusted lead within the Heritage Hub
- 5.6** identifying and consulting with under-represented communities – for example the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and the LGBTQ communities - to raise awareness of archives among new audiences and to identify potential new archive collections
- 5.7** encouraging and advising community archive projects at their outset, and supporting them to gather, keep and share the collections they create, including digital oral history recordings
- 5.8** working with communities to identify collections that are at risk, supporting better care for collections and where appropriate, arranging for their transfer to us
- 5.9** researching, developing and sharing strategies and tools to preserve digital records
- 5.10** liaising with local museums and heritage centres so that our respective collecting activities are complementary and we share information about collections ¹
- 5.11** liaising with other archive services nationwide so that collections are acquired appropriately and information about them is widely available

¹ We do not seek to acquire artefacts although our collections may include a small number (for example, samples of products found among a business firm's archive). Likewise, museums and heritage centres may acquire archive material and publications closely associated with their localities or special collections

5.12 liaising with The National Archives, the Friends of Gloucestershire Archives and the Heritage Hub network to identify and secure significant archive material that may be at risk of dispersal by sale

5.13 monitoring and purchasing new publications relating to local and family history, to add to the collections held at Gloucestershire Archives and at Gloucestershire libraries²

5.14 supporting archive keepers in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire to look after records locally where appropriate

6. 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.

We are particularly keen that our collections reflect the diversity of the communities we serve and will prioritise activities to support this development.

7. Roles and responsibilities

Collections development activities are carried out by, or under the direction of, qualified archivists. The Collections Development Manager and Archives Development Manager have joint responsibility for policy review and overview of development projects.

² Gloucestershire's libraries do not accept archive collections although Cheltenham Library holds some archive material from earlier gifts

8. References

This policy should be read alongside related Archives Service policies, and in particular our Collecting Policy which sets out the statutory framework of our service and summarizes our existing collections, and the Learning and Outreach policy which supports the development of our collections and sets out relationship building with under-represented groups. All our policies can be found at <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/policies>

Gloucestershire County Council's equalities strategy can be found at <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/equalities-and-our-duties-under-the-equality-act-2010/equality-objectives/>

Examples of our partnership projects can be found at <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/working-with-us/partnership-projects/>

Details of our digital curation activities can be found at <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/digital-curation/>

Guidance from The National Archives on archives collection development can be found at <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/advice-and-guidance/managing-your-collection/developing-collections/collection-development/>

9. Review and revision

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

Document Control

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Version	Version date	Summary of Changes
1.0	March 2010	Original policy approved by Libraries' Senior Management Team
2.0	June 2014	Revised to update links and references; to include our advisory service; to add note on securing significant archives that are being sold; to remove references to access, now covered by separate policy
2.1	Sept 2014	Brief review and minor re-formatting
3.0	Dec 2017	Major review following the creation of the new Heritage Hub partnership
3.1	Oct 2020	5.14 added; specific statement about collections reflecting diversity of communities we serve added in section 6. Additional author added. Link with learning and outreach made more explicit.

Date of next revision: 2023