

Acquisition and Collection Policy



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1.0 Aim

The aim of this policy is to define how and why Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service acquires or disposes of archives and records.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other related Archive Policies and accompanying documents including:

- Collection Development Plan
- Appraisal Guidance
- Digital Preservation Policy
- Policy on Preservation and Conservation

2.0 Repository and governing body

This policy statement relates to Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, The Hive, Sawmill Walk, The Butts, Worcester, WR1 3PB.

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service is part of Worcestershire County Council's Adult and Communities Services Directorate.

3.0 Statutory obligations

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service will seek to abide by all relevant legislation including:

- Public Records Acts 1958, 1967

- Manorial Documents Rules 1959 and 1967
- Tithe Apportionment Rules 1960 and 1963
- Local Government (Records) Act 1962
- Local Government Act 1972
- Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978, amended 1992
- Local Government (Access to Information Act) 1985
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Freedom of Information Act 2000

4.0 External recognition

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service is:

- The authorised archive service for the custody of the official records of Worcestershire County Council and its predecessor authorities under the Local Government Act 1972
- An approved place of deposit under the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967 for a number of classes of central government records held locally (public records) such as those of Quarter Sessions, magistrates courts, coroners, county courts, health authorities.
- Recognised by the Master of the Rolls as a repository for manorial and tithe records under the Law of Property Act 1922 and the Tithe Act 1936.
- Designated by the Bishop of Worcester as the Diocesan Record Office under the Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978 as

amended by the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions)
Measure 1992

- Empowered to acquire archives by deposit, gift or purchase and to preserve and make them available under the Local Government (Records) Act 1962

5.0 Standards

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service has adopted the following standards:

- The National Archives Standard for Records Repositories 2004
- National Standard for Access to Archives 2003
- Archive storage at The Hive has been built (2012) to BS5454:2000 standards and conforms to PD5454:2012. It follows guidance now contained in PAS 198:2012
- General International Standard of Archival Description (ISAD(G)) 2000

6.0 Equity, diversity and inclusion

We particularly welcome archives created by, or about, individuals or groups with protected characteristics and other under-represented groups. We monitor additions routinely.

We are committed to embedding equity, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work, and welcome any feedback on how we can improve. You can get in touch with us via our contact page, use a Hive building comments card, speak to a member of staff or use our secure post-box situated near our microfilm readers.

We have an on-going interest in exploring archives with a diverse range of communities and individuals through projects and hands-on workshops, resources, exhibitions and events. Our specialist team have expertise to support your application for grant funding. If you have ideas or need inspiration for a project, we may be able to help.

Every day, we treat all staff, customers, and anyone else we meet and correspond with, with equity, 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 or social background. We recognise, respect and value difference and diversity.

7.0 Scope of acquisition and collection policy

We identify, collect and preserve the archival heritage of Worcestershire to make it available for use both now and in the future and to encourage the broadest public access to archives.

We aim to ensure collections reflect all aspects of Worcestershire's communities and their activities, past and present. We collect records from whatever source which can contribute to a better understanding of the history and development of the County.

Archives are accepted in a variety of formats and may include written or typescript primary sources, maps, plans, designs, drawings, photographs, printed material, audio-visual or electronic media of any date.

Records collected will include:

- Records of the County Council and its predecessor bodies
- Records of other local authorities and their predecessors and statutory bodies operating within the County
- Local public records held under the Public Records Acts

- Ecclesiastical records of the Diocese of Worcester
- Records of regional bodies which have their headquarters within the County except where provision has already been made with another repository
- All types of record-creating bodies within Worcestershire such as Faith groups other than the Church of England, clubs, societies and associations, businesses, families, including landed estates and individuals

A senior archivist or any Archive Service Management Team member may exercise judgement on the informational and historical significance of collections offered to Worcestershire Archive Service which exceptionally do not fall within the scope of this policy.

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service will collect documents relating to both the historic and modern administrative county of Worcestershire. This may include documents relating to places outside the county if there are exceptional circumstances or ethical reasons for keeping a collection together, but Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service will not normally accept the deposit of records from areas outside its current administrative boundaries.

Film and video material will be accepted though this may be lodged in a repository with specialist facilities such as the Media Archive for Central England (MACE) if this is judged to be in the interests of the records.

Only records which are judged to be of sufficient quality for permanent preservation will be accepted.

Only records that will be open for public access after processing by Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (including listing and essential conservation work) or after a fixed period of time agreed in consultation with the owner or depositor will be accepted.

The principle of the integrity of the archive will be respected and the division or dispersal of collections will be avoided.

Copies of archive material may be acquired where the owner does not wish to part with the original records.

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service reserves the right to adopt preservation policies including migration to ensure the readability and long-term preservation of the information contained in electronic media.

8.0 Limitations

We decide what to keep by appraising what is offered to us, to ensure that we preserve records of historical importance. We follow national and local guidelines on selection of archives. We outline and discuss the following limitations with potential depositors as well providing guidance for keeping material with communities/the creating body where appropriate.

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service will not normally accept:

- Potentially hazardous material such as cellulose nitrate film or infested material that would pose a risk to the repository or other collections.
- Archives damaged beyond repair, unless the continuing historic value is judged to be significant
- Archives that are subject to unreasonable restrictions on public use.
- Records of a national rather than local remit
- Records of a particularly specialist nature requiring skills or equipment beyond our resources to preserve, exploit or interpret or for which there is a more suitable repository
- Records which would by virtue of their format, content or provenance be more appropriately housed in another repository

- Records of a low informational value or which do not contribute to an understanding of the aims and objectives of the creating body or individual.
- Records where there is concern over legal ownership
- Published material except where it forms an integral part of an archive, contains significant manuscript annotation or is of value as a research aid
- Material which does not relate to Worcestershire unless that material is integral to a collection or dividing the collection would result in loss of archival value
- Artefacts, three-dimensional objects and works of art unless there is a special relationship between an artefact and the associated archives
- Hard copy of newspapers unless they are deposited as part of a wider collection
- Frames, tin trunks, deed chests and other containers which will be disposed of by Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service or returned to the donor
- Records not judged to be of permanent historical value

Only records which are judged to be of sufficient quality for permanent preservation will be accepted.

Staff can offer advice on suitable alternative places of deposit if Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service is not appropriate.

9.0 Cooperation with other repositories

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service will work closely with other archive authorities to ensure that all records are placed in the most appropriate home and to avoid competition, conflict and duplication of effort, but will nevertheless assert its primacy in discussion with the Archives sector where it considers it has an overriding claim.

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service will inevitably hold material relating to other areas and material relating to Worcestershire will be held by other collecting bodies but will seek to exchange lists as appropriate.

In the case of collections relating to areas on or near the borders of Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service's area staff will consult individual or local preference, but without prejudice to the appropriateness of the repository and the principles of archival integrity.

10.0 Methods of acquisition

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service will acquire archives by transfer, deposit, gift, bequest or purchase. Gifts will be preferred unless a depositor has an ongoing legal need to retain title.

Records will be accepted by transfer from another repository if Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service is deemed the more appropriate repository.

Records may occasionally be purchased from reputable dealers and auctioneers, organisations or individuals who have legal title to those records or are acting on behalf of those who hold lawful title.

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service will issue receipts signed by office staff and the depositor for all the archives. Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service will preserve all documentation relating to each acquisition. These records will form the legal basis for evidence of title.

To justify the Council's administrative expenditure loaned items should normally remain with us for at least 20 years or a charge may be incurred to cover costs.

11.0 Deaccessioning, disposal and transfer

Records are acquired with the intention that they shall be preserved permanently but Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service reserves the right to retrospectively review its holdings against relevant selection procedures and dispose of any archives not deemed to be worthy of permanent preservation at the time of deposit or later in the acquisition process. Such material may be returned to the depositor, transferred elsewhere or destroyed confidentially.

It may be appropriate from time to time, where a collection has been accepted based on its being a particular local example of the records generated by an activity, to reassess its retention should a similar, but better quality, example become available, or where a similar collection is offered as a gift where the existing collection is held as a loan.

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service accepts the principle that there should be a strong presumption against the disposal by sale of any documents in their ownership.

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service aims to maintain the archival integrity of collections. Where it is considered appropriate to split

a collection and transfer part to another repository permission of the depositor will be sought.

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service will transfer archives to a more suitable repository if it is felt that the documents and the users of those documents would benefit from their relocation.

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service will seek to implement a carefully managed programme of deaccessioning/reappraisal should material be identified which is no longer deemed worthy of permanent preservation.

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service will seek to undertake proactive survey work as required within the Service Plan.

12. Collection Development

In accordance with our Collections Development Plan, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service will seek to add further collections to reflect all aspects of life in the area it serves. We aim to cover all parts of the county's past and present and as wide a range of institutions and subjects as possible.

Whilst priority in acquiring records will be given to archives at risk of loss, destruction or damage; we will actively endeavour to acquire record collections that are perceived as underrepresented within the Service's holdings.

13. Review

This Policy was reviewed January 2025 and will be reviewed again January 2030 or earlier if circumstances dictate.

Contact Us:

By post:

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Butts
Worcester,
WR1 3PD

By telephone:

01905 822866

Website and Blog:

<http://www.explorethepast.co.uk>

Click 'Contact Us' to ask us a question.

Find us on social media:



Twitter: www.twitter.com/explorethepast



Facebook: www.facebook.com/WorcsAAS or search for 'Explore the Past'

