

# Acquisition Policy

September 2023

Dorset History Centre  
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## Service Description

The **Joint Archives Service (JAS)**, based at **Dorset History Centre (DHC)** is operated on behalf of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council, and Dorset Council. Partnership between the two authorities as delivered through the joint service sits at the heart of JAS activities and underwrites the protocols and processes by which DHC acquires material. This is enshrined in the 2022 Inter-Authority on Archives which was approved by the Cabinets of both councils.

Local history services (primarily local studies library material) are provided locally at **Poole History Centre** and **Bournemouth Library's Heritage Zone** respectively.

DHC is the sole local authority archive within the county with Accredited status as conferred by The National Archives. Local studies library services and the Historic Environment Record are operated on behalf of Dorset Council.

## Our Vision

That Dorset History Centre is the physical and virtual hub for the archival and recorded heritage of the county of Dorset in both hard copy and digital formats.

## Our Mission

To acquire, preserve and make accessible the archives of the county of Dorset and so promote cultural, economic, educational and social well-being.

## 1. Aim and Purpose

- 1.1 **Definition:** Archives are documents (hand-written, printed items, maps, plans, slides, postcards, photographs, audio-visual material, digital records and comparable items in diverse physical formats) from all dates. The specific areas of interest for the JAS in terms of acquisition are detailed in **Section 5** of this document.
- 1.2 The aim of this policy is to define and publish the basis on which the Joint Archives Service acquires or disposes of archives, records and local studies material.
- 1.3 DHC is the principal archive repository for the post-1974 geographical county of Dorset. It seeks to acquire and hold archive and local studies collections which represent the history, lives and activities of the people, communities and organisations within the geographical county of Dorset through the ages, aiming to cover all parts of the area and as wide a range of institutions and subjects as possible.

- 1.4 The development of the collections will be planned, as far as possible, to support the strategies and objectives of both councils, the policies, strategies and interests of relevant national and regional agencies and local stakeholders, including users. The JAS will endeavour, wherever possible to locate and acquire material relating to under-represented groups and reflective of social, political, economic and environmental change.
- 1.5 This policy operates in conjunction with the *Local Studies Collecting Policy* (March 2011) of Bournemouth Libraries, the *Acquisition and Disposal Policy 2016-21* of Poole Museum Service and Russell-Cotes Arts Galley & Museum's *Collections Development Policy 2021*.
- 1.6 Through consultation with colleagues in BCP Council agreement has been reached relating to the acquisition, management and accessibility of archives:
  - (i) Where archives are offered to either authority by external agencies, they will be forwarded to the JAS as the agreed proper place for the storage of archival material by the two councils.
  - (ii) In the case of archives already held by BCP Council, the JAS will work with colleagues in each place to secure their transfer to DHC primarily by working to digitise content which can then be accessed locally.
  - (iii) Appropriate officers of both authorities will work to secure the transfer of important council records from service units in compliance with agreed retention schedules to form part of the respective corporate archives held on their behalf at DHC.
- 1.7 Regular discussion and consultation with officers in BCP Council and Dorset Council will always underwrite attempts to secure the transfer of archives to DHC.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The JAS acquires, preserves and makes accessible archives, records, local studies and literary material for use by present and future generations. DHC makes these collections accessible to visitors as well as providing worldwide access online and through a range of off-site activities.
- 2.2 The JAS is provided on behalf of BCP Council, and Dorset Council. The JAS ensures that the archives relating to the area, communities, people and families of the county of Dorset are preserved now and for the future and made widely available in the present.
- 2.3 Local Studies Collections are held by the library services of BCP Council, and Dorset Council.
- 2.4 The principal collection for the Dorset Council area has, by agreement with Dorset Library Service, been situated at DHC since December 2005. This collection comprises reference material only. The Dorset Authors Collection was transferred to DHC in December 2010.
- 2.5 Local studies reference collections are maintained at Bridport, Christchurch, Ferndown and Weymouth Libraries and smaller community libraries, and all Dorset Libraries hold Local Studies lending stock.

- 2.6 The Poole Local Studies collection is held at the Poole Local History Centre, part of Poole Museum Service.
- 2.8 Bournemouth Local Studies collection is located within the 'Heritage Zone' at The Bournemouth Library.

### **3. Statutory Position/Legal Framework**

- 3.1 The JAS acquires material in accordance with a statutory framework which includes the following:
  - 3.1.1 Local Government (Records) Act 1962: enables all local authorities to promote the use of their records and empowers county and county borough councils to acquire records by purchase, donation or deposit.
  - 3.1.2 The Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964: compels local authorities to provide a comprehensive library service including both lending and reference material.
  - 3.1.3 Local government Act 1972 (section 224): places an obligation on 'principal authorities' to make proper arrangements for documents that belong to them or are in their custody.
  - 3.1.4 Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967: DHC is recognised as a Place of Deposit under the Public Records Acts and acquires Public Records under the authority of the Acts.
  - 3.1.5 Archive Service Accreditation – the programme administered by The National Archives. It consists of a standards framework which includes the acquisition and disposal of archives. DHC was first accredited in 2018.
  - 3.1.6 Manorial Document Rules 1959 and Tithe (Copies of Apportionment) Rules 1960: DHC is a designated place of deposit for manorial and tithe records and is a Historical Manuscripts Commission Approved Repository.
  - 3.1.7 Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978 (amended 1993): DHC is designated by the Bishop of Salisbury as the official place of deposit for records of Dorset parishes located in the Diocese of Salisbury.
- 3.2 Items held at DHC are made available within the parameters of the Data Protection Act (2018), The Freedom of Information Act (2000) and The Environmental Information Regulations (2004).
- 3.3 The JAS will abide by future legislation relating to archives, local studies and records management.

### **4. Standards**

- 4.1 DHC has adopted the policies set out by The National Archives in *A Standard for Record Repositories* (2004), the Museums and Galleries Commission's *Code of Practice on Archives for Museums in the United Kingdom* (1996) and *Centres for Social Change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for all* and the [Government Policy on Archives](#).
- 4.2 At DHC archives and local studies special collections are stored in high quality accommodation which meets fully the British Standard for the storage and exhibition of archival documents (BS 4971:2017).

## **5. Scope of the Collections**

5.1 **Record Types:** The JAS acquires collections of archives and records that relate entirely or principally to the administrative areas of BCP Council, and Dorset Council. Within this remit, it acquires:

5.1.1 The records of BCP Council, Dorset Council and their predecessor bodies;

5.1.2 Records of other local authorities and statutory bodies relevant to the county of Dorset;

5.1.3 Local public records offered to the service under the terms of the Public Records Acts;

5.1.4 Records of Church of England parishes, rural deaneries and archdeaconries in the Diocese of Salisbury within the geographical county of Dorset;

5.1.5 Records of organisations, businesses, estates, churches, societies, other public and private institutions, families and individuals wholly or substantially relating to the county of Dorset.

## **5.2 Exclusions**

5.2.1 DHC will not acquire artefacts or objects except in exceptional circumstances and where such items complement and are integral to the archival collection of which they form part.

5.2.2 The acquisition of archives and records outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances and then only after proper consideration and consultation, having regard to the interests of other repositories.

## **5.3 Local Studies and Dorset Authors Collections**

5.3.1 The Local Studies Collections include:

5.3.2 Monographs, maps, serials, yearbooks, pamphlets and newspapers which have substantial Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset or Poole content: a guideline minimum of 25%. In the case of Dorset Authors, material of interest relates to writers whose work is principally based in the county and offers a literary perspective on Dorset and its people;

5.3.3 Published video and audio recordings should also contain at least 25% Dorset content;

5.3.4 Supplementary reference material to support local and family history research.

5.4 The Local Studies Collection will not duplicate items also located in the archival collections.

## **6. Methods of Acquisition**

6.1 Archive Collections

6.1.1 The methods of acquisition for archival material are:

- Transfer from Council Departments
- Transfer from Records Management Unit
- Donation
- Deposit on indefinite loan
- Purchase

- 6.1.2 Acquisitions are accepted in accordance with current terms and conditions. Please see *Terms of Agreement for the Deposit of Archives at Dorset History Centre (2020)*. DHC will endeavour to ensure valid title to material offered to it and reserves the right to refuse legally questionable material.
- 6.1.3 Loans of archives for specific purposes or periods may also be accepted.
- 6.1.4 Potential acquisitions will be assessed by professional staff from the History Centre at the time of their accession to assess their suitability for long term preservation.
- 6.1.5 Items will only be purchased if they are deemed to be of cultural or informational importance to the history of Dorset.
- 6.1.6 Donations or deposits will be acknowledged in writing.
- 6.1.7 DHC is indebted to all those who have placed records in its care for use by the public. At the same time depositors of collections on indefinite loan receive substantial benefits. There is a formal deposit agreement between the owner and the Service. This sets out the obligations of each. Under this agreement the Service undertakes to store the archives appropriately, to carry out necessary cataloguing, conservation or reprographic works within its resources and priorities and to make them available to the public. To justify the expenditure in preserving, conserving and cataloguing deposited archives, the agreement stipulates that collections should normally remain at DHC for at least twenty years or a charge may be made to cover part of the costs incurred.
- 6.1.8 There is no mandatory charge for the deposit of archives at Dorset History Centre. However, the financial implications associated with long-term storage are significant. In order to off-set the costs to the JAS's funding authorities, depositors of records are encouraged to make a voluntary contribution towards the costs of storage on a per box basis. They are also asked to consider associated costs of cataloguing, conservation and digitisation.
- 6.1.9 DHC, in consultation with a collection's owner or donor, may transfer groups of documents to a more suitable repository, if it is found that they belong more properly with records in another repository.
- 6.1.10 DHC, in accordance with the wishes and requirements of donors and depositors, evaluates and selects for destruction or return to the owners, documents not deemed to be worthy of permanent preservation. The final appraisal of collections will take place when they are catalogued.
- 6.1.11 Transfer and appraisal will comply with all legislative requirements, notably the Public Records Acts.

## 6.2 Local Studies Collections

- 6.2.1 The methods of acquisition for Local Studies material are:

- Transfer from stock from Dorset libraries;
- Donation/gift, not loan;
- Purchase

## **7. Selection Policy**

### *7.1 Archive Collections*

7.1.1 Collections of archival material: archival material should be worthy of permanent preservation. Appraisal criteria for selection are informed by national guidelines and a desire to select samples of records that illustrate different aspects of the history of Dorset. Material selected must be able to demonstrate significant informational or cultural value in order to be retained.

### *7.2 Dorset Local Studies Collection: DHC*

7.2.1 Monographs: Single reference copy of all books (including booklets and pamphlets) about Dorset (or with significant Dorset content).

7.2.2 Serials representative of Dorset life and history;

7.2.3 Ordnance Survey maps of Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole. Goad Shopping Plans which cover the principal towns in Dorset area;

7.2.4 Published audio-visual recordings.

### *7.3 Dorset Local Authors*

7.3.1 Monographs: Single reference copy of works (including booklets and pamphlets) of fiction, poetry, drama and other imaginative literature, with significant Dorset content; also books on the literary heritage of Dorset. Books of local authorship, with no local content, would not normally be held in this collection.

7.3.2 Theses, articles and audio-visual material about local authors and the literary heritage of Dorset.

## **8. Disposal procedures**

### *8.1 Archives*

8.1.1 DHC presumes against the withdrawal of any documents selected for permanent preservation, unless the owner requests the return of deposited documents.

8.1.2 Where deposited material is subsequently deemed not to be worthy of permanent preservation the depositor will be contacted to ascertain whether they wish to reclaim the material. If the depositor does not wish to reclaim the material or cannot be contacted after reasonable efforts have been made to do so, it will be destroyed as confidential waste.

8.1.2 DHC holds cultural and informational assets in trust for future generations. It operates with a strong presumption against the sale of any owned collections. DHC abides by the precepts of both the Archive Service Accreditation standard and the ARA's Code of Conduct, both of which explicitly oppose the sale of archives.

## 8.2 *Local Studies*

8.2.1 All Local Studies stock at the DHC will be periodically reviewed by the Archivist (Public Services).

## 8.3 *Copy material*

8.3.1 Copies of archives relating to the geographical county of Dorset and held in other repositories are acquired to support and enrich the collections held and for the benefit of local research

## 9. **Liaison and consultation**

9.1 DHC consults and/or liaises with other bodies across Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole regarding the acquisition of documents and Local Studies material in which there may be a common interest. It will also consult whenever this policy is revised.

## 10. **Public Access**

### 10.1 *Archives*

10.1.1 Archive collections will be catalogued or listed in order to provide public access, subject to the requirements of confidentiality and where resources exist to undertake such work.

10.1.2 Archive collections are accepted only on the basis that they will become accessible to the public in due course, allowing for statutory and/or agreed closure periods.

### 10.2 *Local Studies*

10.2.1 All Local Studies material is available for public consultation. A small section of rare and valuable material is held in the DHC strongroom and produced as archival material in the supervised searchroom.

## 11. **Publication of information**

11.1 Information relating to new accessions is made available via a public report to the Joint Archives Board, published in paper and electronic format on DHC's web pages. Additionally, an annual return of accessions is made to The National Archives.

## 12. **Review of the Policy**

12.1 The policy will be reviewed in consultation with interested organisations, stakeholders and individuals every 3 years. It will next be reviewed in September 2026

## 13. **Further information or comment**

13.1 Copies of this policy are available in large print.

13.2 To comment on this policy or for further information about it, contact the Service Manager for Archives and Records at:

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