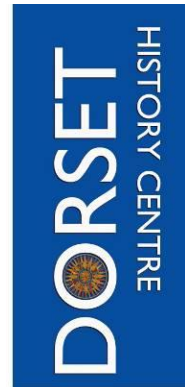


Digitisation Policy

September 2023

Dorset History Centre
Bridport Road
Dorchester
DT1 1RP



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. Introduction and Definitions

- 1.1 The JAS acquires, preserves and makes accessible archives, records, local studies and literary material in any format for use by present and future generations. It makes these collections accessible to visitors as well as providing worldwide access online and through a range of off-site activities.
- 1.2 The JAS has undertaken significant quantities of digitisation activity. This has involved both staff and volunteers. Over 500,000 digital images of DHC-held content appear on ancestry.co.uk providing worldwide access to some of the service's most popular sources.
- 1.3 Digitisation is the creation of digital copies of existing analogue archival or other materials, for example by using a scanner or taking a digital photograph of hard copy documents, maps etc. or converting cassette tape recordings, audio or film to digital versions. The term can also include other activities to ensure the quality and utility of the digital files, such as adding metadata and post-processing.
- 1.4 Digital preservation refers to the actions required to ensure the continued and reliable access to authentic digital records. Digital records are at risk of being lost due to the rapid obsolescence of hardware, software and storage media; uncertainties about resources,

responsibility and methods for maintenance and preservation; and legal barriers to digital preservation activity. Digital preservation is integral and fundamental to the Digitisation Policy as it allows us to manage digitised content for future use.

2. Aim and Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to explain how the JAS will approach the digitisation of original archives and local studies publications held at DHC, and how the resulting digital resources are managed and made accessible. The policy also provides a mechanism for the JAS to manage its available capacity for digitisation and to direct resources to best effect.
- 2.2 Further procedures, standards, and guidance have been developed to address specific aspects of reprographics.
- 2.3 This policy promotes the JAS as a point of reference for anyone wishing to undertake digitisation activity and as a source of advice, guidance and expertise across Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to digitisation of material in the custody of JAS, including digitisation conducted both in-house and by a third party.
- 3.2 This policy is closely connected to and operates alongside the JAS's service planning documentation which is regularly updated.
- 3.3 This policy operates in conjunction with other relevant JAS policies, including the Digital Preservation Policy (2023), Copying Policy (2023), Collections Care and Conservation Policy (2023).

4. Principles for digitisation

Preservation and sustainability

- 4.1 The JAS will adopt a pragmatic approach to developing projects in order to maximise the use of limited resources. The method and format of digitisation will be selected after due consideration of the future sustainability of resources generated.
- 4.2 In developing proposals for new digitisation projects, the full costs of the project (including those associated with the long-term preservation of and access to digital resources) will be determined and considered on a prioritised basis.
- 4.3 Only the essential amount of conservation/repair will be carried out prior to digitisation to enable the items to be safely handled rather than a full repair. The original archives will be stored in the environmentally controlled strong rooms with conditions optimised for their preservation.
- 4.4 Digitised material will be subject to retention criteria. Only content meeting required quality standards will be selected for permanent preservation. Material digitised for public reprographic orders will normally be kept for 3 years.
- 4.5 The JAS is committed to ensuring the digital resources in its care are managed according to digital preservation best practice (see Digital Preservation Policy). This includes transferring master copy files to the digital repository (Preservica).
- 4.6 The JAS is committed to addressing the issue of the audio-visual materials within its custody that face certain obsolescence in the next 7 years by migrating or capturing content in a more sustainable format.

- 4.7 Where possible, the JAS will develop digitisation projects in partnership with other organisations to enable each party to achieve more than they could on their own, avoid duplication of effort and share good practice.
- 4.8 Digitisation activity forms an integral and important element of every collections-related project undertaken by the JAS whether or not they are externally funded.

Access and users

- 4.9 DHC's on-going digitisation activities will consider community and staff suggestions, evaluation and feedback about the digitising programme and the means of resource discovery (i.e. catalogues and other finding aids) that we provide subject to available resources and capacity.
- 4.10 Digitisation will capture, preserve and provide contextual information about the digitised records to ensure their future discoverability and re-use.
- 4.11 The JAS aims to provide a seamless search experience across physical, born digital and digitised items via the public catalogue. Access to catalogues and archives on-site at Dorset History Centre will be provided free of charge.
- 4.12 In certain situations, access to records may only be provided via a digital surrogate, either because of the fragile nature of the document currently, or as a preventative measure to ensure repeated handling does not cause any new damage to records.
- 4.13 The JAS will continue to provide copies of archive material to customers for a charge, in accordance with copyright legislation. This applies equally to paper copies, digital copies and downloaded material online.
- 4.14 The JAS aims to raise awareness and encourage the use of digital resources among all stakeholders, current and potential, to maximise the return on investment in digitisation.

Standards and good practice

- 4.15 Effective business processes, technical standards and guidelines for digitisation projects will be developed and integrated into all aspects of service operations and plans.
- 4.16 Copyright will be cleared for works we intend to digitise that fall within copyright. Where rights holders cannot be identified our activities will be informed by the specific circumstances, and current thinking on Orphan Works.
- 4.17 Each digitisation project will be managed by DHC service staff who understand the project's content and users, with IT suppliers and partners being responsible for relevant deliverables.

5. Digitisation Priorities

- 5.1 The JAS will select material for digitisation on a priority basis. Priority will be given to collections where:
- ▶ They are unique and/or of significance for local, national and international history and will help promote Dorset and its heritage services
 - ▶ There is a significant preservation need or content is at high risk of being inaccessible in the future
 - ▶ Access to the content will be significantly improved through digitisation

- ▶ The material is eligible for public access (i.e. no sensitive information subject to data protection)
- ▶ Material is council owned or out of copyright if it meets other priorities.

5.2 Where multiple collections meet all of the criteria simultaneously those with a significant preservation need will be prioritised.

6. Permission to copy

6.1 Before we can make copies of archive material we are required to ascertain its copyright status. Material may only be reproduced in a publication, website or exhibition with the written permission of the copyright owner. The investment necessary to digitise a collection cannot be justified if the material is not cleared for these uses by DHC.

6.2 Previously, deposited private collections have come into the service without copyright assignments or licenses. In such circumstances we will act in accordance with the current thinking on Orphan Works.

7. Standards and legislation

7.1 Copyright: Copyright protects literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works as well as films, sound recordings, book layouts and broadcasts. Archives are permitted to make and supply copies to facilitate preservation, and for non-commercial research and private study.

7.2 Data Protection Act: we are unable to produce copies of sensitive information about people that are considered to be potentially still alive; or information that has the potential to cause harm to a third party under the Data Protection Act. This includes some photographs where individuals may be identified. The investment necessary to digitise a collection cannot be justified if the material is not able to be shared by DHC with its users.

7.3 At DHC archives and local studies are stored in high quality accommodation which meets fully the British Standard for the storage and exhibition of archival documents (BS EN 16893:2018 Conservation of Cultural Heritage).

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 Joint Archives Service:

- ▶ All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to protect and preserve the records in their care. After appropriate training all staff are responsible for applying the Policy and Digitisation Strategy consistently.
- ▶ The JAS will share advice and knowledge with partners and community groups to ensure good practice.

8.2 Depositors/owners

- ▶ Responsible for providing accurate information regarding the copyright status of material transferred to the custody of JAS.

9. Review of the Policy

9.1 The policy will be reviewed in consultation with interested organisations, stakeholders and individuals every 3 years to consider any new legislation, regulations, guidance, or business practices. The next review of this policy will take place in September 2026.

10. Further information or comment

10.1 Copies of this policy are available in large print.

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

Dorset History Centre, Bridport Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1RP

Tel: 01305 250550

E-mail: archives@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorset-history-centre>