



St. Helens Council

## St. Helens Local History and Archives Library

### Collection Policy

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The St. Helens Local History and Archives Library was established formally in 1974 as a result of the Local Government Act, 1972. It is administered and funded by St. Helens Borough Council.
- 1.2 The purpose of this document is to specify the aims and objectives which guide the acquisition of records and archives by St. Helens Local History and Archives Library. It comprises:
  - aims
  - statutory obligations
  - standards
  - scope
  - method of acquisition
  - limitations of the collection policy
  - disposal
  - access
  - review

#### **2. Aims**

- 2.1 The St. Helens Local History and Archives Library aims to:
  - identify, collect and preserve records and archives regarding the history and development of the Borough of St. Helens from earliest times to the present day
  - encourage public awareness of the significance of the archives by engaging with local communities
  - provide free access to this material to both present and future generations
  - facilitate awareness of the archives through the regular publication of lists and guides in either hard copy or electronic formats
  - encourage the understanding and importance of methods of preservation and conservation in the long-term utilisation and storage of the records
  - provide a Search Room environment which encourages life long learning, private research and opportunities for personal development

### **3. Current statutory obligations**

- 3.1 St.Helens Local History and Archives Library is the authorised archive service for the records of St.Helens Borough Council and its predecessor authorities under the Local Government Act, 1972.
- 3.2 St.Helens Local History and Archives Library is approved by the National Archives as a Place of Deposit for specified classes of public records under the Public Records Acts 1958, Section 4 (1).
- 3.3 St.Helens Local History and Archives Library observes the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- 3.4 St.Helens Local History and Archives Library provides the Local History section of the service under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

### **4. Standards**

- 4.1 Wherever possible the service seeks to conform to the following non-statutory standards: PD 5454: 2012. 'Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials' and 'The National Archives' Standard for Record Repositories', 2004.

### **5. Scope**

- 5.1 The St.Helens Local History and Archives Library will acquire records and archives relating to the geographical area known as the Borough of St.Helens. This includes the records of the historic constituent authorities of the towns, villages or urban districts of:

Billinge and Winstanley (part)  
Bold (part)  
Eccleston (part)  
Haydock  
Newton-le-Willows  
Parr  
Rainford  
Rainhill  
St.Helens  
Sutton  
Windle

- 5.2 St.Helens Local History and Archives Library uses the terms 'records' and 'archives' to include hand written and typewritten manuscripts, maps, plans, photographs, printed material, electronic, digital and other machine readable records.

- 5.3 The St.Helens Local History and Archives Library will collect local Public Records offered under the terms of the Public Records Acts e.g. National Health Service records and National Coal Board records.
- 5.4 Printed and non-archival material reflecting the history and development of the Borough of St.Helens will also be collected. This may include:
- books
  - local newspapers
  - maps
  - pamphlets
  - photographs
  - any other ephemera considered to be locally relevant to the area known as the Borough of St.Helens.
- 5.5 Local and general genealogical resources will be collected in the most appropriate format.
- 5.6 Copies of some original records relating to the Borough of St.Helens, but held by other repositories, may be acquired for the purpose of enriching the understanding of original archives and collections held by the St.Helens Local History and Archives Library, e.g. census enumerators' returns, microform or digital copies of obsolete local newspapers, ecclesiastical records etc.
- 5.7 Surrogate copies will be created wherever possible where it is considered that original records may be in jeopardy as a result of overuse.

## **6. Method of acquisition**

- 6.1 Archives and collections will be acquired as a result of transfer from Council departments; by deposit or gift from external individuals, organisations or societies (a deposit is an indefinite long-term loan where the ownership remains with the depositor) or by purchase (dependent on the availability of funds).

## **7. Limitations of the collecting policy**

- 7.1 Records which do not have any relevance to the Borough of St.Helens will not be collected. St.Helens Local History and Archives Library observes the provisions of the 'Merseyside Archives Liaison Group Collections Statement' to avoid conflict and duplication with neighbouring authorities.
- 7.2 Donors wishing to deposit or donate records more appropriate to repositories located elsewhere in the country will be advised of the appropriate institution or asked to seek guidance from the National Archives.
- 7.3 Fine art or other objects or artefacts will not be collected. Those objects of relevance to the understanding of the history of the Borough of St.Helens will be offered to the World of Glass for inclusion in the Municipal Collection. Advice will be sought where potential donations may be considered to be more appropriate to museums or galleries outside the locality.

7.4 Records will not be accepted in media where appropriate storage and consultation facilities cannot be provided.

## **8. Disposal**

- 8.1 St. Helens Local History and Archives Library operates on the assumption that once records have been accepted for permanent preservation, they will not be subject to disposal.
- 8.2 Despite the statement outlined in paragraph 7.3, some artefacts have come into the possession of St Helens Archives in the past. The paragraphs concerning disposal policy exist to manage those items in the collection as of October 2015.
- 8.3 St Helens Council accepts the principle that, except for sound curatorial reasons, there is a strong presumption against the disposal of any items from its collection.
- 8.4 St Helens Council will establish that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Any decision to dispose of material from the Collection will be taken only after due consideration.
- 8.5 When disposal of an item is being considered, St Helens Council will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant.
- 8.6 Any monies received by St Helens Council from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the Collection. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions but in exceptional cases improvements relating to access and care of the Collection may be justifiable.
- 8.7 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections), will be the responsibility of St Helens Council.
- 8.8 Once a decision to dispose of material in the Collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift, exchange or sale, directly to an accredited museum/archive likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- 8.9 If the material is not acquired by an accredited museum/archive to which it was offered directly, then the museum/archive community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal, and in other professional journals where appropriate.
- 8.10 The announcement will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from accredited museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an

interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, St Helens Council may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations.

- 8.11 Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.
- 8.12 In the usual interests of archival integrity, archive collections will not normally be split. However, if it is considered that part of an archive should be split and offered to a more appropriate repository, this will only be undertaken with the permission of the depositor or donor.

## **9. Access**

- 9.1 Unless a period of closure has been specified by legislation or by the depositor, records will normally be open to the public as soon as they have been catalogued. The catalogue is available on the Internet at [www.sthelens.gov.uk/history](http://www.sthelens.gov.uk/history).
- 9.2 Customers are respectfully advised that the latest retrieval from the Archive Store on a particular day will take place 30 minutes before the library is due to close.

## **10. Review**

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed and updated every two years and before that if there are any changes in legislation.

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