

# St. Helens Archive Service

## Collections Management Policy

### 1. Introduction

St Helens Archive Service contributes to the strategic objectives of St. Helens Council by ensuring the preservation, sustainability and accessibility of the collections held, and by making a significant contribution to educational achievement, broadening the opportunities of lifelong learning to meet the needs of all potential users; and where necessary working with partners in related fields to achieve this aim in the most meaningful way possible.

The aim of this policy is to outline the overall approach taken by St Helens Archives Service towards Collection Management. More information can be found in the Collection Development Policy, Collection Information Policy, Access Policy, Collection Conservation Policy, and Volunteering Policy.

### 2. Background

St Helens Archive was established as a result of the Local Government Act, 1972. It is administered and funded by St. Helens Council and managed through St Helens Library Service. St Helens Archive Service is the authorised Archive Service for the records of St. Helens Council and its predecessor authorities under the Local Government Act, 1972. and 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. Scope of Collections

3.1. St Helens Archive Service aims to collect relevant material that relates to the geographical area known as the borough of St Helens including those generated by St. Helens Council and its predecessor authorities, public records under the Public Records Act, plus records from societies, charities, organisations, institutions, businesses, industrial and commercial organisations, religious groups, families, individuals, trade unions and political parties.

3.2. The types of material that will not usually be accepted are:

- Records that do not relate to St Helens borough
- Records that would be better placed in another repository
- Records which have no historic value
- Duplicates of items already held
- 3D artefacts, unless they form an integral part of a wider Archival collection

### 4. Acquisition and De-accessioning

- 4.1. Acquisition and disposal of Archive material for permanent preservation by internal transfer from Council departments will be made in accordance with existing St. Helens Council retention schedules. Public records will be maintained as outlined under sections 6, 4(3) and 4(6) of the Public Records Act.
- 4.2. Relevant depositor guidelines are provided to any prospective depositor (businesses, organisations, individuals, schools, etc.).
- 4.3. Details of deposited collections are recorded on a Deposit Form to capture as much information about the content, condition, provenance, administrative and ownership history of deposited items as possible.
- 4.4. The depositor is given a copy of the Deposit Form as well as Terms of Deposit.
- 4.5. Items are recorded on an Accession spreadsheet and are given a unique accession number.
- 4.6. The accession list should be published annually on the St Helens Archive Service website so that researchers have awareness of newly acquired collections.
- 4.7. All items deposited will be fully catalogued and the catalogue record made available to the public for research purposes. The items can then be accessed, subject to their physical condition and any restrictions.
- 4.8. Items which do not meet the criteria, duplicates or surrogate copies of original items already in the collections will be de-accessioned and either disposed of as appropriate or transferred to a more relevant repository according to any agreements made with the depositor.
- 4.9. In order to make collections more representative of the communities it serves, St Helens Archive Service seek to identify gaps in coverage through processes such as:
  - Assessing the current Archive holdings
  - Engaging with local communities to discover what is relevant to them
  - Working with partners on heritage projects
  - Actively engaging with non-mainstream communities

## **5. Cataloguing**

- 5.1. St Helens Archive Service produces finding aids using the CALM archival management system as well as catalogue lists. Items are catalogued in compliance with ISAD(g) to ensure accuracy, consistency and relevance.
- 5.2. Estimates of the amount of time and resources required to complete the backlog of cataloguing will be completed and updated as necessary. A spreadsheet prioritising cataloguing backlog is maintained by the Archivist and kept under review.
- 5.3. The CALM catalogue servers are maintained and backed up by St. Helens Council Business IT Department. The servers are regularly re-indexed to ensure the component databases are synchronised.

## **6. Conservation and preservation**

- 6.1. Protection of the archival heritage of the borough of St Helens is a core aim of St Helens Archive Service. Conservation and preservation therefore play a key role in maintaining the collection and its care. Further information regarding the Conservation of the collection can be found within the Conservation Policy.
- 6.2. The Archivist will, working with partners, provide expert advice for assessing the conservation/preservation needs of the collection and how preservation will be undertaken

## **7. Access**

- 7.1. Access to the collection is primarily provided through the St Helens Archive Service Search Room as well as through remote enquiries.
- 7.2. Access to St Helens Archive Service collections happens through exhibitions, displays, publications, tours, events, talks, and learning and engagement activities.
- 7.3. National Lottery Heritage Fund projects are another way that can facilitate access to collections. Recent projects have included 'St Helens Thorough the Lens' (2016-17) and 'St Helens Community Archive' (2018-19).
- 7.4. St Helens Archive Service fully endorses the principle to increase opportunities for lifelong learning and to raise awareness of, and stimulate interest in, Archives and related activities. The team actively work with stakeholders to develop projects and opportunities that promote and extend access to the collection.
- 7.5. As a publicly funded Archive Service, free access to collections is maintained. However, in line with other Archive Services, St Helens Archive Service charges for specifically identified services which may include copying (digital scanning and photography) as well as a research service fee. A list of Fees and Charges is available in the Search Room and on the St Helens Archive Service website.

## **8. Digital records**

- 8.1. St Helens Archive Service collects, manages and provides access to born-digital material according to its Digital Preservation Policy.
- 8.2. St Helens Archive Service will digitise material in order to:
  - Create surrogates that preserve the original items
  - Promote the collections
  - Provide remote access
  - Improve accessibility
  - Improve engagement

## **9. Research**

- 9.1. High quality research using St Helens Archive Service is encouraged and supported as it is fundamental to releasing the potential of the collections for interpretation.
- 9.2. St Helens Archive supports the work of the St Helens Townships Family History Society, St Helens Historical Society and other local heritage groups or individual researchers in utilising material for events or publishing material contained within the borough Archive. The result of any such work will be maintained within the collection.

## **10. Staff**

10.1 The Library Services Manager has overall responsibility for St Helens Library Service and the Archive Service.

10.2 The Archivist supported by the Senior Library Assistant, manages the day to day operation of the Archive Service and reports to the Archive Manager.

10.3 St Helens Archive Service has a team of dedicated volunteers from a range of backgrounds. Volunteers vary from people with an interest in history, a desire to help St Helens Archive in its work or an interest in pursuing a career in Archives.

10.4 As officers of St Helens Council, all staff members are required to abide by the Council's Code of Conduct. As members of the wider Archives profession, Archive Service staff members abide by the Archive and Records Association (ARA) Code of Ethics. St Helens Archive Service adopts the professional standards set by the code as guiding principles for the conduct of all Archive staff.

## **11. Emergency Planning**

11.1. The Disaster Recovery Plan and Collection Salvage Policy for use in case of an emergency are available on the shared drive. Copies are shared with the Council Business Continuity Team and appropriate personnel and are available in the Library Management Team Office (Wesley House) and the Archives office (The Gamble Building).

11.2. Continual testing and review of the Emergency Planning is a service priority.

## **12. Health and Safety**

12.1. Staff follow St Helens Council's Health and Safety Policies and Procedures which are managed through the Corporate Health and Safety Management scheme. All H&S documentation is secured on the corporate G drive which staff are aware of and can access as appropriate.

12.2. Risk Assessments are undertaken for any procedures where there is the potential for harm, by appropriate staff and shared with colleagues. Electronic copies are saved to the corporate drive to ensure all staff have access to the assessment. Risk assessments are reviewed every 2 years or as necessary to reflect any changes.

### 13. Review

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<b>Approved by</b>	Bill Renshaw
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