

St Helens Archive Service

Collections Information Policy

1. Introduction

St Helens Archive Service is the authorised Archive service for the records of St Helens Borough 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).

It is vital that adequate accurate information about collections is collected, recorded, preserved and made available where appropriate. This ensures a high level of transparency and accountability is upheld, standards of collections management are improved and the integrity of the Archive is maintained.

This policy focuses on the provision of intellectual access to collections both by users and by staff. It describes how St Helens Archive Service will aim to maintain and provide accurate documentation of its collections for the purpose of their improved control and access.

2. Mission Statement

Identify, collect and preserve Archive materials relating to the people, places and historic developments across the borough of St Helens

Use the Archive to create better connected communities, inform local decision making and strengthen local communities and their cultural identity.

Widen access to the collection by digitising collections, encouraging school classes to visit and ensuring that people can access materials through their local library and through outreach visits.

Provide free access for all to Archive records and engage with local communities to promote the borough's rich heritage.

Provide an environment which encourages life-long learning, contributes to a feeling of well-being and sense of place, raises aspirations and appreciation for the preservation of historic collections.

Support and enhance the overall strategic objectives of the Council including sustainable healthcare, economic growth, raising aspirations and being better connected

We aim to do this by.....

Collecting – Locating and collecting analogue and digital Archives which are of historic significance and record life in the borough of St Helens

Conserving – Expertly preserving and safeguarding unique and irreplaceable Archives, some of which are of national and international significance.

Collaborating – Making lasting and ground breaking partnerships that inspire and support local people and communities to collect, share and preserve the documented heritage of their communities.

Sharing – Encouraging the use, appreciation and enjoyment of Archives through an inclusive and welcoming public service. Making accurate information about the collections widely available

3. Purpose and Scope

3.1. This policy will assist in decision making and prioritising work relating to:

- Accessing the collections balanced with their long-term preservation
- Meeting legislative requirements
- Guiding cataloguing work by staff and volunteers
- Supporting submission of relevant funding bids

3.2. The policy will outline the framework within which collections information is collected, recorded and kept, which include:

- Entry of items and collections, appraisal and accessioning
- Cataloguing and indexing
- Location and movement control
- Withdrawal or disposal

3.3. The policy covers Archives and broadly Local Studies collections, which are processed by the Library Service.

4. Collections Information

4.1. St Helens Archive Service captures information at various stages during the processing of a collection or item, from its point of entry through to appraisal, accessioning, cataloguing and indexing, location and movement control and withdrawal or disposal if necessary.

This information is recorded and maintained in a variety of places and formats and can include:

- Accession receipt forms
- Accession entries within the St Helens Archive Service collections management database, along with depositor details
- Accession correspondence files (paper)
- Collections entries within collections management database
- Electronic catalogue log
- Cataloguing action plan
- Manual card index

4.2. In 2007, following funding from the Heritage Lottery, St Helens Archive Service introduced a collection management database (Axiell/Calm) which was later made available online via a Calmview site (www.sthelens.gov.uk/history)

- 4.3. All collections information, where required is held securely and in line with the General Data Protection Regulation.

5. Entry, Appraisal and Accessioning

- 5.1. St Helens Archive Service oversees the management of the acquisition and disposal of all archival materials.
- 5.2. As much information as possible is recorded about the item or collection at the point of entry to maintain its integrity and to ensure its provenance is fully understood. This determines ownership and legal status, along with any intellectual property rights, as well as preserving its administrative and custodial history.
- 5.3. Where the recommendation is to acquire, all depositors are required to fill out a receipt/deposit form. One copy of this form is returned to the depositor as a receipt and the other is retained by the Archive Service.
- 5.4. Each individual deposit is given a unique accession number, which is recorded on the receipt/deposit form. The item or collection is then processed following the 'Accessioning and Cataloguing Archives' procedure.
- 5.5. All accessions information (including depositor information) is added to an accessions spreadsheet.
- 5.6. Information about new accessions is supplied to The National Archives (as part of Annual Accessions to Repositories).
- 5.7. Material is appraised and rationalised according to the Collection Development Policy and Collections Development Plan.

6. Cataloguing and Indexing

- 6.1. A cataloguing priority list must be utilised. Once a priority has been assigned, the collection is added to a Cataloguing Action Plan. This plan then serves as the basis for any cataloguing work undertaken by the Archive Service and informs any funding applications relating to cataloguing. This plan also includes the historical cataloguing backlog.
- 6.2. All cataloguing conforms to professional standards including principle and mandatory elements of the General International Standard of Archival Description ISAD(G), International Council on Archives, International Standard Archival

7. Location and Movement Control

- 7.1. Catalogued Archive material is allocated a reference number and the collection is added to the locations index which records its exact location (Store Room, Shelf Number).
- 7.2. All boxes and/or items are clearly labelled.

8. Withdrawal and Disposal

- 8.1. St Helens Archive Service may review its collections in line with its Collections Development Policy and recommend return to depositor, transfer or disposal.
- 8.2. St Helens Archive Services keeps a record of all disposals made, which include the rationale behind the decision.

9. Staffing and Resources

- 9.1. St Helens Archive Service is managed by the Archives Manager and includes an Archivist and Senior Library Assistant. The team are supported by Library Service staff maintaining local studies resources at libraries.
- 9.2. St Helens Archive Service has a network of volunteers that assist in supporting the objectives of the Collection Information Plan.

10. Review

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Approved by	Bill Renshaw
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