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# Archives Volunteer Policy

## Policy Details

What is this policy for?	This policy outlines the nature of the partnership relationship that we have with our volunteers.
Who does this policy affect?	All volunteers who work for the Joint Archive Service, recruited and supervised by JAS staff working both on and off site
Keywords	archives, Dorset History Centre, preservation
Author	Sam Johnston, Service Manager for Archives, Dorset History Centre <a href="mailto:archives@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk">archives@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</a>
Dorset Council policy adopted from	This policy applies across the Dorset Council and Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council areas.
Does this policy relate to any laws?	No
Is this policy linked to any other Dorset Council policies?	All policies relating to archives are available on the <a href="#">Dorset History Centre website</a> .
Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)	An EQIA will be completed when the policy is next reviewed.
Other Impact Assessments	None

## Status and Approvals

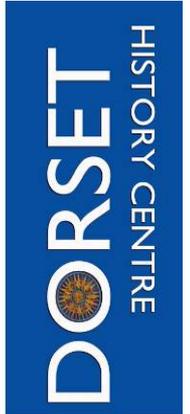
Status	Live	Version	Current
Last review date	June 2020	Next review date	June 2023
Member/ Partnership Board Approval	Joint Archives Advisory Board	Date approved	2020

The Joint Archives Service Volunteer Policy can be found on the [Dorset History Centre website](#).

# Volunteer Policy

June 2020

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 preserves material.

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. They are items that have been selected through a process of appraisal as being worthy of permanent preservation.

DHC is the sole local authority archive within the county with Accredited status as conferred by The National Archives.

## Vision and Mission

DHC is the physical and virtual hub for the archival heritage of Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole in both hard copy and digital formats. The JAS acquires, preserves and makes accessible the archives of Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole and so promote cultural, economic, educational and social well-being.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The JAS has worked with volunteers for many years on a number of different tasks. They have added huge value to the service and contributed to the success of service outcomes.
- 1.2. DHC applied for and was awarded [Investor in Volunteers](#) status in 2018. The award was made after a full and rigorous analysis of all DHC's policies and procedures. The award, which is reviewed after three years reflects the importance that
- 1.3. The JAS recognises the value of volunteering and manages a wide range of activities undertaken by volunteers. It should also be noted that the supervision of volunteers requires staff time and capacity and is thus by no means a 'free' resource. There are very significant mutual benefits to be gained for both volunteers and the JAS and in this sense, they are heavily interdependent.
- 1.4. Volunteer opportunities are available to support the JAS core work and also to work on specific time-limited externally funded projects.

- 1.5. Volunteering is widely acknowledged to offer real benefits to those participating and can be considered as contributing to the corporate priorities of the funding councils. Volunteering encourages social interaction, reduces isolation, promotes self-esteem and community cohesion. It also supports the learning of new skills and provides a real 'hands on' opportunity for people to interact with their heritage.

## **2. Aim and Purpose**

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to detail the terms on which the JAS offers volunteering opportunities and to clarify the rights and responsibilities incumbent on both the host body and the individual volunteer.

## **3. Scope**

- 3.1. This policy applies to all volunteers who work for the JAS, recruited and supervised by JAS staff working both on and off site.
- 3.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the Dorset History Centre Access Policy (2020) in line with the Equalities Impact Assessment (2019) and other relevant JAS policies.

## **4. Principles of Volunteering at DHC**

- 4.1. Volunteering is an important and integral part of the JAS's regular activity. The following considerations form a core part of the service's approach to managing and supporting volunteer activity:
  - Volunteering is undertaken by individuals who offer their time freely to the JAS and to whom no financial recompense (excepting reasonable expenses) is offered. Volunteers will be treated with respect and courtesy by JAS staff and will be expected to reciprocate in kind.
  - Upon starting a volunteer role with the JAS volunteers will be assigned a supervisor and this person will be their key contact at DHC. The supervisor will provide support with tasks and feedback at regular reviews.
  - The JAS will select volunteers for specific roles by assessing an individual's aptitudes and skills; if selected, the JAS reserves the right to terminate the volunteer's relationship with the JAS if they are deemed to be unsuitable for the role assigned to them or if the project, or task they have been working on comes to an end. In this instance there will be a clear explanation of the reason that the volunteer is no longer required, and if appropriate, a further explanation of how to access future opportunities at DHC.
  - Volunteers are not recruited in lieu of paid staff; rather they add value and capacity to the service. The maintenance of professional standards for work undertaken remains the responsibility of paid staff.
  - Volunteers will receive a full induction to DHC and the JAS. They will be required to sign a volunteer agreement which defines the expectations on both parties; this is not a contract of employment.
  - There are a variety of roles available for volunteers which require a range of skills and ways of working (e.g. working independently undertaking oral history interviews or listing documents on-site) depending on the volunteer role and the availability of their supervisor.
  - The JAS will communicate with volunteers in relation to their role and outputs. Whether working under close supervision or largely independently, volunteers are expected to inform their supervisor if they are unable to attend a session.
  - Volunteers will be supported in their work and appropriate training and equipment will be provided to enable them to complete specific tasks.

- Volunteers can request a written reference concerning their performance. Decisions on the supply of such a reference will be the responsibility of the volunteer's supervisor in consultation with their line manager at DHC.
- Volunteers will be consulted regarding any decisions that would substantially affect the performance of their duties.
- The JAS will listen positively to ideas and suggestions from volunteers about how their tasks may be better accomplished, and all such feedback will be given consideration.
- Volunteers must maintain the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information pertaining to the JAS, whether this pertains to a member of staff, another volunteer, a person named in restricted records or any other person involved in the business activities of the JAS. They are expected to maintain this confidentiality after ceasing to act as a volunteer. Volunteers will be asked to sign a data handling agreement.

## **5. Recruitment**

- 5.1. The JAS will recruit volunteers for specific roles when it has vacancies for those roles. Volunteers may be required to support the 'core' work of the JAS, or they may be recruited for a specific project (often externally funded) which will have a set completion date.
- 5.2. Volunteering tasks will be regularly reviewed and may cease or be altered.
- 5.3. Role descriptions, role skill requirements and task outlines will be created and vacancies for each role will be advertised both internally and externally.
- 5.4. Potential volunteers will be asked to apply for the vacant roles and suitable candidates will be invited for an informal visit to the building to discuss the role.
- 5.5. Where there are more applicants for a role than are required, it will be necessary to assess the skills of the applicants against the criteria to provide the role to the most suitable applicant. The other applicants will be informed and their names will be retained for 6 months in the event that other suitable roles become available.

## **6. Equality and Diversity**

- 6.1. The JAS completed an Equalities Impact Assessment in 2019 which has been published online.
- 6.2. The DHC building is broadly compliant with the Equalities Act, 2010. It has wide level access doorways including through automatic doors at the main entrance, and audio loop systems at reception desks and in the Lecture Room, an accessible toilet and a lift to the first floor.
- 6.3. The JAS is firmly committed to the principles of equality and diversity and volunteer opportunities with the JAS are open to people of all backgrounds and ages and recruitment of volunteers is undertaken on a fair and open basis. The needs of potential volunteers will be assessed and where possible adjustments will be made to enable applicants with additional needs to take up roles at DHC.

## **7. Health and Safety**

- 7.1. The wellbeing of volunteers is of paramount importance. Health and safety information forms part of a new volunteer's induction. The policy of the JAS is to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all its volunteers, and to provide such information, training and supervision as is needed for this purpose. The JAS undertakes risk assessments as appropriate. Volunteers are covered by the JAS's public indemnity insurance.

- 7.2. All personnel at DHC, including volunteers, wear identity badges. Volunteers will not work in the strongroom areas of DHC due to the confidential nature of some of the information kept there. Where required for the volunteer role, archives will always be produced from the repositories by DHC members of staff for the use of volunteers.
- 7.3. The JAS will maintain records of volunteers. Personal details will be kept in strict confidence, and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018, will not be disclosed to any unauthorised person.
- 7.4. In appropriate circumstances, where the role includes contact with vulnerable people of any age e.g. carrying out oral history interviews outside the Dorset History Centre or supporting vulnerable service users, volunteers will be asked to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service check. The outcome of the check will be shared with the potential volunteer's supervisor, and any risks associated with their service will be evaluated. DBS check outcomes will be stored securely and destroyed when a volunteer leaves DHC.
- 7.5. Any volunteers who work off premises alone are expected to comply with DCC's Lone Worker policy.

## **8. Expenses**

- 8.1. The JAS offers travel expenses to those volunteering on site at DHC. Free parking is available on-site within DHC's pay and display car park or reimbursed and refreshments are offered to volunteers.
- 8.2. If volunteers are asked and are willing to undertake work for the JAS away from DHC, then travel expenses and parking costs will be reimbursed (ticket or mileage) upon the presentation of appropriate receipts.

## **9. Review of the Policy**

- 9.1. The policy will be reviewed in consultation with interested organisations, stakeholders and individuals every 3 years to take into account any new legislation, regulations, guidance, or business practices. The policy will be reviewed in June 2023

## **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 at:

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Tel: 01305 250550  
E-mail: [archives@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:archives@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)  
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