

Joint Archives Board

8 November 2023

Joint Archives Service: Review of policies

For Review and Consultation

Portfolio Holder: Cllr L Beddow, Culture and Communities
Cllr Andy Martin, Customer, Communications and Culture,
BCP Council

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director: J Sellgren, Executive Director of Place

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Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

The Joint Archives Service (JAS) maintains a policy library which underwrites its commitment to high quality, standards-based best practice. It is particularly important that the service reviews and updates its policies to ensure compliance with any changes in the legal or professional landscape. The review is undertaken every three years. It is also critical that policies have undergone scrutiny by the JAB as the JAS's oversight and governance body. In late November, the JAS will be submitting its application to The National Archives for re-Accreditation so the Board's endorsement of the service's suite of policies is a key part of this process.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Board endorses the policies detailed within this report.

Reason for Recommendation:

Effective oversight of the Joint Archives Service and its activities by the Joint Archives Board is required under the terms of the Inter-Authority Agreement on Archives, 2022

1. Background

- 1.1 The Joint Archives Service (JAS) maintains a policy library which underwrites its commitment to high quality, standards-based best practice. It is particularly important that the service reviews and updates its policies to ensure compliance with any changes in the legal or professional landscape. The policies are made available via the JAS's website.
- 1.2 The review is undertaken every three years. In most cases, amendments to policies are not substantial but reflect changes in national standards or best practice which the service is keen to incorporate into its operating model. They also reflect the new administrative make-up of the county following Local Government Reorganisation.
- 1.3 In late November 2023, the JAS will be submitting its application to The National Archives for re-Accreditation so the Board's endorsement of the service's suite of policies is a key part of this process as it demonstrates to potential funders and to the wider public that the JAS is conversant with the political, economic, social and environmental context in which it is operating.

2. Policies

- 2.1 **Access Policy.** This policy provides a framework for the Joint Archive Service based at Dorset History Centre in providing access to collections onsite, off-site and online. The policy also links to the service's undertakings in respect of being as open and accessible to all audiences as possible. The full policy can be found in **Appendix one**.
- 2.2 **Acquisition Policy.** The aim of this policy is to define and publish the basis on which the Joint Archives Service acquires or disposes of archives, records and local studies material, the geographical basis on which it approaches this and its interaction with other collecting bodies. The full policy can be found in **Appendix two**.
- 2.3 **Collections Care and Conservation Policy.** This policy provides a framework for the Joint Archives Service in caring for and managing the records held at the Dorset History Centre for future generations and in providing appropriate access to the archives and the information contained within them. The full policy can be found in **Appendix three**.
- 2.4 **Collections Development Policy.** The aim of this policy is to indicate the type of records that are underrepresented within the Joint Archives Service's holdings and to describe the methods and strategies by which this situation is being addressed. The full policy can be found in **Appendix four**.
- 2.5 **Collections Information Policy.** This policy explains the information the Joint Archives Service collects on the material it receives and how it describes, processes, and controls its collections. DHC recognises that correct and proper

documentation of its collections, through both accessioning, cataloguing, disposal, and location management is essential for proper collections management and enabling public access. The full policy can be found in **Appendix five**.

- 2.6 **Digital Preservation Policy.** The purpose of this policy is to affirm the Joint Archives Service's formal commitment to address the challenges surrounding the indefinite preservation and accessibility of the unique digital archives of Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole. The full policy can be found in **Appendix six**.
- 2.7 **Digitisation Policy.** The purpose of this policy is to explain how the Joint Archives Service 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 full policy can be found in **Appendix seven**.
- 2.8 **Learning and Public Engagement Policy.** The purpose of this policy is to detail the types and range of learning and outreach offered by the Joint Archives Service. The full policy can be found in **Appendix eight**.
- 2.9 **Preservation Policy.** The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for preserving collections within the custody of the Joint Archives Service for future generations. The full policy can be found in **Appendix nine**.
- 2.10.1 **Volunteer Policy.** This policy outlines the nature of the partnership relationship that we have with our volunteers, the mutual benefits and obligations that underwrite this and the approach taken by the Service in order to ensure fairness and transparency in its dealings with volunteers including those working remotely. The full policy can be found in **Appendix ten**.

3 **Financial Implications**

The JAS's policies underwrite the service's commitment to operate in as efficient and financially-prudent fashion as possible.

4 **Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications**

The JAS's policies clarify the service's commitment to working to support both councils' efforts to reduce energy consumption through the efficient management of the DHC building and the increase in digital provision.

5 **Well-being and Health Implications**

None

6 **Other Implications**

None

7 Risk Assessment

7.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

8. Equalities Impact Assessment

The JAS has completed a full EQIA. Areas for further consideration include working with younger people and with black and ethnic minority groups and religious minorities. Improved digital provision will also assist in providing greater access to collections for people living at some distance from Dorchester.

9. Appendices

- Appendix one: Access Policy
- Appendix two: Acquisition Policy
- Appendix three: Collections Care and Conservation Policy
- Appendix four: Collections Development Policy
- Appendix five: Collections Information Policy
- Appendix six: Digital Preservation Policy
- Appendix seven: Digitisation Policy
- Appendix eight: Learning and Public Engagement Policy
- Appendix nine: Preservation Policy
- Appendix ten: Volunteer Policy

10. Background Papers

None

John Sellgren

Executive Director for Place

Appendix One

Access 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 Background

- 1.1 The JAS is a publicly funded archive service. It was established as Dorset Record Office in 1955 with three key purposes: the acquisition of important archival material relating to the wider county of Dorset, including Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, its preservation and the provision of access to that material by the public. These three core functions remain.
- 1.2 Dorset History Centre (DHC) makes this material accessible to visitors onsite as well as providing worldwide access online; through a range of off-site activities; and via an enquiry service and the provision of digitised

material as appropriate. DHC offers on- and off-site learning and participation opportunities.

- 1.3 The service holds over 10,000 separate collections with well over 100 new collections added every year. Archive material held at DHC dates to 965; material consists of documents, maps, plans, photographs, film and sound.
- 1.4 These records are used by a wide variety of people and for a variety of reasons. This includes not only leisure pursuits such as family history but also educational, official and legal purposes.
- 1.5 The JAS provides access in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, 2000 and the General Data Protection Regulation, 2018. As a result, in a small minority of cases, there will be restrictions on access to records which contain sensitive personal information e.g., coroner's courts or hospital records.
- 1.6 Some materials may be unsuitable for public viewing due to their fragile condition. Wherever possible it would be the intention of the JAS to make these items available in digital surrogate form instead.
- 1.7 Some records may have a 'closure' period which was negotiated with the depositor when they were at the point of transferred to DHC. It would always be the preference of the service to try and reach an accommodation between the need for confidentiality where it exists and a genuine request for information from a member of the public.

2. Aim and Purpose

- 2.1 This policy provides a framework for the JAS in providing access to collections onsite, off-site and online. It is intended to support the service's commitment to opening up the archive collections to as many people as possible, both current users and new audiences.

3. Scope

- 3.1 Access applies equally and inclusively to archives and local studies library material.
- 3.2 All staff at DHC work to promote access to the collections held by the service. This includes providing a warm welcome and help with enquiries, listing material so it can be found through the online catalogue and providing material in digital format.
- 3.3 The service undertakes cataloguing, conservation, and digital preservation to underpin its work in preserving and making accessible hard copy archives. For more information please see the Collections Care and Conservation Policy (2023) and the Digital Preservation Policy (2023).

- 3.4 Access to the collections is also provided through the community outreach and learning activities of the service in accordance with the Learning and Public Engagement Policy (2023).

4. Equality and Diversity

- 4.1 The JAS completed an Equalities Impact Assessment in 2022 which has been published online. In essence this delivered a positive review of the JAS's attempts to provide access for all, but it also highlighted some areas where further work was required.
- 4.2 The JAS is aware that some people may find it harder to access our collections due to their location, income, level of education, personal needs or cultural experience. The service is working towards improved representation of excluded groups in our collections, and fosters partnerships with community groups who have connections with new audiences.

5. Access on-site

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 A team of fully trained and welcoming staff are available to assist the public in identifying the most suitable potential sources for their research. Support is provided for using the onsite computers and advice on handling the documents and carrying out research is also available. We have a large key keyboard computer and an electronic magnification device for people with visual impairment or low vision; and height adjustable work desks to aid customers with movement limitations. Staff receive training in supporting people with less visible disabilities and active outreach aims to provide opportunities for a wide range of abilities and backgrounds.
- 5.3 In addition to personal visits, staff deal with enquiries by telephone, post and email.
- 5.4 The JAS welcomes feedback on its performance and any suggestions as to how we might improve the service for customers. We provide customer feedback forms and participate in the Archives and Records Association surveys of archive users run by CIPFA, as well as welcoming comments in person or via email.
- 5.5 Access to archives at DHC is free. DHC is a member of the Archives and Records Association's Archives Card scheme and those users wishing to view original documents need to register. Access to the local studies library

and the family history sources (microform, transcripts and Public Access computers) does not require any form of registration.

- 5.6 Access to collections information is presented in both hard-copy catalogues available in the searchroom and online, along with guides to particular types of record or areas of research.

6. Access off-site

- 6.1 In accordance with the Learning and Outreach Policy (2023) the JAS provides talks, workshops, and training within our capacity, to encourage the understanding and enjoyment of archives.
- 6.2 The JAS supports a range of organisations in project work and grant applications. The service values collaborative activities and welcomes opportunities for partnership working across Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole.
- 6.3 Off-site activities include talks, exhibitions, workshops, work with community groups as well as schools and colleges and project activities such as oral history training and research support.

7. Access online

- 7.1 The JAS provides worldwide access to a large quantity of its family history resources via Ancestry.co.uk. Access to this resource is free on-site at DHC and Dorset's other public libraries.
- 7.2 The JAS provides free online access to the catalogues of its collections. The online catalogue is hosted on the Dorset Council website. As cataloguing of the material is undertaken these are regularly updated.
- 7.3 DHC will continue to increase digital resources and aim over time to make more collections-related material (both catalogues and content) available online. Material from collections will be digitised in accordance with the Digitisation Policy (2023).
- 7.4 The JAS features on Dorset Council's website with pages that provide information on how to access and use the service along with guides to particular types of record or areas of research. The web pages and social media are used to showcase interesting aspects of the collection and to raise the profile of the service.

8. Volunteers

- 8.1 The JAS recruits volunteers who are a vital form of additional capacity and expertise within the JAS's range of activities. Volunteers at DHC learn skills and work within a sociable context and the JAS benefits from their input.

The service provides support for a limited number of volunteers with additional needs.

- 8.2 The JAS is also supported by the Dorset Archives Trust (DAT). This charitable body carries out fundraising to support projects, assist with collections management and provides financial support to volunteers.
- 8.3 Dorset Archives Trust also holds events which relate to the collections held at DHC to raise awareness of the service.

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 date for the next review of the policy will be 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

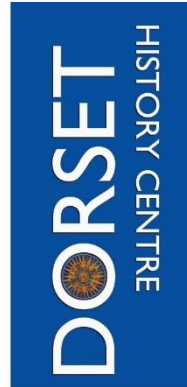
Website: www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorsethistorycentre

Appendix two

Acquisition 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. Aim and Purpose

- 1.1 **Definition:** 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. The specific areas of interest for the JAS in terms of acquisition are detailed in **Section 5** of this document.
- 1.2 The aim of this policy is to define and publish the basis on which the Joint Archives Service acquires or disposes of archives, records and local studies material.

- 1.3 DHC is the principal archive repository for the post-1974 geographical county of Dorset. It seeks to acquire and hold archive and local studies collections which represent the history, lives and activities of the people, communities and organisations within the geographical county of Dorset through the ages, aiming to cover all parts of the area and as wide a range of institutions and subjects as possible.
- 1.4 The development of the collections will be planned, as far as possible, to support the strategies and objectives of both councils, the policies, strategies and interests of relevant national and regional agencies and local stakeholders, including users. The JAS will endeavour, wherever possible to locate and acquire material relating to under-represented groups and reflective of social, political, economic and environmental change.
- 1.5 This policy operates in conjunction with the *Local Studies Collecting Policy* (March 2011) of Bournemouth Libraries, the *Acquisition and Disposal Policy 2016-21* of Poole Museum Service and Russell-Cotes Arts Galley & Museum's *Collections Development Policy 2021*.
- 1.6 Through consultation with colleagues in BCP Council agreement has been reached relating to the acquisition, management and accessibility of archives:
 - (i) Where archives are offered to either authority by external agencies, they will be forwarded to the JAS as the agreed proper place for the storage of archival material by the two councils.
 - (ii) In the case of archives already held by BCP Council, the JAS will work with colleagues in each place to secure their transfer to DHC primarily by working to digitise content which can then be accessed locally.
 - (iii) Appropriate officers of both authorities will work to secure the transfer of important council records from service units in compliance with agreed retention schedules to form part of the respective corporate archives held on their behalf at DHC.
- 1.7 Regular discussion and consultation with officers in BCP Council and Dorset Council will always underwrite attempts to secure the transfer of archives to DHC.

2. Background

- 2.1 The JAS acquires, preserves and makes accessible archives, records, local studies and literary material for use by present and future generations. DHC makes these collections accessible to visitors as well as providing worldwide access online and through a range of off-site activities.

- 2.2 The JAS is provided on behalf of BCP Council, and Dorset Council. The JAS ensures that the archives relating to the area, communities, people and families of the county of Dorset are preserved now and for the future and made widely available in the present.
- 2.3 Local Studies Collections are held by the library services of BCP Council, and Dorset Council.
- 2.4 The principal collection for the Dorset Council area has, by agreement with Dorset Library Service, been situated at DHC since December 2005. This collection comprises reference material only. The Dorset Authors Collection was transferred to DHC in December 2010.
- 2.5 Local studies reference collections are maintained at Bridport, Christchurch, Ferndown and Weymouth Libraries and smaller community libraries, and all Dorset Libraries hold Local Studies lending stock.
- 2.6 The Poole Local Studies collection is held at the Poole Local History Centre, part of Poole Museum Service.
- 2.8 Bournemouth Local Studies collection is located within the 'Heritage Zone' at The Bournemouth Library.

3. Statutory Position/Legal Framework

- 3.1 The JAS acquires material in accordance with a statutory framework which includes the following:
 - 3.1.1 Local Government (Records) Act 1962: enables all local authorities to promote the use of their records and empowers county and county borough councils to acquire records by purchase, donation or deposit.
 - 3.1.2 The Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964: compels local authorities to provide a comprehensive library service including both lending and reference material.
 - 3.1.3 Local government Act 1972 (section 224): places an obligation on 'principal authorities' to make proper arrangements for documents that belong to them or are in their custody.
 - 3.1.4 Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967: DHC is recognised as a Place of Deposit under the Public Records Acts and acquires Public Records under the authority of the Acts.
 - 3.1.5 Archive Service Accreditation – the programme administered by The National Archives. It consists of a standards framework which includes the acquisition and disposal of archives. DHC was first accredited in 2018.

- 3.1.6 Manorial Document Rules 1959 and Tithe (Copies of Apportionment) Rules 1960: DHC is a designated place of deposit for manorial and tithe records and is a Historical Manuscripts Commission Approved Repository.
- 3.1.7 Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978 (amended 1993): DHC is designated by the Bishop of Salisbury as the official place of deposit for records of Dorset parishes located in the Diocese of Salisbury.
- 3.2 Items held at DHC are made available within the parameters of the Data Protection Act (2018), The Freedom of Information Act (2000) and The Environmental Information Regulations (2004).
- 3.3 The JAS will abide by future legislation relating to archives, local studies and records management.

4. Standards

- 4.1 DHC has adopted the policies set out by The National Archives in *A Standard for Record Repositories* (2004), the Museums and Galleries Commission's *Code of Practice on Archives for Museums in the United Kingdom* (1996) and *Centres for Social Change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for all* and the [Government Policy on Archives](#).
- 4.2 At DHC archives and local studies special collections are stored in high quality accommodation which meets fully the British Standard for the storage and exhibition of archival documents (BS 4971:2017).

5. Scope of the Collections

- 5.1 **Record Types:** The JAS acquires collections of archives and records that relate entirely or principally to the administrative areas of BCP Council, and Dorset Council. Within this remit, it acquires:
 - 5.1.1 The records of BCP Council, Dorset Council and their predecessor bodies;
 - 5.1.2 Records of other local authorities and statutory bodies relevant to the county of Dorset;
 - 5.1.3 Local public records offered to the service under the terms of the Public Records Acts;
 - 5.1.4 Records of Church of England parishes, rural deaneries and archdeaconries in the Diocese of Salisbury within the geographical county of Dorset;
 - 5.1.5 Records of organisations, businesses, estates, churches, societies, other public and private institutions, families and individuals wholly or substantially relating to the county of Dorset.

5.2 Exclusions

- 5.2.1 DHC will not acquire artefacts or objects except in exceptional circumstances and where such items complement and are integral to the archival collection of which they form part.
- 5.2.2 The acquisition of archives and records outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances and then only after proper consideration and consultation, having regard to the interests of other repositories.

5.3 **Local Studies and Dorset Authors Collections**

- 5.3.1 The Local Studies Collections include:
- 5.3.2 Monographs, maps, serials, yearbooks, pamphlets and newspapers which have substantial Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset or Poole content: a guideline minimum of 25%. In the case of Dorset Authors, material of interest relates to writers whose work is principally based in the county and offers a literary perspective on Dorset and its people;
- 5.3.3 Published video and audio recordings should also contain at least 25% Dorset content;
- 5.3.4 Supplementary reference material to support local and family history research.
- 5.4 The Local Studies Collection will not duplicate items also located in the archival collections.

6. **Methods of Acquisition**

6.1 Archive Collections

- 6.1.1 The methods of acquisition for archival material are:
- Transfer from Council Departments
 - Transfer from Records Management Unit
 - Donation
 - Deposit on indefinite loan
 - Purchase
- 6.1.2 Acquisitions are accepted in accordance with current terms and conditions. Please see *Terms of Agreement for the Deposit of Archives at Dorset History Centre (2020)*. DHC will endeavour to ensure valid title to material offered to it and reserves the right to refuse legally questionable material.
- 6.1.3 Loans of archives for specific purposes or periods may also be accepted.

- 6.1.4 Potential acquisitions will be assessed by professional staff from the History Centre at the time of their accession to assess their suitability for long term preservation.
- 6.1.5 Items will only be purchased if they are deemed to be of cultural or informational importance to the history of Dorset.
- 6.1.6 Donations or deposits will be acknowledged in writing.
- 6.1.7 DHC is indebted to all those who have placed records in its care for use by the public. At the same time depositors of collections on indefinite loan receive substantial benefits. There is a formal deposit agreement between the owner and the Service. This sets out the obligations of each. Under this agreement the Service undertakes to store the archives appropriately, to carry out necessary cataloguing, conservation or reprographic works within its resources and priorities and to make them available to the public. To justify the expenditure in preserving, conserving and cataloguing deposited archives, the agreement stipulates that collections should normally remain at DHC for at least twenty years or a charge may be made to cover part of the costs incurred.
- 6.1.8 There is no mandatory charge for the deposit of archives at Dorset History Centre. However, the financial implications associated with long-term storage are significant. In order to off-set the costs to the JAS's funding authorities, depositors of records are encouraged to make a voluntary contribution towards the costs of storage on a per box basis. They are also asked to consider associated costs of cataloguing, conservation and digitisation.
- 6.1.9 DHC, in consultation with a collection's owner or donor, may transfer groups of documents to a more suitable repository, if it is found that they belong more properly with records in another repository.
- 6.1.10 DHC, in accordance with the wishes and requirements of donors and depositors, evaluates and selects for destruction or return to the owners, documents not deemed to be worthy of permanent preservation. The final appraisal of collections will take place when they are catalogued.
- 6.1.11 Transfer and appraisal will comply with all legislative requirements, notably the Public Records Acts.

6.2 **Local Studies Collections**

- 6.2.1 The methods of acquisition for Local Studies material are:
- Transfer from stock from Dorset libraries;
 - Donation/gift, not loan;
 - Purchase

7. **Selection Policy**

7.1 *Archive Collections*

- 7.1.1 Collections of archival material: archival material should be worthy of permanent preservation. Appraisal criteria for selection are informed by national guidelines and a desire to select samples of records that illustrate different aspects of the history of Dorset. Material selected must be able to demonstrate significant informational or cultural value in order to be retained.

7.2 *Dorset Local Studies Collection: DHC*

- 7.2.1 Monographs: Single reference copy of all books (including booklets and pamphlets) about Dorset (or with significant Dorset content).
- 7.2.2 Serials representative of Dorset life and history;
- 7.2.3 Ordnance Survey maps of Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole. Goad Shopping Plans which cover the principal towns in Dorset area;
- 7.2.4 Published audio-visual recordings.

7.3 *Dorset Local Authors*

- 7.3.1 Monographs: Single reference copy of works (including booklets and pamphlets) of fiction, poetry, drama and other imaginative literature, with significant Dorset content; also books on the literary heritage of Dorset. Books of local authorship, with no local content, would not normally be held in this collection.
- 7.3.2 Theses, articles and audio-visual material about local authors and the literary heritage of Dorset.

8. Disposal procedures

8.1 *Archives*

- 8.1.1 DHC presumes against the withdrawal of any documents selected for permanent preservation, unless the owner requests the return of deposited documents.
- 8.1.2 Where deposited material is subsequently deemed not to be worthy of permanent preservation the depositor will be contacted to ascertain whether they wish to reclaim the material. If the depositor does not wish to reclaim the material or cannot be contacted after reasonable efforts have been made to do so, it will be destroyed as confidential waste.
- 8.1.2 DHC holds cultural and informational assets in trust for future generations. It operates with a strong presumption against the sale of any owned collections. DHC abides by the precepts of both the Archive Service Accreditation standard and the ARA's Code of Conduct, both of which explicitly oppose the sale of archives.

8.2 *Local Studies*

8.2.1 All Local Studies stock at the DHC will be periodically reviewed by the Archivist (Public Services).

8.3 *Copy material*

8.3.1 Copies of archives relating to the geographical county of Dorset and held in other repositories are acquired to support and enrich the collections held and for the benefit of local research

9. Liaison and consultation

9.1 DHC consults and/or liaises with other bodies across Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole regarding the acquisition of documents and Local Studies material in which there may be a common interest. It will also consult whenever this policy is revised.

10. Public Access

10.1 *Archives*

10.1.1 Archive collections will be catalogued or listed in order to provide public access, subject to the requirements of confidentiality and where resources exist to undertake such work.

10.1.2 Archive collections are accepted only on the basis that they will become accessible to the public in due course, allowing for statutory and/or agreed closure periods.

10.2 *Local Studies*

10.2.1 All Local Studies material is available for public consultation. A small section of rare and valuable material is held in the DHC strongroom and produced as archival material in the supervised searchroom.

11. Publication of information

11.1 Information relating to new accessions is made available via a public report to the Joint Archives Board, published in paper and electronic format on DHC's web pages. Additionally, an annual return of accessions is made to The National Archives.

12. Review of the Policy

12.1 The policy will be reviewed in consultation with interested organisations, stakeholders and individuals every 3 years. It will next be reviewed in September 2026

13. Further information or comment

13.1 Copies of this policy are available in large print.

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

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Tel: 01305 250550

E-mail: archives@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorsethistorycentre

Collections Care & Conservation Policy

September 2023

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1 Introduction/Background

- 1.5 The JAS operates an integrated Collections Care and Conservation policy to deliver the long-term preservation of all the collections in its care.
- 1.6 The staff directly involved in this are the Archivist (Collections), the Archives Conservation Officer and the Collections Assistant (Reprographics), supported and assisted by volunteers.

1.7 This team provides technical advice, expertise and support to other staff in the service in preserving all the collections whether deposited, gifted or owned by the JAS for future generations.

2 Aim and Purpose

2.5 This policy provides a framework for the JAS in caring for and managing the records held at Dorset History Centre for future generations and in providing appropriate access to the archives and the information contained within them.

3 Scope

3.5 Preservation is the retention and maintenance of material over time whilst Collections Care is the management of all risks to the collections, including physical risks inherent in the item or risks from other items with which it is stored, theft, vandalism and poor handling, fire, water, pests, pollutants, light, incorrect temperature and/or humidity as well as those risks associated with its management in storage, use or display.

3.6 Conservation is the direct application of interventive remedial treatment and non-interventive preventive measures to arrest material deterioration and promote the physical preservation and accessibility of an item or collection.

3.7 This policy applies to the management of the physical risks to the collections at the Dorset History Centre and describes the type and extent of interventive conservation that will be undertaken and in what circumstances. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Preservation Policy (2023) and Digital Preservation Policy (2023).

4 Collections Care and Conservation Principles

4.5 All risks to collections will be assessed, and measures put in place to control them. The aim is to stabilise and preserve the original physical object where it is damaged and/or at high risk of damage during storage and/or use. Conservation practise is designed to arrest deterioration through understanding its mechanisms and applying scientifically investigated treatments and preventive measures. This is undertaken within an ethical framework to ensure that the intrinsic nature of a document is not altered, and that recognised professional standards are maintained.

4.6 Conservation includes examination, documentation, preventive measures, remedial treatment, and sympathetic repair where it is necessary to achieve stabilisation. No attempt is made at restoration and any supplementary materials introduced as part of this process must be distinguishable from the original in order to avoid the possibility of compromising or falsifying the original material evidence.

4.7 Any approved treatment will be carried out in accordance with the following general principles of archive conservation:

- Preventive measures will be taken to minimise the risk of damage. Handling training will be given to all staff and volunteers. Documents will be packaged,

stored and handled in a manner designed to reduce both chemical and mechanical damage as far as possible.

- Documents/collections at risk of damage due to high demand and/or poor condition will be made accessible, where possible, by providing a surrogate copy such as a digital image.
- Wherever possible, items shall be preserved in the original form and condition that exist when referred for conservation, except where these significantly jeopardise their life expectancy or prevent access, in any suitable format, to the information they hold.
- Framed archival documents and photographs will be de-framed by conservation staff before being stored in the repository. This may be reviewed if the frame is deemed to be integral to the interpretation of the object. If an item is de-framed information pertaining to the object or its provenance that is attached to the backboard will be removed (as possible) by conservation and retained.
- Conservation treatment shall usually be restricted to consolidation and, if necessary, stabilisation to the extent that items can be digitised for access and last for a significant time into the future when stored in appropriate conditions and handled infrequently.
- Detailed conservation work will only be carried out on significant objects i.e. material with historic, symbolic or physical interest or value. Archive staff will be consulted regarding the importance of specific records.
- Information held within items selected for treatment shall not be lost as a result of this process or be placed at risk of future loss as a consequence of treatment.
- All conservation treatment will be detectable and reversible.
- A full conservation record will be kept of all interventive treatment. It will record the structure of the object prior to treatment, an assessment of its condition including the results of any diagnostic tests, a consideration of the options for treatment as appropriate, and a report of all treatments carried out and all chemicals, materials, and processes used. These records will be maintained indefinitely.
- All materials and procedures used for preventive or remedial treatment will meet British/International Standards and/or current conservation requirements for suitability of purpose, in order to avoid introducing harmful components to documents, users, or the environment, and to maximise performance over the long term.
- The range of items treated shall be determined by the facilities and resources available and the skills of the conservation staff; where appropriate, suitable training and development shall be acquired to maintain or supplement this range.
- A reporting system, linked to the archive management program, is in operation for any member of the JAS staff to refer individual items or collections that they consider require assessment for conservation treatment.
- Conservation treatments will be approved after consultation between conservators and archivists. This will ensure that all available historical, scientific and technological information concerning the effects of treatment on the object have been considered.

4.8 Conservation staff are expected to continually review their conservation practice in the light of on-going research and development in the field, and to interpret the conservation policy according to professional standards and best practice.

5 Standards and legislation

5.5 The JAS aims to adhere to standards and best practice for conservation. Standards and guidance which inform conservation strategies and processes developed by the JAS include the following:

- BS 4971:2017 Conservation and care of archive and library collections
- BS EN 16893:2018 Conservation of Cultural Heritage
- Recommendations of BS 4971:2002 Repair and allied processes for the conservation of documents.
- Icon Professional Standards and Judgement & Ethics 2020
- The Icon Ethical Guidance 2020
- European Confederation of Conservators Organisations (ECCO) Professional Guidelines and ECCO Code of Ethics
- Best Practice Guideline 4: Preservation and Conservation: A guide to policy and practices in the preservation of archives, Chris Pickford, Jonathan Rhys-Lewis and Jerry Weber, 1997 Society of Archivists
- European Confederation of Conservators Organisations (ECCO) Professional Guidelines and ECCO Code of Ethics
- IFLA Principles for Care and Handling of Library Material, Ed. E P Adcock, 1998
- National Preservation Office recommendations

5.6 While every attempt is made to ensure that the standards above inform the implementation of the Collections Care and Conservation Policy the availability of resources may at times affect compliance.

6 Roles and responsibilities

6.5 The staff directly involved in this are the Archivist (Collections), the Archives Conservation Officer and the Collections Assistant (Reprographics), supported and assisted by a team of volunteers.

6.6 All JAS staff are responsible for their own handling of the collections and for supervising the handling of collections by customers at DHC. In addition, all staff should raise any concerns regarding the condition of individual items or collections with the Collections Care team and input information into the archive management system, as required.

6.7 Conservation treatments are undertaken by appropriately qualified conservators, or by those trained by and under the supervision of appropriately qualified conservators.

7 Review of the Policy

7.5 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 next date for review of this policy will be September 2026.

8 Further information or comment

8.5 Copies of this policy are available in large print.

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

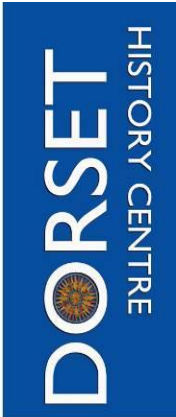
Dorset History Centre, Bridport Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1RP
Tel: 01305 250550
E-mail: <mailto:archives@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk>
Website: www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorsethistorycentre

Appendix four

Collections Development 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

1.5 "Imagine a world without archives. Without records, we could not prove where and when we were born, or who owns the property we live in. We could not trace our ancestry, explore our collective and individual identities, or challenge established views of the past. Without this collective memory, the evidence store for our histories, we could not hold governments and organisations to account. The impact of archives is felt across society: inspiring art and literature; influencing product design and branding; enabling insightful and pioneering research; and informing decision-making in organisations of all types." (*Archives Unlocked, Releasing the Potential, 2017*).¹

¹ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/archives21centuryrefreshed-final.pdf>

1.6 The JAS acquires, preserves, and makes accessible archives, records, local studies, and literary material for use by present and future generations. DHC makes these collections accessible to visitors as well as providing worldwide access online and through a range of off-site activities.

1.7 The development of the collections will be planned, as far as possible, to support the strategies and objectives of the two partner councils, the policies, strategies and interests of relevant national and regional agencies and local stakeholders, including users. JAS will endeavour, wherever possible to locate and acquire material relating to under-represented groups and be reflective of social change.

2 Aim and Purpose

2.5 The aim of this policy is to indicate the type of records that are underrepresented within the JAS's holdings and to describe the methods and strategies by which this situation is being addressed.

3 Scope

3.5 This policy relates to all material (archives and local studies) relevant to the county of Dorset incorporating the areas administered by BCP Council and Dorset Council. It references material that is currently within the custody of the JAS and collections that lie elsewhere but which may at some future date be transferred to DHC for permanent preservation.

4 Current collection strategy

4.5 The JAS collects all records which the funding councils have a legal obligation to permanently preserve. JAS staff meet regularly with officers from different councils, hospitals, the police, magistrates, and other organisations to discuss archive policy, agree retention schedules and inform user groups of their activities.

4.6 The JAS also offers advice to museums and libraries as to appropriate archival collection policies to ensure that functions are not duplicated, and that historic material resides in the most appropriate conditions.

4.7 The JAS selectively acquires archives which represent all aspects of life in the geographical county of Dorset, sampling those areas where there is no statutory obligation to acquire, but without which future generations may not be able to form a clear understanding of events and decisions that were taken in the past. Records are appraised for their informational and/or cultural significance before being accepted for preservation. It is this cultural heritage, along with the natural and built environment and museum collections, which defines Dorset's particular identity.

4.8 The following types of archives have an established route of deposit at the JAS, though the JAS has to maintain these contacts and does need the support of the relevant bodies to ensure that deposits of these records continue:

- Records of local government: county, borough, district, town and parish councils, and their predecessor bodies. Transferred according to nationally and locally produced retention schedules.²
- Records of national government, mostly the records of coroners, magistrates and county courts, hospitals, prisons and Customs and Excise.³
- Records of religious bodies: DHC is the designated diocesan repository for the archdeaconry of Dorset and also receives records of other denominations.⁴
- A wide range of archives generated by community groups, businesses, the arts, charities, families, estates, individuals, and other organisations.⁵ These collections form a cross-section of aspects of work, education, and leisure within the county.

4.9 The JAS maintains a local studies library for Dorset and material is transferred from the Dorset Library Service to maintain this. In addition, items are donated to the service by individuals and groups. The following local studies material is collected by the JAS:

- Local studies library material for Dorset and is solely funded in this area by Dorset Council.
- Local studies stock including books, maps and audio-visual material relating to the county of Dorset.
- Local studies collections including works on the history of the county and other areas including geology, demography, architecture and a substantial local authors section.

4.10 The JAS acquires this material by the following methods:

- Deposit: collections may be held on deposit for organisations which retain ownership such as the Church of England or Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Donation: where ownership is passed to the JAS. Donation, rather than deposit, is strongly encouraged.
- Transfer: from local and national government bodies.
- Terms and conditions of deposit may be found on the DHC website.⁶

² The latest retention schedules for schools and parish councils can be downloaded from the [DHC website](#). Archivists will liaise with departments within the district, borough and county councils to establish which records are suitable for transfer based upon the guidance for local authorities provided by The National Archives:

<http://www.esd.org.uk/foi/records%20management%20retention%20guidelines%20for%20LG.pdf>

³ The new 20-Year Rule for Public Records has affected the quantity of material received at DHC. Current collection policy is based upon advice from The National Archives and from, the ACPO police retention schedule.

⁴ Tithe Act, Parochial Records Measure; The JAS has also produced a reference guide to church records suitable for deposit.

⁵ The JAS has produced a retention schedule for charities and other not for profit organisations. Examples of collections for which DHC has recently received cataloguing grants since 2015 include the Bankes estate, Poole Borough archive, Herrison Hospital, and the archive of Dame Elisabeth Frink.

⁶ <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/libraries-history-culture/dorset-history-centre/terms-of-agreement-deposit-of-archives-at-dorset-history-centre.aspx>

- 4.11 Archival material is selected according to the various retention schedules for different organisations however there are common appraisal principles of not accepting duplicates, ephemera or documents that are unlikely to be of long-term historic interest. Almost all physical formats and born-digital records are accepted unless they cannot be safely stored.⁷
- 4.12 Items of historic interest that do not relate to the geographical county of Dorset are not accepted, except where they form an integral part of a wider Dorset related collection. DHC will suggest an appropriate alternative repository and may act as an intermediary.
- 4.13 Periodic reviews are undertaken of the collections held at DHC to ensure that they contain material that is worthy of permanent preservation. Reviews are informed by changes to retention schedules and by national guidelines.⁸ In the rare instance that previously accessioned documents are found to be unsuitable for permanent retention they will be de-accessioned following a careful and considered process. De-accessioned documents are offered back to the depositor before being destroyed as confidential waste.

5 Collections Development

- 5.1 Whilst the JAS holds a range of collections that represent the life and history of Dorset and its people, as the culture of life in Dorset changes it is necessary to ensure that the collections continue to represent all aspects of life in the county. Therefore, the JAS has identified some areas where there is less or minimal representation of some types of records or records of some specific organisations in Dorset.
- 5.2 As modern life is constantly changing this will be a continuing and on-going process. However certain areas have already been identified as requiring collections development:
- Business archives, particularly those of the new industries in the geographical county of Dorset
 - Records of the wider religious, sexual, and ethnic minority communities
 - Records of the arts and creative life including those of artists, makers and of the cultural industries.
 - Records of political parties and of the parliamentary representatives (MPs) of the county.
- 5.3 Since these records are not deposited at the JAS by traditional means the JAS requires a proactive approach to acquiring these collections. The JAS currently uses a number of methods to reach the creators and owners of these records:
- The JAS works with a range of communities in the county and supports community groups in project work. This raises awareness of the work of the JAS and enables contacts to be made with communities who may have records which are underrepresented in the collections.

⁷ A small number of document types cannot be safely stored at DHC. These include combustible nitrate negatives. DHC will advise as to the most suitable place of deposit or alternative methods of preservation.

⁸ The National Archives: *De-accession and disposal: Guidance for archive services* OGL, 2015.

- The JAS also works in partnership with other services in Bournemouth, Dorset, and Poole who themselves have a network of contacts in their area. In working with these partners, the JAS aims to identify collections that may be worthy of long-term preservation.
- The Learning and Outreach programme brings staff of the JAS into contact with a range of organisations and groups.
- The marketing activities of the service raise awareness of the JAS and signposts potential depositors to useful information on the collections.
- The JAS works with voluntary and professional organisations such as the Dorset Museums and the Dorset Archives Trust to create networks through the county as 'the eyes and ears' alerting the service to possible collections

6 Standards and legislation

6.1 There is no overarching legislation relating to the collection and preservation of archives. Several pieces of legislation deal with different sections of material preserved at DHC.

- For records of local government: Local Government Act 1972 and Local Government (Records) Act 1962.
- For the records of churches and other religious bodies: the Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978, amended 1992; the Tithe Act, 1936.
- For the records of courts, coroners, prisons, hospitals, and other government bodies: the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967; and the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010.
- For historic estate records the Manorial Documents Rules 1959 (amended 1963 and 1967)

6.2 Access to all collections complies with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

6.3 For the Local Studies collection, the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 requires local authorities to maintain a "comprehensive and efficient" public library service.

7 Review of the Policy

7.1 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.

8 Further information or comment

8.1 Copies of this policy are available in large print.

8.2 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: <mailto:archives@dorset-cc.gov.uk>

archives@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

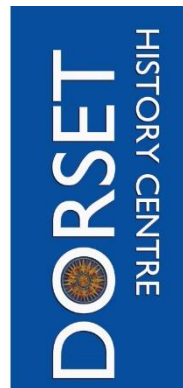
Website: www.dorsetcouncil.gov/dorsethistorycentre

Appendix five

Collections Information Policy

September 2023

Dorset History Centre
Bridport Road
Dorchester
DT1 1RP



Service Description

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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. Aim and purpose

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 authentic and reliable records that have been selected through a process of appraisal as being worthy of permanent preservation because of their evidential, legal, and historical value.

DHC is dedicated to preserving, sharing, and celebrating the rich heritage of Dorset. The service gathers archive collections and local and family history resources to ensure they are kept secure and made accessible

This policy explains the information DHC collects on the material it receives and how it describes, processes, and controls its collections. DHC recognises that correct and proper documentation of its collections, through both accessioning, cataloguing, disposal, and location management is essential for proper collections management and enabling public access.

2. Scope

This policy applies to archive collections relating to Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole, and Dorset; local and family history resources relating to Dorset held at DHC.

3. Point of Deposit and Accessioning

DHC maintains an accession register for all purchases, donations, deposits, and transfers both in a physical volume and within our archive management system. This includes recording any information needed to authenticate the ownership and legal status of material. Every individual deposit at DHC is allocated a unique accession number which is subsequently linked to catalogue reference numbers.

Information recorded includes the following:

- Date of deposit
- Accession number,
- Accession category (Donation, Deposit, Transfer, Purchase etc.)
- Any access restrictions (due to depositors' conditions, sensitivity of information, etc.)
- Name and contact details of depositor(s)
- Any known copyright restrictions
- Title, covering dates, and summary description of deposit
- Extent of deposit
- Any known administrative and custodial history

Information concerning the physical condition of collections is also recorded at the point of deposit and during accessioning. Any urgent conservation interventions required are undertaken at this point, and the information recorded is then accessible to inform whether documents are unfit for production, planning for conservation elements of funding projects, or projects for volunteers or student placements.

Temporary and final receipts are produced for every deposit or donation of archives. Related information, (including copies of receipts, correspondence, information about temporary/permanent withdrawals etc.) is permanently retained outside the archive management system in a series of donor or depositor files stored within our repositories.

A summary of information about our accessions is submitted by DHC to The National Archives as part of its annual [‘Accessions to Repositories’](#) survey.

4. Restrictions and Closure Periods

DHC's collections contain records that have access restrictions or closure periods either because of Data Protection legislation, advice and guidance from The National Archives and the Information Commissioner's Office, or they may have been imposed by the depositor. Dorset Council's Records Management Service and Information Compliance team also offer guidance and advice to the Service in this respect. Existing catalogued

collections are also reviewed by DHC to ensure that sensitive or personal information is not released.

DHC encourages depositors not to impose unnecessary restrictions on access to collections when deposited.

Users are made aware of any restrictions on records and their rationale. Staff follow documented procedures to advise users of actions required to enable access to particular classes of restricted records.

5. Cataloguing

DHC catalogues its records in order to protect the integrity of its collections, enable staff to effectively manage the information retained for permanent preservation, and make the records discoverable and accessible by the public as appropriate. Qualified archivists plan and carry out the cataloguing following the archival principles of provenance, and original order. They may also allocate tasks to support staff and volunteers according to the complexity of the tasks required and the skills and experience of the individual, all whilst ensuring adherence to professional standards. Volunteers only ever work with non-sensitive collections.

6. Standards

Any new cataloguing undertaken by DHC conforms to current professional standards, using the principles and mandatory elements of the International Council on Archives' General Standard of Archival Description (ISAD(G)). When old paper finding aids and catalogues are converted and added to our archive management system, all reasonable efforts are made to ensure conformity with the mandatory elements of ISAD(G).

The following standards are in use at DHC for creating controlled access terms:

- UK Archival Thesaurus
- International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons, and Families (ISAAR, CPF)
- National Council on Archives, Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names

Additionally, DHC's cataloguing manual describes the processes and procedures involved in cataloguing archives and documents the in-house style.

7. Locations and movement control

DHC aims to keep full intellectual and physical control over the records in its custody. During accessioning, the location of the new accession is recorded in the Accessions Database and on a separate Excel locations spreadsheet. It is envisaged that these two systems of recording locations, along with old paper location lists that are currently being converted to Excel will be reduced/merged to solely being recorded in DHC's archive management system. When accessions are catalogued, boxes are relabelled, and new locations are updated.

The Document Production database captures the following information each time a document is removed from the repositories:

- References and/or description of records being produced

- Date of production
- Location
- Initials of staff producing,
- Surname of the researcher
- Date of return and the initials of staff returning the documents.

Triplicate production tickets are used when documents are produced, with one copy remaining at the document's original location in the repository, one at the production desk, and one with the document at all times. These are then all reconciled when documents are returned, and the Document Production database updated. Production tickets are retained for five years before being destroyed.

A Temporary Withdrawal form is completed if a depositor wishes to temporarily withdraw documents. This provides contact information, details of the records being withdrawn, the reason for withdrawal, and an estimated date of return. These details are also recorded in the Temporary Withdrawal database, and the completed Temporary Withdrawal form is filed. On the records' return the form is signed and moved to a return file and the database is updated. The database highlights any outstanding loans, and any outstanding loans for the previous year are followed up. Items withdrawn are noted as such in the archive management system, and production tickets and the Document Production database also record this information.

Should a record be identified as missing, a procedure is followed, with the document recorded on a missing documents database if still not found. This information is also recorded in the archive management system and is updated when the record is located.

8. Archive Software

DHC uses Metadatis' Epexio Describe to maintain intellectual control over its archive holdings. This includes accession records, depositor details, archive descriptions (catalogue) and related authority files. DHC is working towards managing locations, conservation information, document production, and loans through the archive management software.

Public access is provided to catalogue descriptions online via Metadatis' Epexio Discover platform, available at <https://archive-catalogue.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/>.

9. Digital Archives

The intellectual management of digital collections is closely aligned to the process for physical archives. The same accessioning process is followed regardless of format. Digital archives are stored in DHC's digital repository, Preservica. Technical and preservation metadata is stored in Preservica alongside the digital assets.

Descriptive metadata is generated using existing file or folder names where possible. Archivists ensure this metadata facilitates searching and will amend if necessary. The digital assets in Preservica are linked to their corresponding catalogue records in Epexio via metadata shared between the two systems. The archive management system (Epexio) is the master system for descriptive metadata.

10. Backlogs and improving access

Staffing resources for cataloguing are extremely limited. This, along with the fact that many of DHC's collections were received before the development of modern standards for cataloguing, mean that there are significant backlogs of material that require cataloguing, and catalogues/indexes that require conversion into digital format from paper. DHC's aim is to produce collection/fonds-level descriptions (with box-lists if appropriate) for all new accessions and to list small collections in full detail as soon as is reasonably possible. Full catalogues for collections will give detailed descriptions of the contents, generally down to item level with this being a document or bundle that can be ordered in the search room.

DHC also carries out the following activities to improve descriptions of, and access to, its holdings:

- prioritisation activities to ensure staffing resources are targeted appropriately
- proactively exploring possibilities for external funding to catalogue significant collections and reduce cataloguing backlog
- recruiting and training volunteers to create item level descriptions for box-lists, to enhance poorly detailed older catalogues or to contribute to externally funded cataloguing projects
- encouraging owners to list their collections on a supplied template following guidance before donating or depositing their records with us; and importing this data to our online catalogue
- converting old paper box-lists to create usable online catalogue descriptions (accepting that the levels of detail will be quite brief and will lack the structure and contextual information found in a full catalogue)
- where necessary deaccessioning collections following appraisal, and either offering material back to the depositor or another suitable institution, or if permission has been granted, disposing of confidentially

11. Permanent Withdrawals and Deaccessioning

Depositors retain the right to withdraw their records from DHC. Any records that are permanently withdrawn from DHC have their entry in the archive management system updated to reflect this. Written confirmation of the records' withdrawal is kept in the deposit file. Depositors are made aware at the time of deposit that DHC reserves the right to make a charge to cover part of the cost of any cataloguing and/or conservation work carried out on items within the collection should it be withdrawn.

DHC records on deposit all permissions given by the depositor for records to be either returned, destroyed, or transferred to another appropriate archive if the records fall outside our Acquisition Policy. For deaccessioning a record of any disposal is permanently kept in the deposit file

12. Equality and diversity

DHC and Dorset Council are committed to the principles of equality and diversity in the workforce and in the service we provide to our customers. We recognise, respect and value difference and diversity.

DHC recognises that some of its catalogues may contain some terms which are offensive, and some whose meaning has changed over time. Such anachronistic and/or pejorative terms exist within some original records and have been retained to inform users of the nature and content of the sources concerned. They do not reflect the views of the Service or its parent councils. When creating new catalogue entries for items which include offensive terms, we try to include a modern explanation where possible.

13. Roles and responsibilities

Day-to-day collections management activities are conducted by, or under the direction of, qualified archivists.

The Archivist (Collections) is responsible for policy revisions, and for ensuring the policy and related procedures are followed.

14. References

14.1. Relevant standards

[International Council on Archives, General International Standard Archival Description \[ISAD \(G\)\], 2nd edition, 1999](#)

[International Council on Archives, International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families \(ISAAR \(CPF\), 2004\)](#)

[National Council on Archives, Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names, 1997](#)

14.2. Other references

This policy should be read in conjunction with our other policies, especially our access policy, acquisition policy, and collections development policy, to be found at <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/libraries-history-culture/dorset-history-centre/about-dorset-history-centre.aspx>

Our Terms of Agreement for the deposit of archives can also be found at <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/libraries-history-culture/dorset-history-centre/terms-of-agreement-deposit-of-archives-at-dorset-history-centre.aspx>

15. Review of the policy

This policy will be reviewed in consultation with interested organisations, stakeholders, and individuals every 3 years. It will next be reviewed in September 2026.

16. Further information or comment

Copies of this policy are available in large print.

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: <mailto:archives@dorset-cc.gov.uk> archives@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.dorsetcouncil.gov/dorsethistorycentre

Digital Preservation Policy

September 2023

Dorset History Centre
Bridport Road
Dorchester
DT1 1RP



Service Description

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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

- 1.5 The Code of Practice on Records Management issued by the Lord Chancellor under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 recommends that public bodies across the country introduce a strategy for the preservation of digital records to ensure that they can continue to be accessed and used and are resilient to future changes in technology.
- 1.6 The JAS acquires, preserves and makes accessible archives, records, local studies and literary material in any format for use by present and future generations. DHC

makes these collections accessible to visitors as well as providing world-wide access online and through a range of off-site activities.

- 1.7 Digital preservation refers to the actions required to ensure the continued and reliable access to authentic digital records. Unlike paper and parchment records, active management is required throughout the record lifecycle to ensure the maintenance of the integrity, authenticity and accessibility of digital materials.
- 1.8 For legal compliance some corporate records need to be kept for up to 100 years but are not necessarily suitable for permanent preservation. Where these records are created digitally, earlier intervention is required to ensure they remain accessible and authentic for as long as they are needed. In this way, digital preservation activity can contribute to ensuring digital continuity.
- 1.9 At present, the JAS continues to accession significant quantities of paper records, of which it holds over a thousand cubic metres. However, an increasing quantity is now being received in electronic format and DHC is itself creating digital copies of hard copy originals for preservation or access reasons.
- 1.10 This digital heritage is at risk of being lost to posterity. Contributing factors include 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.

2 Aim and Purpose

- 2.5 The purpose of this policy is to affirm the JAS's formal commitment to address the challenges surrounding the indefinite preservation and accessibility of the unique digital archives of Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole.
- 2.6 Raise awareness of the need to address the long-term needs of digital materials amongst staff at BCP Council; Dorset Council and members of the public.
- 2.7 Encourage the transfer of digital archives to DHC by individuals, organisations and businesses.
- 2.8 Further procedures, standards, and guidance will be developed in future to address specific aspects of digital preservation.

3 Scope

- 3.1 We exist in an increasingly digital environment with many born digital items never appearing in hard copy form. The corporate strategies of the two funding councils include the assumption that business activities will be 'digital by default.' There is also increasing awareness of the fragility of digital data and the need to be able to preserve it correctly. The National Archives reflected this view in its strategy for increasing digital preservation capacity [Plugged in, Powered up](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/projects-and-programmes/plugged-in-powered-up/)⁹.
- 3.5 This Policy applies equally to digital material received from Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council; Dorset Council; external depositors such as other local authorities, official organisations, groups and individuals; and material created in-house as accessible surrogates for use in and beyond DHC.

⁹ <https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/projects-and-programmes/plugged-in-powered-up/>

- 3.6 Digital material includes born-digital material, information which has been created and managed electronically; and digitised material, information which has been created in a non-digital form, but which has been subsequently converted to a digital form, e.g., through digitisation projects.
- 3.7 Digital material is selected for preservation by the JAS in accordance with the [Acquisitions Policy](#) (2020), and corporate retention schedules (for records created by local government agencies). This will include material requiring long-term, rather than permanent, preservation which is equally at risk from loss, corruption and obsolescence during its lifecycle.
- 3.8 This policy operates in conjunction with other relevant JAS policies.

4 Preservation strategy

- 4.1 Digital material selected for permanent preservation will be stored in a managed digital preservation environment (digital repository). The management software will be provided by a third party, with suitable measures in place to mitigate supplier failure and allow full data transfer.
- 4.2 Electronic material stored on removable media such as CDs, floppy disk and USB sticks will be transferred to the digital repository as soon as possible to mitigate the risk of permanent loss of content through hardware corruption, degradation and damage.
- 4.3 Creators of digital records will require guidance on the creation and management of sustainable digital resources, including the need to use open and standard file formats wherever possible. DHC will encourage good records management practice and provide advice to the owners of digital records to assist potential depositors of digital archives to create and curate records in a form which meets requirements for long-term preservation and digital continuity.
- 4.4 Where long-term, rather than permanent, preservation is required DHC will act as custodians of corporate records (BCP Council; Dorset Council) to ensure they remain accessible and authentic, with ownership of the records remaining with the originator.
- 4.5 DHC will endeavour to capture and preserve all appropriate metadata required for on-going preservation, discovery, access and rights management of digital assets from all sources.
- 4.6 When appropriate, the JAS will use migration to more recent file formats as the preferred method of preservation. Migrating to another format involves, in most cases, minimal or no loss of content and simplifies access by ensuring that format technologies are current at the time of copying.
- 4.7 Copies of digital files made for preservation purposes shall be authentic and traceable to the original via metadata stored with the digital copy.
- 4.8 Provision for public access to non-restricted digital archives will be delivered online and on-site at DHC.

5 Sustainability

5.1 Long-term preservation of Dorset's digital archives requires continuing assessment of all the relevant resource commitments, including:

- Technical infrastructure (equipment, software, maintenance and development)
- Staffing
- Financial (on-going budget commitments). Financial sustainability will be monitored by the JAS to track the digital preservation costs and overall sustainability of the repository.
- Administrative oversight (policy reviews and strategies pertaining to digital archives held by DHC)

5.2 The JAS will continue to monitor the growth of the digital archive and use this information to inform sustainability planning. The potential for income generation from digital resources will be investigated.

6 Standards and legislation

6.1 The JAS intends to adhere to emerging standards and best practice for digital preservation. Standards and guidance which inform digital preservation strategies and processes developed by DHC include the following:

- ISO 14721:2012 The OAIS (Open Archival Information System);
- The Dublin Core Metadata Element Set (ISO Standard 15836);
- BS 4783 Storage, Transportation and Maintenance of Media for Use in Data Processing and Information Storage;
- Code of Practice for Legal Admissibility and Evidential Weight of Information Stored Electronically

6.2 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 4971:2017)

6.3 All data will be managed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, Data Protection Act and Environmental Information Regulations.

7 Roles and responsibilities

7.1 Dorset History Centre responsible for ensuring that:

- Appropriate advice and guidance is given to depositing bodies, including staff and councillors within BCP Council, and Dorset Council.
- Professional standards for digital preservation are met and that compliance is regularly reviewed.
- Records identified for permanent preservation are transferred as appropriate to DHC.

7.2 Allied professionals (including information governance, records management and IT) within BCP Council, and Dorset Council

Responsibility for ensuring that:

- Digital preservation issues are considered and included in relevant strategies and projects, including procuring new software or hardware.

- Digital information is managed in such a way that facilitates adherence to this policy now and in the future.
- Where appropriate, strategies are put in place to ensure the regular migration of records held solely in digital format.
- A collaborative approach is adopted to facilitate good management of information throughout its life-cycle.

7.3 Senior officers and Cabinet member leads BCP Council, and Dorset Council
Responsibility for ensuring that:

- Digital preservation is recognised as a corporate concern within the councils and receives the necessary levels of organisational support and resources required to ensure effectiveness.
- Staff are supported in terms of training and development to enable them to address digital preservation issues.
- The corporate digital preservation policy and its associated guidelines are implemented within their department/service/section.

7.4 Depositors (including staff within BCP Council, and Dorset Council)

Responsibility for ensuring that:

- Digital records are submitted in a suitable condition for acceptance by the archive, including all appropriate metadata
- Advice is sought from DHC at the earliest opportunity regarding digital material created for the archive

8 Communication

8.1 DHC consults and/or liaises with other bodies across Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole regarding the acquisition of digital materials in which there may be a common interest. It will also consult whenever this policy is revised.

8.2 An annual report of accessions of archives is made to The National Archives. This is published online.

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 policy will be next reviewed 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

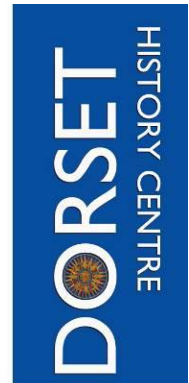
Website: www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorsethistorycentre

Appendix seven

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

1.2 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.

1.3 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](https://www.ancestry.co.uk) providing worldwide access to some of the service's most popular sources.

- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 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

- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 Further procedures, standards, and guidance have been developed to address specific aspects of reprographics.
- 2.4 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

- 3.2 This policy applies to digitisation of material in the custody of JAS, including digitisation conducted both in-house and by a third party.
- 3.3 This policy is closely connected to and operates alongside the JAS's service planning documentation which is regularly updated.
- 3.4 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

- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 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.

- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 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).
- 4.7 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.
- 4.8 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.
- 4.9 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

- 4.10 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.
- 4.11 Digitisation will capture, preserve and provide contextual information about the digitised records to ensure their future discoverability and re-use.
- 4.12 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.
- 4.13 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.
- 4.14 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.

- 4.15 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

- 4.16 Effective business processes, technical standards and guidelines for digitisation projects will be developed and integrated into all aspects of service operations and plans.
- 4.17 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.
- 4.18 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>

Appendix eight

Learning and Public Engagement 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

1.1. Learning and public engagement are the processes by which the JAS encourages the wider public to understand, use and value the raw materials of history, along with access to online resources and the Dorset Local Studies Library. A fundamental purpose in collecting archives is to see them widely consulted for leisure and official research, finding stories of Dorset's people and places to help interpret the past.

2. Scope

2.1. This policy should be read in conjunction with other JAS policies, particularly the service's Access Policy and Volunteer Policy.

3. Aim and Purpose

3.1. The purpose of this policy is to detail the types and range of learning and outreach offered by the JAS.

3.2. Through its Learning and Public Engagement Policy the JAS aims to:

- Encourage new and non-traditional audiences to engage with archives.
- Encourage the appreciation and use of archives and local studies by groups and individuals (outside formal education) as aids to learning, leisure, community cohesion and wellbeing.
- Liaise with community-based heritage projects and initiatives, facilitating positive collaboration and learning and ensuring that archive and local studies content and heritage sector skills are understood and built in to plans.
- To provide high quality learning opportunities based on the JAS collections to learners of all ages and a wide range of abilities via educational and social care providers.
- To liaise with colleagues in related sectors (museums, libraries, arts, adult learning, higher education, and social care) building partnerships and joint commissioning opportunities.
- To promote the JAS and its collections through outreach and attendance at events for local groups and organisations.
- Develop and maintain offers to volunteers, volunteers with additional support requirements and students on work experience placements which enable and encourage learning, new skills, and experience.

4. Equality and Diversity

4.1. The JAS completed an Equalities Impact Assessment in 2023 which has been published online.

4.2. The DHC building is broadly compliant with the Equalities Act, 2010. It has level access for the public from the car park at the rear with disabled parking spaces, wide level access doorways including bi-fold automatic doors at the main entrance. Audio loop systems at the reception desks and in the Lecture Room. An accessible toilet. For members of staff there is ramped access to the staff entrance and a lift to the first floor. DHC staff work individually with customers, visual enhancement tools are available and an accessible computer station. Alternative formats can be supplied where possible. DHC staff receive training to help them work with customers affected by less visible disabilities such as Dementia and Autism.

4.3. The JAS is firmly committed to the principles of equality and diversity for learning and public engagement opportunities. We actively seek engagement with marginalised and minority communities.

5. Principles of Learning and Public Engagement

5.1. The JAS will:

- We will work in partnerships, within the heritage, education and social care sectors, to increase the reach, capacity and skills of all organisations involved.
- Identify sustainable opportunities to enable marginalised communities to engage with their Dorset cultural heritage and to enhance and diversify the JAS collections at DHC.
- Ensure that all staff who come into contact with the public are well-informed and confident in working with a range of audiences.

- Promote the use of Dorset’s cultural heritage and rich JAS collections both digitally and in physical format.
- Facilitate access for all and deliver outcomes in line with the corporate priorities of our funders.
- Provide opportunities for self-directed learning for all visitors and enquirers to DHC creating an informative and welcoming environment that encourages learning and research on-site at DHC.
- Ensure that we actively promote Equality and Diversity best practice and regularly review the Joint Archives Service’s Equality Impact Assessment.
- Work with colleagues and partners, both across the three authorities and externally, to share good practice and offer learning and outreach in new venues and to new audiences.
- Evaluate our work and that of partnership projects to ensure that we meet targets and deliver quality outcomes.
- Make effective use of staff and customer feedback to improve our service delivery.

6. Delivery

6.1. To support the delivery of learning, and public engagement, the JAS will:

- Support and train JAS staff to ensure that learning and outreach in their many forms are at the centre of what we do.
- Ensure that all JAS based projects incorporate significant elements of learning and engagement.
- Improve the virtual learning environment by increasing the quantity of digital data, both catalogue descriptions and curated content as appropriate, with awareness of climate-related consequences and within the JAS’s capacity.
- Develop educational, training and activity opportunities in response to requests to support and advise projects of partner organisations.
- Work collaboratively within the heritage sector, and with Dorset Council and BCP to contribute to the Corporate Priorities for well-being and social connection.
- Encourage and support community groups to engage with collections and bid for grant aid to deliver projects with positive outcomes, including enhancing the JAS collections with diverse accessions.
- Within the capacity of the JAS, engage with schools, colleges, adult learning services, community learning groups and universities to encourage access to the collections held at DHC.
- Provide a variety of well-supported and meaningful volunteer roles both onsite at DHC and remotely.
- Communicate our learning and public engagement services and opportunities as widely as possible, including through social and traditional media.
- Deliver high quality training in heritage skills.

6.2. Since public engagement and learning are central to the purpose of the JAS, all staff participate in promotional and learning activities. This takes various forms as follows:

- **Formal Learning-** short programmes of study with clearly defined learning objectives and outcomes for adults or children.

- **Informal learning** when learning happens because of some other task or activity where learning is **not** a primary element of the activity. For example, through volunteering or accessing information at the Dorset History Centre.
- **Outreach** the process by which the JAS promotes its services and activities to both new and existing audiences through exhibitions, talks, workshops and attendance at community events.
- **Community engagement** involves supporting and advising groups who are delivering projects as well as developing innovative and inspiring approaches enabling a wide range of people to interact with and contribute to Dorset's archives.
- **Social media** through the use of Twitter (@DorsetArchives) and other Web 2.0 tools (such as blogs, file-sharing websites or other Dorset Council Social media accounts) used in accordance with [Dorset Council's Social Media Acceptable Use Policy](#).
- **Onsite and online** public access to the online catalogue of DHC's archive collections. Onsite access to documents, online resources, Dorset Local Studies Reference Library and individual assistance with enquiries, in person, by telephone and by email. See also DHC Access Policy.

7. Review of the Policy

- 7.1. 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 next review of this policy will take place in September 2026.

8. Further information or comment

- 8.1. Copies of this policy are available in large print.

- 8.2. 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/libraries-history-culture/dorset-history-centre>

Appendix nine

Preservation Policy

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.

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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.

Vision and Mission

DHC is the physical and virtual hub for the archival heritage of Bournemouth, 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 Archives are the records created by people and organisations over the centuries in the course of their life and work that form the raw material of the history. These documents are unique and irreplaceable and as original records provide valuable primary historical evidence and often have a legal evidential standing.

1.2 Several million documents dating from the 10th century to the present day are stored at DHC in secure environmentally controlled strongrooms for their long-term preservation.

2 Aim and Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for preserving collections within the custody of the JAS for future generations. It gives direction to staff carrying out their responsibilities regarding the preservation function and provides public information on the principles which guide preservation in the Dorset History Centre.

3 Scope

3.1 Preservation is the retention and maintenance of material over time through appropriate, packaging and storage in environmentally monitored and controlled conditions.

3.2 Conservation is the use of interventive remedial treatment and non-interventive preventive measures to arrest the deterioration of an item and facilitate the physical preservation and accessibility of an item or collection.

3.3 The preservation of digital materials is addressed in the Digital Preservation Policy.

3.4 This policy operates in conjunction with other relevant JAS policies, including the Acquisitions Policy and Collections Care and Conservation Policy and the Terms of Deposit.

4 Preservation Strategy

4.1 The Dorset History Centre:

- Aims to ensure the long-term preservation and availability of the records in its care for present and future generations. This will be undertaken in as environmentally-efficient way with the least mechanical intervention, and energy possible.
- Recognises that preservation is integral to all archive activities from acquisition through to access and that every staff member has a part to play.
- Values all types of records according to their long term historical worth rather than as a result of the nature of their media.

- Undertakes conservation treatment with the intention of protecting and preserving the item to ensure the maximum evidential value but with the minimum impact on the authenticity of the record
- Will make original material accessible where possible. Where there is high demand for an item, it is badly degraded or extremely fragile the JAS will endeavour to make a digital surrogate of the item to protect the original item from further damage.

5 Condition of newly acquired archives

5.1 The condition of archives when deposited at the DHC is determined by three factors:

- The materials from which the records are made e.g. composition of paper, inks, photographs etc.
- How they have been handled by previous users including repair with self-adhesive tapes.
- How they have been stored before they came into the custody of DHC e.g. somewhere damp or in direct sunlight.

6 Processing of newly deposited archives

6.1 Items arriving in the DHC are examined for damp, mould and insect infestation in a specially designated reception area where appropriate action is taken. DHC has cleaning and drying facilities for this treatment to be carried out. The items are then boxed in acid free archival standard boxes and, if required appropriate archival packaging is used to protect the items inside the boxes or where there is outsize material.

6.2 A high proportion of the records held by DHC are boxed for storage and, in addition, many records have individual packaging, using archival standard materials. Volunteers are assisting in stocktaking and repackaging collections and externally funded projects enable repackaging to be carried out on a project basis and during cataloguing.

7 Storage and Security

7.1 The DHC repositories are specially designed to maintain relative humidity and temperature levels consistent with the long-term preservation of archival materials and are secured through an electronic access system. The storage environment is regularly monitored to ensure it continues to meet the required standards as specified in BS EN 16893:2018 Conservation of Cultural Heritage, and BS 4971:2017 Conservation and care of archive and library collections.

7.2 The repositories are regularly cleaned and a pest management programme is in operation to minimise the risk of damage to the collection from pests.

7.3 The staff entrance and access to office areas (not open to the public) are controlled by the electronic access system.

8 Document handling and access

8.1 Staff and volunteers are trained as required on the correct handling of archival collections. Training of staff includes guidance on retrieving and replacing documents in the repositories, moving them through the building, and handling them during use. Volunteers receive training on document handling and the principals of archival repackaging.

8.2 Customers access documents only under supervision in the search room. Invigilating staff are trained to ensure collections care procedures are followed and are available to give specific advice on handling when required. Appropriate book support, pillows, snakes, and weights are available to ensure safe handling of archives. Customers may be required to consult surrogates to avoid damage to original documents.

8.3 Documents may be withdrawn from public access if it is judged handling will have a serious effect on their condition or pose a risk to their long-term preservation.

9 Surrogate access

9.1 Photocopying of secondary sources and original documents is permitted only by the staff for the public within specific guidelines. Public self-service copying is permitted only by camera.

9.2 A digital overhead camera is used for the majority of internal and external reprographic requests, and to carry out digitisation programmes in line with the JAS's digitisation strategy. The digital camera permits safe digitisation of volumes and flat formats and can only be operated by trained JAS staff. Scanning projects to digitise photographic collections may be carried out by trained volunteers.

9.3 Suitability for reprography is dependent upon a document's physical and legal status. A document will not be copied if there is a risk to its long-term preservation.

9.4 Digital imaging standards are being developed; including systematic archiving and retrieval systems to prevent duplication of work and avoid loss of data. It is our policy to preserve digital copies of documents with individual references, and all maps, plans, photographs and whole books; but not individual pages of books, single sheets from large bundles without individual sub-numbers or items imaged in black and white.

10 Exhibition and loans

10.1 Exhibition and loan of original documents must be approved by the Service Manager and the Archive Conservation Officer and will only be permitted if the borrower can meet the JAS's conditions for loans, which include commitments to environmental and security conditions. The JAS reserves the right to

undertake a site visit. The use of facsimiles for in-house and external displays is encouraged.

10.2 Temporary removal of documents is recorded on withdrawal and return, and, where applicable, loaned only with the permission of the depositor.

10.3 Prior to external loans, condition assessments are undertaken which are used to compare and re-assess when documents return from loan. Borrowers are required to fund any conservation required.

10.4 Depositors occasionally request temporary withdrawal of documents held on their behalf. We will provide professional advice regarding the risk of doing so and will assist in taking any measures to mitigate these risk.

11 Emergency Planning

11.1 The JAS mitigates the risk of damage and loss to its collections as far as possible. Disaster recovery and salvage plans are in place and will continue to be reviewed to ensure any damage is limited in the event of a disaster or emergency. Salvage equipment and materials are regularly checked and reviewed.

11.2 Additional support for emergency salvage is available from Harwell Restoration.

12 Standards and legislation

12.1 The JAS adheres to standards and best practice for preservation. Standards and guidance which inform preservation strategies and processes developed by DHC include PD 5454: 2012 Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials, BS 4971:2017 Conservation and care of archive and library collections, and EN 16893 2018 - Archive Buildings Preservation Standard.

12.2 All information will be managed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, Data Protection Act and Environmental Information Regulations.

13 Roles and responsibilities

13.1 All members of JAS staff and volunteers have a responsibility to protect and preserve the records in their care. All JAS staff are responsible for their handling of the collections and for supervising the handling of collections by customers at DHC. In addition, all staff should raise any concerns regarding the condition of individual items or collections with the Collections Care team and input information into the archive management system, as required.

13.2 Guidance is provided for the public by members of staff, and the staff monitor use of documents in the search rooms, providing assistance when

necessary. Basic rules are in place enforced by JAS staff regarding use of pencils only and a restriction on eating and drinking in areas where original records are accessed.

14 Communication

14.1 All staff members actively promote preservation at all times by making customers aware of the need to care for documents in talks and other outreach activities.

14.2 Staff communicate the importance of appropriate document handling in the search rooms and maintain supervision of the use of the documents and demonstrate this by example in their own work.

15 Review of the Policy

15.1 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 September 2026.

16 Further information or comment

16.1 Copies of this policy are available in large print.

16.2 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

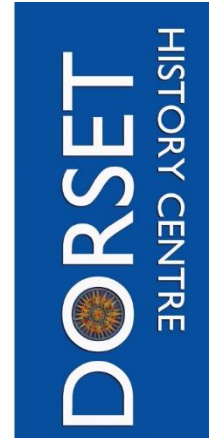
Website: www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorsethistorycentre

Appendix ten

Volunteer 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

1.1. A volunteer is anyone who, without compensation, or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement of expenses incurred in the course of volunteer duties, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the JAS. This includes H.E. students undertaking work experience placements.

- 1.2. The JAS has hosted volunteers for many years in a number of different roles. They have added huge value to the service and contributed to the success of the outcomes it seeks to achieve. They enable us to do work that would not otherwise be possible, and often contribute specialist skills and knowledge.
- 1.3. The JAS recognises the value of volunteering and aspires to widen the range of activities undertaken by volunteers. Supervision of volunteers, along with capitalising on their outputs, requires significant staff time and capacity and is not a 'free' resource. The JAS recognises its responsibility to increase diversity in the volunteering cohort and works to widen participation and to monitor progress.
- 1.4. Volunteer opportunities are offered to support JAS's core work or to work on specific time-limited externally funded projects.
- 1.5. In so far as the JAS benefits from the time, skills, experience and enthusiasm of volunteers, we believe that volunteers should gain personal or employment related benefits from the experience. We are committed to managing volunteers in a way that ensures that the needs of both parties are met.
- 1.6. Volunteering encourages social interaction, reduces isolation and promotes community cohesion. It also supports the learning of new skills and provides a real 'hands on' opportunity for people to interact with their heritage. In order to support the related corporate priorities of the two funding councils, the JAS will ensure that potential volunteers with additional needs receive appropriate assistance in order to take up opportunities with the JAS.
- 1.7. The Service Manager for Archives and Records is responsible for the overall management of volunteer involvement, including overseeing the implementation of this policy and dealing with any complaint or dispute relating to volunteer activity not resolved by the relevant volunteer supervisor. The volunteers' designated supervisors provide project briefs, support and supervision; maintain records; identify training requirements and countersign expense claims. All staff required to undertake such duties are provided with training in the management, supervision, support and training of volunteers.

2. Aim and Purpose of Volunteer Policy

- 2.1 The Service is committed to managing volunteers according to current best practice and aims to provide a satisfying and supportive environment for our volunteers. This policy outlines the nature of the partnership relationship that we have with our volunteers.

3. Scope

3.1. This policy applies to all volunteers who work for the JAS, recruited and supervised by JAS staff whether volunteering onsite, remotely or in the community.

3.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the Dorset History Centre Access Policy (2023) and in line with the Equalities Impact Assessment and other relevant JAS policies.

4. The relationship between the Joint Archives Service and volunteers

4.1 The relationship of a volunteer to the JAS is one of trust, mutual understanding and benefit; it is a 'gift' relationship, with time given freely and willingly without expectation of financial reward by the volunteer. Neither we nor the volunteer regard the relationship as a contract of employment.

4.2 No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on the volunteer to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time or to carry out the tasks provided. Likewise, the JAS cannot be compelled to provide regular tasks or opportunities.

4.3 The relationship is based on the principle that volunteers add value to our work by performing a wide range of roles.

4.4 Although volunteers offer time freely and without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability.

4.5 The JAS recognises volunteers as a core part of our team, with a distinctive but complementary role alongside paid staff. The maintenance of professional standards for work undertaken remains the responsibility of paid staff.

5. Principles for volunteer management

5.1 This policy sets out the broad principles of volunteering with JAS and forms the foundation for good-practice volunteer management across the organisation. Fundamentally:

- We will always aim for fair and equal treatment for all volunteers.
- We aim to match volunteers with suitable projects so that we gain from the activities of the volunteers and the volunteers gain from volunteering with us.
- Each volunteer (or volunteer group) will be appointed a volunteer supervisor to guide and advise them in their tasks.
- The volunteer supervisor will be responsible for providing the necessary induction, training, and ongoing development, so that volunteers can be effective in their role. In return, we expect that volunteers will provide their time and help us to keep our projects on track.

5.2 Volunteers will not be used in times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff. They may continue with their regular tasks subject to any staff being available for supervision but will not be asked to undertake additional duties.

5.3 This policy is relevant for all current and potential volunteers, as well as every member of staff concerned with selecting, supporting, developing volunteers, managing volunteer projects or promoting voluntary activity within the JAS.

6. Selection of volunteers

6.1 The JAS will pursue a fair and consistent process for selecting volunteers.

6.2 DHC's communications about volunteering will use language that is easily understood, using various methods to attract a diverse range of applicants.

6.3 The JAS will select volunteers according to project needs and aim to match volunteers' skills, knowledge, experience, motivation and availability to suitable projects. Supervising staff will also discuss individual volunteer requirements to ensure that volunteers feel adequately supported in their role.

6.4 Anyone being considered for a volunteer role will be invited for an informal interview with the project supervisor, with the aim of setting up teams that are best suited for the project.

6.5 We will ensure that all potential volunteers have a clear understanding of any available roles to support them in selecting an appropriate placement. For individual volunteers, this will be in the form of a concise role description prepared by the volunteer supervisor within a recommended format and placed on our website and social media as well as with the local Volunteer Centre.

6.6 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.

6.7 Reasonable adjustments may be made to the selection methods to suit the access requirements of applicants with disabilities.

7. Equality and Diversity

7.1 The JAS recognises the importance of encouraging diversity and achieving equality among volunteers, as well as employees and users. Volunteers are actively encouraged from a wide cross-section of backgrounds and experiences to help ensure that volunteering projects are accessible to an increasingly diverse range of people.

7.2 The JAS values and respects individuals by adapting projects and levels of support to provide equality of opportunity for active involvement within the scope of the organisation's needs and resources.

7.3 All staff, volunteers, contractors and partner organisations are expected to actively support the JAS's commitment to diversity and equality.

7.4 Acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role will be made on merit, the sole consideration being an individual's suitability to carry out the specified task(s) subject to the needs and restrictions of the location, along with their availability in line with the needs of the project. Adjustments will be considered for a volunteer with a disability or who faces additional challenges in contributing to our work.

7.5 The JAS welcomes volunteers aged 18 and over.

7.6 The JAS has no upper age limit for volunteers, recognising the contribution made by older volunteers in terms of valuable knowledge and experience.

7.7 Volunteers cannot continue in a role where volunteering is detrimental to their own or other people's health and safety.

7.8 The JAS will collect data to monitor progress towards a more diverse volunteer cohort.

8. Recruitment

8.1 The JAS will recruit volunteers for specific roles when it has vacancies for those roles. Volunteers may be required to support the 'core' functions of the JAS – i.e., on-going tasks such as cataloguing and preservation activities, or they may be recruited for a specific project (often externally funded) which will have a completion date.

8.2 Volunteering tasks will be regularly reviewed and may cease or be altered.

8.3 Role descriptions, role skill requirements and task outlines will be created and vacancies for each role will be advertised.

8.4 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, or may meet with the project's supervisor online.

8.5 Where there are several applicants for a role 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 (with their permission) in the event that other suitable roles become available.

8.6 In appropriate circumstances, 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.

9. Induction, training and development

9.1 New volunteers will be made to feel welcome and will be provided with an informal induction. As part of their induction to the Dorset History Centre, volunteers will receive a copy of the volunteer handbook, containing essential information for all volunteers, together with adequate and appropriate facilities, equipment and resources relevant to the specific role, location or group.

9.2 Volunteers will be required to sign a volunteer agreement which defines the expectations on both parties; this is not a contract of employment.

9.3 Volunteers will be supported in their activities. Appropriate training and equipment will be provided to enable them to complete a particular task. The JAS will communicate clearly with volunteers in relation to both scheduled and flexible activities. Volunteers are expected to inform their supervisor if they are unable to attend a session.

9.4 New volunteers will be given time to settle in. This will allow them to learn about the organisation, their project and their role, as well as giving their volunteer supervisor the opportunity to assess how their involvement is contributing to our goals. At the end of a mutually suitable settling-in period, an informal discussion will be held between the volunteer and volunteer supervisor to record positive experiences, as well as discuss any areas of concern.

9.5 Volunteers will be asked to attend training as and when appropriate.

9.6 A volunteer may act as a team leader under the supervision of the project supervisor providing this is properly specified and it has been established that the volunteer has the necessary skills or potential.

10. Support and supervision

10.1 JAS respects volunteers by both listening to and learning from what they have to say, supporting a two-way dialogue between staff and volunteers.

10.2 Volunteer supervisors are encouraged to discuss progress with their volunteers on a regular basis. This provides an opportunity to:

- monitor their contribution
- establish whether the volunteer would like to change their current contribution
- ensure that they feel valued and satisfied with their volunteering.

We may also ask volunteers to complete an anonymous survey from time to time.

- 10.3 Volunteers will have a written role description relevant to their task.
- 10.4 The JAS recognises the role that volunteers fulfil at every level of the organisation. It endeavours to communicate with volunteers in appropriate ways, including email, telephone calls and online meetings.
- 10.5 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.
- 10.6 Volunteers are free to end their involvement at any time. Wherever possible, an end date should be agreed between volunteer and volunteer supervisor. Supervisors are encouraged to hold an exit interview to find out why a volunteer is leaving, share any learning points and establish whether the volunteer may want to be involved again in the future. Volunteers can request a written reference concerning their performance.
- 10.7 Volunteers will be consulted regarding any decisions that would substantially affect the performance of their duties.

11 Health and Safety

11.1 The wellbeing of volunteers is of paramount importance. We are committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of our volunteers. We want to make sure that volunteers are aware of and understand the health and safety risks associated with their role. We aim to provide volunteers with the appropriate information, instruction, supervision and training required to provide a safe environment while volunteering with JAS.

11.2 The policy of the JAS is to provide and maintain a safe and healthy environment for its volunteers and to supply appropriate, equipment and systems to assist with tasks. The JAS undertakes risk assessments as appropriate.

11.3 All personnel at DHC, including volunteers, wear identity badges. Volunteers will not undertake activities in the strongroom areas of DHC due to the confidential nature of some of the information kept there. Archives will always be produced from the repositories for the use of volunteers.

11.4 Any volunteers who undertake tasks alone and offsite will be expected to comply with DC's Lone Worker Policy.

12 Expenses

12.1 The JAS has a limited budget to fund expenses for volunteers coming to DHC. We recognise that this widens the pool of potential volunteers and removes barriers for those on low incomes.

12.2 Free parking is available on-site within DHC's pay and display car park and refreshments are offered to volunteers whilst volunteering when this can be done safely.

12.3 If volunteers are asked and are willing to undertake work for the JAS away from DHC, then travel expenses will be reimbursed (ticket or mileage) upon the presentation of appropriate receipts.

12.4 We will reimburse travel costs to DHC for a volunteering session up to a cap of £15 per visit and whilst DHC's expenses budget is adequate.

12.5 Expenses claims are submitted on a standard DC Non-Employee's Expenses Claim Form and accompanied by proof of expenditure. Volunteer supervisors are responsible for arranging expenses payments.

13 Insurance

13.1 All volunteers engaged in JAS activities are indemnified under Dorset History Centre public liability insurance. However, drivers using their cars in connection with their voluntary work must inform their own insurance company to ensure adequate and continued cover.

13.2 We will ensure that volunteers are covered for insurance purposes in respect of personal injury. The insurance will not cover unauthorised actions or actions outside the volunteering agreement.

14. Confidentiality, copyright and data protection

14.1 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.

14.2 Volunteers will assign any original copyright works they may produce while volunteering to The Dorset History Centre and will be asked to sign a copyright agreement where necessary.

14.3 Personal information recorded about volunteers will be stored and maintained with appropriate safeguards for confidentiality and in accordance with the Data Protection Act will not be disclosed to any unauthorised person.

15 Resolving problems

15.1 The JAS aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. Volunteer supervisors are responsible for handling any problems regarding volunteer conduct or complaints and the JAS actively supports volunteer supervisors by providing relevant training. They will seek to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon when appropriate, and will aim for positive and amicable solutions. The volunteer's supervisor will deal with minor complaints about or by volunteers or their contribution through the usual support and supervision procedures. However, we recognise our duty to protect the wellbeing and interests of all our stakeholders and therefore operate a formal complaints procedure in the case of more serious issues. In the case of particularly serious complaints, this process may be bypassed and /or the subject of the complaint asked to leave. Where a criminal offence is suspected, the matter will be handed over to the police.

15.2 If a problem cannot be resolved by the volunteer supervisor, the County Archivist will make any decisions as appropriate.

16. Review of the Policy

16.1 The policy will be reviewed in consultation with interested organisations, stakeholders and individuals every 3 years. It will next be reviewed in September 2026

17. Further information or comment

17.1 Copies of this policy are available in large print.

17.2 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

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