

DISEWORTH HERITAGE TRUST

Collections Development Policy

Name of museum: Diseworth Heritage Centre

Name of governing body: Diseworth Heritage Trust

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: 8 May 2015

Policy review procedure:

The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

Date at which this policy is due for review: AGM 2020

***Arts Council England* will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.**

1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:

1.1. The museum's statement of purpose is:

Diseworth Heritage Trust aims to interpret and document the culture and heritage of Diseworth and surrounding villages for the education and enjoyment of the public, through the use of accessible collections, temporary displays, presentations and events, and making use of internet facilities in accordance with the standards approved by the Arts Council and to ensure these facilities are accessible, useful and relevant to all members of the public.

Other relevant documents:

Forward Plan

The Forward Plan sets out the direction and priorities over the planning period and the financial and human resources available to implement the Heritage Centre's work.

Collections Care and Conservation Policy and Plan

The Collections Care and Conservation Policy provides a framework which guides the Heritage Centre's approach to collections care and conservation. The plan sets out how the Collections Care and Conservation Policy will be implemented and monitored.

Documentation Policy and Procedural Manual

The Documentation Policy describes the Heritage Centre's approach to collections documentation and the procedural manual provides guidance as to how different processes will be implemented.

- 1.2. The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.
- 1.3. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.
- 1.4. Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.5. The museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.
- 1.6. The museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- 1.7. The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons

2. History of the collections

Diseworth Heritage Centre opened in 2009 following the purchase and renovation of the former Baptist Chapel in 2007 by Diseworth Heritage Trust. The Centre is intended to serve the parish of Long Whatton and Diseworth, and following the opening of the centre the Long Whatton History Society donated its entire collection to the Trust. The collection of the Diseworth History Society is also deposited with the Trust. These collections were formed through the collecting and research activities of members of each society to record the history of the villages and were previously housed in filing cabinets in Long Whatton Community Centre and in private homes. Other documents and artefacts were donated to and collected by the Trust during development of the Heritage Centre and after it opened.

The Trust also holds archive material passed to it by the parish council which relates to the activities of the council and the local area. None is less than ten years old. They are available for research but have no current legal status - such are held by the Clerk to the Council.

Not all of this material has yet been formally accessioned into the permanent collection. Heritage Centre volunteers are undertaking a process of inventory and assessment followed by accessioning of suitable material.

3. An overview of current collections

Diseworth Heritage Centre holds the following blocks of collections: Original deeds relating to Diseworth Heritage Centre and Long Whatton History Society, these include a collection of deeds and documents relating to the Grade 2 listed building and its purchase from the Baptist Union. Photographs, letters, documents and books relating to the local area collected by or donated to the Long Whatton History Society, Diseworth History Society and the Heritage Centre.

A small collection of artefacts relating to the local area and people and organisations connected to it: The larger items include a Griswold knitting machine and an architectural fragment with Civil War period graffiti. Smaller items include a Victorian parasol, a Victorian bridal headdress and corsage, a Victorian Sampler and part of a Victorian Tea set. WW1 and WW2 memorabilia have been acquired in view of the current interest in the subject and some small items commemorating the Royal Jubilees.

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

Diseworth Heritage Trust will only collect objects and archive material which contribute to the Centre's aims to interpret and document the culture and heritage of Diseworth and surrounding villages. These may include artefacts created in relation to projects undertaken e.g. books and display material which have been funded by external sources.

Due to limitations of space, the Heritage Centre will only collect material it has space to store appropriately and the resources to care for on a long term basis, such as photographs, documents, small books and objects. Collections or groups of items that need to be kept together will be considered on the same basis.

We will not normally seek to collect the material and documentary archives that arise from archaeological excavations. Leicestershire County Council is the recognised repository for such material. However, individual objects or small groups of archaeological objects that are recovered in, or relate to, the local area may be considered.

Items which cannot be accepted as permanent acquisitions may be taken in as loans on a time limited basis and for a specific purpose, such as exhibition, public engagement or research.

5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

5.1 The museum does not intend to dispose of collections during the period covered by this policy.

Rationalisation and disposal is not a currently a priority as the collections that the Heritage Centre holds are in line with the Trust's stated objectives. Disposal would however be considered where the following criteria apply:

- Items have been damaged or have deteriorated beyond the Museum's ability to repair them.**
- An item's condition poses a threat to other items in the collection.**
- Items are discovered to pose a threat to health and safety.**

- **Items have been identified as spoliated during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period; Items have been subject to a request for repatriation or restitution.**

Any disposals will be carried out in accordance with the principles and procedures outlined in this policy.

6. Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

- 6.1 The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.**

Copies of the MA Code of Ethics will be kept at the Diseworth Heritage Centre for Trustees, volunteers and all visitors.

7 Collecting policies of other museums

- 7.1 The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.**
- 7.2 Specific reference is made to the following museum(s)/organisation(s):**

Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services which states that *'Together we shall preserve Leicestershire's heritage, care for our environment and encourage creativity, inspiration and delight.'*

Diseworth Heritage Trust will work within this aim.

8 Archival holdings

As the Museum holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002).

9 Acquisition

- 9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:**

Items offered to the Heritage Centre will normally be assessed by the Museum Management Group who will make recommendations regarding acquisition to the Board of Trustees which will make the final decision.

9.2 The museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).

9.3 In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

10 Human remains

10.1 The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

11 Biological and geological material

11.1 The museum will not acquire any biological or geological material.

12 Archaeological material

12.1 The museum will not acquire archaeological material (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.

12.2 In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure (i.e. the Coroner for Treasure) as set out in the Treasure Act 1996 (as amended by the Coroners & Justice Act 2009).

13 Exceptions

13.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin**

- **acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin**

In these cases the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.

14 Spoliation

- 14.1 **The museum will use the statement of principles ‘Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period’, issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.**

15 The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

Not applicable

16 Disposal procedures

- 16.1 **All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.**
- 16.2 **The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.**
- 16.3 **When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.**
- 16.4 **When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, exchange or as a last resort - destruction.**
- 16.5 **The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including public benefit, the implications for the museum’s collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. Expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.**

- 16.6 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.**
- 16.7 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.**
- 16.8 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material normally through a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).**
- 16.9 The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.**
- 16.10 Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from the Arts Council England.**
- 16.11 The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.**
- 16.12 Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the**

preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.

16.13 The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

Disposal by destruction

16.14 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.

16.15 It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.

16.16 Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.

16.17 Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained persons where required.

16.18 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, eg the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.