

Shropshire Archives
Collections Development Policy
November 2105



Gateway to
the history of
Shropshire
and Telford



1 Introduction

1.1 Overview and history

1.1.1 History of the Service

Shrewsbury Corporation established a borough library and museum in 1885, largely through the efforts of the Shropshire Archaeological Society. In 1898 a Records Committee was set up by Salop County Council, initially to report on the records of the clerk of the peace, but an honorary archivist was appointed only in 1934. In 1947, Salop County Council created a Record Office to organise their Quarter Session records and large estate, parish and other official collections, and this appeared to duplicate some of the work of the Shrewsbury Borough Library and Museum. A guide to these holdings was produced in 1952.

The Borough Library became part of the County Library Service in 1974 and its extensive collections formed the basis of a local studies library with a county-wide role. The County Record Office continued to be organised independently but became the principal repository for the vast collection of manuscript material deposited with the County Council. The re-organisation of County Council services in 1988 led to the creation of the Leisure Services Department and the County Record Office and Local Studies Library were finally administratively united as the Records and Research Unit.

1.1.2 Shropshire Archives and the Records Management Service

Further re-organisation in 1995 led to the creation of Shropshire County Council's Information and Community Services Department which funded the £1.8 million project to build the Records and Research Centre. Located in Castle Gates, Shrewsbury, the purpose-built centre has four levels with a total floor space of 1,500 square metres. At the same time a Records Management service was established at Shirehall to manage the records and information created by Shropshire County Council. Following local government reorganisation in 1997, an agreement between Shropshire County Council and Telford and Wrekin Council secured funding to maintain the Service's remit over the historic county.

In 2004 following public consultation, the service was renamed Shropshire Archives, gateway to the history of Shropshire and Telford. In 2009 Shropshire became a unitary council and inherited large quantities of archives and records from the former Borough and District Councils. This meant that additional storage space was required and an out store was established to house both records and archives in 2012.

1.2 Mission Statements

Shropshire Archives will take the lead in preserving and improving access to Shropshire's archives and local history collections in order that individuals and communities can better understand, research and appreciate their heritage.

The Records Management Service will work to ensure that Shropshire Council manages its information and records sources in an appropriate, efficient and economic manner.

1.3 Service Objectives

1.3.1 Objectives –Shropshire Archives

- To fulfil a custodial role in the preservation, acquisition and cataloguing of Shropshire's archives and local history collections
- To promote and provide opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to use Shropshire's archives and local history collections to better understand, and appreciate their heritage
- To develop and to promote best practice in the preservation, enhancement and use of Shropshire's archives and local history collections
- To develop and to support sustainable partnerships and to enable communities and people to engage, explore, conserve and enjoy their own heritage

1.3.2 Objectives – The Records Management Service

- To ensure that information and records sources are retained only for as long as is necessary for legal compliance and administrative need.
- To develop and promote best practice and legal compliance in the creation, use, maintenance and disposal of information and records sources.
- To co-ordinate the selection and offering of records and material to Shropshire Archives, thereby contributing to the corporate memory of Shropshire Council.
- To work with the Information Governance team and the Information Governance Group to ensure Shropshire Council's compliance with legislation relating to information and record keeping.

2 Policy Aims

The document sets out the Collections Development Policy for Shropshire Archives and explains how the service ensures inclusive coverage of Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin's archival and printed heritage. It supports the services' mission statement above and should be seen in conjunction with the Collection Information Policy, Depositor and Gift agreements and other relevant policy documents.

3 Statutory Position.

Shropshire Archives is a recognised place of deposit for public records, and a diocesan record office for records from the Shropshire parishes of the dioceses of Hereford and Lichfield. It is also licensed to hold Manorial and Tithe records, and records of local government and other public and statutory bodies. The service provides a local studies library service under the Public Libraries Act 1964.

The service works to ensure that Shropshire Council complies with the following legislation:

- The Local Government Act 1972 (s.224) which states the Local Authority needs to 'make proper arrangements with respect to any documents that belong to, or are in the custody of the council of any of their officers'.
- The Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967. These relate to those records created by central government and designated as 'public records' which may be held locally. These Acts place an obligation upon services to 'permanently preserve' the original records.
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2005.

4 External recognition

Shropshire Archives is:

- The authorised archive service for the custody of the official records of Shropshire Council and its predecessor authorities under the Local Government Act 1972

- An approved place of deposit under the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967 for a number of classes of central government records held locally (public records) such as those of Quarter Sessions, magistrates courts, coroners, county courts, health authorities.
- Recognised by the Master of the Rolls as a repository for manorial and tithe records under the Law of Property Act 1922 and the Tithe Act 1936.
- Designated by the Bishops of Hereford and Lichfield as a Diocesan Record Office under the Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978 as amended by the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 1992
- Empowered to acquire archives by deposit, gift or purchase and to preserve and make them available under the Local Government (Records) Act 1962

5 Standards

Shropshire Archives has adopted the following standards:

- The National Archives Standard for Records Repositories 2004
- National Standard for Access to Archives 2003
- PD 5454:2012 Recommendations for the storage and exhibition of archival documents
- General International Standard of Archival Description (ISAD(G)) 2000

6 Scope of the policy

Shropshire Archives aims to ensure that the history of Shropshire, and the story of its communities are preserved and survive for the future. To achieve this material representative of all areas of the community will be collected.

Shropshire Archives will acquire material for the study of all aspects of Shropshire past and present. It will acquire material principally relating to the historic county of Shropshire.

In order to fulfil the aims of this policy Shropshire Archives will acquire:

- Records of Shropshire Council and its predecessors.
As Records Manager and Archivist for Shropshire Council, Shropshire Archives must ensure that the archive of Shropshire Council is complete and comprehensive. The following areas should be represented when selecting material from Shropshire Council records for permanent preservation.
 - Policy and administrative.
 - Formulation of policy and management of public resources by the core executive.
 - Management of the economy.
 - Relations with other authorities and central government.
 - Administration of justice and the maintenance of security.
 - Formulation and delivery of social policies.
 - Cultural policy.
 - Interaction of Shropshire Council with its citizens and its impact on the physical environment.
 - The economic, social and demographic condition of Shropshire Council as documented by the dealings with individuals, communities and organisations within the county.
- Records of other local authorities and statutory bodies operating within Shropshire.
- Public records offered to the Service under the terms of the Public Records Acts.
- Records of ecclesiastical parishes within the county of Shropshire under the terms of the Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978, revised 1992.
- Records of organisations, businesses, individuals and others active within the county.

- Printed books, pamphlets, periodicals, newspapers, maps, ephemera and other publications.
- Photographic prints, negatives, transparencies and postcards, including digital images.
- Prints, engravings and other illustrations.
- Sound recordings, both analogue and digital. With no regional sound archive for the West Midlands Shropshire Archives will continue to collect sound material, though depositors will be informed of the limitations of the service's facilities to store and make accessible this material.
- Original film material is now transferred to The Media Archive of Central England (MACE).
- Digital word processed and spreadsheet documents. These will be printed out on archive quality paper.
- Copies of similar and related material held elsewhere.
- Copies of lists and indexes of similar and related material held elsewhere

6 Limitations

Acquisitions or disposal outside this policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances, taking the interests of other archive and library services into account.

Shropshire Archives will only acquire material if the responsible officer is satisfied that the vendor, donor, or depositor has a valid title to the material. Shropshire Archives will not acquire material if it cannot provide adequate storage or professional care for it.

Shropshire Archives will not acquire museum artefacts. If any are offered to the Service these should, with the consent of the owner, be transferred to the Shropshire County Museums Service. If this is not appropriate they shall be returned to the owner with a suggested alternative collecting institution.

Shropshire Archives will consult with other similar collecting institutions if a conflict of interest is thought possible.

6 Cooperation with other repositories

Shropshire Archives is the largest archive and local studies repository for Shropshire, though other institutions and bodies do hold material relating to the county. Collecting policies of these other bodies have been developed in consultation with the Service.

These other Shropshire repositories include:

- Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust. The museum holds material relating to the industrial development of the Ironbridge gorge, its artefacts, and material relating to industrial archaeology generally. Material is accessible to the public in the Museum Library.
- Oswestry Town Council: Records of Oswestry Borough Council now Oswestry Town Council. Archive and records management services are delivered to the Town Council by Shropshire Archives through a service level agreement.
- Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin libraries hold local studies collections relating to their respective areas.

7 Methods of Acquisition

Shropshire Archives will acquire material as follows:

by transfer, gift, purchase or deposit. All gifts and deposits will be completed with a written agreement.

Items acquired under this policy will be held at Shropshire Archives, Castle Gates, Shrewsbury SY1 2AQ, or at a outstore complying with archival storage requirements, or at Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury SY2 6ND, within the Records Management storage areas.

8 Disposal of material

Shropshire Archives will, with the written agreement of any depositor and subject to the terms of any statutory or other regulatory measure, transfer material to a more suitable collecting institution if it is judged that the material and potential users of that material will benefit from their re-location. All transfers shall be recorded.

Shropshire Archives will, with the written agreement of any depositor and subject to the terms of any statutory or other regulatory measure, evaluate and select for destruction or return, material not considered worthy of permanent preservation.

Shropshire Archives accepts the principle that there is a strong presumption against the disposal by sale of any material in its ownership. If materials are to be sold they should first be offered to other appropriate public collecting institutions. Any decision to sell materials shall be the responsibility of Shropshire Council on the advice of the Team Leader, Archives.

All monies received by Shropshire Archives from the sale of material shall be used for the benefit of the Service's collections.

9 Collection Development

There is scope for developing the collection policy in the future as priorities and resources allow. Shropshire Archives will seek to add further collections to reflect all aspects of life in the area it serves, aiming to cover all parts of the county's past and present and as wide a range of institutions and subjects as possible.

Priority in acquiring records will be given to archives at risk of loss, destruction or damage and record collections which may be underrepresented in the Service's holdings. Shropshire Archives will aim to acquire all new printed published works relating to Shropshire and its people. See also *Collection Development plan*.

Shropshire Archives will seek to review the strengths and weakness of its present holdings to fill gaps. Shropshire Archives will seek to implement a carefully managed programme of deaccessioning/ reappraisal should material be identified which is no longer deemed worthy of permanent preservation.

10 Access

Shropshire Archives will make the material in its care accessible to the public as soon as possible after its acquisition subject to restrictions to access required by statute, by an owner or depositor or at the discretion of the Team leader, Archives, for reasons of confidentiality, security or conservation need.

This policy was updated in November 2015 and will be reviewed in November 2020 or sooner if circumstances dictate.