

Town Clerk | Swaffham Town Council

From: anne_fairweather@btinternet.com
Sent: 09 September 2019 15:39
To: Town Clerk | Swaffham Town Council
Subject: Collections Development Policy - Swaffham Heritage
Attachments: CollectionsDevelopmentPolicy2019.docx

Dear Richard

I'm attaching copy of the Collections Development Policy. This forms part of the Swaffham Heritage lease with Swaffham Town Council and is updated every three years. It uses a template required for accreditation by the Arts Council.

The trustees of Swaffham Heritage approved this policy this morning. Could you please seek approval from the Town Councillors at their meeting on 7th October for this document? It can then be signed off by both parties at the Liaison Meeting on 14th October.

Thanking you in advance for your help.

Kind Regards

Anne

N.B - To be signed off AT ESTATES COMMITTEE ON 16TH OCTOBER.

Collections Development Policy – Swaffham Heritage 2019

(using the template supplied by the Arts Council 2014 to meet Accreditation Standards)

Name of museum: Swaffham Heritage

Name of governing body: Swaffham Museum Limited

Artefacts owned by: Swaffham Town Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: 9th September 2019

Date on which this policy was approved by Swaffham Town Council:

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: September 2022

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:
To advance the education of the public by providing a range of heritage services and a museum displaying and storing artefacts and archives relating to Swaffham and the surrounding area.
- 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

The Museum was set up in 1986/7 in one room of the Town Hall at the suggestion of Swaffham Town Councillors. When the Town Council moved to new adjoining premises the Museum took over the whole of the former Town Hall – a grade II listed Georgian building. After renovation work the Museum re-opened to the public in 2007.

The original concept of the collections was to acquire artefacts that pertained to Swaffham or the surrounding area and to local residents. These were and are still collected by public donation or loan. This broad remit is now housed in 5 display rooms – an Archaeology Room, two Social History Rooms, a special events gallery, and a Howard Carter Room including artefacts on loan from the British Museum. There is also an Archive Room which does not have public access but a research service is available.

3. An overview of current collections

The collections continue the original concept of pertaining to Swaffham and the surrounding area. The collections date from prehistoric times to the present day. They are made up of the following:

- Archaeology starting from the prehistoric period.
- Photographs, archives, oral histories and local memorabilia relating to trades, crafts, industries; domestic, social and religious life; business and commerce; education and childhood.
- Militaria.
- Artefacts and exhibits based on the life and times of Howard Carter and his discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun. The Carter family was local to Swaffham and Howard spent his childhood in the town.

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

Priority will be given to collecting artefacts

- pertaining to local events and interest to encourage local visitors
- that are archaeological finds from Swaffham and the surrounding area.
- that support the delivery of the National Curriculum to school groups.
- that can be stored and conserved to professional standards.
- that are accessible to the public via display or research.

5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

- 5.1 The museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.
- 5.2 The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.

Rationalisation will be used to minimise duplication and to ensure that artefacts with provenance fit the Museum's Statement of Purpose. All disposals are signed by a trustee of Swaffham Museum and countersigned by a representative of Swaffham Town Council as owners of the artefacts.

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.

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):

The following museums and organisations collect artefacts and documents within the County of Norfolk so consideration must be given to minimise overlap and duplication with their collections. These are:

Norfolk County Council Museums including Gressenhall and the Castle Museum, the Museums Norfolk Group, Norfolk Record Office and Archive Centre.

- 8 Archival holdings The Archive Room houses documents, newspaper cuttings, photographs, oral histories and electronic records pertaining to Swaffham and the surrounding area.

9 Acquisition

9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

Items left at the museum are accepted on the understanding by the donor, that acquisition will only take place once the item has been approved by the Acquisition Team. This team consists of at least one trustee, the archivist and a member of the curatorial team. The potential donor is informed as to whether or not the item has been accepted for acquisition and advised to collect if not acceptable to the museum.

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 So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

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

15.1 The disposal of human remains from museums in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums'.

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.

Disposal by exchange

- 16.13 The nature of disposal by exchange means that the museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The governing body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.
- 16.13.1 In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or non-Accredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 16.1-5 will apply.
- 16.13.2 If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.
- 16.13.3 If the exchange is proposed with a non-Accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will place a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, or make an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.13.4 Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in the museum's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the governing body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

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 staff 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.

Signed on behalf of Swaffham Heritage.....

Position.....

Date.....

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