



Chippenham Museum

Chippenham Town Council

Collections Development Policy

Name of Museum:

Chippenham Museum

Name of governing body:

Chippenham Town Council, Arts, Culture, Leisure Committee

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:

5 June 2019

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:

June 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.

Contents

Collections Development Policy 1

1. Introduction and relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation: ..3
2. History of the collections 3
3. An overview of current collections 4
4. Themes and priorities for future collecting 7
5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal 8
6. Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items 8
7. Collecting policies of other museums..... 8
8. Acquisition 8
9. Human remains..... 9
10. Biological and geological material 9
11. Archaeological material 9
12. Exceptions 9
13. Spoliation..... 10
14. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains..... 10
15. Disposal procedures 10

1. Introduction and relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:

1.1 The museum's statement of purpose is:

The Museum aims to preserve, interpret and enhance geological and environmental specimens, archaeological artefacts and items of social and historical significance from Chippenham and its immediate area for the inspiration, learning and enjoyment of all.

This policy has been written in accordance with the museum's statement of purpose. All staff (paid and volunteer) have read and agreed to abide by the policy. It should be read in conjunction with the Forward Plan, Emergency Plan and any other plans affecting the collection and the museum buildings.

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, or bequest, 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

Chippenham Museum was established under its original name of the Yelde Hall Museum to: 'collect, record and preserve artefacts, objects, and documents from Chippenham and the surrounding areas for the public benefit', in accordance with Minute No. 260 of the General Purposes Committee of the former Chippenham Borough Council at their meeting on 21st November 1962.

Following the abolition of Chippenham Borough Council under the Local Government Act 1972, the responsibility for the Yelde Hall Museum was transferred to North Wiltshire District Council as the relevant museum authority.

In 1984, under a Section 101 agreement of the Local Government Act, North Wiltshire District Council devolved the running of the Yelde Hall Museum to Chippenham Town Council who then became the museum authority.

In 1999 it was decided to relocate the Museum from the Yelde Hall to 9-10 Market Place and hence to rename it Chippenham Museum and Heritage Centre. At a meeting of Chippenham Town Council on 23rd March 2000, the Section 101 agreement was revised and reconfirmed and it was resolved:

“That the Chippenham Museum be used for the purposes of the above-mentioned Act.”

From 2014-2019, Chippenham Museum was involved in Creative Wiltshire, a Heritage Lottery Funded collecting cultures project which aimed to collect and celebrate the work of the county’s creative people, to widen collections and ensure that creativity is better represented in the county’s museums, archives and libraries. As part of this project Chippenham Museum, acquired approx. 100 works, creating the core of a new art and design collection, focussing particularly on a 20th century modern art and especially on the work of the Bath Academy of Art in Corsham.

3. An overview of current collections

Chippenham Museum holds approximately 30000 accessioned items, the majority of which relate to the local history of Chippenham and surrounding Parishes (as listed below). These items range in date from the Neolithic period to the present day and cover geology, archaeology, agriculture, trade and industry, educational, governance, domestic, artistic and recreational life of people in this area. The museum also holds the Civic Records of Chippenham Borough Council and its successor and predecessor authorities from 1585 until the present day; these are stored at the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre.

Significant Areas of the Collection:

Archaeology Collection

Archaeological artefacts and archives from excavations and other sources in the local area. Objects from this collection are on display in the ‘Chippenham Timeline’ gallery. This collection meets our statement of purpose to “*preserve, interpret and enhance geological and environmental specimens, archaeological artefacts*”.

The strengths of the collection are:

- Artefacts and archives from approximately 30 excavations conducted by Chippenham College Archaeology students in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, the most important being that at the medieval kiln site in Langley Burrell Without, 1982
- Artefacts and published archive of excavation at Showell Farm, Lacock revealing a Bronze Age and Roman agricultural landscape, 1999
- An Anglo Saxon/Norman skeleton found in the Marshfield area

- A large collection of coins, brooches etc. found in the Box area, from the estate of the late William (Bill) John, a local metal detector
- Artefacts from 'Seeking Saxon Chippenham' excavations in St. Mary Street, Chippenham including Roman pottery finds
- Artefacts from excavation to rear of 25 Market Place of a late 17th/early 18th century rubbish pit, with extensive post-medieval pottery and glass finds

Trade and industry collections

Objects produced by and associated with local industries. Objects from this collection are on display in the 'Made in Chippenham' and 'Faces and Space' galleries. These collections meet our statement of purpose relating to *"items of social and historical significance from Chippenham and its immediate area for the inspiration, learning and enjoyment of all"*.

The strengths of the collection are:

- Shotguns made by late 19th/early 20th century manufacturer James B Warrilow
- 100 stoneware vessels associated with local brewers and merchants
- Hathaways: approx. 150 objects manufactured by or associated with Hathaway Family, including butter churns, maker's plates/counterweights, carpet sweeper and Hathaway and Slade Family papers.
- Westinghouse collection: approx. 2000 objects, ephemera items, photographs etc. relating to the major railway engineering works in Chippenham and the companies that have occupied that site, including Roland Brotherhood, Evans O'Donnell, Saxby and Farmer and the Westinghouse Brake and Signal Company Ltd.

The weaknesses of the collection are the lack of objects relating to the town's more recent industrial history.

Art and Design Collections

Artworks produced by artists living and working in the local area as well as local views. Objects from this collection are on display throughout the museum, particularly in the "Faces and Spaces". These collections meet our statement of purpose relating to *"items of social and historical significance from Chippenham and its immediate area for the inspiration, learning and enjoyment of all"*.

The strengths of the collection are:

- Coat of Arms of Elizabeth I dated 1594
- Views of Chippenham by Belgian artist, Karel Wellens, painted during his time as a refugee in the town, 1917
- Oil paintings by Mrs Doris Lloyd, produced for fundraising for war effort in Yatton Keynell, 1942-1944
- 44 watercolour views of Chippenham by the Victorian artist J H Jolliffe
- Tanner Collection; group of material relating to Robin and Heather Tanner, predominately focusing on their life in Kington Langley. Includes original artworks and etchings by Robin Tanner, correspondence and exhibition catalogues. Research

archives belonging to authors who have written about the Tanners. Furnishing items their home Old Chapel Field.

- Bath Academy of Art collection; Paintings, prints and publications by lecturers and students at the Bath Academy of Art, Corsham, as well as their contemporaries living in the area. Includes works by Howard Hodgkin, Clifford and Rosemary Ellis, Henry Cliffe, Joe Tilson, Richard Smith, Peter Potworowski

The weaknesses of the collection are its small size, and lack of breadth and depth of material, making its display and interpretation more challenging.

Costume Collection

Costume and accessories worn and used by people living and working in the local area. Objects from this collection are on display in the 'Life in the town' gallery. These collections meet our statement of purpose relating to "*items of social and historical significance from Chippenham and its immediate area for the inspiration, learning and enjoyment of all*".

The strengths of the collection are a large number of uniforms, robes and regalia, relating to civic, military and public services. The weaknesses of the collection are a lack of everyday costume and domestic textiles.

Photograph and Postcard Collection

A large collection of over 9000 photographs and postcards, mostly of local scenes and people, dating from the 1860s to the present day. Objects from this collection are on display throughout the museum, particularly in the "Faces and Spaces". These collections meet our statement of purpose relating to "*items of social and historical significance from Chippenham and its immediate area for the inspiration, learning and enjoyment of all*".

Loan Collections

A small but significant collection of items on long term loan to the museum that fill gaps in its permanent collections. Objects from this collection are on display throughout the museum. These collections meet our statement of purpose relating to "*items of social and historical significance from Chippenham and its immediate area for the inspiration, learning and enjoyment of all*".

The strengths of the collection are:

- Early and important items of silver on loan from local churches, complementing the museum's collection of civic silver.
- Historic Police Collection, on loan from Wiltshire Police. Containing several examples of uniform and equipment, it complements the museum's collection of uniform and regalia.
- Heather Tanner collection, on loan from Sevington School, containing examples of Victorian costume and toys, the items were collected by Heather Tanner, broadening the scope of our Tanner collection and filling gaps in our costume collection.

Handling collection

The handling collection is used for educational purposes and has not been accessioned due to the sacrificial nature of these items and how they are used.

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

4.1 Chippenham Museum will only acquire items originating from, used in or that have connections with the Parishes of: Biddestone, Box, Bremhill, Calne, Calne Without, Castle Combe, Cherhill, Chippenham, Chippenham Without, Christian Malford, Colerne, Compton Bassett, Corsham, Grittleton, Heddington, Hilmarton, Kington Langley, Kington St. Michael, Lacock, Langley Burrell Without, Nettleton, North Wraxall, Seagry, Stanton St. Quinton, Sutton Benger and Yatton Keynell.

4.2 Chippenham Museum will collect archaeological material, with its associated archive, from excavated fieldwork in the Parishes of Chippenham Within, Chippenham Without and Langley Burrell Without.

Chippenham Museum will collect archaeological stray and casual finds from the whole of its agreed collecting area detailed in 4.1 above.

4.3 Chippenham Museum will consider collecting archaeological material, with its associated archive, from excavated fieldwork in the Parishes listed in 3.1 should they be refused by any other museum collecting from the defined area, specifically Wiltshire Museum.

4.4 Chippenham Museum will seek to acquire items and pictorial records relating to the social history of the Parishes stated in 4.1 up to the present day. This will include:

4.4.1 Working life - crafts and industries, agriculture and rural life, town and village trade and economy.

4.4.2 Domestic life - costume, household economy, leisure pursuits, local societies

4.4.3 Community life - education, religion, government

4.4.4 Civic life - town, parish, records.

4.5 Chippenham Museum has identified the following priority collecting areas for future acquisitions:

4.5.1 Art and Design - build on existing collection of paintings, prints and decorative arts (including studio pottery) produced by artists who lived (or are living) or worked (or are working) in the Parishes stated in 4.1 or of works depicting or inspired by the Parishes stated in 4.1.

4.5.2 Local Industries - build on existing collections by bringing them up to date with relevant modern industries from the Parishes stated in 4.1.

4.5.3 Outlying parishes - increase holdings from those outlying parishes stated in 4.1 that are currently under represented in the collection.

4.6 Chippenham Museum will **NOT** collect:

4.6.1 Unprovenanced or non-local items. The Museum will undertake to advise potential donors of appropriate Museums wherever possible

4.6.2 Objects in serious need of conservation where there are no realistic expectations that conservation can be completed

4.6.3 Large items of local significance unless suitable long-term storage or public display is available.

4.6.4 Natural history material

- 4.7 Chippenham Museum recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

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.
- 5.3 Rationalisation and disposal is not currently a priority for the museum, but may need to undertake disposal for legal safety or care and conservation reasons.

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):

Wiltshire Museum, Devizes
Athelstan Museum, Malmesbury
Trowbridge Museum
Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre
Swindon Art Gallery and Museum, Swindon
Steam, Museum of the Great Western Railway, Swindon
Young Gallery, Salisbury
Victoria Art Gallery, Bath,
Bath Spa University, Art and Design Collection
Calne Heritage Centre
Corsham Civic Society
Castle Combe Historical Society (Castle Combe Museum - currently closed)

8. Acquisition

- 8.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:
- To prepare and submit an acquisition proposal, this may involve due diligence research into legal and ethical matters, or to clarify the intellectual property rights associated with a proposed acquisition.

- The acquisition proposal should be presented at the weekly museum meeting for discussion. If accepted, this should be recorded in the meeting minutes.
- The final decision on acquisitions lies with the collections team, taking into account resources available.

8.2 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).

8.3 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.

9. Human remains

9.1 As the museum holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005.

9.2 The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains under 100 years old.

10. Biological and geological material

10.1 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.

11. Archaeological material

11.1 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.

11.2 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).

12. Exceptions

12.1 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.

13. 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.

14. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

- 14.1 The museum’s governing body, acting on the advice of the museum’s professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the ‘Guidance for the care of human remains in museums’ issued by DCMS in 2005), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 15.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.
- 14.2 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’.

15. Disposal procedures

- 15.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the Spectrum primary procedures on disposal.
- 15.2 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.
- 15.3 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.
- 15.4 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, or as a last resort - destruction.
- 15.5 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.
- 15.6 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, 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.

- 15.7 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.
- 15.8 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).
- 15.9 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.
- 15.10 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/Welsh Government /Museums Galleries Scotland/ Northern Ireland Museums Council (delete as appropriate).
- 15.11 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.
- 15.12 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

- 15.13 The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

Disposal by destruction

- 15.14 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 15.15 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.

- 15.16 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.
- 15.17 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.
- 15.18 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, e.g. the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.