



Warrington Museum of Freemasonry

Collections Development Policy

Name of museum: Warrington Museum of Freemasonry

Name of governing body: Warrington Museum of Freemasonry Board of Trustees

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: February 2018

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: December 2021

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. Introduction

The museum's statement of purpose is:

To create a stimulating resource, reflecting best practice, to represent the development of Freemasonry both nationally and locally, as part of Warrington's cultural environment, and to provide a varied and high-quality heritage experience for all members of the community.

Introduction

1.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Warrington Museum of Freemasonry policies/ Action Plans

Forward Plan
Conservation and Collections Care Policy and Action Plan
Documentation Policy and Action Plan
Documentation Procedural Manual
Access to Collections Policy

1.3 The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.

1.4 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.

1.5 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.

1.6 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.

- 1.7 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.
- 1.8 In exceptional cases, disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below will be followed. In cases where disposal is motivated by financial reasons, the governing body will not undertake disposal unless it can be demonstrated that all the following exceptional circumstances are met in full:
 - the disposal will significantly improve the long-term public benefit derived from the remaining collection
 - the disposal will not be undertaken to generate short-term revenue (for example to meet a budget deficit)
 - the disposal will be undertaken as a last resort after other sources of funding have been thoroughly explored
 - extensive prior consultation with sector bodies has been undertaken
 - the item under consideration lies outside the museum's established core collection

2 History of the collections

Warrington Museum of Freemasonry was founded in 2010 by Vic Charlesworth and Ken Garner with support from the late Ian Boswell who was the Group Chairman at the time and who later became an Assistant Provincial Grand Master.

It began as a small cupboard on a stairway with a variety of objects displayed in it. Advice was sort from Michelle Hill of Warrington Museum and Art Gallery and 2 desk types and one glass cabinet were borrowed from them, this allowed improved display of the objects. Lodges were encouraged to donate items to the museum for display. In 2014 a Constitution was written a board of Trustees formed, and a business plan formulated. The museum had by now moved into a committee room was shortly thereafter it became the central area for the Museum.

In January 2016, the Museum obtained charitable status from the Charities Commission. In late 2016 an application was made to the Arts Council for working towards accreditation status, which was granted in 2017.

The Lodges and individual members of Warrington and the wider area continue to support the development of the Museum with the donation or loan of items. Through open days, our website and as part of Culture Warrington and the Museums of Cheshire Group The museum profile has been raised and members of the public are now contributing to the museum by bringing along their objects as donations or loans.

3 An overview of current collections

The current collection comprises of approximately

- 1700 masonic jewels (medals)
- 100 items of regalia, from various orders including Craft, Royal Arch and Mark, these are made of a variety of textiles including, leather, silk and plastic
- Some 75 commemorative items made of ceramic and metal
- 10 noteworthy items of ceramics and glassware
- The Frank Starkey Collection of books regalia, jewels and archive material
- 20 masonic items, gavels trowels, working tools, charity boxes
- 15 items of commemorative silverware
- 20 items of Masonic memorabilia from overseas
- We have digital images of all our objects, photographs, and some minute books

These items tell the story of the development of Freemasonry, not only in the local area but also nationally and internationally, which are key aims of the museum. We do have a collection of travelling regalia, which is not accessioned.

4 Themes and priorities for future collecting

The priority of the museum is to continue to collect items of local and national interest, with a bias towards the North of England where there is no other Masonic Museum. More specifically;

- Charity jewels to complete the current collections
- Past Masters and Founders jewels
- Regalia from any Masonic order and or other fraternal orders
- Memorabilia which would otherwise be lost or destroyed for example certificates, ladies evening items
- Books with masonic themes

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. Disposal is not a priority for this policy period (2018-2019) and, by careful acquisition, it is hoped that disposal and rationalisation will be minimised in the future. Disposals will, therefore, only be undertaken for legal, safety or care and conservation reasons (for example, spoliation, radiation, infestation, repatriation).

5 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 Warrington Museum and Art Gallery
The Museum of Policing in Cheshire.
The Library and Museum of Freemasonry, Great Queen Street, London
Worcestershire Masonic Library and Museum Masonic Hall, Rainbow Hill, Worcester
Essex Masonic Library and Museum
Kent Museum of Freemasonry
Warwickshire Provincial Museum and Library

7.3 Currently there are no plans for potential joint acquisition agreements etc. But this may come under review during the period of the policy

8 Archival holdings

Currently the archives of the museum, include summonses, programmes, Grand Lodge certificates and photographs.

Registers, minutes books etc. are held by the respective Lodges.

If a Lodge has closed these books may be returned to West Lancashire Province for forwarding to The Museum and Library of Freemasonry in London, for archiving. Access to the archives held by them is by request.

Some Lodge records are held by Local Archives Services and access to them is by request.

9 Acquisition

9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

For every acquisition (whether purchase, gift, bequest or loan), an Object Entry Form must be completed by a member of volunteer curatorial staff.

The Curator may authorise the purchase of items within the terms of this policy up to a limit of £100, subject to sufficient funds being available. Where necessary, advice will be sought from appropriate bodies or persons as to the suitability of the object for purchase and an estimate of a fair price.

Authorisation by the Board of Trustees is required for the purchase of items costing more than £100.

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

- 15.1 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 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.
- 15.2 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'.

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 considered.
- 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.
- 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, e.g. the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.

Appendices

Museums Association Disposal Toolkit

Spectrum Standard for Deaccession and disposal

<http://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/deaccessioning-and-disposal-the-spectrum-standard/>

Code of Ethics for Museums

<https://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=1155827>

Spectrum The UK Museum Collections Management Standard

http://326gtd123dbk1xdkdm489u1q.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/spectrum_4_03.pdf

Policy Approved by Board of Trustees

Signature: *B Jameson*

Name: Barry Jameson

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