



Warrington Museum of Freemasonry

Collections Care and Conservation Policy

Name of museum: Warrington Museum of Freemasonry (WMF)

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 Conservation and Collections Care 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: February 2021

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

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.

The purpose of the Conservation and Collection Care Policy is:

- 1.1 To preserve collections in the care of WMF
- 1.2 To maximise the safe use and access to collections, making cost-effective and sustainable use of resources
- 1.3 To promote the conservation ethic and teach the principles and methods of conservation
- 1.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Warrington Museum of Freemasonry policies/ Action Plans

Forward Plan

Collections development Policy

Conservation and Collections Care Action Plan

Documentation Policy and Action Plan

Documentation Procedural Manual

Access to Collections Policy

2. Principles of conservation and collections care

2.1 The policy covers all activities that are designed to preserve the cultural assets of WMF, including preventive measures as well as interventive/remedial conservation.

2.2 The policy aims to maximise intellectual access to collections by sharing understanding of their physical nature and needs. It aims to present collections in the best possible condition.

2.3 The policy aims to promote physical access to and use of collections, while minimising risks to the objects and to users.

2.4 The policy aims to make sustainable use of resources in local/regional/global contexts.

2.5 The policy applies to all WMF collections and objects in WMF care (e.g. loans) The standard of care may vary according to significance; rarity/replaceability; fragility, access demand for individual items and collections and owner requirements for items on loan.

2.6 The policy relates to all volunteers of WMF.

3. Approach to conservation and collection care

3.1 The preservation of WMF cultural assets will be optimised by assessment and reduction of risks to them, with priorities decided in the light of their needs and significance.

3.2 WMF will aim to meet appropriate published standards and benchmarks in collections care.

3.3 WMF will document all activities covered by the policy to the standards outlined in Spectrum, making sure that all conservation information is accessible via the object number, and is up-to-date, with the name of the person who performed the work, the organisation to which they belong and the date on which it took place.

3.4 WMF will employ qualified and experienced staff to implement the policy.

3.5 WMF will seek to obtain appropriate specialist advice, working with contractors where necessary.

3.6 The Curator and Board of Trustees will agree an annual action plan to outline any required conservation and will co-ordinate and be responsible for the delivery of the plan.

3.7 Where WMF concludes that it is unable to provide adequate care or accommodation, or if better care of and/or access to collections can be provided by other organisations rationalisation will be considered using the Museums

Association's Disposals Toolkit in order to follow best practice.

3.8 WMF will seek to benefit from close partnership with the Museum and Library of Freemasonry and Warrington Museum and Art Gallery in the care of archives and other paper-based collections.

3.9 Projects involving collections should always benefit from the input of the Curator and larger projects may require the input of specialist advice, from a conservator or Collections specialist, from Warrington Museum and Art Gallery or The Library and Museum of Freemasonry London.

4. Buildings and environments

4.1 WMF will seek to ensure that all collections are housed in buildings that meet agreed minimum standards of construction and condition.

4.2 WMF recognises that the maintenance of a building's fabric and services is fundamental to the preservation of both buildings and collections. Working with Warrington Masonic Hall Company Ltd and Warrington Masonic Group WMF will seek to maintain strong working relationships and secure tenure.

4.3 As part of the collections care plan the internal environment of buildings will be monitored, as an aid to achieving the conditions that promote the conservation of collections. Where collections are stored or displayed we aim for monitoring, with the use of a thermohygrograph, humidity and temperature monitors. Readings will be documented weekly. As a minimum, the normal climatic characteristics of buildings will be understood through recording over suitable periods of time.

4.4 Control of the internal environment of the building, is difficult as the museum room is part of a large building with many variables. Once baselines have been established, further intervention may be required, following Conservation advice.

4.5 For reasons of economy and sustainability WMF recommends passive controls over mechanical controls wherever feasible.

4.6 Cleaning, housekeeping and pest management are important to the preservation of collections. WMF will establish and maintain programmes that should aim for best practice and use standards such as Benchmarks in Collections Care.

4.7 Objects that may be infested must be quarantined when they enter WMF premises.

4.8 WMF will consult with the Warrington Masonic Hall Company to determine prior to planned building developments and repair programmes are taking place to ensure that the care of the collection has been considered during and after the work.

5. Displays, exhibitions and loans

- 5.1 WMF will ensure that lenders' conservation requirements can be met before agreeing to borrow objects.
- 5.2 A risk assessment will be made before the WMF agrees to lend objects and if necessary the advice of a conservator will be sought.
- 5.3 A condition report will be made before the WMF lends an object.
- 5.4 Objects borrowed and loaned by WMF will be condition checked on arrival and departure.
- 5.5 The Curatorial team will select objects for new displays and temporary exhibitions by assessing their condition and seeking conservation advice if necessary.
- 5.6 The Curatorial team select furniture, materials, mounting and presentation aids used in production of new displays and exhibitions, having reference to current best practice.
- 5.7 The Curator and Board of Trustees will commission any necessary remedial treatment of individual objects to be put on display.
- 5.8 When new displays and exhibitions are planned, conservation implications will be considered at an early stage.
- 5.9 Records will be kept of the loan and exhibition processes in accordance with Spectrum and a reference to the loan or exhibition should be added to the object's record.

6. Collections and individual objects

- 6.1 All proposed acquisitions will be assessed before acquisition and if there are cost implications of conservation and long-term care the Board of Trustees must be consulted.
- 6.2 The Curatorial team will contribute to the selection of furniture, materials, mounts, packaging and presentation aids used in collections stores, having reference to current best practice.
- 6.3 WMF will record appropriate access level for objects using agreed practice.
- 6.4 These records will be used as a basis for selection of handling collections.
- 6.5 The Curatorial team will provide further advice and practical help with packaging and care of objects in handling collections.

7 Remedial conservation treatments

- 7.1 Objects will be selected for treatment in consultation with all relevant parties: Curator, Board of Trustees, owner.
- 7.2 Criteria will include object condition as well as display need.
- 7.3 Only trained conservators will carry out remedial treatment.
- 7.4 Where work is contracted out conservators accredited by the Institute of Conservation (ICON) will normally be selected.
- 7.5 Volunteers may be employed in basic object cleaning and then always under supervision. Anything more than this should not be attempted unless specifically authorised and supervised by a conservator.

8 Emergency planning and response

- 8.1 The Curatorial team will contribute to the content of the emergency plan for the museum.
- 8.2 The Curatorial team must be notified immediately of any incident involving collections.
- 8.3 The advice of a Conservator will be sought, who will supervise the handling and care of collections in the aftermath of an emergency.

9 Training/learning/dissemination

- 9.1 As part of their induction, all WMF staff should be made aware of the issues around handling objects and working within a museum environment. Those who have direct contact with collections will receive basic training in object handling.
- 9.2 WMF Curatorial team will provide training in conservation and collections care appropriate to the needs of and volunteers, using external providers where appropriate.
- 9.3 Specialist trained staff and contractors will be used to handle and transport large, heavy and/or fragile objects.
- 9.4 WMF Curatorial team will share expertise and information in response to requests from individuals and institutions.

10. Budgets and Staff

- 10.1 WMF will review the available resources of the collections care team against the needs of the collections.

- 10.2 The Curatorial team will determine the range and type of work done on collections by volunteers.
- 10.3 WMF will seek external funding for specific conservation projects agreed by the Board of Trustees.

Appendices:

Collections Care Audit Report – 22 November 2017
Collections Care and Conservation Action Plan
Museums Association Disposal Toolkit Guidelines for Museums – Arts Council
England
UK Registrars report for Loans out
Condition report
Environmental monitoring sheets

Policy Approved by Board of Trustees

Signature: *B Jameson*

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Date: **19 February 2018**