

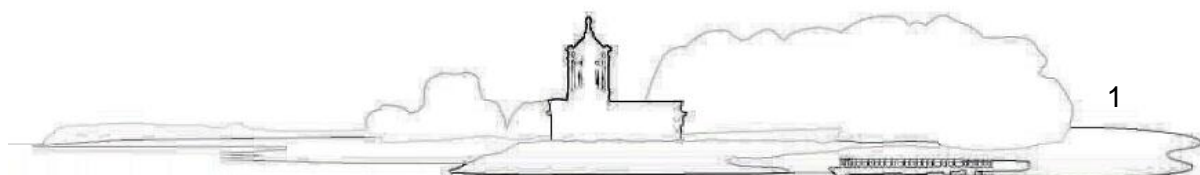
Rutland County Council

Collections Development Policy Rutland County Museum



Version & Policy Number	Version 1.1
Guardian	Robert Clayton Head of Culture & Registration 01572 758435
Date Produced	January 2018
Next Review Date	January 2021

Approved by Cabinet	--/--/----
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Name of museum: *Rutland County Museum*

Name of governing body: *Rutland County Council District Council*

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:

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: *January 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.

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

1.1. The museum's statement of purpose is:

Rutland County Museum (RCM) exists to improve access to the heritage of Rutland, and generate interest and knowledge of the area.

We promote exploration of the history of Rutland through our collections, sites, and expert staff for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. We collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts, records and specimens and hold these items in trust for future generations.

- 1.2. Rutland County Council, as the governing body of the Museum, will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency, and in consultation with the Friends of Rutland County Museum and Oakham Castle, who are the principal funders of all collections acquisitions.**
- 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 of items motivated principally by financial reasons. Disposals will not be undertaken without taking into account the wider implications.**

2 History of the collections

- 2.1** The original collections were those transferred to the museum when it was set up by the former Rutland County Council in 1967, namely the mainly rural life collection of Mr E G Bolton from Casterton Secondary Modern School and the mainly archaeological collection from Oakham School (on long term loan).
- 2.2** Since the museum opened in 1969, the collections have continued to grow along similar lines, including during the period 1974-1997 when it was part of Leicestershire County

Council (LCC). Successive acquisitions policies of that service continued to reflect the importance of the Rutland emphasis of the collections and their concentration on the humanities.

- 2.3 Rutland County Museum was one of several museums operated by Leicestershire with social history collections, but was the only one which concentrated on agricultural history. Material representing the natural sciences, and the fine and decorative arts was not collected as part of the RCM collections since these disciplines were covered by specialist curatorial sections of LCC. Some archaeological material was also acquired by the appropriate Leicestershire collection. As this relationship with Leicestershire is no longer in place, it is appropriate that the restrictions on collections that operated under the arrangement be removed.

3 An overview of current collections

- 3.1 The permanent collections of RCM consist in the main of items of many kinds relating to the archaeology and history of Rutland and its surrounding area, supported by an archive of associated information and reference material. There is a minimal amount of material related to other disciplines or fields of interest.
- 3.2 The principal collecting area of RCM is defined as the historic county of Rutland together with a small number of contiguous parishes such as Knossington and Cold Overton which habitually view Oakham as their natural, if not administrative, centre.
- 3.3 In geographical terms, the majority of the collections are of *local* origin, i.e. with provenances in Rutland or its immediate area; some material, particularly where it has been acquired to fill gaps in the social history collections, is either of *regional* origin or effectively *unprovenanced* where it is of a general nature. The quantity of material with a wider *British* or *foreign* origin is minimal.
- 3.4 In the case of the Oakham School collection, there is also a small amount of archaeological material either of wider *British* origin or, in a very few instances, of *foreign* provenance, but nothing has been added to these aspects of the collection since it was passed to RCM as a long term loan.
- 3.5 Although RCM holds collections of photographs, printed ephemera, and simple social history archive material, other archives are for the most part deposited at the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland to ensure the provision of archive care to the appropriate standards.
- 3.6 In order to maintain museum services and curatorial advice to Rutland in discipline areas which cannot be provided directly via RCM through limitations of staff expertise or practical resources, principally the natural sciences, archaeology and archives, fixed term Joint Agreements have been entered into with LCC, following local government reorganisation.
- 3.7 Most of the items in the collections have been given to the museum, some have been purchased, and a small amount of material is held on loan.

4 Themes and priorities for future collecting

4.1 *The Council recognises that:*

- The acquisition of collections is fundamental to the purposes of the museum, and brings a continuing obligation to provide proper permanent care;
- The acquisition of collections is accompanied by a responsibility to document, preserve, research, interpret and make accessible these collections and associated information;
- The care of the collections requires the allocation of funds and resources at a level sufficient to ensure that proper standards can be achieved and maintained.

4.2 The museum will not collect material evidence indiscriminately, nor will it acquire items that it cannot reasonably accommodate, preserve and maintain in appropriate environments.

4.3 Wherever possible, ownership of copyright, publication and reproduction rights will be acquired at the same time as the items to which they relate.

4.4 The museum may acquire items for the collections as a result of:

- Acceptance of an offer of gift or of a bequest;
- Purchase at auction or from reputable dealers, organisations or individuals;
- Collection by way of fieldwork or similar activities;
- Transfer from other institutions.

4.5 The museum may acquire items for the collections if they meet one or more of the following condition:

- Their acquisition helps to fulfil the purpose of the collections as defined in paragraph 1.1 above;
- Their acquisition prevents important material evidence from being lost or destroyed and preserves it for the benefit of future generations;
- Their acquisition assists in providing a context within which the culture, history and environment of Rutland can be better studied, understood or appreciated, or enables the museum to respond to appropriate user interest and demand in these areas.

4.6 The museum will not acquire any items for the collections where:

- Their acquisition would result in unnecessary duplication of items already in the collections;

- Their acquisition would conflict with the interests of or an agreement with a neighbouring Accredited Museum or other organisation of similar status to the detriment of that institution;
- Their acquisition would unavoidably jeopardise the existing collections, museum users or museum personnel in any way or their condition is such that this outweighs their relevance, importance or long-term value;
- They are offered on the basis of attached conditions which are not acceptable to the museum.

4.7 Themes/priorities for future collecting

- Items of regional, national or international importance, which relate to the history of Rutland and its inhabitants
- Costume and textile related to Rutland
- Artwork from significant artists or showing local scenes of high quality and historical interest
- Archaeological finds and related archives for past and future sites within the County
- Crime & Punishment themes relating to Rutland but particularly Oakham Castle
- Items relating to war/conflict for Rutland individuals both on the home front and in action. These to include but not exclusive to WW1 and WW2
- Items relating to RAF, Army and Missile bases of Cottesmore, North Luffenham
- Sport and pastimes including foxhunting, riding, art and craft etc.
- General social history objects that help to tell the story of Rutland life and add to the interpretation of displays and exhibitions.

Handling objects (for handling collection only) may be acquired for use by school groups, external groups as part of loans boxes and at special events. These objects will not be accessioned into the permanent collections. They will be added to a separate handling collection list.

For how the collections link in with the exhibitions and displays please refer to the Museums current Interpretation Plan.

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 will only take place after a collection review for each part of the collection in question has been undertaken.

Priorities for rationalisation will be for:

- long term loans and loans for renewal
- objects where provenance is unknown or do not fit within the collecting policy
- items in very poor condition where display is not appropriate and conservation costs are deemed out of proportion to the significance of the object.
- Items of archaeological nature that are not considered to be part of a considered archive which means that they are of little or no use for display and research.

5.4 Priority collections considered for rationalisation are

- Archaeological collections where previous archaeological surveys have not been part of a considered archive. These consist of large amounts of objects with no research or display use. Items include pottery, flint and iron slag for example. Rationalisation of this collection will allow us to continue to take in surveys from around Rutland rather than stopping this service due to lack of space available within the store.
- Rural life collection. Due to the nature of the collecting in the early years of the museum the collection consists of large numbers of duplicate items. Many of these items are in poor condition and others have no Rutland association or an unknown association. Rationalisation will allow us to make space available for the adequate storage of the remainder of the collection and allow us to identify objects which would be more useful to the museum as handling collections for schools and workshops etc.

5.5 Collections considered for alternative display or rationalisation:

Large farm & agricultural equipment. The Museum currently houses many large and bulky examples of farm equipment which are difficult to display and interpret effectively within the museum. Although these items do represent a significant element of the history of the County, the Museum believes they could be better presented as a separate collection at a different site, where their use could be more effectively presented. To this end, it is proposed that work is undertaken to find a new, more appropriate setting for them potentially in partnership with other organisations in the County, as a loan collection. As part of the work, the collection will be extensively reviewed, and it is possible that without an alternative location, a number of items may be identified for rationalisation.

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):

- Melton Carnegie Museum to the north
- Harborough Museum to the south-west
- Discover Stamford (located within Stamford Library) to the east
- Kettering Museum to the south
- City of Leicester Museums, whose collections also include some Rutland material,
- Rocks by Rail (formerly Rutland Railway Museum)

8 Archival holdings

- 8.1 As the museum holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (third edition, 2002).
- 8.2 The museum will take into account the collecting policies of the following non-museum organisations regarding the collecting of Archival information.
- Rutland Library Service – Local Studies Collection
 - The Record Office of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland
 - MACE (Media Archive for Central England)
 - East Midlands Oral History Archive

9 Acquisition

9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

- 9.1.1 The Collections Manager as responsible officer is authorised to decide whether or not an item qualifies for acquisition, where necessary taking the appropriate advice, provided that where a potential acquisition may involve the commitment of significant funds or resources in order to ensure that it can be properly cared for, or for its purchase, the acquisition will be referred to the Cabinet of the Council for authorisation.
- 9.1.2 In the case of items purchased, funding to support the purchase, including promises of grant aid where relevant, must be in place and approved before the purchase is committed and completed.
- 9.1.3 Acquisition as here referred to excludes the loan or temporary deposit of an item with the museum for whatever purpose.

- 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 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.

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 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 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 deposited with the Friends of Rutland County Museum and Oakham Castle so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. The Charitable Objectives of the Friends means that their funds can only be used for the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.

Disposal by exchange

- 16.12 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 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.
- 16.14 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.
- 16.15 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).
- 16.16 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

- 16.17 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 16.18 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.
- 16.19 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.
- 16.20 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.
- 16.21 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.

A large print version of this document is available on request



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