



Littlehampton Museum Care and Conservation Policy

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Governing Body	Littlehampton Town Council
Responsibility	Community Resources Committee
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Review Cycle	To be reviewed every 5 years.
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1. Introduction

The Care and Conservation Policy has been written in accordance with Littlehampton's Museums Statement of Purpose and Collections Development Policy. The policy should be used in conjunction with the Care and Conservation Plan which sets how the policy will be put into action.

The purpose of the Care and Conservation Policy is to set a framework for:

- The preservation of the collections in the care of the museum
- Preventative and remedial conservation of the collections
- The safe use of and access to collections, within the limits of the museum's resources

The care and conservation of the collections will be at the forefront of any new project or plans to change displays, storage or during significant building works.

2. Long Term objectives

2.1. Littlehampton Museum hopes to tackle a significant backlog in collections documentation as well as improving the storage and preventive conservation of its collection whilst providing the public with opportunities to engage with the collections. Over the next two years it hopes to:

- Complete a full inventory of the collections, meeting Spectrum 5.0 minimum standards for documentation within the MODES collections management system.
- Create a new store within the Manor House building to help improve collections care.
- Continue with a programme of rehousing objects in inappropriate storage containers or areas.
- Develop the collection through acquisitions and disposals as outlined in the collections development policy.
- Engage the public with the collections documentation project through the in gallery documentation hub, blog posts on the website and object handling sessions.
- Improve collections care – working to Benchmarks in Collections Care 2.1.

3. Standards for Care

3.1 Littlehampton Museum aims to improve the care and conditions of its collections in line with Benchmarks in collections care 2.1, improving its current score over the duration of the current Future Plan document.

3.2 The Museum will manage the collection in line with professional standards outlined in Spectrum 5.0, the UK museum's collections management standard.

4. People

4.1. The Museum will recruit experienced and trained museum professionals to manage the museum's collections.

4.2. All new staff will follow a set induction process including an introduction to this policy and other relevant museum plans and procedures.

4.3. All staff will have the opportunity to further develop their skills through regular development reviews and through continuing professional development.

4.5. All staff and volunteers should be trained on how to handle museum objects as well as how to supervise and lead object handling sessions with the public. Visiting researchers should be briefed on good handling techniques prior to working within the collections. They will be made aware of any health and safety risks or vulnerable objects.

5. Preventive Conservation

5.1. Littlehampton Town Council will ensure that the Manor House (home to the galleries and object stores) is well maintained and any issues that threaten the environment or security of the collections are quickly dealt with.

5.2. Monitoring of environmental conditions within the museum galleries and stores will be undertaken by museum staff using a system of spot checks and a calibrated logging system (LogTag). Any necessary action will be taken to improve the environment as set out in the care and conservation plan.

5.3. Temperature and Relative Humidity (RH) within the Museum Stores will be maintained with dehumidifiers which will be looked after by the museum team and the amenity team.

5.4. Light levels will be monitored through the use of blinds in areas where natural light falls on collection objects and monitored with an Elsec light meter.

5.5. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) will monitor the threat from pests with a series of traps around the museum gallery and stores. The Museum team will complete a quarterly review of pests and act if any infestations are present, seeking the advice of a conservator where necessary.

5.6. A regular housekeeping plan will be in place to prevent the build up of dust alongside museum cases and good storage enclosures to prevent dust build up on collections on display and in store. Collections on open display will be cleaned only by or under the supervision of trained museum staff.

5.7. Handling of objects will be kept to a minimum, all staff, volunteers and visiting researchers will be given a brief by the museum team before handling any objects being made aware of object handling basics as well as any manual handling concerns. Manual handling will be provided for the museum team as part of their induction.

5.8. Damage to collections during transportation (for loans etc) will be mitigated through good packing techniques. Art handling companies or couriers should be briefed and supervised when handling museum objects.

5.9. All objects should be stored in appropriate materials. These include, as appropriate, acid free tissue paper and boxes, polyethylene boxes with silica gel, and metal cabinets. Specialist advice should always be sought whenever in doubt. The Museum is currently improving the storage of objects replacing old or inappropriate storage as budget allows.

6. Remedial Conservation

6.1. Remedial Conservation may be needed for objects due to general decay on an object, disaster, poor display/storage, to improve the presentation of an object for display or a loan request.

6.2. As part of the house keeping programme items identified as being in need of remedial conservation should be set aside. All items in need of remedial conservation should be assessed by a relevant qualified conservation professional.

6.3. The Collection Management budget can be used to cover conservation costs. Grants to help with the cost of conservation will be sought whenever possible. Conservators should be selected from the list of approved contractors by recommendation from regional conservation advisor or from the ICON conservation register.

6.4. All remedial treatments will be fully documented with a written and photographic record and should be filed appropriately according to the documentation manual and the condition notes updated on MODES.

7. Auditing and monitoring of collections

7.1. Museum accessions, updating of collection locations and object condition will be recorded on the collections management system to SPECTRUM 5.0 standards as outlined in the Documentation Plan.

7.2. Monitoring the collection for signs of deterioration or other conservation issues is monitored during regular conservation activities such as IPM, the collections documentation project and stores cleaning.

7.3. A full audit of the collections will take place at a minimum every 5 years – with an aim to audit one part of the collection annually.

8. Use of Collections for loans

8.1. All Outgoing loans will be subject to a loan agreement which is written for each individual loan and all documentation should be completed in accordance with the collection's documentation manual. Outgoing loans should have any necessary conservation work completed before leaving the museum.

8.2. All incoming loans will be subject to a loan agreement for each individual loan and all documentation should be completed in accordance with the collection's documentation manual.

9. Security and Emergency plan

9.1. Security is an important element of collections care. All collections stored within public galleries will be securely locked whilst objects on open display will be secured appropriately. Galleries should be monitored by the staff on reception with any issues being reported to the Curator.

9.2. The Museum security is maintained by Littlehampton Town Council who are responsible for systems of access, keys, CCTV and intruder alarms. A security review will be carried out every 5 years by the Curator.

9.3. Collection Store rooms will be kept locked except when in use. Any visiting researchers or contractors will be supervised at all times.

9.4. The Museum's emergency plan will be kept up to date to ensure that it remains relevant.

9.5. A professional salvage company is contracted to provide additional emergency support (Harwell).

10. Specialist Collections

10.1. The Museum houses no working historic objects.

10.2. The Museum houses an entomology and natural history collection. The museum will seek specialist advice for the care and conservation of this collection. Museum staff will be trained to care for the collection by external museum professionals.

11.Review

11.1. This document will be reviewed at a minimum every 5 years. The next review date is set for September 2021 – towards the end of the current Collections Documentation Project.