

## IWCRO Collections Information Policy

### A) INTRODUCTION

#### A1) Mission Statement

The aim of the Isle of Wight County Record Office (afterwards IWCRO) is to collect records which reflect the history and diversity of the Isle of Wight and its inhabitants. It will then provide conditions to ensure the conservation of these records for present and future generations. IWCRO will also make these records universally accessible to researchers, Isle of Wight Council and other bodies, both, through the Record Office search room and through an outreach programme. This outreach will enhance understanding and inform local decision making, as well as strengthening local community and cultural identity.

#### A2) Purpose of this Policy

This document defines the stages at which IWCRO will capture information about records in our care, in order to maintain their integrity as archives for the benefit of present and future researchers. Accompanying documents will address the parameters by which these records are collected and the means by which IWCRO will make records in our care universally accessible. Further documents will address the conservation requirements of documents collected by this office.

In the context of this and accompanying policies, Archives are defined as documents which have been generated over the lifespan of an individual or business. They are defined (and therefore grouped) by their provenance rather than their subject matter, and the significance of individual items is enhanced with their relationship with the collection as a whole.

### B) COLLECTION INFORMATION

#### B1) Collection Information

Information about collections is collected at various stages, from the point of deposit or donation through the accessioning and cataloguing stages and may be further modified in light of subsequent developments or changes in legislation.

This policy relates to information gathered:

As part of the deposit/donation and accession process

During cataloguing accruals and indexing

As part of location and movement control

During conservation management

## B2) Deposit/Donation and Accessioning

Ensuring the provenance of each donation or deposit received at IWCRO is important in maintaining the integrity of documents and collections at this office. In order to achieve this, The Donor/Depositor is asked to complete and signs a separate 'Accession Form' for each Deposit, Gift, Transfer or Purchase. The form contains the contact details of the depositor/donor, the name of an organisation (if any), a brief description of the deposit/donation and covering dates, along with the permission to dispose/transfer/return as appropriate. The form is then countersigned by a member of staff and a copy is created and given to the depositor as evidence of deposit. The original is retained at the office as proof of title, along with any associated correspondence.

Depositors who make prior contact may be requested to arrange their collections into some form of order and to include with the collection any content lists they have generated. Alternatively, they may be asked to make time to work with the Archivist to discuss the context, significance and complexity of the potential deposit.

The Accession form does not currently include any specific provision for digital records, but IWCRO intends to adapt their accessioning process accordingly. In the meantime, depositors of digital material are verbally encouraged to record metadata that will assist with access and asked whether they are happy for their data to be migrated for the purposes of preservation.

All material was recorded in a manual accession register from 1963 to 2005, at which point an Access database was created. Volunteers have since transcribed the accession registers from 1984 to 2005 into the Access database, but the registers from 1963 to 1983 remain only accessible in a paper format.

All deposits are assigned a unique sequential Accession Number, which is used in the accessions database. Information recorded in the accessions database includes:

Accession Number

Date of receipt

Name of depositor

Contact of depositor

Address/email details of depositor

Terms of deposit

Summary description of deposit (including approximate covering dates and access restrictions).

Strong room location

Subject indexing (carried out retrospectively by volunteers)

IWCRO participates in The National Archives annual Accessions to Repositories to provide updates to The National Archives Discovery Catalogue.

An augmented version of the Accessions to Repositories is printed at the start of the following year with the depositors details removed and other items of local interest (such as local publications purchased) added.

IWCRO records information about the physical condition of a collection during the accessioning process. This information helps to guide the priorities for cataloguing and any restrictions on access until the items can be stabilised and safely handled.

#### B2.1) Cataloguing Accruals and Indexing

IWCRO does not use cataloguing software. Catalogues and box lists are instead produced using a combination of Microsoft Access, Excel and Word, which are stored on the servers of Isle of Wight Council.

IWCRO follows the following standards when cataloguing:

Mandatory elements of the International Standard of Archival Description, General [ISAD(G)]

International Council on Archives, International Standard Archival Authority for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families [ISAAR(CPF)]

IWCRO has a cataloguing backlog which it seeks to address in a number of ways depending on the complexity and nature of the collection. Simple collections may be offered to volunteers as a discrete project, under the supervision of the Archivist. Time will be allocated to the Archivist to catalogue the more complex collections.

All accruals will be accessioned separately. Additions to existing collections will be cross-referenced to existing deposits in the accession register and paper catalogues. Accruals to a small number of collections (primarily parish records, school records, estate or local government records) are accessioned separately and entered into an overarching classification scheme.

Finding aids and indexes exist for specific collections and are available primarily in the IWCRO search room, although there is an ongoing project to make these available online. Volunteers are making an increasing number of these available online using thesaurus terms under the management of the archivist.

## B2.2) Restrictions and Closure Periods

IWCRO collections include records which are subject to access restrictions or closure periods. These may be determined by Data Protection legislation, advice from The National Archive or the Information Commissioners Office, or set by the depositor. Advice is also sought from colleagues in the Isle of Wight Council Legal Department. Restrictions are indicated in the accession register at the point of deposit, catalogues and finding aids and on the packaging of the item itself. There is an ongoing project to ensure that restricted documents in past deposits have markers applied and updated in line with legislation. Staff awareness acts as an additional safeguard both in the search room and when dealing with remote enquiries.

IWCRO encourages depositors not to impose unnecessary restrictions on their collections, and may refuse to accept material for which an unrealistic closure period is required. No item will be accepted with a closure period of over 100 years.

Researchers using IWCRO are made aware of the access restrictions and their rationale. Staff will advise users of any steps necessary to request access to particular classes of restricted records. The Record Office may

also advise departments which have inherited control of closed material on the likely content of requested sources so that they can make an informed decision on access. This is a particular problem with local authority minutes created before the Access to Information Act 1985.

### B3) Locations and Movement Control

IWCRO maintains a record at all times of the location of all documents in its care. It uses duplicate retrieval slips when any documents are withdrawn from the strong rooms for any use, providing an audit trail for the document. Researcher details are recorded on index cards, and the documents they request are recorded in a spreadsheet.

IWCRO will record any mislaid, withdrawn or permanently relocated document and an index card will take its place with details of the document.

Depositors wishing to temporarily withdraw their records, for example for use in an exhibition, must complete a Temporary Withdrawal form and will receive advice on the correct handling and exhibition of the documents. The date of return is negotiated with the Depositor and reminders will be sent for any overdue items.

### B4) Conservation

The physical condition of an item is assessed at the point of deposit and during the accessioning process. This information is recorded on the accessioning register and will be used to inform future cataloguing and conservation priorities.

See also the Collection Care and Conservation Policy and Plan

### B7) Disposal and Withdrawal

At the point of deposit, IWCRO capture Depositors permissions for destruction, transfer or return. A record is then maintained of disposals (except for multiple file copies).

### C) REVIEW

This policy was written in 2018 and will be reviewed in 2023, or sooner if changes are made

