

IWCRO OUTREACH POLICY

A) INTRODUCTION

A1) MISSION STATEMENT AND AIMS

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 means by which IWCRO will engage with existing and potential researchers through an outreach programme based at the Record Office and in the community. It is complemented by a number of other IWCRO Policies reflecting the collection of documents, the provision of access and the care for these documents.

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 through their relationship with the collection as a whole.

B) AIMS

The Record Office promotes the use of its services by engaging with existing and potential customers, either alone or in partnership with other Council departments or outside organisations. IWCRO will:

Encourage stakeholders to make best use of all resources available at the office.

Raise the profile of the Record Office among those who are not aware of how the office could help them.

Increase an awareness of and passion for the Island's past and the documents which reflect this.

Support national and local Heritage initiatives and provide training for project volunteers in the use of archive sources.

Support the priorities of the Isle of Wight Council.

C) OBJECTIVES

In order to meet these aims, the IWCRO will:

Provide advice and guidance to Isle of Wight Council, groups and individuals on the provision of access to archival records.

Work with partners in the Isle of Wight Heritage Service and the wider Isle of Wight Council.

Identify and implement opportunities for individuals to engage with records, either through IWCRO or through partnerships

Enhance access to documents wherever possible.

Raise the profile of IWCRO wherever possible.

Promote the study and awareness of the history of Island communities by working with local groups.

D) OUTPUTS

In order allow the Record Office to meet these objectives, the office will:

Provide access to archives through the Record Office search room.

Develop a series of leaflets and research guides

Provide workshops and talks based on the records held at IWCRO

Respond to requests for information from Council colleagues or the public.

Regularly update the IWCRO website.

Have a good relationship with local groups, providing advice and guidance on archival matters, as well as supporting forums to allow the free exchange of ideas and experiences.

Liaise with departments of Isle of Wight Council such as Planning, Legal and Children's Services as well as Coroners, the NHS, Court and Police and Tourist Offices to help them meet their own objectives.

Work closely with colleagues across the Isle of Wight Heritage and Library Services to support mutual aims and objectives.

E) PRIORITIES

IWCRO are happy to work with any individual or organisation but due to limited resources priorities are assessed on a 6-monthly basis. As this office is part of the Isle of Wight Council, the office will always be guided by the aims and objectives of the parent body.

It is recognised that some individuals are less inclined to visit the Record Office due to social, cultural or economic barriers. These may be groups in Minority Ethnic communities, people with disabilities such as learning difficulties, people from areas of deprivation or those who are unable to travel to the Isle of Wight. Consideration is therefore given to how IWCRO Outreach and Promotion programmes can engage with these groups and explains how the archives may be relevant for them.

F) STAFFING

Although there is no member of staff dedicated to outreach and promotion all members of staff are responsible for contributing to the various strands of this policy.

G) CHARGING

Charges are not made for the use of the Record Office building by local groups, or for introductory talks. Charges are made for workshops led by a member of Record Office staff, although this is assessed on a case by case basis.

When talks are given externally, donations are requested from the host organisation set at a level which reflects their normal payment for a local speaker. This ensures that organisations with a smaller income are not excluded.

H) MONITORING

Statistics on outreach events are routinely recorded and monitored to ensure these events are advancing the relevant policy objectives.

I) MEDIA

IWCRO promotes public outreach events in local media, using the services of the Isle of Wight Council Communications and Engagement Team. Events are promoted in co-ordination with the Library Service, both by putting leaflets and posters in their buildings and through their social media presence. These steps allow the Record Office to reach a wider demographic.

Requests for assistance from local media are also arranged through the Isle of Wight Council. These will be considered on a case by case basis due to the variety of requests and resources of the Record Office. While IWCRO will try to assist with the enquiry, staff and time constraints may limit the level of help.

Requests for assistance from National Media are assessed on a case by case basis, assessing both the benefits and demands on IWCRO.

J) REVIEW

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