

## RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

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Agenda Item No. 10

meeting date: 17<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2017  
title: CLITHEROE MUSEUM COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY  
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES  
principal author: MARK BEVERIDGE

### 1 PURPOSE

1.1 This report is to provide an opportunity for the Committee to discuss and consider the collections policy developed by the Lancashire County Council Museums Service, with whom RVBC has a service level agreement for the management of the Clitheroe Castle Museum. This policy has to be ratified periodically to ensure the museum retains its accredited status.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives – To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley
- Corporate Priorities - To encourage economic development throughout the borough, with specific focus on tourism
- Other Considerations – To develop, with relevant partners, measures to support the visitor economy

### 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Clitheroe Castle Museum was developed in its' current form as a result of the significant capital project initiated by this Council and completed in 2010.

2.2 The major grant funding for the scheme came from the Heritage Lottery fund, which required the Council to operate the service as an accredited service.

2.3 This Council has an annual service level agreement with LCC to manage the museum under the umbrella of their countywide museum service

### 3 ISSUES

3.1 The policy provides a framework for how the collection is managed in all its' aspects. It is an essential element of the accreditation process which is important because it sets nationally agreed standards for museums in the UK. It defines good practice and identifies agreed standards, thereby encouraging development. It is a baseline quality standard that helps guide museums to be the best they can be, for current and future users, maintaining a shared understanding of professional standards.

3.2 It encourages sustainable development through effective planning, responsible collections management and active engagement with communities.

3.3 The achievement of a national standard gives confidence to all stakeholders.

Without accreditation the museum would be significantly hampered when applying for grant funding, managing the collection or acquiring new objects or disposing of items.

#### 4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – Accreditation is covered under the SLA with the County Council and does not require further resources to implement. The budget provision for the annual sum paid to LCC to manage the museum on behalf of the Council is accounted for in the current budget of the Council.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – There is an agreement between the Council and LCC for how the museum is operated.
- Reputation – It is important to have a museum which is accredited, for all of the reasons outlined in this report.

#### 5 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

5.1 Committee is recommended to approve the Collections Development Policy 2017.

MARK BEVERIDGE  
HEAD OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE SERVICES

JOHN HEAP  
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS None

For further information please ask for Mark Beveridge, extension 4479.



# Collections Development Policy 2017

**Ribble Valley Borough Council Collection**

**Name of museum:** Clitheroe Castle Museum

**Name of governing body:** Ribble Valley Borough Council

**Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:** *Insert date*

**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:** *Insert date*

*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.

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

1.1. The museum's statement of purpose is:

Under the terms of the management agreement, the Clitheroe Castle Museum Collection remains the property of Ribble Valley Borough Council but is managed on their behalf by Lancashire County Council Museum Service (LCCMS), Lancashire County Council. Clitheroe Castle therefore is run under the LCCMS Mission Statement, which reads as follows:-

*To collect and preserve Lancashire's diverse heritage and to make it accessible to everyone through high quality cultural experiences.*

1.2. The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.

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, 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 motivated principally by financial reasons.

## **2. History of the collections**

The Ribble Valley Borough Collection tells the story of Clitheroe and the Ribble Valley area from the earliest times to the present day, comprising natural history specimens from the landscape, and objects which explore man's settlement and development in the area. The collection began in 1954, when the Clitheroe Castle Museum was first opened.

One of the important collections is that of Frank B. Mitchell, who was one of the founders of the museum. He had an interest in archaeology, and social and local history and made many donations to the museum. He also influenced many others to donate their objects and collections to the museum. He was instrumental in saving the town's medieval market cross, which is now on display in the museum.

The Clitheroe area is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), due to the sheer variety of geological material. This is reflected in the important geological collections that are held here, which includes type and figured specimens.

## **3. An overview of current collections**

Clitheroe Castle Museum has acquired collections of local artefacts, many of which are significant in the history of the town and its region. The following is a summary of the collections held by Clitheroe Castle Museum. All numbers are approximate.

### **Social History**

The collection comprises about 5,000 items, mainly photographs, ephemera and mixed artefacts, pertaining to 18th, 19th and 20th century local history. It concentrates upon social, domestic and rural life in the Ribble Valley area and especially upon Clitheroe town history.

### **Costume**

There is a small costume collection including civilian dress, accessories and occasional wear such as wedding dresses. The collection is sporadic and includes items from the 18th, 19th and 20th century. There has been no real thematic direction on collecting costume representative of the community past or present.

### **Natural History**

There is a modest natural history collection composing of small amounts of ornithological, entomological and lepidoptera specimens in addition to some flora and fauna.

### **Geology**

This area of the collection concentrates upon the geology of the Ribble Valley area. There are less than 1000 specimens, but the collection includes four type and figured specimens within this total, mainly from the Carboniferous Limestone of the area.

### **Art**

The modest art collection includes oil paintings, watercolours and drawings of Clitheroe Castle and other topographical scenes in the town itself, principally by local artists. It also includes a collection of prints in all media of Clitheroe, its castle, and other historic places (Whalley Abbey, the Hodder Bridge, Waddington Church, Gisburn Priory, etc.) in the Ribble Valley region, dating largely from c. 1750 to c. 1850. In addition, the collection includes several portraits of 19th century local industrialists and their families.

### **Archaeology**

The collection is less than 150 items. Most notable of these are items recently found by Oxford Archaeology North's excavation during the recent refurbishment and building work at Clitheroe Castle Museum. It has mixed origins, generally collected and donated by local worthies.

## **4. Themes and priorities for future collecting**

In some areas there is overlap between the collecting policies of the Clitheroe Castle Museum and LCCMS. Due to the limited storage available at Clitheroe Castle Museum, LCCMS may wish to collect large items should Clitheroe Castle Museum not

be able to accommodate them. These items would then form part of the LCCMS collections.

The Clitheroe Castle Museum seeks to collect works of art and objects associated with the history of Clitheroe, and the Ribble Valley area. In particular artefacts associated with the following historical events will be sought:-

- Items relating to Clitheroe Castle and its history from its construction by Robert de Lacy in the 12th century, and its many military conflicts, including its capture by Royalists during the Civil War in 1644.
- Items relating to Henry VI and his capture near Clitheroe by Yorkist forces during the Wars of the Roses in 1465. In the context of this Collections Development Policy, it is relevant to mention that up to the early 20th century a private museum, formerly at Bolton Hall, near Clitheroe, held a collection of personal memorabilia associated with Henry VI and is said to have been left in the district after his capture.
- Items relating to Clitheroe and the Pendle Witches in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, who were executed at Lancaster on August 20, 1612.
- Items relating to Clitheroe as a historic market town, well known for its fairs which have been regularly held there since the 12th century. Items relating to the Industrial Revolution in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and Clitheroe's cotton spinning, and related industries. In addition, Clitheroe was the main centre for the manufacture of quick lime and plaster for the building industry, using the natural limestone of the region as a ready source of supply for the ten limekilns in the town.

Clitheroe Castle Museum will seek to strengthen the collections in the following collection areas:

### **Social History**

The Governing Body will endeavour to strengthen its collections of material relating to social, domestic and rural life of the Ribble Valley Area. The collections should also concentrate on collecting items pertaining to the history of the Castle. The Museum will take steps to establish collections relevant to all communities in Ribble Valley Area.

### **Costume**

The Governing Body will not seek to expand the costume collection, unless the costume piece in question is of exceptional significance and meaning to the history of Ribble Valley area.

## **Art**

The Governing Body will seek to improve its general art collection of paintings, drawings, sculptures and other works of art, as a visual record of Clitheroe and the Ribble Valley over the past centuries. Works from contemporary artists will be considered. Areas of collecting will include local topography, events and activities, portraits and sculptures of local landowning families, local industrialists and local people.

Clitheroe Castle has been a tourist attraction for visitors for over 200 years, and has been drawn and painted by many major artists including J.M.W. Turner. In this context it is interesting that the local historian, the Rev. T.D. Whittaker, Rector of the nearby Whalley, was a personal friend of Turner. The Castle and its surrounding landscape features in many prints from the 18th and 19th centuries, either as a picturesque scene recorded on the tourist circuit on the way to the Lake District, or as a romantic setting for the legends associated with the Witches of Pendle. The Picturesque Movement of the late 18th and early 19th centuries represents an important phase in the history of British art and Clitheroe Castle and its surrounding landscape was part of that tradition. The Museum will, therefore, seek to add to its collection of prints, and to augment it with oil paintings, watercolours and drawings by artists of national importance who have painted Clitheroe and its castle, and the Ribble Valley area.

## **Archaeology**

Since LCCMS is the repository for archaeological material for the County, the collection of archaeological material should be limited to the environs of the castle site, other than in exceptional circumstances. Material pertaining to Clitheroe and the surrounding Ribble Valley area should be directed to LCCMS in the first instance.

## **Geology**

Local rocks, minerals and fossils, with particular reference to the Carboniferous Strata and gritstones of Clitheroe and the adjacent area, will be acquired. The LCCMS holds an extensive geology collection. Any new acquisitions for Clitheroe should not duplicate anything in the existing LCCMS collections.

## **Natural History**

The Governing Body will not seek to expand the Natural History collection, unless the specimen in question is of exceptional significance and meaning to the history of Clitheroe and surrounding area.

## **5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal**

- 5.1 The museum does not intend to dispose of collections during the period covered by this policy.



There are no plans to review the collections at this time. Documentation of the collections is being carried out by volunteers, and all staff resources are being put into documentation and reconciliation of the collections at other sites. Once this work is done, and a picture of the whole collection emerges, rationalisation and disposal will be considered at this time.

Disposal during this period will only be considered for legal, safety or care and conservation reasons (for example, spoliation, radiation, infestation, repatriation).

## 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):

Lancashire County Museum Service  
Lancashire Archives (formerly Lancashire Record Office)  
Craven Museum, Skipton  
Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery  
Towneley Hall Art Gallery and Museums, Burnley  
Haworth Art Gallery, Accrington  
Ribchester Roman Museum

## 8 Archival holdings

LCCMS is currently working with Lancashire Archives and Lancashire Libraries to write a single integrated development policy, recognising the requirements of different elements of the Lancashire County Council Collections. In the meantime, the policy for any new donations of archival material offered to Clitheroe Castle Museum, would be to discuss this with the Lancashire Archives.

## 9 Acquisition

9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

When donations are offered to the collection, the Museum Manager/Curator would discuss the acquisition further with other staff members and stakeholders, and also carry out the steps required in the LCCMS Procedural Manual. The object can then be authorised for acquisition by the Conservation and Collections Manager if it is in line with the Collections Policy.

- 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 The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

## **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, 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, 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/CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales/Museums Galleries Scotland/Northern Ireland Museums Council (*delete as appropriate*).

- 16.11 The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.
- 16.12 Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.

### ***Disposal by exchange***

- 16.13 The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

### ***Disposal by destruction***

- 16.14 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 16.15 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.
- 16.16 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.
- 16.17 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.
- 16.18 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.