Collections Management Policy

Conwy County Borough Council
Archive Service

December 2020

1) Collections Management Policy

The Repository:
This policy relates to Conwy Archive Service, Conwy Culture Centre

Conwy Archive is part of the Culture and Information section of Conwy County Borough Council. It is the only public archive service in Conwy County Borough. Its purpose is the collection and preservation of documents of historical significance relating to the County Borough in order to make them publicly accessible to all. Its activities support Conwy County Borough Council's Corporate Plan (2017-2022), particularly the priority area of:
- People in Conwy are educated and skilled
- People in Conwy live in a county where heritage, culture and the Welsh language thrive

Status of the Repository:
Conwy Archive seeks to abide by all relevant archive and records legislation, including but not limited to:

- Public Records Act, 1958
- Sections 224-229 of the Local Government Act, 1972
- Section 60 of the Local Government (Wales) Act, 1994
- Data Protection Act, 2018
- Freedom of Information Act, 2000
- BS 4971:2017

The Lord Chancellor appoints Conwy Archive as a place of deposit for particular classes of Public Records under the Public Records Act, 1958. These include records of Courts of Petty Sessions / Magistrates Courts, hospitals, and bodies such as the Board of Trade and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

The Representative Body of the Church in Wales designates it in respect of parish and parochial records relating to the Deaneries of Arllechwedd (Diocese of Bangor) and Llanrwst and Rhos (Diocese of St Asaph).

This policy should be viewed alongside the following:
Digital Preservation Policy
Access Policy

This policy covers the following key areas of Collections Management:

1) Collections Development
2) Collections Information
3) Collections Care and Conservation

1)   Collections Development Policy

1.1 Acquisition

Conwy Archive will acquire, preserve and make publicly accessible records of any date, medium or format that have been assessed as relevant to Conwy County Borough Council and worthy of permanent preservation and are within the means to do so, including:

- Official records of Conwy County Borough Council itself and its predecessor local government authorities
- Other local government authorities and statutory bodies operating within Conwy
- The National Archives approved classes of record
- Ecclesiastical records of the Church in Wales Deaneries of Arllechwedd and Rhos and Llanrwst, or their successors
- Records of Nonconformist Chapels and Circuits
- Records of societies, organisations, estates, businesses, families and individuals.

Conwy Archive will seek to acquire records that objectively reflect all aspects of the County Borough's past and present, without bias of any kind.

It will acquire records of its parent body by transfer from services of Conwy County Borough Council through the Modern Records Service, via the Corporate EDM or any other approved method, per agreed retention schedules, and, from any other source, by donation, deposit or, exceptionally, for documents of outstanding significance to the history of the County, by purchase.

Conwy Archive will acquire material relevant to the history of Conwy County Borough (i.e. the four authorities that were merged in 1996 to create Conwy County Borough Council, Aberconwy, Colwyn and parts of Clwyd and Gwynedd, and prior to 1974, those parts of the historic counties of Caernarfonshire and Denbighshire which now fall under Conwy's administration). It will also acquire material of other geographical areas if the dispersal of such material detracts from the understanding of the collection as a whole or of the history of the County Borough.

It will liaise with the Archive Services of neighbouring local authorities to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest in its Collection Policy. It will liaise with other sections of Conwy County Borough Council that have a heritage remit, primarily the Museum Service, to ensure there are no conflicts of interest.

It will liaise with other sections of Conwy Borough Council to create awareness of our role and to help identify other records of cultural value.

Conwy Archive Service encourages good relationships with depositors and donors of archives. We welcome all relevant information regarding a collection

that owners can supply at the point of accession in order to establish provenance, collection context and content, ownership, and copyright. The ownership status of a number of smaller collections deposited a long time ago is unclear because the depositor has not kept in contact or has died.

Specific identification of gaps in the collection, and planning on how it is proposed to fill these gaps, will be contained in the Collections Development Plan.

1.2 Media

Conwy Archive will not normally acquire records in a format that is beyond its current or planned capability to store, interpret, conserve or make accessible for consultation. Accordingly, it will accept records that are:
- Paper
- Parchment
- Bound volumes
- Engravings and photographs on paper and glass
- Maps, plans and architectural drawings
- Audio-visual material, but excluding original film or sound recordings. Conwy Archive does not have appropriate storage and access facilities for these media but will liaise with the specialist National Screen and Sound Archive on behalf of donors, in order to ensure that the material is stored correctly and that a digital copy is made available for local access
- Digitally-born material, unless on media or a format outside the scope of hardware or software in Conwy Archive's possession.

It will not normally accept artefacts but will direct these to the authority's Museum Service. It will seek to ensure that catalogue entries for both Services cross-reference related material.

1.3 Limitations to Collection Policy

Only documents which are deemed by the Archivist in charge to be of sufficient quality (i.e. historic importance) for permanent preservation will be accepted.

Documents in poor physical condition requiring conservation treatment beyond the capacity of the Archive Service may not be accepted.

Documents requiring an extensive closure period before they are publicly accessible may not be accepted.

It is a condition of acceptance that records will be available for public access, subject to physical condition allowing production, either immediately or from a

specified date, whether by statutory closure period or by agreement with donor or depositor.

Published material is normally outside the scope of our remit, with the exception of relevant local newspapers.

1.4 De-accessioning

Conwy Archive accepts the principle that there is a strong presumption against the disposal by sale of documents in their ownership.

Records are acquired with the intention of permanent preservation but Conwy Archive reserves the right to review them later (e.g. in the case of duplicates or subsequent accessions of, or relating to, the same organisation or individual).

Conwy Archive reserves the right to return records deemed unsuitable for permanent preservation to depositors, to destroy such records with donors / depositors' approval, or to recommend transfer to a more suitable repository. This intention, if applicable, shall be made clear to donors / depositors at the time of transfer.

1.5 Benchmarking of Collections Development within the collecting community

The policies of all neighbouring authorities' Archive Services have been reviewed for the purposes of Conwy Archive Service's Collections Development Policy. These authorities are Flintshire, Denbighshire, Anglesey, Wrexham and Gwynedd. This policy has also been written in close consultation with Conwy Museum Service.

2) Collections Information Policy

2.1 Introduction

Conwy Archive Service recognises that good documentation of its collections, through accessioning and cataloguing, is fundamental to collection management and to good public access.

Maintaining accurate documentation of our archive collections is a central responsibility of Conwy Archive Service. The two types of documentation, namely accessioning information and cataloguing information, are both collected and stored using a specialist archive software system and hard copy backup. For born-digital records, Conwy Archive Service recognises the need for, and will seek to acquire, additional metadata required for the purpose of long-term preservation and access.

Conwy Archive Service works towards meeting common international standards governing the creation of catalogues for archives, both digital and analogue, including but not limited to:

- ISAD(G) (General International Standard Archival Description 2000)
- Dublin Core
- PREMIS (Preservation Metadata: Implementation Strategies)
- EAD (Encoded Archival Description)
- METS (Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard)

Procedural manuals and workflows are available to guide staff.

2.2 Accessioning

Recording the provenance of material within Conwy Archive Service's custody is a crucial part of preserving the integrity of Conwy's archival heritage. The Service will accession every donation, loan, purchase and bequest of records in order to achieve this.

The Archive Service uses its database to record the following details for each accession: title, date range, description, any access restrictions, terms of deposit, details of depositor and staff member recording accession. The accession registers are for internal use only. For digitally-born records, additional technical metadata is required.

The CALM database contains brief details of all accessions from the earliest deposit in 1996, but full details of accessions are still being slowly added to CALM and legacy data from hard copy registers is being imported. A hard copy accessions register is also maintained.

A formal receipt for every donation, loan and bequest will be issued, requiring the countersignature of the depositor, donor, or executor / administrator of the estate. A copy of Conwy Archive Service's 'Terms of Deposit' is available as a separate document, and is legally binding.

The unique number assigned to each accession is linked to the full detail of the accession, including depositor or donor's contact details, and associated catalogues. It is not available to the public.

The Appraisal field in CALM records actions relating to the evaluation of the accession for permanent retention, as well as the quantities of any material confidentially disposed of. The Copyright field records any specific information relating to any known intellectual property rights; where there is no information staff are guided by the terms of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and the Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003.

Integral to the accessioning process is the management of information relating to the source of the material. This is retained in the Depositors

database in CALM. Combined with information in the Legal Status field, this supplies the detail needed to authenticate ownership and the legal status of collections held. Historic depositor details are being and will continue to be added to CALM.

2.3 Access

Cataloguing the material within Conwy Archive Service's custody is essential to enable staff to manage the information retained for permanent preservation within the Archive, and to enable public access as appropriate.
Conwy Archive Service coordinates cataloguing through its Collections Information Plan to create new and improved information about the collections in its care.

All new cataloguing conforms to current professional standards, namely the principles and mandatory elements of the General International Standard of Archival Description (ISAD (G)), the minimum requirements for Dublin Core, and the requirements of Conwy Archive Service's CALM database. Older catalogues may not meet these standards, however these catalogues have been identified after an assessment programme and work is ongoing to update them.

Accruals to existing collections are added to the same collection but details of which accrual forms which portion of the collection are available via the accession number for each accrual.

Collection level descriptions are created immediately a new collection is accessioned. Cataloguing is inputted directly into the CALM database. It is then made available on the internet via CalmView, the CALM database public access module. A hard copy print out will also be made available in the search room.

In common with many record offices in the UK, Conwy Archive Service has a small percentage of material which is not catalogued. This material is not easily accessible to the public. Uncatalogued material may make it more difficult for Conwy Archive Service to comply with Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation.

Cataloguing work as scheduled in the Collections Information Plan created as part of the Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan (CCMP) for the Conwy Culture Centre was completed in full. An updated plan sits within the new edition of the CCMP designed for the 3-year period following the end of the Conwy Culture Centre project.

2.4 Restrictions and closure periods

Conwy Archive collections include records subject to certain access restrictions or periods during which the records are closed. These are

determined by Data Protection legislation, record condition, conservation status, advice and guidance from The National Archives and the Information Commissioner's Office, or imposed by the depositor. It is Conwy Archive's policy to mark the CALM catalogue entry and the archival packaging with these restrictions.

2.5 Location and movement control

Conwy Archive Service aims to maintain up-to-date information on the collections in its care. It uses the Locations database, which is updated as necessary, within CALM to provide locations information. Each archive container is barcoded, with documents and their packaging clearly labelled within. When documents are accessed paper document request slips, containing the details of the document and the user, are used to track the documents being retrieved and returned. Future expansion of the use of barcoding to enhance paperless location control is being considered. In line with our Access Policy, researchers' details and evidence of their visit are recorded through the Archive Card system and strict search room rules apply.

The Archive Service will ensure that information about mislaid or withdrawn records is recorded on the CALM database.

Archive material must not be temporarily removed on loan, for example for exhibition purposes, without a designated document request form being filled in. The person removing material must be supplied with information on the correct handling and care of the material and a return date must be agreed.

3)   Collections Care and Conservation Policy

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to state the principles that guide the care and preservation of Conwy Archive's collections. It applies to all materials and all formats, including digital records and surrogates. It incorporates elements of pest control.

Conwy Archive has a responsibility to ensure continuing availability and authenticity of the records that it holds in trust for present and future generations. Given the unique and irreplaceable nature of archives, loss of material is a significant risk to the institution and to Conwy County Borough as a whole. Preservation is the passive protection of a document by the provision of safe packaging, storage, environmental conditions and appropriate access arrangements. All staff are trained in document handling and preservation activities.

3.2 Standards

The Preservation Policy has been developed in accordance with best practice standards employed by the archive profession, and in particular The National Archives and the British Library. Relevant standards include:

- BS 4971:2017 Conservation and care of archive and library collections
- BS EN 16983:2018 Conservation of Cultural Heritage. Specifications for location, construction and modification of buildings and rooms intended for the storage or use of archive collections
- 'Integrated Pest Management', British Library, 2001
- The European Confederation of Conservators – Restorers Organisations (ECCO) Code of Ethics, 2002
- ISO 14721:2012 – Space data and information transfer systems - Open Archival Information System (OAIS)

3.3 Security

Conwy Archive Service is housed within a bespoke new building housing several co-located services. The site has an overall site manager. The building is checked regularly and routinely for signs of water ingress, pests, vandalism and structural defects. Once identified, problems are reported to CCBC's Property Repair Service. Fire detection and prevention systems are maintained in line with current standards and are tested and serviced regularly. The building has a high level of security, with security alarms and sensors fitted throughout the building, along with CCTV cameras monitored 24 hours a day. Access fob permissions and designated keys restrict entry to the Archive Service search room and strong room to archive staff only. The back office areas are restricted to Conwy Culture Centre staff only. Visiting staff and contractors are signed in and supervised where appropriate.

3.4 Storage environment

Conwy Archive understands that of all potential risks to the long-term preservation of physical records, inappropriate storage is one of the most significant.

It seeks to ensure that appropriate and secure strong room accommodation, in conformity with BS 4971:2017, is provided for all its holdings. It moved its collections into purpose-built new accommodation in February 2020.

3.5 Environmental conditions and monitoring

Data loggers monitor for temperature and relative humidity in container micro-climates and these are analysed by conservation specialists at the National Conservation Service on a three-monthly basis. Additionally, while the collections settle into the new building, staff are conducting spot checks of temperature and relative humidity. The strong room also has four humidity, temperature and CO_2 monitors, which communicate with the air handling unit and are connected to the Building Management System (BMS). These

sensors take readings every 15 minutes, which allows for environmental patterns and changes to be observed over a period of days. The aim is for the strong room accommodation to be stable within suitable levels of temperature and humidity without frequent artificial intervention. There is also a pest management programme.

In addition, appropriate archival quality storage is provided in the way of conservation-quality packaging and boxes.

Water detection alarms and various insect traps are located around the strong room.

3.6 Accession

All material is inspected for signs of infestation by insects or mould upon accession. New accessions are, where necessary, placed in isolation for stabilisation and observation. All accessions are in any case held in a separate cleaning room prior to processing. An air bench and suitable Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is available in the cleaning room to ensure documents can be cleaned appropriately and safely.

3.7 Access (handling)

Documents are made accessible to staff and searchers under controlled and supervised conditions in a search room. The search room has blinds and UV filters on the windows to prevent light damage. All visitors to the Archive are made aware of search room rules, which include guidance on handling documents. Pencils, unbleached cotton gloves, book support cushions and archival document weights are provided, and staff are trained to be vigilant and ready to give advice.

3.8 Access (reprographics, surrogates, and exhibitions)

Staff take great care before making a copy of an archival item. Since moving into our new location we no longer photocopy material while members of the public are on site; staff instead carry out digital reprographics (photography and scanning).

The Service seeks to digitise collections where appropriate in order to enhance access and to further protect the originals. Where available, surrogates in the form of microforms, paper or digital copies are made available for public consultation in preference to original documents.

Archive collections are only placed on exhibition on a temporary basis. If a depositor requests temporary withdrawal of an item for his or her own outreach purposes advice is given on care of the document while it is outside

our custody. No archive items will be on long-term display at Conwy Culture Centre; a reproduction will be sought for this purpose.

3.9 Disaster preparedness

Conwy Archive has an Emergency Plan that has been recently created as an integrated plan for the Conwy Culture Centre following the Service's move. This is reviewed and updated regularly. Staff have designated roles within the plan, with deputies also assigned for resilience. Disaster kits containing salvage and emergency response materials are kept in an easily accessible location, as recorded within the plan. Conwy Archive subscribes as a Priority User to Harwell Document Recovery Service. Practical training for all staff in responding to disaster situations is provided periodically.

3.10 Conservation

Conservation is the active protection of a document by physical or chemical treatment, to prevent further deterioration.

Conwy Archive currently contracts out conservation work to appropriately qualified and experienced Conservation Services. Suspect or damaged material is noted and referred to the conservator for advice and treatment based on priority. A Conservation Log is kept for the purpose of recording all conservation needs and actions carried out. All conservation treatments carried out comply with The European Confederation of Conservators – Restorers Organisations (ECCO) Code of Ethics, 2002.

3.11 Digital Preservation

Conwy Archive will support and implement recommendations for the care and migration of born-digital documents through its activities with the Modern Records Management Service and other appropriate Conwy services.

In respect of digital material offered to the Archive for permanent preservation, Conwy Archive Service is a partner in a Wales-wide initiative sponsored by ARCW (Archives & Records Council Wales) to develop a Digital Preservation Strategy, which, once adopted, will ensure appropriate software systems and metadata are used to preserve and enable access to the records. Advice will be taken from CCBC's Information Technology Section as relevant.

3.12 Housekeeping

Arrangements are in place for housekeeping tasks including cleaning of both public and secure areas in order to minimise the threat to collections from pests, pollution and mould.

3.13 Finances

Conwy Archive Service has control over its own conservation budget, which is part of the overall Archive Service budget. Care and maintenance of the repository and its storage facility are covered by a shared archive and library service budget for the building.

3.14 Statement of responsibility

Overall responsibility for the care of archive collections lies with the Senior Archivist and Records Manager, who may delegate specific responsibilities to /the Assistant Archivist and Archive Assistants as appropriate.

<u>Date of Review</u>

This policy statement will be reviewed as necessary and not less than every 5 years. The next planned review date is therefore December 2025.