

PITSTONE & IVINGHOE MUSEUM SOCIETY

ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL POLICY

Museum: Pitstone Green Museum

Governing Body: Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society

Date approved by governing body:

Date at which policy due for review: 14th April 2024

Policy reviewed 17th Nov 2015

4th April 2019

1.0 Introduction

The collection housed at Pitstone Green Museum is owned and controlled by Pitstone & Ivinghoe Museum Society. The Society has a 99-year lease on a large area of Pitstone Green Farm, which includes buildings, and external areas for display and car parking purposes. Most buildings are of various dates from 1831, but there is an early 17th century timber framed threshing barn which is in the centre of the site. Pitstone & Ivinghoe Museum Society is a registered charity having four trustees

2.0 Statement of purpose

The overall purpose of Pitstone Green Museum is to collect, document and preserve for posterity artifacts which mainly reflect local (usually within a 25 mile radius of Pitstone) agriculture, social, domestic and rural life, and local trades and professions covering the period from early 19th century to mid 20th century and earlier if applicable to our archaeological collection.

The museum would only, in unusual circumstances, accept artefacts on loan, the intention being that we should own items on display.

- Where, for reasons of value, the item is on loan (for example, the Lancaster Cockpit, tractors, motor vehicles etc), written agreement must be reached with the owner as to the period of loan and/or the notice required by the museum prior to removal of said object. For the time such objects are in our care, they will be treated in the same manner as museum owned artefacts, catalogued and displayed
- Where lower value objects have been accepted for loan from the volunteer body, they will be treated as museum artefacts and catalogued as such until the volunteer or museum deems otherwise. In such circumstances it will be expected that the item remain on display until the open day calendar is completed for any given year.

3.0 The Collections

3.1 Agricultural: A large collection of mainly locally used tools, implements, machinery, equipment including horse/tractor drawn ploughs, sowing, cultivating and harvesting items together with associated carts, wagons, tractors and heavy horse harness. Both arable and livestock farming are well represented

3.2 Rural Life: Domestic (including radios, toys and ephemera) and rural life objects are well represented and many are displayed in a reconstruction of a Victorian kitchen and associated themed rooms. In addition a very large collection of old photographs and slides is carefully preserved.

3.3 Local trades and professions: The collection includes artifacts used by blacksmith, wheelwright, carpenter, cobbler, market gardener, plumber, printer, undertaker, brush maker, shepherd (including sheep shearing), thatcher, hedge-layer, brewing (Ivinghoe Brewery) poultry and pig keeping.

3.4 Archaeology: This section started when Society members helped with rescue digs on archaeological sites temporarily exposed during the winning of chalk in the local cement company's quarries. In addition glass bottles have been included where these have been dug up and are of local

interest. Specimens will continue to be collected if they have been found locally.

3.5 Stationary Engines: We have a growing collection of stationary internal combustion engines of the type used to power static barn machinery. In addition there is one very large horizontal single cylinder Crossley gas engine in working order and a restored Crossley Oil engine which runs a rack saw once used on the local Rosebery Estate. All these items have been restored and are jointly maintained by the Beds and Bucks Stationary Engine Club (who are corporate members of the Society) and PIMS volunteers.

4. Limitations on collecting

4.1 The museum recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as inadequate staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

5.0 Acquisition Policy

5.1 The museum will consider any item offered subject to the following conditions and the collecting criteria. Due to the existing size of the collection and the limited space available limited collecting currently occurs.

5.2 Items will be acquired through donation, bequest or exchange whenever possible. Funds may be made available to allow acquisition by purchase in exceptional conditions. This was the case with the acquisition of the Cook Collection in 2014.

5.3 As the museum holds / intends to acquire archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the Arts Council Accreditation Standards.

5.4 The museum will not accept any gift or bequest to which conditions are attached, except in so far as they are intended to ensure the permanent protection of the item in the museum and then only within the terms of the Disposal Policy. The use of the term "permanent loan" is recognized as having no legal status.

5.5 The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields and will consult with such organizations where conflicts of interests may arise or to define areas of specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources. Specific reference is made to the following museums: -

- Chiltern Open Air Museum.
- Milton Keynes Museum.
- Buckingham Museum, Aylesbury

5.6 This acquisition policy is to be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is noted above. The Arts Council will be notified of any changes to the acquisitions policy and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

5.7 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy should only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

5.8 Acquisition procedures

5.8.1 The museum will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, 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.

5.8.2 In particular, 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).

5.8.3 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 DCMS in 2005.

5.8.4 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.

5.8.5 The museum will not acquire archaeological antiquities (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, such as reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure as defined by the Treasure Act 1996 (in England, Northern Ireland and Wales) or reporting finds through the Treasure Trove procedure (in Scotland).

5.8.6 Any exceptions to the above clauses 5.8.1, 5.8.2, 5.8.3 or 5.8.5 will only be because the museum is either:

acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin; or

acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgement of experts in the field concerned has not been illicitly traded; or

acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin; or
in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970.

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.

5.9 Spoliation

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.

5.10 Collecting criteria

5.10.1 There must exist within the museum a suitable category into which this object will fit.

5.10.2 The object must be within our collecting period

5.10.3 Space must be available either to:-

Permit this object to fit into an existing display, enhance and not exactly duplicate any item, or
to replace an item on display that was in inferior condition or having less provenance, or
to store for future display purposes.

5.10.4 The object should be complete and in a condition that it can be displayed immediately. If not it must be easily restorable with the expertise at hand, to a suitable display condition

5.10.5 If an object failed to meet the above criteria it could still be accepted if it is of such importance, high monetary value or rarity such that if we did not accept it would be destroyed but is conditional on space being available for storage or display

6.0 Disposal Policy

6.1 By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and should possess (or intend to acquire) permanent collections in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body accepts the principle that, except for sound curatorial reasons, there is a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.

6.2 The museum will establish that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Any decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken only after due consideration.

6.3 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.

6.4 Decisions to dispose of items will not be made with the principal aim of generating funds.

6.5 Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions but in some cases improvements relating to the care of collections may be justifiable. Advice on these cases will be sought from our professional mentor.

6.6 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, 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), 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 of the collection acting alone.

6.7 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift, exchange or sale, directly to other accredited museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.

6.8 If the material is not acquired by any accredited museums to which it was offered directly, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material.

6.9 The announcement 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.

6.10 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.

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Originally compiled by P. Keeley / N. Groom. (*Reviewed by D Trebble Nov 2015, April 2019, January 2020*)

Adopted by Executive Committee.....

Chairman

