



# Accreditation

## Collections development policy Template

**2014**

**Name of museum:** Pitstone Green Museum

**Name of governing body:** Pitstone Green Museum Executive Committee

**Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:** December 2015

**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:** December 2019

**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:**

To maintain a museum at Pitstone Green Farm that has a secure volunteer base in order to preserve the core collection of original farm buildings, artefacts and local history documentation for the benefit of present and future generations. To make both the site and the collection available to present and future generations for general interest, research and education. Exhibits and attractions outside the core collection to be included to ensure public interest and hence, financial security.

**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 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.**

*Please include one of the following two paragraphs:*

## 1.7. The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons

## 2. History of the collections

The collection was the result of a group of farmers concerned at the disappearance of machinery and artefacts during farm amalgamations in the 1970s. They collected, largely from their own sources, a series of objects related to the farming of the area. They were members of the local history society and, together, formed the museum society. This collection was rationalised and put on display, for the first time, in the early 1990s. Other items of local interest have been acquired since and the collection has grown to be housed in a set of farm buildings, leased from the National Trust, left to them by one of the original farmers.

## 3. An overview of current collections

- **Domestic** – This includes the Victorian Kitchen, Homes and Garden and 1940's Room. Together, this spans a period of around 150 years, with most of the collection drawn from local sources and much from the adjacent farmhouse.
- **Farming** – Large machinery includes a 1950s combined harvester, an early twentieth century threshing box, a number of ploughs, rakes, harrows and tractors. Animal husbandry items are in various locations and show the mixed nature of farming where the chalk downlands meet the clay vale.
- **Engineering** – A variety of forms is on display and is centred around the installation of a 1914 Crossley Gas Engine of 27 litres displacement. Smaller barn engines are also in the collection as are a series of model engines, mostly engineer scratch-built.
- **Technological** – The Science Rooms trace the history of radio, television and personal computing as well as displaying early telephonic communications. The centre of this collection is a 1:1 scale representation of a Lancaster bomber flight deck equipped with genuine instruments, radar, radios and controls, all of which can be demonstrated via a series of electrical sources.
- **Societal** – The Village Room and the local village archive reflect many of the changes in society in both Pitstone and Ivinghoe. Local history is supported by pictures and archived documents and traces from a period of around 1880 through to the present time.
- **Trades** – Plumbing, shoe repair, wheelwrights, brush making, carpentry and smithing are all represented by individual room displays that try to capture the atmosphere of these artisan workshops. Many of the displays are simply the contents of workshops that have been left to the museum and relocated here.
- **Miscellany** – in particular, this refers to the Colin Cook Collection – the contents of which transcend the arbitrary boundaries suggested by this classification of displays and is one man's collecting passion for local domestic history.

## 4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

To continue to collect pertinent agricultural items,

To add to our archive of local village history

To expand the "everyday" household items based upon the core of the Collin Cook Collection

## **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.**

The museum collection is in a more or less complete condition in terms of our mission statement. It is not our intention to either rationalise or dispose of items unless the opportunity arises to acquire a better example or because the item concerned has ceased to be of an acceptable quality. Most of the items in the collection have been given to the museum on the understanding that they form part of a permanent collection and are not to be disposed of for the purposes of fund raising.

## **5 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):**

The Museum of English Rural Life – Reading  
The Buckinghamshire Museum - Aylesbury

## **8 Archival holdings**

We hold a significant local archive in the form of paper and photographic records. All of these items have been digitised and are available on an internally generated data base. The original material is kept in two locations. The photographic files are kept in a fire-proof safe in an office whose ambient temperature is maintained by a low voltage wall heater. The paper archives are kept in a set of Victorian document drawers that are double sealed.

Whilst we would welcome more local material of this kind, the current priority is to re-catalogue the photographic archive into a more easily accessible form.

## **9 Acquisition**

### **9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:**

Acquisitions that are offered voluntarily are authorised by either the manager or the archivist. Any potential acquisitions that carry a cost need to be authorised by the Executive Committee over the signature of the chairman or his nominated deputy, the secretary.

### **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, nor intends 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).
- 12.2 forego its title to a portable antiquity or excavation assemblage, a Curator or other responsible person acting on behalf of the *[name of governing body]*, can establish that valid title to the item in question has been acquired by ensuring that a certificate of 'No Claim' has been issued on behalf of the Crown.

## **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**

**The museum does not hold, nor does it intend to hold, any human remains.**

## **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, exchange 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, 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 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.
- 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.**