

## **Warwickshire County Record Office**

### **Acquisitions and Disposal policy**

#### **1 Governing body**

Warwickshire County Record Office forms part of the Heritage and Cultural Services section of the Libraries, Heritage and Trading Standards Department of Warwickshire County Council. In addition to its archive service, Warwickshire County Record Office manages Warwickshire County Council's corporate Records Management Service. This policy relates solely to the archive service.

#### **2 Contact details**

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#### **3 Statutory position**

Warwickshire County Record Office endeavours to abide by all current legislation impacting on the management of archives<sup>1</sup>, including the following.

Public Records Acts, 1958 and 1967

Local Government (Records) Act, 1962

Local Government Act, 1972 (ss 224-229)

Parochial Registers and Records Measure, 1978 (amended 1992)

#### **4 Official external recognition**

4.1 Warwickshire County Record Office is appointed as a place of deposit for public records outside the National Archives: Public Record Office. The current Public Records (Places of Deposit) instrument is attached as appendix A, and gives details of classes of public record which Warwickshire County Record Office is authorised to hold.

4.2 Warwickshire County Record Office is recognised by the National Archives: Historic Manuscripts Commission as meeting the *Standard for Record Repositories*, and by the Master of the Rolls as a repository for manorial and tithe documents under the provision of section 144A (7) of the Law of

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<sup>1</sup> In this policy, the word *archives* is used as follows: "records which have been created by individuals or institutions in the course of their life or work in order to record an event or transaction and which are worthy of permanent preservation because of their evidential, administrative or historical importance".

Property Act 1922, and section 36 (2) of the Tithe Act 1936, as amended by section 7 (1) of the Local Government (Records) Act 1962.

- 4.3 Warwickshire County Record Office has been designated by the Bishop of the Diocese of Birmingham as diocesan record office for those Anglican parishes lying within the Diocese of Birmingham and the County of Warwickshire, with the exception of those parishes lying within the City of Birmingham itself, but including those within the Metropolitan Borough of Solihull.
- 4.4 Warwickshire County Record Office has been designated by the Bishop of the Diocese of Coventry as diocesan record office for the Anglican parishes lying within the Diocese of Coventry and the County of Warwickshire.
- 4.5 Warwickshire County Record Office acts as official place of deposit for those Anglican parishes which fall within the Diocese of Gloucester and the County of Warwickshire by arrangement with the Diocese of Gloucester and the diocesan record office, Gloucestershire Record Office.

### **Mission statement and priorities**

#### **5 Mission statement**

- 5.1 Warwickshire County Record Office exists to ensure the preservation of historic and current records and information of significance for the study of Warwickshire and its people, and to hold them in trust for the use, enjoyment and education of present and future generations.

#### **To achieve this, we will**

- 5.2 seek out and survey records and information within the community, and either arrange for their transfer to the record office or support their preservation within the community as appropriate.
- 5.3 ensure the physical well-being of the records and information in our care through appropriate storage, security, preservation and conservation.
- 5.4 provide the best possible opportunities for access to and understanding of the record office's holdings and services through qualified and trained staff, finding aids, and supporting information resources, taking full advantage of technological advances
- 5.5 stimulate interest in and make provision for formal and informal educational use of the office and its holdings.
- 5.6 encourage the use of the service and its holdings by all sections of the community
- 5.7 advise on and support the County Council in the management of its own records.
- 5.8 publicise and promote the role of the County Record Office and the service it provides, and foster public interest in the importance thereof.

## **6** **Geographical area**

- 6.1 Warwickshire County Record Office will acquire material from within, or relating to, the administrative county of Warwickshire as at 1 April 1974. Subject to the overriding principle that the integrity of archival groups should normally be preserved as far as possible and practicable, the record office will not acquire records relating to places outside Warwickshire unless they have a close connection with the area.
- 6.2 Warwickshire County Record Office recognises the collecting policies of local authority archive repositories in the cities of Birmingham and Coventry, and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Record Office in Stratford-upon-Avon, all of which fall within the boundary of the historic county of Warwickshire. Warwickshire County Record Office seeks to avoid competition, conflict and duplication of effort, and aims to work closely with all interested parties to ensure that records are placed in the most appropriate home. Records originating from or relating to Sutton Coldfield before its transfer to Birmingham City Council in 1974 are likely to have strong Warwickshire connections, and we would welcome negotiations with Birmingham City Archives over the appropriate place of deposit for any documents offered to either repository which fall into this category.
- 6.3 Warwickshire County Record Office acknowledges the current lack of provision for archives for the Metropolitan Borough of Solihull, which formed part of the administrative county of Warwickshire until 1<sup>st</sup> April 1974. Warwickshire County Record Office will continue to collect pre-1974 records from, or relating to, Solihull, or where the integrity of existing collections would be compromised were complementary material not accepted. Warwickshire County Record Office will continue to contribute to discussion on how to address the anomalous situation arising from the lack of provision for post-1974 Solihull records.
- 6.4 Warwickshire County Record Office will not actively encourage the deposit of records primarily relating to or arising in areas outside the current boundaries, unless there are exceptional circumstances and the agreement of any other interested archive authority has been sought.

## **7** **Subject area**

- 7.1 Warwickshire County Record Office exists primarily to safeguard the records of Warwickshire County Council, but also collects more widely. In addition to records acquired under statute (see 3. above), the service welcomes accessions from other organisations, businesses, non-conformist churches, other places of worship, clubs, societies, families and individuals within Warwickshire.
- 7.2 The archives service will not seek to represent any particular historical, sectarian or other viewpoint in its acquisition of records, but to reflect as objectively as possible all aspects of Warwickshire's past and present.

## **8** **Archival media and genres held**

- 8.1 Archives may be accepted in a range of formats, including paper, parchment, electronic or other digital media, microform, photographic, film or audio tapes.

- 8.2 Records are accepted by the County Record Office when they are deemed by the Head of Archive Service to be of sufficiently high evidential or historical value as to merit permanent preservation. Semi-current records will not usually be accepted, except where special circumstances make this desirable, such as where public records are offered in advance of their expected date of transfer. In such cases, the record office reserves the right to charge for storage and retrieval. The record office also reserves the right to appraise semi-current records.
- 8.3 In the case of electronic, digital media and audio tapes, the record office reserves the right to adopt migration policies which will ensure the readability and long-term preservation of the information contained in such media.
- 8.4 Where the format of archives requires specialist knowledge or facilities for storage or access, such as electronic, digital or audio-visual media, Warwickshire County Record Office will explore, if appropriate, the possibility of transferring materials to a more appropriate repository, and will do so having consulted with relevant bodies and individuals.
- 8.5 Printed materials, including books, newspapers and pamphlets will be acquired by Warwickshire County Record Office where they are judged to be likely to support the use of its archive holdings by researchers or staff.
- 8.6 Warwickshire County Record Office will seek to acquire copies of documents held in other repositories if they relate closely to the existing holdings or to the acquisition policy.
- 8.7 Warwickshire County Record Office will work in close co-operation with Warwickshire County Council's Records Management Service to ensure the systematic transfer of official records to its safekeeping.
- 8.8 Warwickshire County Record Office will not normally accept three-dimensional artefacts unless they have a special relationship with the associated archives held. Artefacts will normally be directed to the appropriate museum on the advice of Warwickshire County Council's Head of Museum Service.
- 8.9 Warwickshire County Record Office will work in close co-operation with Warwickshire County Council's Museums and Libraries to facilitate the transfer of archival material to the County Record Office where appropriate. The record office will also foster positive relationships with other museums and community groups within the county of Warwickshire in order to ensure that archival material is deposited with the most appropriate repository.

## **9 Methods of acquisition**

- 9.1 Warwickshire County Record Office acquires records by gift, purchase, bequest, transfer and/or loan.
- 9.2 Warwickshire County Record Office will evaluate archive collections prior to donation or deposit, and reserves the right to refuse, return or recommend the destruction of any material not deemed to be appropriate for permanent preservation.

- 9.3 The office will not normally accept archives and records which are of a particularly specialist nature, requiring skills or equipment beyond the office's resources to preserve, exploit or interpret.
- 9.4 Acquisitions purchased with the assistance of grant aid will be held subject to the terms and conditions of bodies from whom such aid has been received.
- 9.5 All archives and records received by the County Record Office will be processed in accordance with current accessioning procedures which record information about the nature and provenance of the material in question.

## **10 De-accessioning policy**

- 10.1 Warwickshire County Record Office accepts the principle that there should be a strong presumption against the disposal by sale of any documents in their ownership.
- 10.2 Warwickshire County Record Office has authority to transfer records to a more suitable repository if it is considered that the documents would benefit from relocation.
- 10.3 Records which the County Record Office decides are not worthy of permanent preservation will, in accordance with the depositor's wishes as expressed in the written deposit agreement, either be returned to the depositor, transferred elsewhere or destroyed.
- 10.4 The County Record Office reserves the right to retrospectively review its holdings against its relevant selection criteria, and dispose of material which is not worthy of permanent preservation, subject to securing any necessary permissions.

## **11 Public availability**

- 11.1 Warwickshire County Record Office will systematically supply copies of its finding-aids to depositors and the National Register of Archives.
- 11.2 Warwickshire County Record Office is already, and will continue to be, a contributor to the Access to Archives programme. The record office will also consider participating in future initiatives of this kind.

## **12 Date of statement**

- 12.1 This policy statement was prepared by the Head of Archive Service in November 2003, and approved by Warwickshire County Council's Cabinet in June 2004.
- 12.2 It is due for review in June 2009, or sooner if substantial legislative or administrative changes so dictate.