

Louth Naturalists', Antiquarian & Literary Society Ltd

Acquisition & Disposal Policy 2018- 2021

Name of museum: Louth Museum

Name of governing body: Louth Naturalists', Antiquarian & Literary Society Ltd.

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: May 2018

Date at which this policy is due for review: May 2021

1. Museum's statement of purpose

Louth Museum exists to collect, document, exhibit and interpret material relating to the history and antiquities, natural history and literature of Louth and neighbourhood for the benefit of the public.

2. An overview of current collections

The collections provide a broad catalogue of material evidence which ranges from geology and pre-history through to current cultural artefacts and archives relevant to the last 20 years. The museum also has a significant collection of works relating to local artists, including woodcarver TW Wallis. The following alphabetical list describes the range of collections:

Agriculture: hand tools, sack barrow, potato scales, veterinary equipment, seed drill, Corn Exchange gates, replica statue Ceres (as on Corn Exchange).

Archaeology: Stone Age & Bronze Age tools, Romano-British & Anglo-Saxon material, Cistercian stone coffin, quatrefoil and glass, engraved stone slabs and notices, post-medieval pottery, replica wax seals & medallions.

Archives: indentures, MS documents, architect plans & drawings (James Fowler), handbills & posters, estate agents records, maps, engravings, prints, local newspapers, scrapbooks & printed ephemera, various research materials, large library of books & journals, large number of postcards & greetings cards).

Arms & Armour: Yatagan & other swords, blunderbuss, guns & pistols.

Biology: butterflies, moths, beetles, shells, mounted birds & animals, a few birds eggs.

Costume & Textiles: dresses, uniforms, smocks, samplers, headgear, boots & shoes, 16th century Spanish bedcover, Louth flat weave carpets.

Decorative & Applied Arts: Large collection of Louth crested china, Lincoln Longwool punchbowl, carved credenza.

Fine Art: paintings, drawings & engravings (Bennet Hubbard, Peter de Wint, William Brown, Thomas & John Espin, Bartholomew Howlett, J W Wilson, C R Morton), woodcarvings (T W Wallis), replica Louth Panorama & sketches. Prints & paintings of St James's Church (loan).

Geology: local rocks, fossils & minerals, large Whin Sill & other erratic, Ice Age mammal bones, model formation of Hubbard's Hills.

Medicine: surgery equipment, chemist jars & bottles.

Numismatics: some coins & medals

Personalia: items relating to Sir George Broadley, C S Carter, Claribel, James Fowler, R W Gouding, Andreas Kalvos, George Marshall, Edwin Richardson, Stella Sharpley, Alfred Lord Tennyson, T W Wallis, Tom & Margaret Wintringham, Jack Yates.

Photography: large number photographs (some framed) & negatives (glass & film) including local photographers & 1920 Louth Flood, lantern slides, transparencies, cameras & videos of local events.

Science & Industry: malting implements, local bricks & tiles & brickmaking equipment, carpenters' tools, Arab Platen print machine, typefaces, blocks & printing equipment, Armitage fog signal, survey equipment, telescope, Louth barometer (Innocent Tara), Louth violin (Herbert Tyson).

Social History: domestic items including furniture local shop/trades/pubs items, local fire/police/Civil defence/WW2 items, street name plates, advert panels, market stall, school items, Borough of Louth weights & measures, weighing machine, gibbet cage, mantraps, knife/scissors grinder, model of St James's Church, memorabilia.

Transport: boneshaker, Louth Le Brun bicycles, Raleigh bicycles, children's tandem and unicycles, railway station foundation trowel & bier, Louth bypass opening scissors, models: schooner, Donna Nook lifeboat, traction engine, stationary engine, waterwheel.

3. Themes and priorities for future collecting

Louth Museum will continue to accept donations, or actively purchase material which conforms to its Statement of Purpose. This material must not duplicate items already in the collection and must be regarded as a uniquely important contribution to telling the story of Louth and neighbourhood.

4. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

Louth Museum will review its accessioned collections and non-accessioned material as part of a wider Collections Documentation Project between 2013 – 2015. It will actively dispose of material which does not have a demonstrable local provenance, duplicates other items in the collection, or is too severely damaged to be either exhibited or used for educational purposes.

5. Limitations on collecting

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 staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

6. Collecting policies of other museums

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.

Specific reference is made to the following museum(s):

- Boston Guildhall & Haven Art Gallery
- Alford Manor House Museum, Alford
- Magdalen College Museum, Wainfleet
- Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum, Woodhall Spa
- Museums, libraries and archives managed by Lincolnshire County Council
- Museums, libraries and archives managed by North East Lincolnshire Council.

7. Policy review procedure

The collections development policy will 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.

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 existing collections.

8. Acquisitions not covered by the policy

Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will 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.

9. Acquisition procedures

a. 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.

b. 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).

c. 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.

d. 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.

e. 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.

f. 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 as defined by the Treasure Act 1996.

f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 9a, 9b, 9c, or 9e will only be because the museum is:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
- 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
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin
- 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.

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

10. 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.

11. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

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 13a-13d, 13g and 13o/s below will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

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'.

12. Management of archives

As the museum holds and intends to acquire further archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (third edition, 2002).

13. Disposal procedures

Disposal preliminaries

a. The governing body will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.

b. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.

c. The museum will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.

d. 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.

Motivation for disposal and method of disposal

e. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs 13g-13s will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.

f. In exceptional cases, the disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below in paragraphs 13g-13m and 13o/s will be followed. In cases where disposal is motivated by financial reasons, the governing body will not undertake disposal unless it can be demonstrated that all the following exceptional circumstances are met in full:

- the disposal will significantly improve the long-term public benefit derived from the remaining collection
- the disposal will not be undertaken to generate short-term revenue (for example to meet a budget deficit)
- the disposal will be undertaken as a last resort after other sources of funding have been thoroughly explored

In addition:

- the disposal will only be undertaken in order to directly benefit the collection (rather than the building, for example)
- the disposal will only be undertaken after consultation with the relevant professional body for accreditation

The disposal decision-making process

g. Whether the disposal is motivated either by curatorial or financial reasons, 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 the 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. External 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.

Responsibility for disposal decision-making

h. 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 of the collection acting alone.

Use of proceeds of sale

i. 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. 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 Arts Council England.

j. The proceeds of a sale will be ring-fenced so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard.

Disposal by gift or sale

k. 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 or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.

l. If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly 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 an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.

m. 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.

Disposal by exchange

n. The nature of disposal by exchange means that the museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The governing body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.

o. In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or unaccredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 13a-13d and 13g-13h will be followed as will the procedures in paragraphs 13p-13s.

p. If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.

q. If the exchange is proposed with a non-accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will make an announcement in the Museums Journal and in other specialist journals where appropriate.

r. Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in the museum's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the governing body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

Documenting disposal

o/s. 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.