

FRINTON & WALTON HERITAGE TRUST

Registered Charity No: 289885

Collections & Development Policy (including Acquisitions & Disposals): a short version

This policy applies to all the museums of the Trust, currently the Museum & Heritage Centre, Crossing Cottage Museum and the Trevor Bright Railway Museum, all in Frinton-on-Sea.

Our museums' mission statement is:

- a) to hold collect and preserve archives & artefacts (known as 'the collections') on themes relating to the area of benefit, which comprises the towns of Frinton-on-Sea and Walton-on-the-Naze together with the villages of Great Holland, Kirby Cross, Kirby-le-Soken and Thorpe-le-Soken and their neighbourhood, and to manage those collections, which are held distinct from corporate assets, to professional museum standards;
- b) to interpret and display such material in exhibitions at our museums or other appropriate venues; and
- c) to promote research into subjects directly connected with the collections, to publish the results of such research by way of papers, reports and other literature and to provide information by way of meetings and lectures.

The governing body of the Trust ensures that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and transparently, and accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition or disposal of items to or from the collections. The Trust also recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisitions and disposals.

The care and use of our collections, as well as documentation arrangements, meets the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard by using the Spectrum primary procedures for collection management. However, we also take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements. The Trust undertakes due diligence and makes every effort not to acquire any object unless it is satisfied that it can acquire a valid title to the item under consideration, and it does not dispose of items motivated principally by financial considerations. Disposals are only undertaken for legal, safety or care & conservations reasons, such as spoilation, radiation, infestation, repatriation or duplication.

The Trust does not acquire any objects unless they are satisfied that the object has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediary country in which it may have legally been owned) in violation of that country's laws. In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting & Preventing the Illicit Import, Export & Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from 1 November 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the Trust is guided by the national guidance issued by the Department for Culture, Media & Sport in 2005 and rejects any items that have been illicitly traded.

The Trust does not hold, or intend to acquire, any human remains. So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the Trust does not acquire any object 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 UK or any other country, except with the express consent of any appropriate outside authority. The Trust does not acquire archaeological material (including excavated ceramics) in any case where it has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures, including reporting finds to the landowner or occupier 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).

The Trust uses the statement of principles 'Spoilation of Works of Art during the Holocaust and World War II period: Statement of Principles & Proposed Actions' issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museum & Galleries Commission.

All disposals are undertaken with reference to Spectrum’s Primary Procedures on Disposal. The Trust confirms that it is legally free to dispose of an object; agreements on disposal made with donors are also taken into account. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons, the procedures outlined below are followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or, as a last resort, by 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. A decision to dispose of an object is the responsibility of the Trust acting on advice, not a curator or manager of the collection acting alone.

Once a decision has been to dispose of an item, priority is given to retaining it within the public domain and it is therefore offered in the first instance directly to Accredited Museums that are likely to be interested in its acquisition. These museums will have at least two months for an interested to be express in acquiring the item(s) by gift or sale but if no interest is forthcoming, the museum community at large is advised of the intended disposal either through a notice on the Museum Association’s ‘Find an Object’ web listing service or an announcement in the Museums Association’s Journal as appropriate. The announcement indicates the number and nature of the objects involved and the basis on which they will be transferred to another museum. If no expressions of interest are received, the Trust may dispose of the material to other interested individuals or organisations.

Any monies received by the Trust from the disposal of items are applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This means the purchase of further acquisitions and, only in exceptional circumstances, improvements relating to the care of collections, in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk or damage to and deterioration of the collections, may be justified. Monies must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collections. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections is sought from Arts Council England. Full records are kept of all decisions on disposals and the objects involved, and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the objects concerned, including photographic records where practicable, in accordance with Spectrum’s procedure on disposal.

Disposal by destruction is only acceptable if the material is of low intrinsic significance, such as duplicate mass-produced articles or common items which lack significant provenance, where no alternative method of disposal can be found. It is also acceptable 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. Specialist advice is sought to establish appropriate methods of destruction as appropriate. Health and safety risks assessments are carried out by trained staff where required and the destruction is witnessed by a Charity Trustee. Alternatively, if circumstances dictate, such as the destruction of a controlled substance, a police certificate should be obtained and kept with all other disposal records in the relevant object’s file.

Date of adoption: 20th March 2025

Date of review: