



# Farmland Museum

## Collections development policy

**Name of museum:** *The Farmland Museum and Denny Abbey*

**Name of governing body:** *The Farmland Museum*

**Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:** *23 September 2014*

**Policy review procedure:** *Updated by museum staff and presented at Trustees meeting*

**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:** *10 September 2018*

**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:**

The Farmland Museum has adopted the Museums' Association definition of a museum (1998) and utilises this in its own statement of purpose:

*"The Museum enables people to explore the collections and site for inspiration, learning and enjoyment."*

**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.**

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

## 2. History of the collections

The current collections started in 1969 comprises these main areas:

- Agricultural history: Agricultural machinery and implements used, manufactured or distributed by a county agent, in Cambridgeshire and associated trade catalogues.
- Craft and trade history: Objects and ephemera from different rural crafts and trades practised in Cambridgeshire.
- Social History: Objects and ephemera which relate to and represent the changes in social and domestic lives of people in Cambridgeshire.
- Archaeological finds from Denny Abbey during its excavations in the late 1960s and 1970s. dating from Bronze Age to early 20<sup>th</sup> Century
- A handling collection used for education purposes containing material representing all of the above.

The buildings around the site are also considered to be part of the collections. In particular

- The abbey tells the story of religious orders and tenant farming in Cambridgeshire.
- The 17<sup>th</sup> century stone barn showing how wheat was threshed. Showing how farm buildings were just as much of a tool of the farmer as the plough.
- The post WWII Grain store; highlighting the importance of the grain harvest in Cambridgeshire.
- Walnut tree cottage showing the living conditions of a farm labourer on average means in the 1940s.

The museum was originally in the village of Haddenham but after its owners retirement a trust was established in 1992 to care for the collections from the original museum and to establish a new museum at the Denny Abbey site.

Since then the Fossy collection (rural objects relating to farming in southern Cambridgeshire) has been added to the collection and a collection from the Pell Trust.

## 3. An overview of current collections

There are roughly 9000 accessioned objects in the collection these all represent

- Agricultural history: Agricultural machinery and implements used, manufactured or distributed by a county agent, in Cambridgeshire and associated trade catalogues.
- Craft and trade history: Objects and ephemera from different rural crafts and trades practised in Cambridgeshire.
- Social History: Objects and ephemera which relate to and represent the changes in social and domestic lives of people in Cambridgeshire.

The museum holds archaeological material from excavations at Denny abbey which belong to English Heritage, but are available for the museum to use.

The Museum holds a handling collection of over 1000 objects, this has been acquired through dispersal of the original Farmland Collection and active collecting from 1995 to present. This collection is available for access by groups for educational purposes.

## 4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

**The Museum collects and develops its collection around the following areas**

- Cambridgeshire with a strong emphasis on agricultural and rural life. Particular emphasis will be given to collecting material that is unique to the area, well documented and related to a named family or farm worker at a named farm, or a named trade or craft maker.
- The Museum will collect archives such as printed ephemera and trade catalogues that relate to the specified collecting areas as detailed above.
- Craft and trades collecting will build on the Museum's existing strengths and fill in any existing collecting gaps.
- Social History with a focus predominantly on the areas of Denny, Chittering, Waterbeach and Landbeach.

#### **The museum collects around the following parameters**

- Parishes falling within South and East Cambridgeshires and Fenland District Councils, including the cities of Cambridge and Ely.
- The Museum will collect material which reflects the working life (related primarily to agriculture and rural crafts) of people in Cambridgeshire from 1700 to the present day.

#### **The Museum will not collect**

- Biological, natural history, geological or archaeological material, unless the archaeological material relates to the site and its surroundings.
- Costume, unless it is a working costume related to agricultural, crafts and trades or social/domestic life of Cambridgeshire.
- Fine or decorative art objects or firearms, unless related to agricultural, crafts and trades or social/domestic life of Cambridgeshire.
- Manuscript records, unless they relate to property owned or managed by the Museum.

### **5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal**

**5.1 The museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.**

**5.2 The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.**

Over the period of this collection development policy the Farmland Museum will be disposing of duplicate objects, in particular duplicate pieces of farm machinery. The disposal process will follow the outlines of 5.1 and 5.2. This disposal is necessary for us to better use our resources into the care of fewer larger objects as well as to enable us to accept larger objects which are not represented in our collection.

### **6 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):**

- Museum of Cambridge
- Burwell Museum
- Ely Museum
- Cambridgeshire County Libraries service (specifically the Cambridgeshire Collection)
- Cambridgeshire County Records Office

*There will be a presumption against collecting photographs, except where they relate to an object in the collection and the site of the Museum, Abbey and its immediate surroundings. Offers of photographs will be directed to the Cambridgeshire Collection.*

## **8 Archival holdings**

As the museum holds 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 (3rd ed., 2002).

## **9 Acquisition**

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

The delegated member of staff responsible for accepting acquisitions is expected to only accept objects agreed under the museum's collecting remit. All new acquisitions are expected to either fill gaps in the collection or enhance the existing collection.

**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 As the museum holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005.**

## **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 Exceptions**

**12.1 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.**

## **13 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.**

## **14 The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains**

**14.1 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 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

- 14.2 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'.

## 15 Disposal procedures

- 15.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.
- 15.2 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.
- 15.3 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.
- 15.4 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.
- 15.5 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.
- 15.6 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.
- 15.7 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.
- 15.8 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).

- 15.9 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.
- 15.10 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.
- 15.11 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.
- 15.12 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.
- 15.13 The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.
- 15.14 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 15.15 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.
- 15.16 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.
- 15.17 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.



**15.18 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.**