



Seirbheisean Dualchais

Outer Hebrides Heritage Services

Museum & Tasglann nan Eilean

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Collections Care and Conservation Policy



**Museum &
Tasglann
nan Eilean**

Museum & Archive

Museum & Tasglann nan Eilean

Lews Castle

Stornoway

Isle of Lewis

Outer Hebrides

HS2 0XS



**Museum
nan Eilean**

Lionacleit

Museum nan Eilean

Sgoil Lionacleit

Lionacleit

Isle of Benbecula

Outer Hebrides

HS7 5PJ



Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

**Approved:
Review date:**

Background to the Policy

Governance of Museum nan Eilean

Museum nan Eilean's governing body is Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, the local authority for the Outer Hebrides. The Scheme of Administration (<https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/your-council/committees/constitutional-documents>) details the membership, quorum, purpose and functions of the Comhairle and its Committees, Sub-Committees, Panels and Joint Consultative Committees. It also regulates certain aspects of procedure. It makes explicit reference on page 40 to the provision and management of museums for the display of antiquities, works of art and objects of educational and scientific interest being under the remit of the Sustainable Development Committee

Local authority museums are deemed to have the power to operate museums through the **Public Libraries Consolidation (Scotland) Act 1887**. "The library authority or museum or art gallery authority, as the case may be, may from time to time for the purposes of this Act purchase, feu or rent any land, or any suitable building; and may erect any building suitable for public libraries, public museums, or for any one or more of those objects, and may alter or extend any buildings for such purposes, and repair and improve the same respectively, and fit up, furnish, and supply the same respectively with all requisite furniture, fittings, and conveniences..... The library or museum or art gallery authority, as the case may be, shall manage, regulate, and control all libraries or museums or art galleries established under this Act, or to which this Act applies; and shall have power to do all things necessary for such management, including the following powers; that is to say, to purchase books, newspapers, reviews, magazines, and other periodicals, statutory, pictures, engravings, maps, specimens of art and science, tape recordings and films]and such other articles and things as may be necessary for the establishment, increase, and use of the libraries or museums or art galleries under their control, and to do all things necessary for keeping the same in a proper state of preservation and repair."

Section 32 of the above Act states “All libraries, museums, or art galleries established under this Act, or to which this Act applies, shall be open to the public free of charge, and no charge shall be made for the use of books or magazines issued for home reading.”

Section 163 of the 1973 Local Government Scotland Act refers to public libraries, museums and galleries “each regional council shall have a duty in consultation with regional councils within their region to ensure that there is an adequate provision of facilities for the purposes of the said Act in that application for the inhabitants of their region”.

Policy Context

The Collections Care and Conservation Policy is part of a Collections Management Strategy for Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean (the archive service of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar) and the Archaeology Service. The Collections Management Strategy includes Collections Development and Documentation policies.

The key purpose of Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean is:

Our Mission 2023 – we do this

We promote the value and potential of Outer Hebrides heritage by safeguarding collections and making them accessible for present and future audiences through exhibitions, engagement and research, while upholding professional standards.

Our Vision 2023 – so that

Our rich heritage will be valued, preserved and enjoyed as a key asset of the Outer Hebrides, with the necessary investment and professional skills, enabling it to grow sustainably and ethically, so that our collections, Gaelic culture and intangible heritage will enrich, educate, challenge, inspire and reflect diverse audiences.

Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean follows the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC) definition of conservation, which is *'any action taken to determine the nature or properties of materials used in any kinds of cultural holdings or in their housing, handling or treatment, any action taken to understand and control the causes of deterioration and any action taken to better the conditions of such holdings'*.

Caring for the collections is a fundamental duty of all museums and archives. This policy is designed to ensure the long-term preservation of the collections, based on preventive and remedial conservation.

Preventive conservation aims to minimise deterioration to individual objects, or collections by controlling the environment. Remedial conservation is the interventive treatment of an object to stabilise or preserve.

For the purpose of this policy, the term object refers to all Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean collection items.

1. Policy Statements

- 1.1 The Policy is subject to regular review and update. This Policy is reviewed not more than three years from the date of its adoption.
- 1.2 This Policy recognizes the provisions of the Collections Development Policy.
- 1.3 Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean will meet current standards of conservation and professional practice for museum and archive collections, measured against appropriate benchmarks. We will pursue 'best practice' in our preservation and conservation procedures as established in such documentation as BS EN 16893: 2018 Conservation of Cultural Heritage; BS4971: 2017 Conservation and care of archive and

library collections and the National Conservation Service Benchmarks in Collection Care 3.0.

- 1.4 Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean accepts that all objects in the museum and archive collections are held in perpetuity.
- 1.5 Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean will implement preventive conservation measures to ensure the permanent preservation of the collections and will undertake remedial conservation of individual objects as necessary.
- 1.6 Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean will monitor the environment and conditions in which collections are stored and displayed and carry out improvements and maintenance to fittings and buildings, replacing where necessary.
- 1.7 Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean provide advice and support to the Outer Hebrides Heritage Network which is a forum for community heritage organisations in the Outer Hebrides.

2 Buildings

- 2.1 Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean will use suitably constructed and well-maintained buildings to ensure the security and preservation of its collections.
- 2.2 Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean will assess and maintain appropriate levels of security and insurance on all buildings used for the collections.

2.3 Key control, security, fire and other protection systems are regularly tested and serviced.

2.4 Arrangements should exist for restricting access to designated staff where appropriate and for implementing appropriate supervision arrangements for visitors and contractors.

3. Storage

3.1 Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean will apply high standards of professional practice to all collection areas, equipment, materials and procedures. It will endeavour to ensure that collection areas are kept clean, organised and pest free.

3.2 Designated collection storage areas are not used for any other purpose.

3.3 Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean will work with colleagues in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar to develop a digital preservation solution, to build our capability to manage and preserve digital material in line with legal obligations and recognised standards.

4 Housekeeping

4.1 Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean will apply effective management and monitoring procedures and carry out appropriate cleaning to prevent damage or deterioration of the collections.

4.2 The discovery of a threat to the preservation of the collections will be prioritised to remove or minimise the risk.

4.3 Conservation treatments carried out on the collections comply with relevant health and safety legislation.

4.4 There will be an ongoing programme of collections inspection.

5. Handling and use of collections

5.1 Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean ensure that all objects are subject to careful and appropriate handling to minimise the risk of damage and to contribute to future accessibility.

5.2 All persons working with or handling the collections are provided with appropriate training regarding the care of the collections. Written guidelines will be made available to all staff and other users engaged in the handling, transportation, packaging, labelling, research, loan, display and use of objects.

5.3 Objects from the collections are loaned only to those borrowers who can satisfy the specified conditions for their stable and secure storage, study, interpretation or display, as set out in the relevant loan agreement.

6. Environmental Monitoring and Control

6.1 Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean will ensure the collections are not subjected to inappropriate or unstable environmental conditions, including temperature, relative humidity, light, pests and pollutants. Appropriate monitoring, control systems and equipment will be used. Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean aim to achieve a satisfactory compromise between long-term preservation of collections and accessibility to public and staff.

6.2 Monitoring and control equipment will be regularly monitored, calibrated and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's guidance and current health and safety legislation.

7. Conservation

7.1 Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean undertake to stabilise the collection to ensure its long-term preservation and the accessibility through the use of professional, qualified staff and appropriate techniques and materials. Where appropriate or necessary, external conservation professionals with specific expertise will be consulted or engaged.

7.2 Conservation requirements will be prioritised within the framework of resources available.

7.3 Conservation assessments of objects are carried out prior to and after acquisition, loan and display.

7.4 All treatments and materials used on objects are recorded on the database as part of that object's permanent record.

7.5 The operation of working historic machinery may contribute to the preservation of tangible and intangible aspects of the object. The operation of such objects is carried out only after a condition assessment has been carried out to determine the risks to both people and object. A conservation plan and operating manual will be prepared and the object only operated if sufficient suitably trained operators and conservation staff are available.

8. Facsimiles and New Media

- 8.1 Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean may commission facsimiles of original objects to enhance interpretation and learning, and to reduce handling and risk of damage to originals.
- 8.2 Facsimiles will be of the necessary quality for their intended use.
- 8.3 Facsimiles will be maintained to ensure their future accessibility, particularly where they are in digital formats or new media.
- 8.4 The production of facsimiles is subject to professional assessment of the capability of the original object to withstand the process.
- 8.5 Archive objects will only be copied in a way which does not harm the original.

9. Emergency Procedures

- 9.1 Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean will maintain an Emergency Plan that is updated after every major incident and subject to an annual review.
- 9.2 All incidents are recorded and reported, with recommendations, to inform future response planning.
- 9.3 Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean undertake to provide appropriate training in emergency response and provide suitable equipment and materials in disaster kits at all sites.
- 9.4 External bodies whose resources may be used in specific emergency situations will be consulted.