

Highland Archive Service Vision and Mission Statement

Highland Archive Service collects, conserves and makes accessible records which reflect the history and diversity of the Scottish Highlands and its inhabitants for the benefit of present and future generations. We promote the use of these records to inform local decision-making, strengthen community and cultural identity and promote wellbeing through the study and enjoyment of history. We aim to make the collections in our care as widely accessible as possible, in the welcoming and inclusive searchrooms at our Archive Centres, through modern digital channels and through an active community engagement programme, enhancing opportunities in culture, learning, leisure, health and wellbeing.

History of the Service

Highland Archive Service (HAS) was established in 1990 by the then Highland Regional Council with the appointment of a professionally qualified Archivist based in Inverness. The collections held covered the historic counties of Caithness, Sutherland, Ross & Cromarty, Inverness-shire and Nairnshire. In 1992 a public searchroom opened at Inverness Library. In 2009 HAS relocated to a £10.5 million purpose built archive facility including conservation studio, supported by The Highland Council (THC) and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

In 1995 the Caithness Archives was opened in Wick Library to hold records relating to the former County of Caithness including the burghs of Wick and Thurso. In 2017 Caithness Archives relocated to Nucleus and became part of Nucleus: The Nuclear and Caithness Archives which also houses the national archive of the British Civil Nuclear Industry. HAS is responsible for the operation of the public searchroom and supports the community engagement programme.

Lochaber Archives was established in 2007 at the West Highland College, Fort William to hold records relating to Lochaber, the parishes of Kilmallie, Kilmonivaig, the Small Isles, the Argyllshire parishes of Ardnamurchan, Morven and Sunart and the burgh of Fort William. In 2018 it relocated to a purpose built strongroom and searchroom in Alexander Ross House, Fort William.

Skye and Lochalsh Archives was established in 2009 in the Elgin Hostel, Portree to hold records relating to Skye and Lochalsh, including the parishes of Brackadale, Duirinish, Kilmuir, Portree, Sleat, Snizort, Strath, Glenshiel, Kintail and Lochalsh.

In 2011 HAS became part of High Life Highland (HLH), a charity formed and registered in Scotland by The Highland Council (THC) to develop and promote opportunities in culture, learning, sport, leisure, health and wellbeing across nine services throughout the whole of the Highlands, for both residents and visitors.

A Service Level Agreement (SLA) identifies the services, including archives, which are provided by HLH and archive service functions are set out in the Collections Agreement between THC and HLH. A Client Manager within THC is responsible for overseeing the SLA, with regular meetings being held between the Client Manager and HLH Senior Management. In addition, operational records management responsibilities are delivered by HLH through a Service Delivery Schedule overseen by THC's Information and Records Manager.

Statutory and Legal Status

The Highland Archive Service operates under:

- Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994
- The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011(s.1)
- Data Protection Act 2018

- The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002
- Environmental Information Regulations 2005

Three of the four Archive Centres (Highland, Nucleus and Lochaber) hold records under Charge and Superintendence Agreements with the Keeper of the Records of Scotland and Nucleus also hold a collection under a similar agreement with Historic Environment Scotland.

Scope of the Policy

- This policy sets out a co-ordinated approach to Collection Management, including acquisition, accessioning, cataloguing, preservation, conservation and repository management.
- Staff and volunteers working in these areas all have specific responsibilities and report to the Highland Archivist and designated staff including the Senior Archivist, Area Archivists, the Senior Conservator and the Records Manager.
- All staff work closely with the Community Engagement Officer to ensure that individuals and communities can better understand, learn about and engage with their local heritage through classes, events, workshops, talks and exhibitions which celebrate the unique documentary heritage of the Highlands.

Service Objectives

Archives

- To fulfil a custodial role in the preservation, acquisition and cataloguing of Highland archives.
- To promote and provide opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to use the archives and to better understand and appreciate their heritage.
- To develop and promote best practice in preservation and conservation by being an instructing office on the Archive and Records Association Conservation Training Scheme.
- To develop and support sustainable partnerships which enable communities and people to engage, explore and enjoy the archives.
- To develop commercial opportunities to support the overall service including external conservation and ancestral tourism product offerings.

Records Management

- To ensure that information and records sources are retained only for as long as is necessary for legal compliance and administrative needs across HLH and THC.
- To facilitate the selection and transfer of records from THC into the custody of HAS, contributing to the Council's corporate memory.
- To manage records stores across the authority's area containing HLH and THC semi-current records and provide a retrieval service in respect of those records.
- To work with THC's Information Management Governance Board and HLH's Management Team to ensure compliance with legislation relating to information and record keeping.
- To develop and promote best practice and legal compliance in the creation, use, maintenance and disposal of information and records.
- To provide professional input into the development and review of THC's Records Management Plan (RMP) required under the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011.

Collections Management

The Collection Management Policy outlines the inter-relationships between all areas of the service which are reflected in the Vision and Mission Statement and Service Objectives outlined above.

- Acquisition of the documentary heritage of the Highlands, and thereafter preserving, cataloguing, publicising and celebrating its use.

- Developing and promoting access to and use of collections enabling engagement with the culture and heritage of the Highlands.
- Providing opportunities for staff and volunteers through work-based learning and training.
- Developing commercial opportunities to support the overall Archive Service.

Standards

The following standards are relevant to this policy;

BS 4971:2017	Conservation and Care of Archive and Library Collections
BS EN 16893:2018	Conservation of Cultural Heritage. Specifications for location, construction and modification of buildings or rooms intended for the storage or use of heritage collections
PAS 197:2009	Code of Practice for Cultural Collections Management
PAS 198:2012	Specification for Managing Environmental Conditions for Cultural Collections
BS EN 16095:2012	Conservation of cultural property. Condition recording for movable cultural heritage
ISAD(G)	General International Standard of Archival Description

Inter-relationships

- New archive accessions are regularly received passively and through routine accrual. Analysis of the collections and the pattern of accessions has identified gaps and the Highland Archive Service will work to target collecting around these areas.
- On receipt all accessions are assessed for preservation and conservation needs.
- All accessions are cleaned and packaged in archive quality materials before being allocated a location in the repositories.
- All accessions are recorded on CALM (a specialist archive software system) with collection level descriptions as a minimum.
- Digital archives are treated in accordance with the Digital Preservation Policy.
- Funding for cataloguing, conservation and digitisation will be sought out from record owners and external grant-giving bodies as appropriate according to local priorities.
- Volunteers add value to catalogues by creating indexes and item level descriptions which are added to the catalogue following review by archive staff.
- Catalogues are added to the online catalogue on completion.

Other associated policies include:

Collections Development Policy
Collections Information Policy
Collections Care and Preservation Policy
Digital Preservation Policy
Access Policy
Engagement Policy
Acquisitions Policy

Policy Review Schedule

This policy will be reviewed at least once every 3 years, or earlier if a response is needed to any changes in legislation.

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