

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.

Scope of the Policy

- Highland Archive Service (HAS) recognises the importance of encouraging a wide range of audiences to engage with archive material and notes the positive and life-affirming impact that this can have. This policy sets out an inclusive and forward-thinking approach to engagement; actively reaching out to a diverse range of audiences with an awareness of the challenges and opportunities that present themselves to an archive service working across a geographical area of such diversity. Central to this is a belief in the power of archival material to positively impact the lives of those who engage with it.
- This policy should be read in conjunction with the Collections Management Policy which sets out the Vision, Mission Statement and Service Objectives as well as with the Access Policy and other policy documents.

Our aims

- To raise awareness of the resources and services of HAS locally, nationally and internationally.
- To provide access to the internationally significant collections of HAS through our public searchrooms, talks, events and other activities.
- To increase our profile in not only the towns which contain the Archive Centres but across the wider Highland area.
- To establish new and diverse user groups while maintaining our established audiences.
- To provide a safe and welcoming space for learning opportunities both formal and informal.
- To continue to foster links with the schools in the HAS catchment area, providing pupils with exciting, creative and innovative ways to engage with archival material and their local area.
- To encourage the growth of ancestral tourism through the promotion of the dedicated Family History Centre at the Highland Archive Centre.
- To maintain a relationship with both our local and overseas audiences through the extensive use of social media, newsletters and the our websites www.highlifehighland.com/archives-service/ and www.ambaile.org.uk
- To look for opportunities which generate income or increase donations to support our work.
- To actively gather feedback to evaluate our performance and ensure that our offering meets user needs.

Our objectives

- To maintain regular opening hours across all HAS sites, enabling both locals and visitors to engage with our collections as researchers.
- To retain a member of staff with a specific remit for engagement while also ensuring that all staff see community engagement as a substantial and vital part of their role.
- To have a continuous and advance-planned programme of events, talks, displays and classes across all four Archive Centres, creating a range of opportunities for both locals and visitors to experience our collections.

Highland Archive Service Engagement Policy

- To attend external events and mark anniversaries of local and national significance, recognising the importance of archives in the collective memory of the Highlands, Scotland and the UK.
- To use our social media channels to promote collections relating to the whole of the area we cover, thereby ensuring that those at a distance from the Archive Centres still have access to archival material relevant to their local area.
- To promote our collections and activities through both local and national media via regular newspaper articles and press releases for specific events.
- To create user-friendly catalogues, indexes, collection guides and interpretive storyboards to ensure that our archive material is as accessible as possible.
- To actively reach out to both groups and individuals who may be unfamiliar or lack confidence with archives. This will be done not only directly by archive staff but also in collaboration with wider High Life Highland (HLH) teams and by partnering with external organisations.
- To support the work of the Highland Community Planning Partnerships in their aims to tackle inequalities in the Highlands, through actively approaching groups and individuals who may not otherwise encounter archives.
- To recognise and support the work of Community Archives across the Highlands, tailoring events to their needs and offering professional advice and guidance as and when required.
- To provide opportunities for volunteers and work experience placements, through both national agencies such as Skills Development Scotland and through HLH's Young Leaders programme.
- To participate in both local and national projects which provide opportunities to enhance health and wellbeing through engaging with the archive collections. (e.g. enabling those with dementia to reminisce using archive material).
- To actively encourage visits to and from schools and youth organisations, creating activities and resources (both in hard copy and online) which tie in to the Curriculum for Excellence and allow both children and teachers/leaders to have a meaningful experience of archives.
- To promote the resources of the Family History Centre at Highland Archive Centre, encouraging visits from both individuals and groups and inspiring those who use the service to make use of the wider archive collections.
- To participate in surveys (both local and national), actively request feedback, and collate and analyse the responses to inform future decision-making.

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.

July 2019