

Archive Collections Policy

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Introduction

Gwent Archives' mission is to collect, preserve and make accessible records relating to the area it services. This policy lays out in detail:

- Why Gwent Archives collects archives
- What archives Gwent Archives will collect
- How it collects these archives

It is complemented by the [Library Collecting Policy](#), which outlines acquisition of print and secondary sources.

Statutory Framework

The statutory framework for the defining of archives and records to be accepted by the Archives includes:

- the Law of Property Act, 1922 (manorial records);
- the Tithe Act, 1936 (tithe records);
- the Public Records Acts, 1958 and 1967 (public records of a local nature);
- the Local Government (Records) Act, 1962 (records of private individuals or organisations which an Archive Service may acquire by gift, purchase or deposit);
- the Local Government Act, 1972 (records of local authorities);
- the Local Government (Wales) Act, 1994 section 60.

Why We Collect

Gwent Archives collects archives to:

- Provide evidence for the accountability of public institutions, decision-makers and opinion formers thereby helping safeguard the democratic and legal rights of the citizen.
- To provide the public with evidence on all aspects of life in the region, past and present.

For this to happen it is imperative that access is available to the Collection. How this is provided is detailed in the [Gwent Archives Access Policy](#). How this access will be sustained for future generations is detailed in the [Gwent Archives Collections Care and Conservation Policy](#).

What We Collect

Gwent Archives collects archives from any date. Archives are media in any format which are generated by an organisation or an individual during the course of their business or activities.

Geographical Scope

Gwent Archives collects archives which relate wholly or primarily to the area it services. This area is that covered by Monmouthshire County Council; Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen County Borough Councils, Newport City Council and that part of the Caerphilly County Borough Council which comprises the former Islwyn Borough Council.

In addition, it will collect records of ecclesiastical parishes within the Diocese of Monmouth and of those parishes of the Diocese of Swansea and Brecon which fall within the present county of Monmouthshire, in accordance with agreements made between the Representative Body of the Church in Wales and relevant local authorities in Wales, and such parishes as fall outside of these areas but within the local authority areas it serves.

The Collection will cover as objectively as possible all aspects of the Gwent area past and present.

Content

The service will not normally accept archives and records which are of a particularly specialist nature, requiring skills or equipment beyond the office's resources to preserve, exploit or interpret. Where appropriate such material will be transferred to another institution.

The Archives will only accept records that will be open for public access either immediately, after processing work or after a fixed period of time, agreed in consultation with the owner or depositor. Any restriction must comply with relevant legislation.

Format

Gwent Archives accepts documents in the following formats:

- Manuscript documents (whether on paper, parchment, vellum, etc)
- Typescript documents
- Digital records
- Photographs
- Maps and Plans

Language

The Archives will accept collections, whose records are predominantly in English, Welsh or Latin.

Limitations

Gwent Archives will not normally collect:

- Records which fall outside the stated geographical collection area of the Archives, unless forming an integral part of a collection which cannot be divided without loss of archival value, or relating primarily to the Gwent area.
- Artefacts, three-dimensional objects and works of art. Only where there is a special relationship between an artefact and the associated archives will the Archives seek to keep the material together.
- Frames, tin trunks, deed chests and other containers – these will be disposed of by the Archives (with permission) or returned to the donor.
- Material judged not to be of permanent historical value.
- Copies of original records where the originals exist elsewhere
- Audio/Visual Records, which are more suited to a specialist archive such as the National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales
- Records that are too fragile to be consulted
- Specialist items which are better suited to a specialist archive
- Items that are deemed not to be worthy of permanent preservation

As part of the processing of collections of records, either before or after deposit, appraisal will take place to ensure that no unnecessary duplication of information takes place, or records of limited value are kept. Details of this are contained in the [Gwent Archives Appraisal Policy](#).

Removal of Records

On occasions there will be records, which have been transferred to Gwent Archives, but which are subsequently discovered to have fallen outside of the terms outlined in this Collecting Policy. If the records should be permanently preserved, but more appropriately at another Archive or another repository such as a local museum, then Gwent Archives will deaccession the records and transfer them, in the instance of deposits, with the agreement of the depositor.

If records are not for permanent preservation Gwent Archives will return to the Depositor or destroy them confidentially, in the instance of deposits, with the agreement of the depositor.

How We Collect

The Archives will acquire records worthy of permanent preservation in the following categories:

- Records of past and present local authorities and statutory bodies
- Public records offered to the Archives under the terms of the Public Records Act 1958
- Records of organisations, businesses, individuals, societies, public and private institutions, and other activities relevant to the history and life of the Gwent area

Gwent Archives will acquire records by:

- gift (including bequest)
- purchase
- deposit on permanent loan
- statutory deposit
- official transfer.

Gwent Archives reserves the right to refuse records that do not fall within the remit of our collection policy, or where there is concern over the legal ownership of the records.

Collections Development

Gwent Archives seeks to ensure that the collections held are representative of the people and places of Gwent. We will engage in activities where it actively pursues the acquisition of identified gaps in our records, in line with objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan and Annual Service Plans.

The strengths of Gwent Archives' Collection include its local authority holdings, landed estates and ecclesiastical records. Relatively less abundant are the records of small businesses and local clubs and societies, for example, and this is an area to actively collect in the future.

Co-operation

Gwent Archives will work closely with other archive repositories, including the National Library of Wales and colleagues in Archives and Records Council Wales, to ensure that all records are placed in the most appropriate home, and to avoid competition, conflict and duplication of effort.

In particular within the County Borough of Caerphilly, Gwent Archives shall administer and manage the archives and records of the former Islwyn Borough Council, Glamorgan Archives carrying out the same functions in respect of the former Rhymney District Council.

Gwent Archives will work closely with those responsible for creation and management of records to ensure the continued acquisition of archival records and to maintain the relevance of the Collection.

This policy was approved by Gwent Archives Joint Committee 24th September 2021. It will be reviewed in April 2025 or sooner if circumstances dictate.