

Volunteer Policy

Introduction	1
Policy Aims	2
Volunteer roles.....	2
Recruitment and Induction of Volunteers.....	2
Roles and Responsibilities	3
Security and Confidential Information.....	3
Health and Safety	4
Review	4

Introduction

Volunteers perform a valuable and much needed service which helps to advance the three strands of Gwent Archives' mission – to collect, to preserve and to make accessible archives relating to the area it serves. In return we offer the opportunity for volunteers to learn new skills, meet new people and interact with unique historical archives.

Our volunteers are individuals – working separately or in groups – who carry out work in partnership with us, and the work is by choice and is unpaid. This policy recognises the contribution the volunteers make to our work, in terms of the time and their skills, and makes clear our commitment to supporting them during their time with us. It applies both to volunteers on site at Gwent Archives as well as those working remotely.

Gwent Archives aims to identify worthwhile and satisfying opportunities for volunteers appropriate to their skills and aspirations. The service also aims to support potential volunteers who may need to overcome barriers/experience challenges when volunteering.

Gwent Archives will always operate in line with equal opportunities in relation to both recruitment and support of volunteers.

Policy Aims

- To provide positive opportunities for volunteers to develop skills and confidence in support of Gwent Archives
- To acknowledge the value of the contribution made by volunteers to the work of Gwent Archives
- To clarify the role of volunteers and their relationship with the staff and the service
- To recognise the roles, rights and responsibilities of the service and the volunteers
- To confirm the commitment of the Archive Service to involving volunteers in its work.

Volunteer roles

The principal areas in which volunteers are involved are:

- Enhancing our collections, through creation of indexes and transcriptions, to make them more accessible
- Cleaning and repackaging of records to help ensure their long-term protection, preservation and accessibility.

Each requires different levels of support and planning.

Recruitment and Induction of Volunteers

Volunteers will be recruited via a fair process, and opportunities will be advertised widely as they become available. Clear information will be provided about the tasks, required skills, commitment and time and this will be regularly reviewed.

Applications will be made via an application form and an informal discussion prior to volunteer work being offered. This will provide an opportunity for informal assessment on both sides and for a consideration of possible options. Every effort will be made to match volunteers with opportunities, but Gwent Archives may not accept volunteer placements or may withdraw opportunities from existing volunteers where the project is deemed unsuitable for the volunteer.

Volunteers will be given an induction prior to commencing their activities. This will cover

- procedures such as fire evacuation and first aid
- health and safety information
- Information on facilities, such as toilets and refreshment areas
- Who to contact in the event of a problem
- Specific information about their task

At the end of the induction period a Volunteer Agreement form will be signed by both parties.

Gwent Archives recognises the volunteer's right to withdraw at any time without prejudice. The volunteer will be offered an exit interview upon leaving.

Roles and Responsibilities

All volunteers can expect from us:

- A named member of staff as a point of contact
- A full, documented, induction
- Training appropriate to their task
- Two events each year arranged specifically for volunteers
- Regular updates with their staff contact
- Clearly defined tasks
- A safe working environment
- To be free from any form of discrimination
- To be listened to, and any comments or complaints dealt with through established corporate procedures
- A reference to support future work applications
- Regular communication on projects, new accessions and any other news and information from the Service

Gwent Archives expects that its volunteers will:

- Work within the guidelines, processes and procedures agreed at the start of the task
- Raise any concerns with staff
- Attend training and support sessions where agreed
- Respect confidentiality
- Show courtesy to members of staff and other volunteers

Security and Confidential Information

The work that volunteers will undertake will only involve those records that are open and accessible to the public. Volunteers will not work with closed records or those containing confidential information. However, all volunteers will be briefed on security measures when using the Research Room and on working with confidential information as part of their induction.

Health and Safety

Volunteers will be provided with the necessary training to enable them to perform their tasks safely without putting themselves or others at risk. Volunteers must adopt safe working practices with proper attention paid to their Health and Safety and their responsibility to others. Raising awareness of this will form part of the induction.

Risk Assessments will also be undertaken on the work activities and workplace of volunteers engaged. Any residual risks identified will be taken into account in the training of volunteers.

Review

This Policy was approved by Gwent Archives Joint Committee in March 2022. It will be reviewed again in April 2025 or sooner if circumstances dictate.