



Archives and Library Access Policy

The Archives and Library Access Policy will be fully reviewed every six years, and reapproved by Chapter. It will be subject to an intermediate review every three years, with Chapter reapproval if there are significant changes.

Date of approval by the Chapter of Canterbury: 30th Jun 2017
Date of intermediate review: Feb 2022 (delayed by Covid)
Date of full review and reapproval: Apr 2023

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1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles with which Canterbury Cathedral provides access to its Archives and Library collections for as wide an audience as possible.

2 Related Statements and Policies

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the Cathedral's Access Statement and the Collections Statement of Purpose, and with the following policies: the Conservation and Collections Care Policy, the Collections Management Policy, the Collections Development Policy, the Collections Documentation Policy and the Learning Policy. Copies of any policies not available online on the Cathedral's website can be supplied by the Archives and Library.

3 Scope and context

This policy relates to all of the collections held by Canterbury Cathedral Archives and Library. These collections are made up of the written and other archival collections of Canterbury Cathedral and other collections held on loan (deposit) by the Cathedral.

An overview of the collections is available on the Archives and Library webpages and in the Collections Management Policy. The Archives and Library houses approximately 1.3 kilometres of shelving of archives material, and approximately 50,000 books. Regular new acquisitions are made to the archives and library collections according to the Collections Development Policy.

There are numerous collections which are on loan (deposit) from other bodies, including Church of England parishes, Canterbury City Council and other local organisations. At the heart of the collections is material from past centuries in unfamiliar languages (eg Latin, Old English) and in archaic typefaces/handwriting. Staff have specialist knowledge required to provide access to this material for a wide audience. Some collections are in digital form, with some on vulnerable and/or obsolescent media. This policy relates to all of the collections: those owned by the Cathedral and those on loan, and both analogue and digital material.

Our users are:

- onsite visitors to the reading room, both researchers and those coming as part of organised group visits
- offsite users, including those contacting us with enquiries or copy requests, those participating in offsite learning events based on our collections, and those using online resources

4 Principles of access

The overarching aim of the Archives and Library is to preserve our collections for future generations, in the interests of Canterbury Cathedral and other owners of the collections, while providing access to collections and learning opportunities for as wide as possible an audience, and to meet the access needs of the communities and stakeholders of our service. These communities and stakeholders include Cathedral staff and volunteers, owners of material which we hold on loan, local educational establishments, partners, onsite users of the reading room and remote users of our collections and services.

We provide suitable facilities and services to facilitate this access. Access is free of charge for individual researchers (with the cathedral precincts admission charge not payable for those coming to the Archives and Library and not visiting the Cathedral); group visits are chargeable. There are charges for copying, photography permits and research services.

We will:

- Ensure the availability and accessibility of our collections in the long-term by safeguarding and preserving them
- Provide the best possible access in line with the Archives Accreditation Standard and the PSQG Standard for Access to Archives
- Respond to remote enquiries (phone, post, email), requests for copies and requests to use images from our collections within identified timeframes
- Develop our collections in line with our Collections Development Policy and according to identified priorities, in order to ensure that the collections have as broad a base as possible

- Work towards opening up access to our collections and to information about them through cataloguing, interpretation and increased digital access, aiming to accommodate a full range of access needs and learning styles
- Develop our understanding of the audiences for our collections and of their needs
- Sustain audiences for our collections through communication and consultation
- Communicate with the audiences for our collections in order to understand fully their interests and their access and learning needs
- Sustain and develop our partnerships with local learning institutions (in particular the University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church University) in order to provide a quality contribution to their learning offers
- Create, with other cathedral departments and external partners, learning opportunities based on our collections in order to improve access to the collections for learning
- Host pre-booked groups with an interest in our collections
- Deliver talks offsite to groups with an interest in our collections
- Provide volunteering and work experience opportunities for a wide profile of people
- Publicise our collections and our services
- Promote a culture of customer care, ensuring staff are trained in this area
- Work with and support other custodians of the country's written heritage and collaborative cataloguing initiatives in order to improve the inter-institutional co-ordination of access to our heritage resources
- Report on and evaluate what we do

5 Access to Collections

5.1 Research access

Research access to our collections is provided in our reading room, subject to our reading room regulations. Advance information for visitors to the reading room, including a map, details of facilities and information about our readers' tickets, is provided on our webpages. Users are encouraged to book in advance, and to order material in advance; we are, however, able to accommodate those who have not made a booking, subject to capacity. There is good signage to the Cathedral within the city, including from bus and train stations. Visits Department staff at the main Cathedral Gate offer directions to the reading room and maps.

The reading room is accessible up a set of stairs; lift access is available. Because of the historic nature of our buildings, wheelchair users may need to request staff assistance for accessing the reading room.

Visitors are welcomed by staff at a Welcome Desk in the reading room. In advance of each visit, staff send reading room procedures and regulations to each visitor. Printed copies of the regulations are available in the reading room, alongside guidelines on handling and information on fees and charges, including fees for the provision of copies. Staff provide advice on research. Access to the online catalogue is provided on public PCs; printed catalogues are also available.

Researchers will be asked to use surrogates (eg microfilm or digitised images) when available, in the interests of the preservation of the original. If the researcher identifies

a need to see the original, he or she may complete a form for this access, for staff assessment.

Details of our facilities, including for those with mobility or other impairments, are given in Appendix A. Various resources and provisions are available for those with particular access needs. A full range of copying services is provided, with charges payable.

5.2 Group access and learning activities

Visits by groups from educational establishments, other learning organisations and general interest groups are welcomed. These visits are arranged through the Cathedral's Visits or Schools Departments; charges are applicable. Groups may request a visit specifically tailored to their interests, with examples from the collections on display. Visits may take place to either the Archives or the Library building, or both. A ramp is available for wheelchair access to the Library building.

We regularly host talks and seminars for outside bodies, including the University of Kent. Charges may apply. We also contribute towards the planning and delivery of learning activities delivered by other bodies, including the Christ Church Medieval/Tudors and Stuarts Weekend and the Medieval Pageant.

We host work experience placements for local schools and higher level education establishments. Applications are made via the Cathedral's Human Resources Department and are accepted according to capacity. We aim to offer those coming on placement an impression of the working life of the department, and allocate specific projects. We also accommodate a large team of volunteers from a range of volunteering profiles. These volunteers work on a variety of projects, including listing and repackaging tasks.

5.3 Displays and exhibitions

Temporary displays of original material may be presented in our Archives or Library buildings for group visits or for specific events. There are cases suitable for short-term display (maximum one week) in the Library building; displays of original material in the Archives building are presented for a maximum of one day, with staff supervision and presence at all times, as there are no suitable cases available. In the Archives building there may on occasion be photographic displays based on the collections. There are occasional short-term loans from the collections to other institutions, subject to our Loans Policy.

Items from the Archives and Library collections are included within the displays in the Crypt.

5.4 Learning materials

Archives and Library collections feature in the online learning resources project by The Canterbury Journey project and in the Cathedral's media guide. We support research and encourage learning from our collections by providing images for inclusion in publications and online resources. Charges may be payable.

5.5 Digital and remote access

Access to information about our collections is given on our webpages and on the online catalogues to the Archives and Library collections. Access is also provided through

other combined catalogues such as the ArchivesHub, The National Archives' 'Discovery' and JISC's Library Hub Discover. We also welcome enquiries about our collections; there is a chargeable research service for detailed enquiries.

Access to digitised images and indexes from parish registers is provided through Findmypast. This is a subscription-based service; free access to images from our collections and to other sets of images is provided in the reading room, and many local authority libraries have subscriptions to Findmypast which can be accessed for free via their computers. Staff can provide guidance on how to use the service and on other online resources. Further access to digitised images is provided via our image management system both in the reading room and online; this system will be replaced by Piction in the course of 2022/3.

Included on our webpages is an online resource for the Bargrave Collection, a 17th-century 'cabinets of curiosity' collection. This provides access to images of items in the collections, as well as interpretation and teachers' notes. The monthly 'Picture This...' feature on our webpages features items from the collections, and we also contribute to the Cathedral's social media activity.

5.6 Specialist access

For access for specialist academic research, creative practice and research projects, it may be necessary to complete a Project Proposal Form available on the Cathedral's website.

6 Restrictions on Access to Collections

We provide access to collections under the terms of relevant legislation, and are committed to providing the widest possible access to our collections and to the information we hold. However, we may need to restrict access for a number of reasons, including those relating to:

- Data Protection
- Privacy and confidentiality
- Physical fragility of items
- Exemptions under Freedom of Information (local government records only)
- Incomplete cataloguing
- Copyright

Some items are stored offsite, and advance notice is required to make them available in the reading room. This is specified on the online catalogue. We encourage advance document ordering by all researchers.

It may also be necessary to close the reading room because of events within the precincts. Due notice will be given on our webpages and on notices in the reading room.

7 Consultation and Communication

Information on accessing and using the collections is given on our webpages. Notification of any closures will also be given on the webpages. There is Cathedral Archives and Library Committee, with representation from local partners and service

users. This meets twice a year. We also have a User Group which since the Covid pandemic has been consulted by email. We welcome feedback from researchers when visiting the reading room.

We produce an annual report at the end of each financial year and provide updates for the *Journal of the Kent Family History Society* and the newsletter of the Cathedral Archives, Libraries and Collections Association.

Appendix A: Reading room facilities

- Open for research Wed-Thurs, 10.15-16.30
- Group visits by prior arrangement through booking with the Visits or Schools Departments. Specific access needs can be discussed.
- Blue Badge parking (needs to be pre-booked by contacting the department by email or phone)
- Lift access to reading room via the Dean's Steps lift and the Watertower corridor. Unaccompanied wheelchair users should request staff assistance by ringing the doorbell at the main Archives door.
- Microfilm and microfiche readers, with reader-printer, with accessibility for wheelchairs
- Seven document reading spaces, suitable for wheelchair-users
- Wide tables, which can facilitate seating for reading companions for the blind or visually impaired
- Table for consulting large format items (eg maps and plans)
- Lockers offering high- and low-level storage
- Two wheelchair-accessible public PCs with internet access, including membership-level access to Findmypast for Cathedral Archives' records
- Headphones for listening to recorded sound on PCs
- Book rests and document weights
- Handheld magnifiers
- On-desk power sockets for laptops
- Hand-held UV light
- Free WiFi
- Open access printed catalogues
- Good range of reference books
- Seminar room for group work (needs to be pre-booked by contacting the department by email or phone)
- Toilets, including an accessible toilet
- Trained staff (including training in disability awareness, guiding the blind and visually impaired, audio-description, customer service and collections handling)