



West Somerset Railway Heritage Trust



Registered Charity No. 265564

Collections Care and Conservation Policy

Statement of Purpose.

- 1) This policy has been written in accordance with the museum's Statement of Purpose and the Collections Development Policy. All staff (paid and volunteer) have read and agreed to abide by the policy. The Collections Care and Conservation Plan sets out the way the policy will be put into action and should be read in conjunction with the Forward Plan or Business Plan, the Emergency Plan, the Building Plan and any other plans affecting the collections and the museum buildings.

The Purpose of the Collections Care and Conservation Policy is to set a Framework for:

- 1) The preservation of the collections and buildings in the care of the museum.
- 2) Preventative and remedial conservation of the collections.
- 3) The safe use of and access to collections, within the limits of the museum's resources.

Context.

- 1) The museum aims to improve the care and conditions of all its collection in accordance with Signposts to Collection Care.
- 2) The safety and preservation of the collection will be considered from the outset of any plans to alter the displays or storage, to modify the buildings or to allow access to any part of the collections.

People.

- 1) The care of the collections is the responsibility of everyone who works in or visits the museum.
- 2) Any concerns regarding the collections should be reported in writing to the Curator.
- 3) The museum trains all staff and volunteers who handle the collections in the course of their work. No untrained personnel are allowed to handle items from the accessioned collection.
- 4) Researchers or other visitors working with the collections will be briefed on how to handle the items they are working on and will be supervised at all times.
- 5) The museum has access to, and will consult with, the regional Conservation Development Officer (CDO) for regular advice see: <https://southwestmuseums.org.uk/who-we-are/our-team/>
- 6) Any problems or concerns relating to the care of the collection are referred by the Curator to the CDO or another appropriately qualified conservator.
- 7) The museum will check the suitability of conservators chosen to work or advise on the collections. A professionally accredited conservator or a conservator listed on the Conservation Register will normally be chosen.

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- 8) No item in the collections will be modified or altered until advice has been obtained from a suitably qualified conservator.
- 9) Only suitably trained and qualified conservators will carry out remedial treatment on objects.
- 10) The museum will keep detailed records of all treatments carried out on objects, including the name and contact details of the person or company. This will be recorded on MODES.

The Buildings.

- 1) The museum recognises that the maintenance of its buildings is fundamental to the preservation of the buildings and collection and endeavours to keep the buildings in a suitable condition. The museum's collection is stored and displayed in the following buildings. The body responsible for the upkeep of the buildings is listed:

Building:	Used for:	Owner:	Upkeep carried out by:
Goods Shed Bishops Lydeard	Gauge Museum & Gauge Junction	West Somerset Railway PLC	External: WSR PLC Internal: WSRHT
Containers at Bishops Lydeard	Gauge Museum Additional Archive	WSRHT	External and Internal: WSRHT
Waiting Room Blue Anchor	Blue Anchor Museum	West Somerset Railway PLC	External: WSR PLC Internal: WSRHT

- 2) The museum has a Buildings Plan for the upkeep of all buildings which are its responsibility.
- 3) The museum carries out an annual inspection of all buildings which are not its responsibility and notifies the body responsible about any remedial or maintenance work required.

The Collections.

- 1) The museum is aware of the risks to the collection from environmental factors, poor handling, storage and display materials and methods, and of the need to record the condition of the collection. The museum cares for the collections in store, on display and, by setting suitable requirements, on loan.
- 2) The details are listed in the Collection Care and Conservation Plan and include:
 - a) Awareness of vulnerable objects.
 - b) Identifying threats to the collection.
 - c) Checking building condition.
 - d) Building maintenance.
 - e) Inspecting and cleaning the museum.
 - f) Housekeeping and cleaning objects on open display.
 - g) Condition checking the collection.
 - h) Collections Care and Conservation records.
 - i) Environmental monitoring including temperature, relative humidity, light and dust.
 - j) Environmental control and improving the environment.
 - k) Pest monitoring and managing the threat from pests.
 - l) Equipment maintenance.
 - m) Storage of materials and methods.
 - n) Display of materials and methods.
 - o) Transporting objects.

- p) Collection care resources.
- q) Professional advice.
- r) Remedial conservation and working with conservators.
- s) Training for the collection care team.

The Collection: Working Items.

- 1) The museum will have separate policy for the care of historic working items (e.g., machinery, clocks, mechanical toys, instruments).

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Version No	Date Approved	Revision
0.1	November 2021	First Issue of document. Review Date: Annually.
0.2	November 2022	Policy Reviewed and Amended. Draft for Approval
0.3	January 2023	With WSRHT Trustees for Approval. Next Revision January 2026.

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