



Fermanagh District Council

## **Fermanagh County Museum**

### **Collections Development Policy**

#### **Name of Governing Body: Fermanagh District Council**

Agreed by Council on 5 December 2013 (Min Ref: ES99/13a)

Review December 2015

#### **1. Introduction**

The Accreditation Scheme administered by Arts Council England in partnership with the Northern Ireland Museums Council states that ‘the museum must have an approved policy for developing collections (also known as an acquisition and disposal policy)’. The approved policy will be published on the Museum’s website [www.enniskillencastle.co.uk](http://www.enniskillencastle.co.uk). The policy must include:

- Statement of purpose
- Overview of current collections
- Future themes and collecting
- Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal
- Information on the legal framework for acquisition and disposal

## **1 Museum's Statement of Purpose**

A key aim of Fermanagh District Council's Corporate Strategy 2011-15 is to maintain and enhance 'a place which is unique, welcoming and renowned for its natural beauty, environment, leisure, heritage, culture and diversity. A place which is safe, sustainable and accessible.'

In tandem with the overall vision, Fermanagh County Museum's mission is to 'safeguard the history of Fermanagh as a source of enjoyment, education and culture for all'. Inspiring audiences locally and internationally, the Museum promotes the unique heritage of Fermanagh from pre-historic times to the present-day. Preserving its important collections of Archaeology, Local History, Arts and Folklife for future generations, the Museum engages with people to interpret the region's history and act as a gateway information hub. Connecting people, places and heritage, Fermanagh County Museum is committed to increasing physical and intellectual access to its collections and services for all communities, abilities and faiths. Visitor-centred and outward-looking in approach, Fermanagh County Museum presents a lively programme of changing exhibitions and events as well as extensive learning and outreach activities for people of all ages.

## **2 Museum's Key Aims**

- Act as a magnet for visitors locally and internationally, promoting cultural diversity and inclusion
- Engage with all communities and faiths, encouraging a sense of ownership and pride in the Museum and the heritage of Fermanagh
- Preserve the story of Fermanagh's past and present for future generations, maintaining high standards of collection care
- Build on the Museum's reputation as a key heritage provider, managing resources effectively and in a sustainable way

## **3 Overview of Current Collections**

Fermanagh County Museum's collection relates to the heritage of the County from prehistoric times to the present day. The Museum's multi-disciplinary collections of Archaeology, Local History, Arts and FolkLife include artifacts of local, national and, in certain areas, of international significance. Its collection remit also covers Tyrone as there is currently no County Museum provision in this region.

### **3.1 Archaeology**

The County contains important prehistoric sites such as the Drumskinny Stone Circle, Aghanaglack Court Tomb, the Reyfad stone and monuments on Topped Mountain. The Museum collection includes prehistoric stone artefacts for example pottery vessels, flint implements, saddle and rotary querns. The majority of archaeological artefacts on display are on loan from the National Museums Northern Ireland and the National Museum of Ireland, including Bronze Age gold ornaments and a rare example of a wooden musical horn from the 8<sup>th</sup>- 10<sup>th</sup> century AD. In the absence of a County Museum in Tyrone, the Museum has collected a small number of significant Bronze Age artefacts

from Tyrone, including a cist burial and a collection of pottery urns and vessels, one of which is on loan to An Creagan Centre, near Cookstown.

The Museum houses a significant collection of early Medieval stone artefacts include a grave-slab with an Irish inscription, the head of a High Cross, a bronze bell and carved stones from a Romanesque church. Late Medieval artefacts include carved heads from churches and a 16<sup>th</sup> century yew goblet.

In the early Christian era and Medieval period, Fermanagh was an important pilgrimage route, with pilgrims from around the world travelling through the County on their way to St Patrick's Purgatory at Lough Derg. The islands in Lough Erne are important heritage sites, with remains of seats of learning and monastic sites - most significantly on Devenish Island. The County's heritage is often represented by the unique Boa Island figure (also known as the Janus figure) located in Caldragh Graveyard, now classified as an early Christian sculpture rather than a pre-Christian pagan representation. The Museum houses a significant collection of beautifully carved stone sculpture from religious sites such as pieces from the Maguire graveyard at Aghalurcher and a cross-slab with an Irish inscription from a monastic site at Kilcoo. Recently, the history of the waterways and islands has received world-wide interest with the excavation of the Drumclay Crannog, a man-made island and medieval settlement. The first-ever scientific excavation of a crannog to have taken place in Northern Ireland, it has resulted in a huge volume of significant finds, a small selection of which are currently on loan to the Museum.

### **3.2 Local History**

The Local History collection has developed largely through generous donations from people in the County. The Museum is the key repository in the region for objects, documents, photographs and textiles relating to the history of the County. As well as being an introduction to the area and its important landmarks, these collections are of particular pride to local communities and an important part of the unique identity of the region.

Paper archives encompass maps, postcards, documents, topographical prints and printed ephemera. These include 17<sup>th</sup> century documents relating to the Williamite Wars, 18<sup>th</sup> century road maps by Taylor and Skinner, a complete bound set of the Ordnance Survey first edition six-inch maps of Fermanagh, a large-scale set of maps of Enniskillen in 1858 and a unique plan of Enniskillen made for the Hon. John Lowry Cole in 1842. Artefacts range from trade tokens issued in Enniskillen in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by Abraham Clements and James Warnock, a silver seal of the Corporation of Enniskillen with the date of 1612 marking the foundation of the town, and a silver Queen Anne Mace made for Enniskillen in 1707-08. There is a set of standard weights and measures made for the Borough of Enniskillen in 1861 and associated documentation. There is a collection of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century artefacts reflecting the importance of local industries such as leatherwork, brewing and distilling, the Florence Court Tilery, as well as the impact of the Railway. The historic photographic archives document the changing face of the town and County in include examples by Annie King, Shay Nethercott, David Blair and Walter Brady. The textile collections include appliquéd and patchwork bedcovers, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> costume including examples from the Taylor-Woods Lingerie and Hosiery Factory in Enniskillen.

Collections relating to the history of the more recent past have been strategically extended through the Connection & Division 1910-1930 project, supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund. The collecting and audience engagement initiative involved partnership working with the Inniskillings Museum and Derry Heritage and Museum Service, in collaboration with the University of Ulster. Within the context of the western border region of Northern Ireland and a wider international framework, collections acquired encompass the period of the Decade of Commemorations from the move towards Home Rule, the First World War, the Easter Rising, the War of Independence/Anglo-Irish War and the formation of the border.

### **3.3 Folklife**

Fermanagh is a rural County with its unique traditions, crafts and folklore. Local traditions such as 'mumming' can be linked to other cultures world-wide. The Museum owns significant collections and archives relating to rural life. A large collection (800 items) was donated by Pat Cassidy, who ran a museum behind his public house in Lisnaskea. This includes farm hand tools, veterinary equipment, straw artefacts including a hen's nest, poitin-making equipment, a pair of panniers (pardogs) used for spreading manure, and cooking utensils. Part of the Pat Cassidy collection is on display at Lisnaskea Library. Another large collection (400 items), mainly of domestic equipment, was donated by the family of the late Dowager Duchess of Westminster, who in the 1960s had fitted out a 17<sup>th</sup> century house near her home at Ely Lodge. This includes household utensils, country furniture and examples of Belleek ware. The collections also include horse-drawn farm machinery and other substantial farm equipment some of which is on display at Castle Archdale.

### **3.4 Arts**

The Museum houses a strong art collection relating to the heritage of Fermanagh. It includes twelve key examples by the important 20th artist, William Scott (1913-1989), who was raised in Enniskillen, a significant selection of work by TP Flanagan (1929-2011) and paintings by their Enniskillen mentor, Kathleen Bridle (1897-1989). Further artists represented include Jeremy Henderson (1952-2009), Anthony Scott, Philip Flanagan and Marion Thomson. Several key pictures have been donated by the Earl of Belmore and a recent collection of paintings was gifted by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. Other works have been purchased with support from the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Northern Ireland Museums Council and with generous assistance from the Association of Friends of Fermanagh County Museum.

The Museum houses one of the most significant public collections of Belleek pottery, collected worldwide. Examples include a rare experimental early Belleek terracotta vase as well as important First Period Parian figures. Other local crafts represented include Inishmacsaint and Clones Lace and Fivemiletown Art Deco copperware. Contemporary craft includes ceramics by Ann McNulty and textile pieces by Patricia Kelly.

### **3.5 Geology**

This area includes a representative range of geological specimens from Fermanagh, collected for educational purposes.

### **3.6 Contextual Collections**

These include the Photographic Database of 14,040 digital images relating to the history of Fermanagh, its people and places, including images of objects and Museum exhibition and events. Some images are not Fermanagh County Museum copyright and have been given permission to be added by the copyright owners for research purposes only. There is also a collection of around 200 tapes of oral history recordings; an important resource of contextual files of information surrounding the Museum's collection as well as the wider heritage of the County.

The Museum's reference library includes all the subject areas covered by the collections with many of the volumes received as donations. There is a complete set of the 'Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries' which commenced in 1848, a complete set of 'The Ulster Journal of Archaeology' begun in 1853, the first edition of Lewis' 'Topographical Dictionary of Ireland', and editions of the 'Annals of Ireland' and the 'Annals of Ulster'. There are rare privately published books about Fermanagh families and works by Fermanagh writers, poets and local historians. The library contains some specialised reference books on museum practice and the entire collection is for the use of researchers as well as museum staff.

Separate collections of material are maintained for use with schools and other groups, and relate to educational programmes such as 'Life in Early Times', 'Vikings', 'Meet the Middle Ages', 'The Plantation', 'Life in the Recent Past' and 'World War II'.

## **4 Future themes and collecting**

In 2011, the Museum began a consultative process with existing audiences to explore key themes and stories surrounding the heritage of the County. The findings from this initial consultative process have been incorporated into the future themes and collecting. Consultation will continue to take place and shape the collecting priorities of future Collections Development Policies.

### **4.1 Archaeology**

4.1.1 Material relating to Fermanagh from all periods will be accepted into the collection

4.1.2 Specific themes relating to:

- the history of the islands and waterways, incorporating the story of the Drumclay Crannog,
- objects and contextual information relating to the international pilgrimage route via Lough Erne to St Patrick's Purgatory
- life in the times of the ruling Maguire clan in Fermanagh

## **4.2 Local History**

4.2.1 Material relating to Fermanagh from all periods will be accepted into the collection. Artefacts alongside personal contextual information will be given priority

4.2.2 Secure the donation of models and artefacts made and collected by the late Gordon Johnson in preparation for the Enniskillen Castle Masterplan developments

4.1.3 Specific themes relating to:

- Towns and castles. Fermanagh is recognised as having the greatest number of surviving ruins of 17<sup>th</sup> century Plantation Castles, as well as some of the best preserved examples, in the whole of Ireland. Enniskillen is a distinctive island town and the County includes many other towns with a unique heritage and compelling histories
- Famine and migration. The history of the famine and the workhouses with the subsequent Irish Diaspora
- Our History. The history of living memory and family history information. The theme encompasses the Connection & Division 1910-1930 collecting period relating to the Decade of Anniversaries, and the more recent history of 'The Troubles'

## **4.3 Folklife**

4.3.1 Collect artefacts and information which reflect the changing conditions of the landscape and people's lives in rural Fermanagh.

4.3.2 Secure the donation of the late Johnny McKeagney's archive of drawings, reminiscences, photographs and books in preparation for the Enniskillen Castle Masterplan developments.

## **4.4 Arts**

4.4.1 Acquire art relating to Fermanagh's heritage

4.4.2 Acquire work by established artists and craftspeople with a connection to County Fermanagh

4.4.3 Secure donation of works by TP Flanagan relating to the Enniskillen Castle Masterplan developments

4.4.4 Acquire examples of Belleek pottery, Fivemiletown metalwork and Inishmacsaint and Clones lace

4.4.5 Specific themes relating to artefacts and information regarding significant cultural figures and their connection to the County, including Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) and Samuel Beckett (1906-1989) who both went to Portora Royal School, Enniskillen.

## **4.5 Contextual**

4.5.1 Develop the sound and photographic databases relating to Fermanagh

4.5.2 Acquire information relating to the collections and heritage of the County, utilizing Fermanagh District Council's Records Retention & Disposal Schedule to appraise and select records for permanent preservation

4.5.3 Develop the educational collections for all the existing education programmes

4.5.4 Acquire material to serve in new educational programmes, in particular to acquire a collection of toys

4.5.5 Continue to acquire publications for the Library regarding the people, places and heritage of Fermanagh

## **5 Themes and Priorities for Rationalisation and Disposal**

By definition Fermanagh County Museum has a long-term purpose and possesses permanent collections in relation to its Statement of Purpose. The Museum accepts the principle that, except for sound curatorial reasons, there is a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in Fermanagh County Museum's collection.

However, responsible, curatorially-motivated disposal may take place as part of a programme of review and rationalisation in order to increase public benefit derived from the collections. In such cases, Fermanagh County Museum will abide by clauses 13(e) and 13(f) of this policy. Such disposal may take place:

- To remove from the collections any item that is too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any further use for the purposes of Fermanagh County Museum
- To improve the curatorial care of the collections by the disposal of duplicate or unprovenanced material of low intrinsic relevance to the Collections Development Policy
- To transfer to the ownership of another Accredited museum or archive any item which the Manager-Museum Services advises would be more appropriately placed elsewhere
- Certain areas of the collection will not be actively collected for the foreseeable future due to space constraints and priorities. These include large farm machinery and equipment as well as the Geology collection.

## **6 Limitations on Collecting**

Fermanagh County Museum recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

## **7 Collecting Policies of Other Museums**

Fermanagh County Museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

**Specific reference is made to the following museums:**

National Museums Northern Ireland

National Museum of Ireland

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Inniskillings Museum

Headhunters Railway Museum

Belleek Pottery

Sheelin Lace Museum

Aughakillymaude Mummings Centre

Derry Heritage & Museum Service

Cavan County Museum

Monaghan County Museum

Donegal County Museum

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland



## **8 Policy Review Procedure**

The Collections Development Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every 5 years. Another full review will take place in 2015, after the completion of the amalgamation of Fermanagh District Council and Omagh District Council.

NIMC will be notified of any changes to the Collections Development Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

## **9 Acquisitions not Covered by the Policy**

Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the Museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

## **10 Acquisition procedures**

- a. The Museum will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the Museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- b. In particular, the Museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).
- c. In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.
- d. So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the Museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.
- e. The Museum will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.

In England, Northern Ireland and Wales the procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure as defined by the Treasure Act 1996.

f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 10a, 10b, 10c, or 10e will only be because the Museum is either:

acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin; or

acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgement of experts in the field concerned has not been illicitly traded; or

acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin; or  
in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970.

In these cases the Museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

g. The Museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

h. The Museum Manager will normally have delegated authority and responsibility for the acceptance or rejection of potential gifts or bequests to the Museum, for soliciting gifts of material for the collections within the terms of this policy, and for making recommendations and taking actions on the purchase of material in accordance with this Policy and within Fermanagh District Council's procedures.

i. In the event an acquisition to the Museum by gift, bequest or purchase, the Museum Manager will inform Fermanagh District Council's Administration Officer. The information will include a description of the object, method of acquisition and valuation information.

## **11 Spoliation**

The Museum will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

## **12 Management of archives**

As the Museum holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002).

## **13 Disposal Procedures**

- **Disposal Preliminaries**

a. The governing body will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.

b. By definition, the Museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.

c. The Museum will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.

d. When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the Museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.

- **Motivation for Disposal and Method of Disposal**

e. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs 13g-13s will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.

f. In exceptional cases, the disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below in paragraphs 13g-13m and 13s will be followed. In cases where disposal is motivated by financial reasons, the governing body will not undertake disposal unless it can be demonstrated that all the following exceptional circumstances are met in full:

- the disposal will significantly improve the long-term public benefit derived from the remaining collection
- the disposal will not be undertaken to generate short-term revenue (for example to meet a budget deficit)
- the disposal will be undertaken as a last resort after other sources of funding have been thoroughly explored

- **The Disposal Decision-making Process**

g. Whether the disposal is motivated either by curatorial or financial reasons, the decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including the public benefit, the implications for the Museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. External expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the Museum will also be sought.

- **Responsibility for Disposal Decision-making**

h. A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the Museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.

- **Use of proceeds of sale**

i. Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from the Northern Ireland Museums Council.

j. The proceeds of a sale will be ring-fenced so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard.

- **Disposal by gift or sale**

k. Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.

l. If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.

m. The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.

- **Disposal by Exchange**

n. The nature of disposal by exchange means that the Museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The governing body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.

o. In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or unaccredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 13a-13d and 13g-13h will be followed as will the procedures in paragraphs 13p-13s.

p. If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.

q. If the exchange is proposed with a non-accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the Museum will make an announcement in the Museums Journal and in other specialist journals where appropriate.

r. Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in the museum's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the governing body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

- **Documenting disposal**

s. Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.

t. In the event of a disposal of an artefact from the Museum, the Museum Manager will inform Fermanagh District Council's Administration Officer. The information will include a description of the object, method of disposal and valuation information.