Archives and Library
Access Policy

The Archives and Library Access Policy will be published and reviewed by the Archives and Library on a three-year cycle.

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

2 Related Statements and Policies
2.1 Outline
The Archives and Library Access Policy supports the Cathedral’s Mission Statement and Collections Statement of Purpose, and also the department’s Aims and Objectives. It should also be read in conjunction with the Cathedral’s Access Statement (as available at https://www.canterbury-cathedral.org/visit/access/) and in particular with the following policies: the Conservation and Collections Care Policy, the Collections Management Policy (available at https://www.canterbury-cathedral.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Collections-Management-Policy.pdf) the Collections Development Policy, the Collections Documentation Policy and the Learning Policy (available at https://www.canterbury-cathedral.org/learning/). Copies of any policies not available online on the Cathedral’s website can be supplied by the Archives and Library. The policy also supports the Activity Plan of The Canterbury Journey.

2.2 Cathedral’s Mission Statement
The Cathedral’s Mission is: ‘To show people Jesus’
‘Among those who went up to worship were some who came and said “Sir we would see Jesus”’. (John 12, v20)

2.3 Collections Statement of Purpose
Canterbury Cathedral is a holy place of pilgrimage, founded by St Augustine for the worship of Almighty God. It is the seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury who is the bishop of the Diocese of Canterbury and the Primate of All England and it is the Mother Church of the world-wide Anglican Communion. The Cathedral’s ministry is to both these roles and to all people who come to the Cathedral as worshippers, pilgrims and tourists.

The unbroken continuity of offering worship to God on this site for over 1400 years resonates with the understanding that the present incumbents are maintaining the long tradition of stewardship of a place and a presence that has been, and remains, significant in England’s Christian history. Canterbury Cathedral is Grade I listed, part of a World Heritage Site, and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. It is a busy working church, which houses internationally significant archives, library and object collections. Many items in its collections continue to fulfil a role in the day to day life of the church, and their significance is often revealed through such continuous use.

With due regard to this, Canterbury Cathedral manages and cares for its collections in order to:
• further the mission of the Cathedral
• support its role as the Mother Church of the world-wide Anglican Communion
• support its role within the City and Diocese of Canterbury
• engage people with heritage
• enrich their understanding of the history and purpose of the Cathedral
• support the Cathedral’s formal and informal learning and participation programmes

The Cathedral fulfils these aims through acquisition, preservation and research, and by making accessible the unique material in its care for the benefit of learning and for present and future generations to enjoy.

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 2 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 parishes, Canterbury City Council, the Diocese of Canterbury (as of April 2017) 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 Plan 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 conditions. 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 also available. Because of the historic nature of our buildings, wheelchair users may need to request staff assistance for accessing the reading room. A hearing loop at the reading room desk will be supplied in 2017/18, and a hearing loop for the reading room for use during lectures and talks will be investigated.

Visitors are welcomed by staff at a Welcome Desk in the reading room. Staff explain 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; on Saturday morning openings, members of the Canterbury Branch of the Kent Family History Society are available to advise on genealogical 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.

In 2016 we introduced a new system to analyse and report on onsite access to collections. This system will help us gain a better understanding of which parts of the collection are most used in our reading room and by which category of user, and will inform digitisation and conservation priorities.

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, in line with the Cathedral’s Learning Policy and The Canterbury Journey’s Activity Plan. These visits are arranged through the Cathedral’s Visits or Schools Departments; charges are applicable. The preferred days for group visits are Mondays and Fridays. 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 for outside bodies, including the University of Kent and the Historical Association. We also contribute towards the planning and delivery of learning activities delivered by other bodies, including the Christ Church Medieval 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, including the annual Cathedral Open Evening and Heritage Open Days. 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.

The delivery of The Canterbury Journey project (2017-2021) includes the creation of new displays within the Cathedral and in the new Welcome Centre, and items from Archives and Library collections will be included in these. Some original items will be included in displays, with images from the collections used when it is not possible to display the original.

5.4 Learning materials
We have some loan resources based on collections relating to Whitstable which can be borrowed by school and other groups. Collections will also feature in new Loans Boxes and in other interpretation and learning material produced by The Canterbury Journey project. Additionally, material will be made accessible via the Cathedral’s new multi-media guide and online resources. The Cathedral’s Learning and Participation programme will increase access to material for research and interpretation by the wider community, and partnering organisations, to create content for wider learning through exhibition, symposia, publication, digital media, online resources and community engagement activities.

We support research and encourage learning from our collections by providing images for inclusion in publications and online resources. Charges may be payable. We will increase content on our website to interpret collections in our care.
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 Copac. 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 in our collections 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; the improvement and development of access to digitised images is identified as an objective in our three-year departmental Access Plan.

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 as part of the Cathedral’s Learning and Participation programme. This will ensure outcomes meet the Cathedral’s strategic aims to engage new, and diverse audiences with heritage. The form is 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 five days’ notice is required to make them available in the reading room. This is specified on the online catalogue. Documents to be accessed on Saturdays need to be ordered in advance; 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. We will participate regularly in the Survey of Visitors to UK Archives, administered by CIPFA, and will report on its recommendations. There is a User Group for the Archives and Library, with representation from a range of users, including academic users, professional genealogists and general interest researchers. Its role and constitution is defined in its terms of reference, given as Appendix B. It meets twice a year, and its minutes are available to users of the reading room upon request. We also welcome feedback from researchers when visiting the reading room and issue a form for gathering this. Feedback is passed to the Head of Archives and Library for consideration and for response if necessary. We seek feedback from those attending events and taking part in group visits.

We produce a newsletter twice a year, with news from the service. This is available on our webpages and in hard-copy in the reading room. Large print versions can be made available. We also 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 Tues-Thurs, 9.15-16.45 and first Saturday of the month, 9.15-12.45
• Group visits by prior arrangement through booking with the Visits or Schools Departments, including on Mondays and Fridays. 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.
• Ten microfilm and microfiche readers, with accessibility for wheelchairs
• Digital microfilm reader-printer
• Ten document desks, with four suitable for wheelchair-users (please pre-book if possible by contacting the department)
• 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
• Four 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)
• Family history ‘helpdesk’ during Saturday opening manned by members of the Canterbury branch of the Kent Family History Society

Appendix B: Cathedral Archives and Library User Group, Terms of Reference
The Cathedral Archives and Library User Group (CALUG) was established in April 2013 to represent the various constituencies of users of the Cathedral Archives and Library. The group is an advisory group, and will consider in particular matters relating to the provision of public services for users of the Reading Room of the Archives and Library.

The group will meet twice a year, usually in April/May and October/November. Minutes will be kept, and these can be made available to users of the reading room upon request. Meetings will be chaired by the Head of Archives and Library or his/her deputy.

Membership of the group will aim to include representatives from the following constituencies/institutions:
• Students/academics from the University of Kent
• Students/academics from Canterbury Christ Church University
• Professional researchers
• General interest researchers
• Cathedral Archives and Library Committee

There may be multiple representatives of these constituencies/institutions. A member may represent more than one constituency/institution. The Chairman will either appoint members or ask respective constituencies/institutions to nominate members. Members should usually serve for a term of three years, with usually a maximum of two terms’ service.