

# Care & Conservation of the Collections

East Dunbartonshire Leisure & Culture Trust

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Caring for the collections of the Auld Kirk Museum and the Lillie Art Gallery is a fundamental responsibility of East Dunbartonshire Leisure and Culture Trust (EDLC). EDLC is responsible for the preservation of the objects in our collections and making the collections available to the public for exhibition, study, and research. As stated in the museums service's Statement of Purpose, the service exists to: "provide the best care possible for the objects in our collections"<sup>i</sup>, and one of our Key Aims is "To improve management and care of collections; delivering to SPECTRUM standards, utilising digital technologies and embedding an approach to environmental sustainability."<sup>ii</sup>
- 1.2 The care of these collections involves a combination of preventative and remedial conservation, both intended to ensure preservation of objects in East Dunbartonshire's ownership & EDLC's responsibility, and balancing this with use. Care of the collection is guided by sector standards of best practise with preventative conservation measures being the primary strategy.
- 1.3 The Museum does not provide advice to the general public on how to undertake conservation or recommend any one particular specialist. Enquires are referred to the ICON (Institute of Conservation) Conservation Register.

## 2 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this Policy is to outline preventive and remedial collections care measures that will assist with the long-term preservation of the collections and enable access to the collections for present and future users. Our overarching objectives are to:

- Provide storage conditions that minimise risks to objects that may be caused by temperature, relative humidity, light levels, pests, and pollution.
- Maintain appropriate levels of security for the collections while in storage or on display.
- Assess condition of objects prior to acquisition, loan and display.
- Regularly monitor collections in storage.
- Ensure remedial conservation is carried out by suitably qualified conservators and maintain records of any conservation work.
- Promote best practice in handling and care of objects through staff training.
- Reduce the environmental impact of caring for the collection when and where possible. *See also Sustainability Policy*

### 3 COLLECTIONS CARE & PREVENTIVE CONSERVATION

- 3.1 Collections care is the responsibility of the Museums Collection Officer. All staff have a responsibility to follow the agreed procedures, guidelines and trainings for preventive care, handling, cleaning and display.
- 3.2 Appropriate benchmarks for conservation will be utilised, with the aim to achieve 'best practice' in our preservation and conservation procedures in line with appropriate standards of collection care.
- 3.3 The Museum will apply preventive conservation measures to care for collection objects over their lifespan, and as resources permit. This covers the measures necessary to reduce or minimise deterioration of collection objects, based upon appropriate storage conditions and environmental control within storage and exhibition areas.
- 3.4 Housekeeping & cleaning of collections store areas will be undertaken or overseen by Collections staff. A schedule of housekeeping and preventative conservation activities will be maintained and reviewed on a regular basis. An integrated pest management programme will be utilised to monitor and manage risk to the collections.
- 3.5 The Museum aims to provide suitable and sustainable storage and environmental conditions for the collections and display materials. A programme of renewing packaging & storage materials will be implemented on a rolling basis where resources allow. Environmental monitoring systems are in use in all collection areas.
- 3.6 Any item known, or suspected, to contain a hazardous material will be segregated, assessed when possible, and managed in line with legal regulations and best practice. Appropriate risk signage will be displayed.
- 3.7 Surveys of collections will be undertaken at appropriate intervals to identify potential issues and prioritise improvements to buildings, facilities, and environments housing collections. Surveys will be conducted with consultation with an accredited conservator, and records kept to maintain progress of collection care activities.
- 3.8 Conservation and Collections Care information, as it relates directly to collection items, will be recorded, and made available through the Collections Management System (CMS) in line with the Collections Documentation and Access Policies.

### 4 CONSERVATION TREATMENT

- 4.1 Remedial conservation involves treatment to an object to bring it to a more acceptable condition or state in order to stabilise it or make it suitable for display.
- 4.2 Prioritisation of required conservation treatments of objects will be based upon significance, vulnerability, and planned use.
- 4.3 All newly acquired objects will be assessed to establish conservation requirements prior to acquisition. The Museum will aim to ensure recently acquired objects receive appropriate conservation treatment as soon as possible after being accepted into the collection.
- 4.4 Treatment methods will use stable and tested materials that, as far as possible, are reversible and do not compromise the intrinsic nature of the object.

- 4.5 External funding will be sought for treatment that is beyond existing resources.
- 4.6 Accredited conservators will be used for any remedial conservation work, and may be consulted prior to any basic treatment which could be carried out by appropriately trained museum staff. Basic preventative conservation treatment which could be undertaken in-house could include dusting and surface cleaning and consolidation.
- 4.7 A plan for conservation actions will be maintained and reviewed on a regular basis. Prioritisation may need to be amended on short notice to attend to arising issues.

## 5 COLLECTIONS USE

### 5.1 General

- 5.1.1 All use of the collections will be risk assessed to minimise the risk of deterioration, damage, and loss; and standard procedures followed for common functions. All research, teaching, and exhibition use, including condition assessments and treatments will be recorded in the collections management system. *See Collections Documentation Policy/procedure for further information*
- 5.1.2 Standard handling and storage procedures will be followed when objects are used for research, teaching and exhibitions.
- 5.1.3 Study spaces where collections are on open display will be actively invigilated by trained staff, who can provide assistance to users when handling items. Users will be provided with relevant equipment (for example, gloves, book-rests) and information (for example, handling guidelines and risk assessments) to minimize risk of damage during use.
- 5.1.4 Display materials / methods used for, or in proximity to, collections items will be appropriate for use.
- 5.1.5 Appropriate training will be provided to all who work directly with collection objects, both EDLC collections and objects on loan from other external collections, and appropriate supervision will be given to trainees.

### 5.2 Working Collection Items

EDLC has only a small number of objects which can fit within the category of historic working objects (e.g. machinery, clocks, mechanical toys, instruments).

- 5.2.1 Only those objects identified in their care plans as permitted to be worked, are worked.
- 5.2.2 Every object to be worked has an operating manual and is worked only in accordance with that manual.
- 5.2.3 Appropriate training is provided to all who operate working objects, and appropriate supervision is given to trainees.
- 5.2.4 A record is kept of instances of operation.

### 5.3 Handling Collection

A handling collection will be available for use by the service and on request to teachers, local groups and members of the public. This will be managed by the Museums staff and sit within the Engagement Collection category (*see Collections Development Policy 2023, section 2H*).

### 5.4 Loan-in Objects

5.4.1 Objects on loan to the Museum or Gallery will be temporarily under the responsibility of the Museums Collection Officer, unless otherwise arranged. The museum will treat all incoming loans according to the requirements set out in the loan agreement between it and the lending body.

5.4.2 The museum will notify the lending body if there is any change in its circumstances which mean that it can no longer meet the requirements set out in this agreement.

5.4.3 If the lending body does not supply a Condition Check Form for each object, the museum will use its own Condition Check Forms.

## 6 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

6.1 Provision of emergency disaster kit & monitor supplies.

Equipment and materials will be provided to make up an Emergency disaster kit which will be located at each main venue (Auld Kirk Museum, Kirkintilloch, and Lillie Art Gallery, Milngavie) with additional basic supplies within any satellite store or display area, such as at Donaldson Crescent. Stock within these kits will be monitored so that supplies remain at an adequate level.

6.2 Provision of disaster plan within Emergency Manual document.

Emergency Manual and Disaster Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis, with contact details updated as and when needed.

6.3 Provision of training in disaster/emergency planning and awareness.

Desktop emergency/disaster scenario will be undertaken with museum team on an annual basis. Awareness training will be given on staff induction.

## Review Information

Review date September 2023

Reviewed by Jennifer Binnie (Museums Collection Officer)

Approved by Esmee Smith (Heritage & Arts Team Leader)

Previous version: Care & Conservation Policy (2012)

Next review date September 2024

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<sup>i</sup> Museum Mission Statement and Key Aims (2023-2028), section 2

<sup>ii</sup> Museum Mission Statement and Key Aims (2023-2028), section 3.5