

# Access Policy

## Island Archives

The Island Archives preserves records of the States of Guernsey and other public bodies, as well as records of historical value obtained by purchase, deposit or donation from institutions and private individuals.

Island Archives' holdings include records from:

- States of Guernsey Committees;
- Law Officers;
- Bailiff's Office;
- Lieutenant-Governor's Office;
- The ten civil parishes;
- Parish churches of St Andrew, Castel, Forest, St Martin, St Pierre du Bois, St Saviour and Vale; the other Anglican churches of Holy Trinity, St James' Church, and St Peter's, Sark; Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches, etc.;
- Local organisations including the Women's Institute, National Trust and La Société Guernesiaise.

The Island Archives aims to make these records available for use while preventing unauthorised access and respecting the rights of individuals, creators, owners and users. In this document 'access' means the availability of records for consultation.

The Island Archives makes its resources and services available to the States of Guernsey, Crown, parish offices, research professionals, students, the media, and leisure users from the local community and worldwide.

## Legislation

The main legislation governing access to records is the Data Protection (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law, 2017 (the Law). The Island Archives wishes to provide reasonable public access to records, while complying with the Law and protecting the privacy and confidentiality of people whose information is contained within the records.

Researchers have responsibilities under the Law in respect of personal data obtained from records they access, including those not subject to access restrictions. Researchers wishing to access records created in the last 100 years and potentially containing personal data will be required to sign a researcher confirmation form in order to be given access to these records. Further information is available in the Island Archives' 'Data Protection – Information and Researcher Confirmation' form.

## Standards

The States of Guernsey has not made legislation equivalent to the English Public Records Act 1958 as amended, or the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The States of Guernsey operates a non-statutory *Code of Practice on Access to Public Information* which was adopted in 2013. The Code describes the exceptions that should be applied to the presumption of disclosure to protect confidentiality and Guernsey's legal, commercial, competitive or public interests. Further information is available on the States' web page, <https://www.gov.gg/information>.

The Island Archives aims to meet best practice guidelines for public access set out in that *Code of Practice on Access to Public Information*, the International Council on Archives *Principles of Access to Archives* (2012) and the National Council on Archives Public Services Quality Group *Standard for Access to Archives* (2008).

It also adheres to the International Council on Archives *Code of Ethics* of 1996 which states, amongst other things, that:

- Archivists should promote the widest possible access to records and provide an impartial service to all users (Principle 6);
- Archivists should respect both access and privacy, and act within the boundaries of relevant legislation (Principle 7).

## Collections information

All records held at Island Archives are catalogued on its Collections Management System, *Axiell Collections*. This database is not yet available to the public to search, although staff can undertake reasonable searches for enquirers and provide information on collections free of charge.

Printed indexes to some of the most popular records and collections are available in the public research room and on the Island Archives' web pages. An overview of the collections and research guides on popular topics can also be found online ([www.gov.gg/islandarchives](http://www.gov.gg/islandarchives)). Island Archives aims to increase digital resources (catalogues, indexes and content) as resources permit.

Exhibitions promoting wider access to archive material are provided by Archives' staff. Group tours for schools and other organisations can usually be accommodated during office hours by prior arrangement.

### Research enquiries

The Island Archives provides information on its collections and resources free of charge. The Island Archives does not undertake detailed or paid research on behalf of public users although it may, other commitments allowing, undertake limited research of a straightforward nature for enquirers who are unable to visit in person. For more substantial research, it is recommended that researchers attend in person or arrange for a privately contracted service.

The Island Archives accepts enquiries via email, telephone, post, or preferably via the contact form on the Island Archives' web page, [www.gov.gg/islandarchives](http://www.gov.gg/islandarchives). All enquiries will be answered within a reasonable time.

### Consultation of records

The Island Archives welcomes visitors who want to carry out their own research by appointment during office hours. Researchers are advised to contact the Island Archives to make a viewing appointment, and where possible order in advance any documents already identified for consultation.

Records (subject to any access restrictions) can be consulted in the public research room, which is equipped with desks, reading lights, book rests, document weights, and a small reference library of local publications. A member of staff will be available to assist users and provide advice on resources as required. There is no charge for consultation of records or staff advice.

Visitors are asked to observe the research room rules, and handle records carefully. After consultation, records should be returned to a member of staff. More details can be found in the information sheet 'Guidelines for Handling Archive Materials'.

Accessibility information is available on the AccessAble website:  
<https://www.accessable.co.uk/venues/island-archives-centre>.

### Access restrictions

Although most records held at Island Archives are available for public viewing, some may be subject to restrictions.

The States of Guernsey, either as controller or processor, has responsibilities in relation to personal data under the Data Protection (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law, 2017. For this reason, certain categories of records such as those relating to health, education and crime are usually subject to a 100-year closure period from their date of creation. Some records may be subject to closure periods to cover the 'lifetime' of an individual, for which 100 years is assumed<sup>1</sup>.

Data Protection legislation allows people to request information about themselves which they think may be held by Island Archives. For further information about making an application, please contact the Island Archives or the Office of the Data Protection Authority.

Most States' administrative records created before 1948 are available for public viewing. Access to most States' administrative records created after 1948 requires written permission from the committee or body concerned.

The Island Archives must balance the provision of access with the need to preserve archive material for future generations. Researchers may be required to use surrogate copies of records to preserve the originals.

Some records may be subject to access restrictions, for example if they:

- Contain personal data, subject to the Data Protection (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law, 2017;
- Contain sensitive information;
- Have not yet been catalogued;
- Are in a fragile physical condition;
- Are subject to access restrictions imposed by the relevant States of Guernsey Committee or public body;
- Are subject to access restrictions agreed with the depositor of a collection.

Island Archives' staff will make users aware of any closed records and explain the restrictions and procedure for applying to consult them.

Users who would like to consult archive records that are likely to be subject to restrictions are requested to contact the Island Archives well in advance of any visit to discuss necessary permissions.

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<sup>1</sup> See The National Archives (2019) *Closure Periods*. Available from <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/closure-periods.pdf>

Depositors may consult their own records subject to adequate identification and preferably by prior arrangement. In the case of archives of organisations, including the States of Guernsey, only authorised persons will be allowed access to restricted records.

Depositors and institutional personnel transferring records to the custody of Island Archives understand that records are preserved for access. If they require or are legally obliged to withhold certain information from public use for a period of time, they are responsible for communicating this to the Island Archives along with the reasons for and duration of restriction.

The Island Archives monitors restrictions and encourages creators and depositors of archive material to suggest fair and consistent rules for access. In the absence of unambiguous access guidelines, Archives' staff will deal with access requests case by case considering legal requirements, professional ethics, and the rights of individuals, creators, owners and users.

### Copying of records

Visitors can obtain copies of most publicly available records held by the Island Archives, subject to Copyright provisions and other relevant legislation. Further details can be found in the information sheets 'Reprographic Policy' and 'Reprographic Services and Charges'.

The Island Archives may allow archive material to be digitised for preservation purposes and increased accessibility, for non-profit purposes, subject to the content and condition of the material and terms of deposit.

### Loans

Records are for reference only and cannot be removed from the Island Archives by users without agreement. The Island Archives may loan records for exhibition or digitisation, subject to the permission, where practically obtainable, of the depositor.

Records transferred to the Island Archives from States of Guernsey Committees or private donors on deposit terms may temporarily or indefinitely be returned for administrative use. Depositors are encouraged to consult their records in the Archives' research room where possible, or to create reference copies rather than withdrawing records.

### Security

Consultation of records is limited to the research room, which is monitored by Island Archives' staff and CCTV. All visitors are asked to sign the visitor book on arrival and to place their coats, bags and other personal items in a locker. Notebooks, pencils, and electronic equipment to be used for notetaking and photography are allowed in the research room. There is no charge for researchers using their own cameras.

Access to storage and working areas is restricted to Island Archives' staff. Access by contractors (including engineers and cleaners) is by prior arrangement and visiting personnel are supervised by Island Archives' staff.

### Review Period

This policy was approved in 2021 by the Island Archivist. This policy will be reviewed as required but at a frequency of not less than five yearly. If you require any further information or clarification regarding this policy, please contact the Island Archives.