

Shropshire Archives  
Interim Digital Preservation Policy  
November 2015



Gateway to  
the history of  
Shropshire  
and Telford



## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Overview and history

#### 1.1.1 History of the Service

Shrewsbury Corporation established a borough library and museum in 1885, largely through the efforts of the Shropshire Archaeological Society. In 1898 a Records Committee was set up by Salop County Council, initially to report on the records of the clerk of the peace, but an honorary archivist was appointed only in 1934. In 1947, Salop County Council created a Record Office to organise their Quarter Session records and large estate, parish and other official collections, and this appeared to duplicate some of the work of the Shrewsbury Borough Library and Museum. A guide to these holdings was produced in 1952.

The Borough Library became part of the County Library Service in 1974 and its extensive collections formed the basis of a local studies library with a county-wide role. The County Record Office continued to be organised independently but became the principal repository for the vast collection of manuscript material deposited with the County Council. The re-organisation of County Council services in 1988 led to the creation of the Leisure Services Department and the County Record Office and Local Studies Library were finally administratively united as the Records and Research Unit.

#### 1.1.2 Shropshire Archives and the Records Management Service

Further re-organisation in 1995 led to the creation of Shropshire County Council's Information and Community Services Department which funded the £1.8 million project to build the Records and Research Centre. Located in Castle Gates, Shrewsbury, the purpose-built centre has four levels with a total floor space of 1,500 square metres. At the same time a Records Management service was established at Shirehall to manage the records and information created by Shropshire County Council. Following local government reorganisation in 1997, an agreement between Shropshire County Council and Telford and Wrekin Council secured funding to maintain the Service's remit over the historic county.

In 2004 following public consultation, the service was renamed Shropshire Archives, gateway to the history of Shropshire and Telford. In 2009 Shropshire became a unitary council and inherited large quantities of archives and records from the former Borough and District Councils. This meant that additional storage space was required and an out store was established to house both records and archives in 2012.

### 1.2 Mission Statements

Shropshire Archives will take the lead in preserving and improving access to Shropshire's archives and local history collections in order that individuals and communities can better understand, research and appreciate their heritage.

The Records Management Service will work to ensure that Shropshire Council manages its information and records sources in an appropriate, efficient and economic manner.

### 1.3 Service Objectives

#### 1.3.1 Objectives –Shropshire Archives

- To fulfil a custodial role in the preservation, acquisition and cataloguing of Shropshire's archives and local history collections
- To promote and provide opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to use Shropshire's archives and local history collections to better understand, and appreciate their heritage
- To develop and to promote best practice in the preservation, enhancement and use of Shropshire's archives and local history collections
- To develop and to support sustainable partnerships and to enable communities and people to engage, explore, conserve and enjoy their own heritage

### 1.3.2 Objectives – The Records Management Service

- To ensure that information and records sources are retained only for as long as is necessary for legal compliance and administrative need.
- To develop and promote best practice and legal compliance in the creation, use, maintenance and disposal of information and records sources.
- To co-ordinate the selection and offering of records and material to Shropshire Archives, thereby contributing to the corporate memory of Shropshire Council.
- To work with the Information Governance team and the Information Governance Group to ensure Shropshire Council's compliance with legislation relating to information and record keeping.

## 2 Policy Aims

The aim of this policy is to outline what we hope to achieve in respect of preserving digital archives. It will also clarify what depositors, donors and other stakeholders can expect from the archive service in terms of digital preservation, and explains what the service can and cannot do with the resources, infrastructure and skills available at present.

It supports the services' mission statement above and should be seen in conjunction with the Collection Management policy and other relevant policy documents.

## 3 Statutory Position.

Shropshire Archives is a recognised place of deposit for public records, and a diocesan record office for records from the Shropshire parishes of the dioceses of Hereford and Lichfield. It is also licensed to hold Manorial and Tithe records, and records of local government and other public and statutory bodies. The service provides a local studies library service under the Public Libraries Act 1964.

The service works to ensure that Shropshire Council complies with the following legislation:

- The Local Government Act 1972 (s.224) which states the Local Authority needs to 'make proper arrangements with respect to any documents that belong to, or are in the custody of the council of any of their officers'.
- The Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967. These relate to those records created by central government and designated as 'public records' which may be held locally. These Acts place an obligation upon services to 'permanently preserve' the original records.
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2005.

## 4 Scope

This policy and related guidance covers born digital records deposited or donated to Shropshire Archives under the Acquisitions Policy. Shropshire Council is currently developing an electronic records management system using Microsoft SharePoint, but to date procedures for the permanent preservation of born digital Council records have not yet been formulated.

## 5 Appraisal, selection and acquisition

At present, Shropshire Archives is unable to undertake the permanent preservation of any digital formats. It seeks to make potential donors or depositors fully aware of its position in this regard so that they are clear about the terms under which such records are accepted.

The specific conditions under which Shropshire Archives accepts the donation or deposit of certain digital formats are as follows:

### *Digital audio files*

Wherever possible, Shropshire Archives will inform potential depositors or donors of alternative places of deposit, such as the British Library, if the subject matter falls under the terms of their collecting policy. However, it accepts that at present there is usually no alternative repository for the deposit of digital audio files.

Whilst this is the case, Shropshire Archives will accept digital audio files and undertake to store them in such a way to prolong their life as far as possible with the resources available. It advises that audio files should be deposited on gold coated CD-R and DVD-R which it stores in environmentally controlled strong rooms.

However, it does not undertake the active management of these records and does not take responsibility for the long-term survival of the audio data. Shropshire Archives seeks to work with the British Library and any other relevant bodies to help find a longer-term solution for the preservation of these records.

### *Digital image files*

Where digital image files are offered for deposit, Shropshire Archives appraises and selects these in line with its existing guidelines. Once selected as suitable for permanent preservation the digital files are transfer onto a server and the relevant technical and descriptive metadata recorded on Lightroom and CALM. A hard copy using carbon based ink is then produced to ensure permanent preservation of the image.

Shropshire Archives is aware of the potential additional value of the digital format (for instance, the image may be in colour) and so also undertakes to retain the digital image as an additional copy whilst it seeks to develop a more secure solution to its long-term preservation.

### *Other digital records*

Depositors are advised to deposit a hard copy version of their records wherever possible in order to ensure their preservation. Shropshire Archives will occasionally accept certain files formats, such as Word, PDF or other text-based files for the purpose of creating a paper copy for permanent retention on behalf of the depositor. The digital format is not preserved once the paper copy has been produced.

Shropshire Archives will appraise and select digital records for preservation in line with our existing guidelines.

## 6 Preservation and storage

Shropshire Archives is committed to identifying a solution for the long term accession, storage and preservation of digital records within the next 5 years. Shropshire Archives will work with other West Midlands archive services and seek the support of Shropshire Council's IT and Information Governance teams to ensure this.

## 7 Access

Copy sound files are accessible via a dedicated pc in the reading room.

## 8 Standards

Standards and guidance which inform digital preservation strategies and processes developed by Shropshire Archives will include the following:

- The Dublin Core Metadata Element Set (ISO Standard 15836)
- BS 4783 Storage, Transportation and Maintenance of Media for Use in Data Processing and Information Storage
- The OAIS (Open Archival Information System)
- Code of Practice for Legal Admissibility and Evidential Weight of Information stored electronically

The following organisations are relevant to digital preservation and will be consulted in the process of developing digital preservation strategies:

- The Digital Preservation Coalition
- The Digital Curation Centre
- The National Archives
- The National Preservation Office

This policy was written in November 2015 and will be reviewed in November 2020 or sooner if circumstances dictate.