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**Collections Development Policy**

**February 2023**

**Name of museum:** Glasgow Women’s Library

**Date review completed**: February 2023

**Staff who undertook the review:** Jenny Noble, Museum Curator and Nicola Maksymuik, Archivist

**Name of governing body:**Glasgow Women’s Library Ltd Board of Directors

**Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:**23rd February 2023

**Policy review procedure:**This Collections Development Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years**.**

**Date at which this policy is due for review:** December 2027

***Museums Galleries Scotland* will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.**

1. **Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:**
   1. **The museum’s statement of purpose is:**

**Our Vision**

Our vision is of a world in which women’s historical, cultural and political contributions to society are fully recognised, valued and celebrated by all.

**Our Mission**

Glasgow Women’s Library celebrates the lives and achievements of women, champions their historical, cultural and political contributions to Scotland and acts as a catalyst to eradicate the prevalent gender gap that contributes to inequalities in Scotland.

**Our Core Values**

* ***Empowerment:***Glasgow Women’s Library provides a safe, friendly, empowering environment where women can access the information and opportunities they need to take control of their own learning and personal development and to change their lives for the better.
* ***Redressing Inequalities:***We recognise the impact that social and cultural barriers have on women’s participation in society and we seek to redress these inequalities in our work.
* ***Valuing All Women:*** We value all women and work proactively and creatively to bring women together from diverse backgrounds, especially the most vulnerable and excluded in society, in order to invest in women’s social and cultural capital to the benefit of our nation.
* ***Development and Growth:*** We are committed to sustaining and supporting an individual’s personal growth and encouraging the development of skills, knowledge and self-confidence.
* ***Diversity and Inclusivity:*** We are fully committed to diversity and to creating the opportunities that an inclusive approach brings to an organisation, trying at all times to operate transparently and to involve people across the organisation in decision making.
* ***Openness and Respect:*** We are committed to maximising the accessibility of our resources by ensuring that they are freely and widely available; by providing a courteous, friendly, professional and non-discriminatory service and by working to ensure that all our staff, volunteers, learners, users, donors and supporters are treated with respect.

**Aims and Objectives**

Glasgow Women’s Library is an Accredited Museum and vibrant information hub housing a lending library, archive collections and contemporary and historical artefacts relating to women’s lives, histories and achievements. It works across Scotland delivering innovative Learning Programmes and providing dedicated services, including Adult Literacy and Numeracy support, a Black and Minority Ethnic Women’s Project and a Volunteer Development Programme.

* 1. The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.
  2. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum’s collection.
  3. Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
  4. The museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.
  5. The museum will undertake 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.
  6. In exceptional cases, disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below 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
       - Extensive prior consultation with sector bodies has been undertaken
       - The item under consideration lies outside the museum’s established core collection

1. **History of the collections**

Glasgow Women’s Library (GWL) has been providing information, resources and services since 1991. It developed from a broad-based arts organisation called Women in Profile, which was set up in 1987 with the aim of ensuring the representation of women’s culture during Glasgow’s year as the European City of Culture in 1990.

Women in Profile comprised community artists, grass-roots activists, academics, students and broad-based arts practitioners who collectively ran a year-long season of events, workshops, exhibitions, projects and other activities before and during 1990.

Over the course of that time Women in Profile gathered documentation and materials relating to its activities and, following consultation with the local community and women’s groups across the City of Glasgow, opened Glasgow Women’s Library in September 1991 in the Garnethill area.

Since 1991 thousands of women have contributed to the growth and success of the Library. The collection has been largely donated and there have been scores of women involved in managing its projects, volunteering and contributing their time, expertise, visions and energies.

1. **An overview of current collections**

The GWL collection contains a large lending and reference library of over 20,000 volumes, several archive collections and historical and contemporary artifacts and ephemera relating to women’s lives, history, culture and achievements.

GWL primarily collects records and ephemera relating to women’s lives, interests, campaigning and culture. It strengths are in ‘Second Wave’ feminist materials especially Women’s Liberation and Equality campaigning in Scotland.

GWL’s holdings of ephemera and historical and contemporary artefacts of importance include:

* *The Suffragette* newspaper (1913 original, covering the death of Emily Wilding Davidson, killed under the King’s Horse)
* A collection of suffragette and anti-suffragette postcards, mostly ‘postally used’ and dated between 1903 and 1914
* Suffragette jewellery, anti-suffragette clocks and a complete set of PANKO card game, *c.*1900-1920s
* Album of Alice Moakes, 1910, with writings and sketches, including coloured drawings of Loch Awe and a suffragette
* Historical and contemporary artefacts, such as a Victorian iron umbrella stand from Duke Street prison, painted by suffragettes imprisoned there
* Travel album of Elaine Burton, Baroness Burton of Coventry (1904-1991 – athlete and politician), containing postcards and press cuttings of her trip to the USA on the Mauritania, as a representative of the government, *c*.1940s.
* Copies of *The Scotswoman*, a one-off issue of *The Scotsman*, published to celebrate International Women’s Day
* Original artworks, including the Hannah Frank print collection (1925–1955) and Margaret Meade Whalley designs (*c.*1950s–1990)
* Photographs held within numerous collections, including photographs of marches, women workers during WWII, women’s suffrage campaigners and anti-nuclear demonstrations
* Calendars, diaries, badges, posters, reports, pamphlets, flyers and T-shirts relating to women’s campaigns, political movements and organisations, and particularly strong representation of second wave feminism.

Our collections include:

* The Equal Opportunities Commission Archive – a complete set of catalogued materials produced by and charting the work of the EOC from its inception in 1975 to 2007.
* Edinburgh Women’s Centre Collection – donated *c*.1995 following the closure of Edinburgh Women’s Centre and comprising a collection of early second wave feminism materials and papers relating to the Centre. Also, the Edinburgh Women’s Liberation Archive.
* Archives of the Scottish Abortion Campaign – collection of papers relating to the Scotland-wide campaign, along with the organisation’s banner and the National abortion campaign and the Pro-choice abortion archives.
* Archives of the Family Planning Association – papers from the early family planning movement in Scotland, dating from the 1960s onwards.
* Women’s Church Resource Group Collection – collection of journals and papers relating to women involved in faith groups in Scotland.
* Meridian Archive – archive materials from Meridian Black and Minority Ethnic Women’s Centre, Glasgow, including photographs, papers and banners.
* Scottish Women’s Aid (Press cuttings and oral history project) – press cuttings from the 1970s onwards, relating to press coverage of domestic abuse issues and cases in Scotland and the Glasgow Women's Aid, Women Live in Scotland archive and the ENACT (Education Networking Action Culture Training) archives.
* *Harpies and Quines*, Scottish Feminist Magazine – a complete run of copies and its related archive.
* Take Root Self Build Group – Glasgow Women’s Self Build Group, 1993-date.
* The Lesbian Archive and Information Centre (LAIC) - established as the Lesbian Archives Collective in London in 1984 and transferred to Glasgow Women's Library in September 1995. Comprised of printed materials ranging from books, reports, pamphlets and theses to biographical cuttings, 1900–2007. The Archive also includes several collections of personal papers and approx. 1,000 (mainly black and white) photographs of individual women, social events and demonstrations, 1972–2007.
* Camden Lesbian Centre and Black Lesbian Group (part of the LAIC Collection) - began in 1982, funded by Camden Council. The Camden Black Lesbian Group was established in 1984 as a support group. The collection consists of two sections: the book materials and the papers of the Camden Lesbian Centre and Black Lesbian Group.
* Lesbian Line Glasgow Archives, relating to the organisation until its closure in the mid-1990s.
* Oral History Project, including tapes and transcripts of testimonies of lesbians in Glasgow.
* Women of the Glasgow Commonwealth Games Legacy Collection, including items donated by competitors, broadcasters, volunteers
* Badges of Honour, including items that reflect the theme of how badge wearing women changed the world
* Zero Tolerance, including items that tell the story of the Zero Tolerance campaign
* Several individual women’s collections – including journalist and writer, Sue Innes; campaigners Jenny Hills and Jackie Forster; writers Anna Livia, Emma Donoghue, Rosemary Auchmuty; filmmaker Lucinda Broadbent.
* A range of Scottish women’s periodicals, with a particular strength in Second Wave feminist publications of the1970s and 1980s*.*
* Collections of knitting and dress patterns *c.*1930s–1980s, lifestyle magazines and cook books.

In addition, GWL has built up its own collection that documents women’s history and achievements in Scotland. This includes GWL’s news-cuttings archive referring to women in Scotland and women’s issues collected by GWL from *c*.1980s to 2000, and archive material, oral history projects and exhibitions generated from its lifelong learning programmes.

1. **Themes and priorities for future collecting**

GWL primarily collects records and ephemera relating to women’s lives, interests, campaigning and culture. It strengths are in ‘Second Wave’ feminist materials, especially Women’s Liberation and Equality campaigning in Scotland.

GWL will consider adding items to its collections that contribute to the following areas:

* The history of the Suffragettes, including anti-suffragette materials
* Women’s campaigns, political movements and organisations, particularly of BAME, LGBTQ+ and STEM material
* Individual women’s archives (writers, journalists, artists, activists)
* Collections created during GWL projects and workshops
* Material of significance relating to women’s lives and their contribution to life in Scotland.

GWL will also aim to implement a ‘rapid response’ approach to collecting material generated during local, national and international events, in line with the overarching collecting policy.

1. **Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal**

The museum collection includes a number of children’s and adults’ fiction and non-fiction books. These are comprised of former library books (no longer required for the lending or reference collections) and acquisitions dating back a number of years. A small number are accessioned but most are not. Many of these books are not required for the core museum collection and/or are duplicate examples. After completing a full inventory, duplicate or non-relevant books will be the priority for museum disposals during the period covered by this policy.

The museum collection also includes a small number of accessioned duplicate items, including badges and flyers. At least one example of each will be retained for the core museum collection, but where duplicate items do not have significant provenance or association history they may be considered for transfer to the handling collection.

Where any other disposals do take place it will only be for legal, safety or care and conservation reasons *(for example, spoliation, radiation, infestation, repatriation).*

1. **Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items**

The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.

1. **Collecting policies of other museums** 
   1. The 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 specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.
   2. Specific reference is made to the following museum(s)/organisation(s):

* The Women’s Library, London
* The Feminist Library, London
* The Mitchell Library, Glasgow
* National Records of Scotland (NRS)

In any case of dispute between the GWL and another repository as to the proper custodian of the records, the advice of a neutral arbiter such as the Keeper of the National Archives of Scotland, the Historical Manuscripts Commission or Museums Galleries Scotland will be taken.

* 1. Where the potential for joint acquisition arises agreement will be sought with the relevant organisation. This policy assumes that joint acquisitions are most likely to occur in digital form during the period of this policy.

1. **Archival holdings**

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).

1. **Acquisition**
   1. The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

The Director of Operations, Resources and Enterprise and the collection team approve the addition of items to the collection.

* 1. 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).
  2. 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, 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.

1. **Human remains**

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

1. **Biological and geological material**

The museum will not acquire any biological or geological material.

1. **Archaeological material**

The museum will not acquire any archaeological material.

1. **Exceptions**

Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is acting:

* As an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
* With the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin

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. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.

1. **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.

1. **The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains**

The museum’s governing body, acting on the advice of the museum’s professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the *Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museums” issued by MGS in 2011*), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

1. **Disposal procedures**
   1. All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.
   2. The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.
   3. 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.
   4. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, exchange or as a last resort - destruction.
   5. 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 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. 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.
   6. 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 or manager of the collection acting alone.
   7. Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. 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.
   8. If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered 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 a notice on the MA’s Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association’s Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
   9. 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.
   10. Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly 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 Museums Galleries Scotland*.*
   11. The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.
   12. 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.

***Disposal by exchange***

* 1. 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.
     1. In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or non-Accredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 16.1-5 will apply.
     2. 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.
     3. If the exchange is proposed with a non-Accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will place a notice on the MA’s Find an Object web listing service, or make an announcement in the Museums Association’s Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
     4. 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.

***Disposal by destruction***

* 1. If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
  2. It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.
  3. Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation’s research policy.
  4. Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.
  5. The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, e.g. the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.