



York Minster Library Collections Development Policy

Produced: March 2023

Adopted: 27 April 2023

Date of Review: April 2028

Name of library: York Minster Library (YML)

Name of governing body: The Chapter of York, Registered Charity Number 1201499, of 8-10 Minster Yard, York, YO1 7HH

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: April 2023

Policy review procedure: The 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: April 2028

1. Relationship to other relevant policies / plans of the organisation:

1.1. Statement of Purpose:-

The Charitable Purpose of the Chapter of York

The charitable purpose of the Chapter of York is—

- (a) to advance the Christian religion in accordance with the faith and practice of the Church of England, in particular by furthering the mission of the Church of England;
- (b) to care for and conserve the fabric and structure of the Cathedral Church building;
- (c) to advance any other charitable purposes which are ancillary to the furtherance of the purpose referred to in sub-paragraph (a) or (b).

Extracted from Constitution of York Minster, revised with effect from 29 September 2022, p.1, Article 3(1)

Statement of Purpose for the Collections

The museum, library and archive services seek to preserve, develop, interpret and make accessible to all the collections of the Chapter of York, supporting Chapter's mission and charitable purposes, and enriching people's lives through enabling participation, learning, understanding, inspiration and enjoyment.

The Collections are referred to in the *Statutes of York Minster, revised with effect from 29 September 2022, p.17, Article 40 (1)-(4)*

40. (1) The Chapter shall maintain a Library and Archives whose purpose shall include the promotion of sacred learning.

(2) The Chapter shall make appropriate provision for the direction and oversight of the Library and Archives and for the care and conservation of the historic and working collections of the Cathedral.

(3) Where it may in the opinion of the Chapter assist the Chapter in fulfilling requirements imposed upon it by the Measure or by the Care of Cathedrals Measure 2011 or where it may otherwise further the Chapter's charitable objects as set out in the Constitution, the Chapter may at its discretion operate an Accredited Museum, as defined by the applicable Arts Council England national quality standards, within

the Cathedral or within such other precinct property of the Cathedral as the Chapter may from time to time determine.

(4) The Chapter may enter into agreements with the University of York ... or any other institution of Higher Education concerning the management and administration of the Library and Archives and concerning the care and use of the historic collections of the Cathedral.

- 1.2.** The Chapter of York will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.
- 1.3.** York Minster Library has a long-term purpose and its collections are held in relation to their stated objectives. The Chapter of York accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collections, or the disposal of any items in the Chapter of York's library collections.
- 1.4.** Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances and will require the specific prior approval of the Chapter of York.
- 1.5.** The Chapter of York 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 Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England (CFCE), and national library standards. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.
- 1.6.** York Minster Library will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any material unless the governing body, Head of Collections & Interpretation, York Minster Librarian or other delegated responsible officer is satisfied that the Chapter of York can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- 1.7.** 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 library's established core collection
- 1.8.** NB: As a cathedral collection, the Library Collection is subject to the legislative framework of the Care of Cathedrals Measure 2011 and The Care of Cathedrals (Amendment) Rules 2020. Material works relating to care, conservation, repair or development of the cathedral fabric or to collections on the Cathedral Inventory are subject to advice and consent from the Cathedral Fabric Commission for England (CFCE) or the cathedral's own Fabric Advisory Committee (FAC). Works deemed by the Fabric Advisory Committee to be of 'architectural, archaeological, artistic or historic interest' must be recorded on the cathedral's Inventory, including library material that falls into these categories in its own right (ie books of particular artistic or historic interest, not books simply on the subject of architecture, archaeology, art or history). The cathedral's Fabric Advisory Committee will identify which works are of 'outstanding' interest and will assist the Chapter more generally with advice on Inventory-related matters. New accessions should be

added to the inventory as they are collected, if they are deemed by the FAC to be ‘of special architectural, archaeological, artistic or historic interest’ (*Cathedral Inventories*, CFCE, 2021 p. 27). Application for disposal (including by sale) of ‘outstanding’ items must be made to CFCE, whereas applications in respect of all other items on the Inventory must be made to the FAC (*ibid*, p.20).

The legal requirements of the Care of Cathedrals Measure 2011 and The Care of Cathedrals (Amendment) Rules 2020 must be taken into account. Not every item in the Library Collections is on the Inventory and subject to the framework governing Inventory material. Please see Section 3 for further details.

2.0 History of the collection

The library at the Minster can be traced back to the Anglo-Saxon scholar, Alcuin, who founded a library in the 9th century. None of the original early medieval collections can now be identified and the library has existed in its present form since 1414 when lawyer, academic and cleric John Neuton (c. 1350-1414) gifted 35 manuscripts to the Minster, essentially refounding the library. Further details of Neuton’s bequest may be found in the *Collections Development Policy for the Museum and Archive & Manuscript Collections*.

The next significant donation was that of the library of Archbishop Tobie Matthew by his widow Frances in 1628. Consisting of ‘the largest private library in England’ at the time, its 3,000 volumes transformed the standing of the Minster Library. By further accessions it continued to grow. The most important include the Marmaduke Fothergill collection in the 18th century, and the extensive and unique collection of Yorkshire material bequeathed by the antiquarian Edward Hailstone in 1890, totalling over 10,000 published items and several thousand deeds and documents, the latter of which are in the Minster Archives.

The Library’s early purpose of supporting the scholarship, knowledge, research and development of Chapter members and staff continues to the present day.

The collections have developed since through purchases, donations and bequests.

3.0 An overview of the current library collection

The library holds around 90,000 books. This includes a significant historical collection of books and pamphlets printed before 1801, and a modern collection of books and serials published in the 20th and 21st centuries. The different categories of material in the collection are covered in Appendix A.

All books printed before 1501 appear on the Cathedral Inventory as ‘Outstanding’ and all material printed before 1801 (the end of the hand press era) appears on the Inventory as ‘Of Interest’.

Specific material printed after 1801 that is unique or of particular importance to the Minster has also been added to the Inventory as ‘Of Interest’, e.g. the Hailstone Yorkshire collection.

Material entered on the Inventory as ‘Of Interest’ will be reviewed by the FAC, on the advice of the Librarian and, currently, the FAC’s Inventory Sub-Committee, to identify any further ‘Outstanding’ material.

Material printed after 1801 does not automatically appear on the Inventory, unless categorised as ‘Of Interest’ and so its management, acquisition and disposal is not governed by Care of Cathedrals Measure 2011 and The Care of Cathedrals (Amendment) Rules 2020, but by the Chapter of York alone. This allows for routine library management and turnover and ‘weeding’ of modern books and periodicals, including duplicates, without application to the FAC or CFCE. Books printed before 1851 are not routinely considered for disposal.

4.0 Library Management Arrangements

- 4.1** 'The Collaboration Agreement relating to the provision of Library Service based at the Old Palace, Dean's Park, York' between The Chapter of York and the University of York sets out the management arrangements for the library service. The current Agreement runs 2022-2027.
- 4.2** In essence, the Agreement provides for the employment, by the University of York, of a Librarian or equivalent suitably qualified and experienced professional individual ('The Minster Librarian') supported by an appropriate number of suitably trained and experienced staff, to provide professional standards of collections care and management for the Chapter of York's Library collection, including a Library management system and electronic catalogue, and to deliver public library services from the Old Palace.
- 4.3** The Library collection and Old Palace building are owned and maintained by the Chapter of York. Decisions relating to acquisitions and disposals of material in the Library collections rest with the Chapter of York (or delegated responsible officer, in accordance with this policy) and not the University of York.

5.0 Themes and priorities for future collecting

- 5.1** The Library has been working on a collections assessment programme since 2014. This has included identifying material for retention and for disposal. Further work will be carried out during the period of this policy to identify collection gaps, and themes and priorities for collecting.
- 5.2** The Library collects materials that support the mission and charitable purpose of the Chapter of York and the Statement of Purpose for the Collections, are relevant to users and support the strengths and focus of the existing collection. The strengths of the printed collections include church history and architecture, including fabric and stained glass; York Minster's history and heritage; theology, liturgy and music; Yorkshire history; and York regional printing. A rich strand of illustrated material and techniques, alongside histories of typography and book design, runs through the entire collection. Items are considered that are relevant, legally published, affordable, and value for money. The Library does not generally purchase duplicates of material already held except in exceptional circumstances such as significant provenance. Periodicals are considered that support the collection strengths and / or the professional development of Chapter's staff.
- The Library will not usually duplicate material held at the University of York unless it is of direct relevance and significance to the collecting area of York Minster Library, the charitable purpose of the Chapter of York or the Statement of Purpose for the Collections.
- 5.3** Additions to the Collections may be made by donation, bequest, or through purchase, if financial resources are available and not used at the expense of maintaining the existing collections.
- 5.4** Items offered to the York Minster Library as gifts or bequests will not normally be accepted if they are subject to any restrictive covenant or special conditions. In exceptional circumstances, if the items are assessed to be of overriding importance, the Head of Collections & Interpretation or York Minster Librarian may recommend that the Chapter of York approve the acquisition of a specific item(s) to which conditions are attached.
- 5.5** The acceptance of items on loan, normally for a finite period for display or specific study or examination, may be authorised by the Head of Collections & Interpretation, York Minster Librarian or their authorised deputy, acting on Chapter of York's behalf. The period of all loans will normally be agreed in writing between the Librarian and the owner of the item in advance of deposit. As the term of the loan expires, it may be renewed or extended for further finite periods, by mutual consent of the owner and the library service.

- 5.6** Where parish library material from churches in the Diocese, or other library material, is held for safe-keeping at York Minster, this will be subject to finite loan agreements, which will be assessed for renewal on a regular cycle, usually five years. Where loan arrangements have not previously been formalised, formal agreements will be introduced. Although there is an assumption that parish library material already in the care of York Minster Library will be held in York Minster Library long-term, renewal of loan agreements should not be assumed and cannot be guaranteed.
- 5.7** The Chapter prefers not to acquire material by ‘deposit on loan’ because of difficulties that can arise in establishing ownership after the death of a depositor and when an owner decides to withdraw material in which the Chapter has invested resources. However, the Chapter may acquire occasionally material in this way, especially where a continuing organisation is not able to transfer ownership of its collection.
- 5.8** Items offered to the Chapter of York as gifts or bequests that Chapter decides not accept into its Museum, Library or Archive Collections shall be rejected or accepted, and retained or disposed of, by Chapter in accordance with its Donations Policy.

6. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

- 6.1** The Chapter of York recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well-managed collection, emphasising the identified collection strengths and opportunities for research.
- 6.2** The procedures used will meet professional library standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.
- 6.3** Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal across the Library collection as a whole (including items on the Inventory) are:
- Items containing materials that present an unacceptable level of risk to health and safety, where their significance is not such as to warrant the processes and costs involved in decontamination or provision of specialist, segregated storage, or this is not found to be possible without unacceptable remaining risk.
 - Items damaged beyond reasonable conservation or repair; items infested or contaminated beyond reasonable treatment or conservation, likely to put at risk other items in the collections. (NB As collections care and management procedures should prevent this situation from arising, this is anticipated to be an infrequent occurrence, perhaps arising from an emergency such as fire or flood. Deterioration caused by active neglect is not an acceptable reason for disposal).
 - Duplicates of minor importance.
 - Re-identified items, when accurate identification shows the item to have little or no importance or connection to the core collections and collecting areas.
 - Minor items of no or remote connection to the core collections and collecting areas.
 - Spoilation, repatriation or restitution, in accordance with sections 8.4, 8.5 and 9 of this policy.
- 6.4** It is recognised that regular assessment and turn-over of modern library material is a standard part of library collections management. The Library service will undertake collection management activity on its non-Inventory

material which may include deaccessioning of stock that is not relevant to the collection policy. Items considered for rationalisation or disposal should meet all the following criteria:

- (a) printed after 1850
- (b) not part of a significant donor collection
- (c) available in 10 or more UK open access libraries including the National Deposit Libraries and the University of York
- (d) not part of a core subject area e.g. history and archaeology of the Minster
- (e) not borrowed, not in an exhibition, not used for research in the last 10 years
- (f) without local, national, or international significance
- (g) not relevant to the needs and strengths of the archives and museum collections

Assessments may also identify items that are potentially 'Of Interest' or Outstanding significance and should be considered for inclusion on the Inventory (see section 1.8).

7. Collecting policies of other libraries

- 7.1** The library service will take account of the collecting policies of other libraries, archives 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.
- 7.2** Specific reference is made to the following libraries and organisations:
- Other Cathedral collections, particularly Canterbury, Durham, Ripon, St Paul's, and Winchester
 - Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford
 - The British Library
 - Leeds University Library, Special Collections
 - The University of York, including the Borthwick Institute for Archives
 - York Archaeological Trust
 - York Civic Trust
 - York Explore Library and Archive
 - York Museums Trust
 - Yorkshire Film Archive

8. Acquisition

- 8.1** The Minster Librarian, under the direction and supervision of the Head of Collections & Interpretation and acting, where appropriate, on the advice of the Archivist, will normally have delegated authority and responsibility for the acceptance or rejection of potential additions to the Library Collections, including gifts and bequests, and for soliciting gifts of material for the Collections within the terms of this policy, and for making recommendations and taking action on the purchase of material in accordance with this Policy and within the Chapter of York's normal standing orders and the annual budget set by the Chapter. Where the acquisition of any item would result in significant financial implications, including in respect of purchase, storage, conservation or display, or other significant implications, including reputational impact, the proposal will be referred by the Head of Collections & Interpretation to the Senior Executive Team for scrutiny, and thereafter to the Chapter of York for a final decision.

Items will be added to the Cathedral Inventory, in addition to the Library Collection, if they are deemed by the Fabric Advisory Committee to be 'of special architectural, archaeological, artistic or historic interest' under the terms of the Care of Cathedrals Measure 2011 and The Care of Cathedrals (Amendment) Rules 2020. A list of items of potential interest within this category will be presented to the FAC regularly (and at least annually, if any acquisitions of potential interest are made within the year preceding).

- 8.2** The Library has an annual budget for journal subscriptions. This was reviewed in 2021 by Minster Librarian in consultation with the Head of Collections & Interpretation, the residentiary canons and the Director of Music. At the start date of this Collections Development Policy 15 titles are taken and regular reviews will take place to ensure subscriptions are current and useful.
- 8.3** Potential donors will be advised that items are unlikely to be accepted unless they fall within the collecting area, although exceptional circumstances may be considered. The Library will not usually accept large collections of material, such as complete personal libraries, unless directly relevant to the collecting area, due to storage and other limitations. The Chapter of York may require funding from the donor to support the transport, cataloguing, storage and preservation of material. Potential donors, vendors and depositors are asked to supply a list of items offered. Where appropriate, they are also expected to supply electronic images of material. It may be necessary for the Library service's staff or a delegated representative of the Chapter of York to examine material, either *in situ* or on temporary loan to the Chapter of York, as part of the significance assessment. All potential donors and depositors will be advised that the Chapter of York reserves the right to not accept, or to dispose of or destroy after acquisition, items within collections acquired by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange that do not fall within the collecting area or which would otherwise be considered for disposal under the terms of this Collections Development Policy.
- 8.4** York Minster Library will not acquire any item, 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).
- 8.5** 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, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the library will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The Chapter of York 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.
- 8.6** Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the library is:
- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
 - acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin

In these cases the Chapter of York 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 Chapter of York will document when these exceptions occur.

9. Spoliation

- 9.1** The library 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.

10 Disposal procedures

10.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the CILIP approved Disposals Policy for Rare Books and Manuscripts

10.2 The Chapter of York will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors and depositors will also be taken into account.

10.3 When disposal of a library item is being considered, the Chapter of York 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.

10.4 When disposal is motivated by collection management 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.

10.5 The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the Chapter of York only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including public benefit, the implications for the Chapter of York's collections and collections held by libraries, museums, archives and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. For pre-1851 material, expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum and archive service may also be sought.

10.6 A decision to dispose of an item, 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 Chapter of York acting on the advice of professional library and collections staff and any other specialist whose advice may be sought, and not of the Minster Librarian or manager of the collection acting alone. For items on the Cathedral Inventory, the decision would be subject to approval from:

- The Cathedral Fabric Commission for England, for items designated 'outstanding' on the Cathedral Inventory
- The Fabric Advisory Committee, for all other items on the Cathedral Inventory

10.7 For library material on the Cathedral Inventory, the procedures in this clause apply:

- 10.7.1** 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 Church of England-related bodies or professionally-run libraries likely to be interested in its acquisition.

10.8 For non-Inventory material, the following procedures apply:-

- 10.8.1** Material is offered for purchase or, if of no financial value, donation to the University of York in the first instance.

- 10.8.2** If not required by the University of York it will be:

(a) If of financial value, sold, usually either via any relevant specialist auction or via an ethical secondhand bookdealer who returns a portion of the profits back to the Chapter of York.

(b) If of no financial value, disposed of.

10.9 Any monies received by the Chapter of York 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. Improvements relating to the care of collections may be considered. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way.

10.10 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 library standards on deaccession and disposal.

Disposal by destruction

10.11 If it is not possible to dispose of an object or item through transfer or sale, the Chapter of York may decide to destroy it.

10.12 It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (mass-produced publications or common items which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.

10.13 Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an item is in extremely poor condition or has high associated health and safety risks.

10.14 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.

Appendix A

York Minster Library is the largest cathedral library in England with around 90,000 printed items. A rich strand of illustrated material and techniques, alongside histories of typography and book design, runs through the entire collection. Many of the items have evidence of significant previous owners and many have examples of use through markings, marginalia or modifications. The library is strong in liturgy, music, theology, in church history and architecture, and in Yorkshire history.

Highlights include:-

- 121 incunabula – a nationally important collection of books printed between the invention of the printing press in 1454 and 1501, some of which have been in the Minster since the 15th century
- A large collection of over 25,000 books printed before 1801, the hand press era, including English and Continental printed works from the 16th and 17th centuries, many with original bindings
- The Yorkshire Collection, totalling some 20,000 books and pamphlets of material on Yorkshire's social, political, and economic history. This includes the Hailstone Collection, an extensive and, in some cases unique, collection of c.10,000 items of Yorkshire material donated by the antiquarian Edward Hailstone in 1890.
- A strong collection of Bibles, pre- and post-Reformation prayer books, and numerous works on church history, liturgy and reformation theology
- Over 700 Civil War pamphlets printed in and outside of London, including York
- Atlases and regional map books
- Significant titles in the history of medicine, science and natural history
- Some rare early printed music, including a unique printed work, Byrd's *Gradualia* (1605), and compositions by Minster organists, as well as a small collection of items donated to the library to compensate for music lost in the 1829 fire
- Rich holdings of York printing and ephemera such as newspapers, periodicals, sermons, chapbooks and theatre playbills
- 60 parish or parochial libraries on long term deposit (over 1,500 books).
- The library of the Yorkshire Change Ringers Association on loan to the Minster (213 items)

Significant owners:

- Tobie Matthew (1546-1628), Archbishop of York
- Ferdinando Fairfax (1584-1648), commander of the parliamentary forces in Yorkshire during the Civil War
- Marmaduke Fothergill (1652-1731), liturgical scholar and non-juror
- William Burgh (1741–1808), Irish MP and polemicist
- Edward Hailstone (1818-1890), antiquarian
- Cyril Garbett (1875-1955), Archbishop of York
- Eric Milner-White (1884-1963), Dean of York

Several of the collections eg of Tobie Matthew, Marmaduke Fothergill and William Burgh were donated by the widows of the owners, Frances Matthew, Mary Fothergill and Mary Burgh.

Appendix B

Priorities for collecting during the term of this current policy are:-

Pre-1900 material

Items that enhance the collection within the collecting area, including:-

- Material of exceptional significance
- Items with close associations with the Minster
- Items of notable relevant provenance
- Unique material that enhances specific parts of the library core collections

Post-1900 material

Items that complement the historical collection and the core collecting areas and strengths, including:-

- Church history
- Church architecture, buildings and fabric including masonry and stained glass
- York Minster
- York history
- Material of exceptional significance
- Items with close associations with the Minster