



York Minster Library Collections Information Policy

Produced: April 2024

Adopted: June 2024

Date of Review: June 2029

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This Collections Information Policy is for the library collections of the Chapter of York, the governing body of York Minster (henceforth 'the Chapter'). It applies to information about the library collections, including library material on the Inventory of the Chapter of York, which is subject to the legislative framework of the Care of Cathedrals Measure 2011 and The Care of Cathedrals (Amendment) Rules 2020.

Name of service: 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 the governing body: June 2024

Policy review procedure: The York Minster Library Collections Information Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time by the Chapter of York, at least once every five years.

Date at which this policy is due for review: June 2029

Dissemination: collections staff (including Library staff), volunteers involved in collections information activities and the Senior Executive Team.

1. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set a framework, within the limits of the institution's resources, for the development and management of relevant, useful and useable collections information, and to guide the planning of collections information activities.

Collections information is information an organization collects, creates, holds and maintains about its collections and/or collected items. It supports:

- accountability for collections and the items within them
- effective management of collections, and their development, care and conservation
- access to collections, including for research and public engagement

The Chapter recognises that collections information is fundamental to the fulfilment of the purpose of its collections and is committed to creating, maintaining and making available good quality and up-to-date information about them.

Specific collections information objectives are set in the Collections Information Plan (documentation plan). The library service maintains procedural manuals to guide and ensure consistency in delivery of collections information-related activities.

This policy has been written in accordance with the Statement of Purpose for the Collections. Details of access to collections information are provided in the Collections Access Policy. The Collections Information Policy should also be read in conjunction with the Strategic Plan of the Chapter of York, the Forward Plan for

the Collections, the York Minster Library Collections Development Policy, the Collections Development Policy for the Museum and Archive & Manuscript Collections of the Chapter of York, the Collections Care and Conservation Policy and Plan, the Collections Information Policy for the Museum and Archive & Manuscript Collections of the Chapter of York, the Conservation Management Plan for York Minster, the Emergency Plan and Business Continuity Plan and the Chapter's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Standard.

2. Context and Legal Framework

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.

Statutes of York Minster

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.

Delivery of Library Services

Library services are delivered through the Collaboration Agreement between the Chapter of York and the University of York, as described in the 'The Collaboration Agreement relating to the provision of Library

Services based at the Old Palace, Dean's Park, York' summarised in the *York Minster Library Collections Development Policy*, Section 4, Library Management Arrangements. The Library collection and the Old Palace building in which it is housed are owned and maintained by the Chapter of York. Library staff, library services and the library collections management system including the online public library catalogue are provided by the University of York. The Library Collaboration Agreement authorises all Library staff to act on Chapter's behalf to collect and maintain library collections information.

Legislative Framework

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. Objects (including library material) deemed by the Fabric Advisory Committee (FAC) to be of 'architectural, archaeological, artistic or historic interest' must be recorded on the cathedral's Inventory. (That is, books that fall into these categories in their own right, not books simply on these subjects). Material works to, or disposal of, inventory items is subject to advice and consent from the FAC for material designated 'of interest' and from the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England (CFCE) for material designated 'of outstanding interest'. Not every item in the Library Collections is on the inventory. Broadly, all books printed before 1501 appear on the cathedral inventory as of 'outstanding interest'; and all material printed before 1801 (the end of the hand press era), and specific material printed after 1801 that is unique or of particular importance, e.g. the Hailstone Collection, appears on the Inventory as of at least 'of interest'. Material printed after 1801 does not automatically appear on the Inventory, unless categorised as 'of interest' or 'of outstanding 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.

See the York Minster Library Collections Development Policy for more information, in particular sections 1.8 and 3.0.

Codes of Practice

Collections information activities will be informed by relevant professional, sectoral and ethical standards, including:

- BS EN 17820: 2023 *Conservation of Cultural Heritage – Specifications for the Management of Moveable Cultural Heritage Collections*
- Spectrum: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard
- *Cathedral Inventories*, Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England, 2021
- Anglo-American Cataloging Rules. American Library Association / Canadian Library Association / Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
- Descriptive Cataloguing of Rare Materials (Books), American Library Association
- Ethical Framework, CILIP (the library and information association)

3. Collections Information Activities

Collections information activities are planned by the professional Library staff of the Collections & Interpretation team, in discussion with the Head of Collections & Interpretation, and carried out by members of the permanent staff, trainees, or dedicated project staff or volunteers, as appropriate. Staff and volunteers are trained in relevant procedures.

The library service may seek external funding for collections information projects, where appropriate.

The library service has arrangements in place to ensure that the Chapter owns the copyright in collections information created during work for the Chapter, where appropriate.

4. Collections Information Systems

York Minster Library gathers collections information relating to:

- Acquisitions and loans
- Cataloguing
- Research
- Preservation and conservation
- Location and movement control
- Deaccessioning

Digital collections information is stored in three main areas:

- Library management system
- Chapter of York onsite servers and a cloud-computing platform
- University of York Google Drive (cloud-based)

It is supported by historical paper-based systems, for example early accessions registers.

York Minster Library currently uses Ex Libris Alma library management software as the main system for managing information about its collections. Alma is used to create information about:

- Collections
- Loans
- Locations and storage
- Collection care

Items in the collection considered to be of interest / outstanding interest / parish loans are indicated as such in their Alma records, so that collectively the Alma records form a schedule to the inventory.

The library service will:

- review the collections management system and other systems regularly to ensure that they are suitable for the management of the Library collections and collections information requirements, including their future development, and that the information they contain is appropriately safeguarded against potential future obsolescence of the systems.

- ensure that measures are in place for the security and long-term preservation of the collections information, whether paper or digital, including copies and back-ups and secure storage.

The Library Collaboration Agreement makes provision for all Minster Library catalogue data held in the University Library catalogue to be transferred to the Chapter of York in a form that migrates comprehensively into Chapter's records management system, should the Library Collaboration Agreement be terminated.

5. Cataloguing

The printed books are recorded and described in Alma's metadata module. The electronic library catalogue can be searched on-line and is the principal finding aid to the collections.

<https://yorkminster.org/discover/collections-archive-library/> and <https://yorsearch.york.ac.uk/>

Information contained in the catalogue that must not be made public for reasons of legislation, confidentiality or security is not available via the public interface.

Printed material is catalogued in line with Descriptive Cataloguing of Rare Material (Books) for antiquarian material and Resource Description & Access for modern books. Library of Congress subject headings are used.

The Library catalogue is included in Library Hub Discover <https://discover.libraryhub.jisc.ac.uk/> and relevant items in the Library collection have been reported to the Incunabula Short Title Catalogue and the English Short Title Catalogue. Incunabula data is also reported to the database Material Evidence in Incunabula. <https://www.cerl.org/resources/mej/main>

New acquisitions are catalogued on arrival, so there is currently no backlog of modern printed items. There is a historical backlog of c.1500 printed items. The Library service identifies and prioritises backlog projects as resources allow and outlines the projects in the Collections Information Plan (documentation plan).

6. Historical Background to Collections Information

The library at the Minster can be traced back to the Anglo-Saxon scholar, Alcuin, who founded a library in the 8th century, and described its contents in verse. 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 re-founding the library. A series of historical inventories and accessions registers record the development of the Library collection over the centuries. In the 20th century, information was kept in a series of card catalogues. These were transferred to the University of York's online catalogue during the 1980s. The Chapter's library catalogue records have appeared on the University's catalogue since then. The Chapter's records are separate at holdings and physical items level which enables filtered searching.

Accessions were recorded in a physical register until 2020. Accessions information can now be retrieved from Alma.

Historical collections information may contain language that may now be considered inappropriate, out of date, or offensive or reflect outdated ideas, practice, and analysis. The library service proactively acknowledges this in relevant contexts and provides means by which users may contact the service about information they feel is of concern, so that staff may review it, in consultation with the Cathedral Heritage Committee, a sub-committee of the Senior Executive Team (SET) of York Minster, the remit of which includes the consideration of 'contested heritage'. The results of reviews will be recorded and may lead to collections information being updated.