

Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society
Legacy Policy – July 2022

Name of Museum: Dorset Museum

Name of Governing Body: Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society

Policy approved by the Board of DNHAS: 28th July 2022

Policy review date: July 2025

In order to communicate the Museum's need for legacy gifts and encourage potential donors the Trustees are asked to confirm a Legacy Policy which determines:

- a) the activities for which legacies will be encouraged;
- b) how the Society will manage any unrestricted legacies received;
- c) the terms on which objects may be left to the Museum.

The policy will need to be clearly communicated to prospective legacy donors, with the intention of increasing the frequency and scale of legacies received and the likelihood of receiving legacies which reflect the Museum's priorities.

Financial legacies

It is to the Museum's benefit to encourage unrestricted gifts whenever possible. However, this may not be attractive to some potential legators, whose affinity with the organisation is specific to an area of activity.

The Museum's policy can address these challenges by providing clarity on Trustees' priorities. The first priority is to ensure that the Museum is sustainable. Thereafter the Museum may create 3 ring-fenced funds, as follows.

Collection fund

A designated fund supporting projects and activities directly relating to the collection including conservation, acquisitions and interpretation.

Current projects fund

A designated fund supporting a wider range of current projects including exhibitions, activities to educate and inspire the Museum's audiences, and developments which improve the future sustainability of the organization.

Future Fund

An expendable endowment fund securing a long-term future for the Museum and its collections by generating annual, unrestricted income.

Potential legators (and other major donors) would be introduced to these funds via print and website, and encouraged to specify the destination of their choice which in the case of unrestricted funds would not be binding. All legacies would be acknowledged within the Museum and in media unless anonymity is requested.

For unrestricted legacies, Trustees will adopt and communicate a policy whereby the first use of funds would be to ensure the sustainability of the Museum and thereafter legacies may be split, for example, as follows:

- 25% Collections Fund
- 25% Current Projects Fund
- 50% Future Fund

Any split will remain at the final discretion of the Trustees although the non-binding wishes of legatees will be taken into account.

Object legacies

The Museum needs to ensure it has a policy in place regarding the acceptance of objects which have been left to the Museum. This should reflect the organisation's collecting policy and the future costs involved in caring for the object/s.

In line with policies adopted by the National museums Dorset Museum should agree to accept only those objects which fulfill the following criteria:

- The object/s fit/s with the current collecting policy
- The organization has the resources now, and in the foreseeable future, to conserve and store the item
- Ownership of the object can be proved
- The donor (or Executors) will sign an unconditional agreement confirming there are no restrictions on the Museum's use of the object

Once approved by Trustees, this policy can be communicated to prospective legators as part of the Museum's legacy programme.

Relevant definitions from the Charity Commission:

Designated funds are part of the unrestricted funds which Trustees have earmarked for a particular project or use, without restricting or committing the funds legally. The designation may be cancelled by the Trustees if they later decide that the charity should not proceed or continue with the use or project for which the funds were designated.

Endowment funds are funds which the trustees are legally required to invest or to keep and use for the Charity's purposes. Endowment may be expendable or permanent.

Expendable endowment is an endowment fund where the Trustees have the power to convert the property (ie land, buildings, investments or cash) into 'income'. It is distinguishable from 'income' by the absence of a positive duty on the part of the Trustees to apply it for the purposes of the charity, unless and until this power to convert into 'income' is actually exercised.