

Collections Access Policy

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North East Lincolnshire Archives

Access Policy

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1. Introduction

North East Lincolnshire Archives (hereafter abbreviated to NELA) aims to make access to its collections as wide as possible and to enable people of all backgrounds to use our resources both on and off site.

NELA will seek to promote access by:

- Working with all users to provide access in a safe and secure environment.
- Providing equal opportunities for all users.
- Consulting with, and being responsive to, the needs of users, staff and stakeholders.
- Continuously improving our service to meet users' needs.
- Developing remote access to our holdings.
- Raising awareness of the relevance and significance of our collections.

2. Our collections

The collective holdings of NELA constitute the most comprehensive source of primary information on the history of North East and North Lincolnshire that can be accessed by the public.

Included in our collections are the records of local government (dating back to the 13th century), Quarter Sessions papers, school records and building plans. We also hold the records of local charities, businesses, societies and campaign groups. Our holdings provide a unique insight into the maritime history of Grimsby, which was once the largest fishing port in the world; these records include plans of the docks (together with their associated buildings and infrastructure), shipping registers, fishing apprentice registers, and over 38,000 crew agreements.

3. Access to NELA

- NELA is free to use and open to everyone.
- NELA's facilities meet with the provisions of the Equality Act (2010). There is no change of level between the street and our entrance, and there is a drop-kerb in close proximity to the front door. The front door is wide enough to allow easy access for wheelchair users (it is 95cm in width) and all our facilities are located on the ground floor, with no changes in level. We have sanitary facilities that are fully accessible to wheelchair users, with grab rails and an alarm pull cord. The hand basin, pedestal, soap dispenser and towel dispenser all meet the prescribed height requirements.
- We aim to make access to our holdings as wide as possible and we welcome visitors with a diverse range of interests and research needs.
- We endeavour to explain our holdings, services and conditions of access as clearly, comprehensively and simply as possible.
- We welcome feedback from users about our face-to-face, postal and e-mail communications.
- A limited number of original items from our collections are made available to the public at events such as Heritage Open Days.
- Facsimiles of items from our collections are used in outside events, such as school visits.

4. Remote access to our collections

As many potential users of NELA cannot visit the site, remote access to our collections is of great importance.

- The catalogue entries on our CALM database can be remotely accessed through our website.
- Images of many items from our collections can be viewed on our Facebook page, which we share with Grimsby Local History Library. Over 8,000 images from our collections have been posted on the page (May 2025).
- Some of the photographs from the collections of NELA can now be accessed on Digital Collection page of Lincs Inspire's website. The digitised images can be searched and there is an online ordering facility.
- Photocopies of documents from our collections can be ordered by telephone or e-mail.

5. Access to original records

- Free access to original documents is provided in our Search Room, which is open every weekday except Friday.
- Access to some classes of records may be restricted for a term of years under Data Protection legislation, national guidelines or access conditions requested by the depositor.

- Access to some unlisted records may be restricted if security is compromised through a lack of reference numbers or there is a risk of a sequence of papers becoming muddled. We will, however, make every effort to draft list and number the papers if a request from the public is made and reasonable notice is given.
- Some records may also be closed to the public because of their physical condition. However, as we have an on-site conservator we can often undertake the required repair work to allow the material to be seen.

6. Copying records

- Users can request copies of our records subject to current copyright legislation and on payment of our current charges. Users are required to sign a copyright declaration, which is incorporated into the order form.
- Copies will not be made of records if there is a risk of causing damage.
- Users can photograph records themselves, provided that they complete a copyright form.

7. Copies for publication or official use

- Any publication of copies of our records must be agreed with NELA in advance and certain conditions apply.
- Items that are protected under copyright legislation may not be reproduced unless the requisite permission has been obtained.
- We provide copies of documents for official and legal purposes; the classes of records in question include motor vehicle licensing papers, planning records and entries in the court registers.

8. Enquiries

- NELA aims to provide accurate, friendly and helpful advice on its collections.
- We aim to provide an answer to most enquiries within 5 working days.
- We undertake straightforward enquiries free of charge, but levy a fee if the research is more complicated.
- We have a small staff and, if an enquiry is likely to be very time consuming, we will advise the researcher to use a record agent. We usually suggest contacting AGRA via their website.

9. User involvement

- Users are invited to contribute suggestions, comments and complaints about our services by submitting a Customer Feedback Form or by talking to staff.
- We have worked with a number of local schools over the past five years, including St Mary's School, Willows Academy and Welholme Academy. We deliver a learning class on World War Two at Welholme Academy and St Mary's School on an annual basis.

- We have also worked with a number of other local institutions and community groups, including East Marsh United and the West Marsh Community Centre. We participate in Grimsby in Bloom's Environment Day every August. This event takes place in the Duke of York Gardens in West Marsh, which is one of the most deprived areas of Grimsby. We have a stand at the Children's Health & Wellbeing Fayre at Cleethorpes Leisure Centre every year. This event provides us with an excellent opportunity to introduce young people to local history and archival sources.
- We frequently post images on the pages of local Facebook groups, such as Grimsby Memories, Cleethorpes Memories and Scartho Past and Present, and these groups often share material that is posted on our own page.
- We assist other local heritage sites, such as the Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre and North Lincolnshire Museum, with their research.
- We welcome volunteers and currently have 2 volunteer placements working on listing projects (May 2025).
- We publicise news about our collections, interesting new acquisitions, forthcoming events and any access issues via social media as well as on our website.