

Carmarthenshire Archives

Access Policy

2022 – 2026

Mission statement

Our mission is to identify, collect and preserve historical documents relating to the county of Carmarthenshire and make them available to anyone who wishes to use them.

We are also committed to raising awareness about our work and demonstrating the many ways in which archives and records can be used by all members of the community.

Policy aims

The purpose of this Access Policy is to ensure that Carmarthenshire Archives can provide the widest possible access to the materials it holds and the subjects they represent. It will do so irrespective of the customer's age, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or disability, and where possible the subject of the enquiry.

Access to the building

We will provide direct public access to Carmarthenshire's archive collection, free of charge in the public Searchroom of the archives building in Carmarthen. Our staff will help visitors to find the information they need and can assist in reading and interpreting the documents.

The public areas are fully accessible for disabled people. There is a loop system to assist those with a hearing impairment, and text enhancement facilities for people who find it difficult to read some of the archive material.

The service is open to the public at the following times:

Monday: Closed

Tuesday: Closed

Wednesday: 09.15 – 16.45

Thursday: 14.00 - 18.45

Friday: 09.15 – 16.45

Saturday: 09.15 – 16.45

Sunday: Closed

Access details

Carmarthenshire Archives,
At Carmarthen Library,
St Peter's Street,
Carmarthen,
SA31 1LN
Wales

Searchroom: 01267 228232

Email: ECSArchivist@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Access to the archive collection

We provide direct public access to the archive collection in accordance with our Collection Management Policy and our Searchroom Rules and relevant legislation.

We make our collection available to people who:

- hold a current readers ticket (*Y Cerdyn Archifau: The Archives Card*)
<https://archivescard.com/>
- agree to comply with the Searchroom Rules

We make archives available unless:

- there is a statutory exemption prohibiting access
- the owner of the collection has placed a restriction on access
- access is likely to cause physical harm to the archives or
- there is a surrogate or other alternative copy available

Access to the archive collection from a distance

We respond to enquiries about the archive collection received by letter, email, and telephone in accordance with Carmarthenshire County Councils Strategic Equality Plan for 2020-24 (see Access Standard below).

Access to copies of material from the archive collection

We supply copies of documents in accordance with our Copying Policy and relevant legislation.

We supply copies of archives to people who:

- have received a quotation for the cost of the copies and have paid in advance for all the copies they require
- have completed and signed a copyright declaration form for each item requested

We make and supply copies of material from the archive collection unless:

- there is a statutory exemption prohibiting copying
- the owner of the collection has placed a restriction on copying
- copying is likely to cause physical harm to the archives
- copying is likely to cause an infringement of copyright legislation

Access for groups of people

We welcome visits from groups of adult learners, community groups or leisure interest groups and welcome enquiries from schools, colleges and universities.

Access to archives containing personal information

We deal with subject access requests under the Data Protection Act and requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act in accordance with relevant legislation and Carmarthenshire County Councils procedures. We refer the requests to the Corporate Data Protection Officer.

Access standards

We are committed to always giving a high standard of service in accordance with Carmarthenshire County Council's published Strategic Equality Plan for 2020-24.

<https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/media/1222154/strategic-equality-plan-2020-24.pdf>

We will:

- aim to provide the best possible service within available resources
- aim to find a solution and have a “can do” attitude
- be polite, helpful, open, and honest with you
- treat you fairly and equally
- provide you with clear information in Welsh and/or English

If you visit Carmarthenshire Archives in person, we will:

- welcome you on arrival
- be tidy and dress appropriately for our job
- endeavour to see those with appointments within 10 minutes
- keep our facilities accessible, comfortable, clean, and tidy
- respond in accordance with this Charter's standards
- provide private interview rooms when available
- ensure that our facilities are clearly signposted, and the opening times specified

If you contact us by letter or email, we will:

- acknowledge all correspondence within 5 working days
- aim to reply to your letter or email within 10 working days
- use plain language and respond in accordance with your language preference (Welsh or English)
- use Braille, audio, large print, and different languages if needed
- encourage email correspondence

If you contact us by phone, we will:

- aim to answer the call within 5 rings during opening hours of our facilities
- answer the call bilingually and respond in accordance with your language preference (Welsh or English)
- make you aware who is dealing with your enquiry

If you visit Carmarthenshire Archives, we expect you to:

- Bring your reader's ticket (Y Cerdyn Archifau: The Archives Card) each time you visit. You need this in order to use original documents
- Follow our Searchroom Rules
- Handle all documents and books with care
- Tell us what you want. We can only help you if you give us enough information to understand and answer your enquiries
- Treat us as courteously as you would like us to treat you
- Help us to improve our service by telling us what we do well and not so well

If you are unhappy with any aspect of our service, we want to know

- Please talk to the searchroom staff who will try to sort things out

- If you are still not satisfied, please ask to speak to the Archives Transformation Manager, Mr Hayden Burns; or write to him at the postal / email address given above
- If you feel that your complaint has still not been resolved, please ask for an official Carmarthenshire County Council complaints form

If you make a complaint we will:

- acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days
- investigate your complaint
- provide a written response within 20 working days and if this is not possible, we will let you know why and when you can expect a response

See: <https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/media/3515/complaintsbooklet.pdf>

Widening access and engagement

Carmarthenshire Archives is committed to widening enjoyment and understanding of the county's archives in all sectors of the community.

We hold a variety of outreach events and exhibitions every year to promote the archive collections and to encourage new people to enjoy and explore their heritage.

We contribute to the wellbeing of our community by providing opportunities for people to participate through their engagement with Carmarthenshire's archives.

We welcome interest from the media. Fees may be payable where necessary and an acknowledgment will be required.

We welcome the views of all our users, potential users and other stakeholders and monitor and evaluate feedback to improve service delivery and to meet their needs. We seek their views in a variety of ways including feedback forms and the survey of visitors to UK archives which is carried out every eighteen months.

Review

This policy was created in December 2022. It will be reviewed in 2026, or sooner if circumstances dictate.