

Covid-19 measures for visitors to Bedfordshire Archives

Booking a visit to Bedfordshire Archives

We will be operating with some Covid measures in place for your safety and ours due to the continuing high case rate. Please bear this in mind. We will try to help you make the best use of your visit and we are happy to help as much as we can before you arrive.

Before you visit

- You **must make an appointment** and **pre-order all archive material*** you want to see at least **three working days in advance**.
- Bookings are for a morning (9.30-1.00) or afternoon (2.00-4.30) session or a full day (9.30am to 1pm, 2pm to 4.30pm) on a first come, first served basis. We close between 1pm and 2pm so if you are staying for the full day you will need to leave the office during the lunch period.
- We can accommodate four visitors per morning or afternoon session **if you wish to bring someone with you** please make this clear when booking so that we do not overbook the space.
- If you develop any symptoms of Covid 19, test asymptomatic or have to self-isolate between booking and the appointment please contact us to cancel the booking so that we can offer it to someone else.
- You may be contacted the working day before your appointment to check that you are still able to attend and to update you on any changes to procedures. We are no longer routinely contacting people. We'll only get in touch if there's an issue or for those individuals who have booked a number of weeks in advance.

*All archival documents. There is no restriction on amount of material pre-ordered but we reserve the right to restrict your order if requests are unrealistic due to size or quantity. Please search our catalogue to find references to the material you need. Once we receive your initial list we will do our best to advise you and to suggest any other material appropriate to your research. Please be open with us about what you are trying to research so that we can assist you. We cannot guarantee that everything you wish to see will be available. Finally, **please check your references thoroughly before sending**; if they are incorrect we may not have time to contact you to find out what you meant and therefore may not be able to retrieve everything you thought you had requested.

If possible please pre-order material usually on open access in our reading room (e.g. microfilm/microfiche/parish register transcripts/access to Ancestry or FindMyPast), although we can now allow free browsing of the searchroom items without the need to pre-order.

What to bring with you

- You need to bring your own **pencils**, pencil sharpeners (no erasers please) and notepads
- You may also bring a **camera**, mobile phone
- Cash; our charges are generally multiples of 95p. For amounts above £5.70 (6 copies) you may pay by card via the council's website on either your own device or by the service's searchroom computer.
- A **face covering** – in line with current advice Bedford Borough Council requires that all visitors to the service wear a face covering during their visit (the searchroom staff will also

be wearing one). If you are exempt from wearing a face covering please let us know when you make the booking and, if possible, wear a visor.

Your data

- Please be advised that data of the date and time of your visit and your contact details will be kept by us as part of our normal security procedures

When you arrive

- On arrival wait outside the glass doors at the first floor entrance of Riverside Building, Borough Hall.
- Contact us using the intercom to the left (third button down marked Archives) or ring 01234 228827 to let us know that you have arrived. We will then open the main doors for you – please do not let anyone else come through the doors with you.
- Proceed up the stairs to the 2nd floor. If you need access to a lift please let us know at time of booking.
- Wash your hands in the toilets on the 2nd floor before entering the archives office (We do not use hand sanitizer or gloves as their use may damage historic documents).
- The archives staff will meet you in our reception.
- Please fill out the form waiting for you – this indicates your acceptance of our searchroom rules and your acceptance to our processing of your personal data as indicated above.
- Please go through to the research room and speak to the duty staff who will have your documents ready and waiting for you.
- A copying form will be with your documents, please use this to record any photographs you take yourself and/or to request any copies you need us to make for you.
- The duty archivist will be at the other end of the room if you need advice and they will provide any assistance they can.
- After you have finished consulting material please return it to the place indicated.
- We would ask that you continue to observe social distancing rules and any visitor disregarding them will be reminded of them. If at any time the staff member feels that they are unable to continue the visit safely then the customer will be asked to leave and the reason explained.
- At the end of your visit please inform the duty archivist, ensure that you have returned all materials to the place indicated, pay for any copies etc, and collect your personal belongings.

Our remote Images and Research services will continue to operate so you can request copies or do research if you prefer not to visit in person. There is a charge for this service. See our [Enquiry](#) and [Scale of charges](#) web pages.