

Covid-19 measures for visitors to Bedfordshire Archives

Booking a visit to Bedfordshire Archives

We will be operating with very reduced staffing, for your safety and ours. Please bear this in mind. We will try and 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 material*** you want to see at least **five working days in advance**.
- A booking is for one person only – you will not be able to bring anyone with you.
- Bookings are for a morning (10.00-12.30) or afternoon (2-4.30) session on a first come, first served basis.
- 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 will 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.

*All archival documents, material usually on open access in our reading room, microfiche and microfilms must be pre-ordered. Public access computers will not be available. 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. We will do our best to advise you and to suggest 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.

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 – if you need to pay for copies we can accept cash in exact amounts only – our charges are generally multiples of 90p. For amounts above £5.40 (6 copies) you may pay by card via the council's website.
- A face covering – in line with current government advice Bedford Borough Council requires that all visitors to the service wear a face covering during their visit (the searchroom archivist 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
- In addition this information may be passed to the NHS test and trace system within 21 days of the visit should we be notified of an infected person having been in contact with you during your visit.

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 of 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 or, if you need access to a lift please let us know at time of booking.
- Wash your hands in the toilets on that floor before entering the archives office (We do not use hand sanitizer or gloves as their use may damage historic documents).
- The duty archivist will meet you in our reception (please stay 2 metres apart) and will tell you which locker has been allocated to you for your personal belongings in.
- Please sign 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. You should use your pencil to do this.
- Follow the duty archivist to the searchroom where they will explain where to find the material ordered by you. The material will either be on a trolley or table depending on size and quantity.
- Collect one document at a time from the trolley/table to be used at the table indicated on the east side of the searchroom. If large numbers of small documents have been requested these may have been put into groups in which case one group of documents as indicated may be taken for consultation.
- Where a book rest/cushion has been placed with a volume please take this to your table with the document and use it to support the volume. The duty archivist may give verbal instructions if necessary.
- Large or rolled maps will have been laid out prior to your visit by the staff – please avoid touching the map while you are consulting it.
- 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 that social distancing allows.
- After you have finished consulting material please return it to the place indicated.
- Any customer disregarding social distancing rules 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.