

Covid-19 measures for visitors to Bedfordshire Archives

Booking a visit to Bedfordshire Archives

We will be operating with reduced staffing, for your safety and ours. 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 (10.00-12.30) or afternoon (2.00-4.30) session on a first come, first served basis.
- We can accommodate two 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, microfiche and microfilms and computer access although we can now allow free browsing of the searchroom items (e.g. microfilm/microfiche/parish register transcripts) 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 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 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 (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 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 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.
- Follow the duty archivist to the searchroom where they will explain where to find the material ordered by you and where you should sit.
- Collect one document at a time from the trolley/table to be used at the table indicated. 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 they can.
- 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.