



Seirbheisean Dualchais
Outer Hebrides Heritage Services

Museum nan Eilean

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Access Policy 2025 - 2030

Two museums;



Museum
nan Eilean
Stornoway

Museum nan Eilean

Lews Castle

Stornoway

Isle of Lewis

Outer Hebrides

HS2 0XS



Museum
nan Eilean
Lionacleit

Museum nan Eilean

Sgoil Lionacleit

Lionacleit

Isle of Benbecula

Outer Hebrides

HS7 5PJ



Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Approved:
Review date:

Background to the Policy

Governance of Museum nan Eilean

Museum nan Eilean's governing body is Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, the local authority for the Outer Hebrides. The [Scheme of Administration](#) details the membership, quorum, purpose and functions of the Comhairle and its Committees, Sub-Committees, Panels and Joint Consultative Committees. It also regulates certain aspects of procedure. It makes explicit reference on page 40 to the provision and management of museums for the display of antiquities, works of art and objects of educational and scientific interest being under the remit of the Sustainable Development Committee

Local authority museums are deemed to have the power to operate museums through the **Public Libraries Consolidation (Scotland) Act 1887**. "The library authority or museum or art gallery authority, as the case may be, may from time to time for the purposes of this Act purchase, feu or rent any land, or any suitable building; and may erect any building suitable for public libraries, public museums, or for any one or more of those objects, and may alter or extend any buildings for such purposes, and repair and improve the same respectively, and fit up, furnish, and supply the same respectively with all requisite furniture, fittings, and conveniences..... The library or museum or art gallery authority, as the case may be, shall manage, regulate, and control all libraries or museums or art galleries established under this Act, or to which this Act applies; and shall have power to do all things necessary for such management, including the following powers; that is to say, to purchase books, newspapers, reviews, magazines, and other periodicals, statutory, pictures, engravings, maps, specimens of art and science, tape recordings and films]and such other articles and things as may be necessary for the establishment, increase, and use of the libraries or museums or art galleries under their control, and to do all things necessary for keeping the same in a proper state of preservation and repair:"

Section 32 of the above Act states “All libraries, museums, or art galleries established under this Act, or to which this Act applies, shall be open to the public free of charge, and no charge shall be made for the use of books or magazines issued for home reading.”

Section 163 of the 1973 Local Government Scotland Act refers to public libraries, museums and galleries “each regional council shall have a duty in consultation with regional councils within their region to ensure that there is an adequate provision of facilities for the purposes of the said Act in that application for the inhabitants of their region”.

1. Introduction

1.1 Our Mission 2025 – we do this

We promote the value and potential of Outer Hebrides heritage by safeguarding collections and making them accessible for present and future audiences through exhibitions, engagement and research, while upholding professional standards.

1.2 Our Vision 2025 – so that

Our rich heritage will be valued, preserved and enjoyed as a key asset of the Outer Hebrides, with the necessary investment and professional skills, enabling it to grow sustainably and ethically, so that our collections, Gaelic culture and intangible heritage will enrich, educate, challenge, inspire and reflect diverse audiences.

1.3 It is the policy of Museum nan Eilean to make its collections as available as possible within resource, conservation and security constraints. This is only achievable if objects can be made available for research, teaching, exhibition, enjoyment and loan. We also recognise that Museum nan Eilean holds collections in trust for the public in perpetuity and their use must be monitored carefully, so as to ensure their long term preservation, and we balance that requirement alongside access needs.

2. Legal

2.1 Museum nan Eilean will deliver its services in compliance with all relevant legislation. This includes;

- Data Protection Act (2018)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act (2002)

2.2 This policy is consistent with the following Comhairle nan Eilean Siar standards and policies:

- Comhairle Customer Care Standards
- Comhairle Local Accessible Information Policy
- Comhairle Equal Opportunities Statement & Policy
- Comhairle Gaelic Language Plan /Plana na Gaidhlig

3. Reducing Barriers

3.1 To eliminate and reduce barriers and ensure equality of access we will consider the following aspects of accessibility to our services and collections:

- **Physical:** enabling people with physical disabilities, the elderly and those caring for young people to reach and appreciate every part of the service and its collections
- **Sensory:** to build into all aspects of the services activities a wide range of different sensory experiences
- **Intellectual:** we acknowledge that people have different learning styles and we will accommodate these by adopting clear interpretive guidance
- **Cultural:** we acknowledge and recognise cultural differences and seek to represent varied cultural experiences and issues through our programmes and exhibitions
- **Emotional / Attitudinal:** to ensure that all visitors feel welcomed and valued
- **Financial:** we will aim to minimise financial barriers to the use of sites and the collections and wherever possible

4. Access to facilities and collections

4.1 Museum nan Eilean is committed to and believes that all people and sectors of the community have a fundamental right to engage with, use and enjoy the collections and services we provide. We acknowledge that every user will have different needs and we are committed to reducing barriers and to making all aspects of our activities as fully accessible as our resources allow, including access to buildings, collections, events, exhibitions, learning and to our staff and volunteers as well as visitors.

4.2 Museum nan Eilean acknowledges that every user will have different needs, and we are committed to reducing barriers to both physical access to our collections.

- The building is all on one level and is fully wheelchair accessible. There is one wheelchair available for the use of visitors
- An accessible toilet is available
- Working guide and assistance animals are welcome at the museum
- A hearing loop is fitted throughout.
- A magnifying frame is available on request for anyone who needs to use it. Please ask a member of staff.
- Fixed seating is provided in most galleries and in the long corridor for anyone who needs to take a break. There are also lightweight folding transportable stools that you can use throughout the galleries.
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4.3 Museum nan Eilean is committed to ensuring a range of interpretative methods are available within in-house curated exhibitions – these include bi-lingual text, large text copies, audio interpretation, interactives and hands-on activities. All our films are subtitled (except the 360 degree in the first gallery which only has

natural sounds of wind, rain and bird calls).

- 4.4 Museum nan Eilean is committed to increasing public access to our collections and information associated with those collections, to increase knowledge and understanding of the items the Museum Service holds and about Outer Hebrides heritage in general.
- 4.5 We will provide welcoming staff and learning opportunities for different audiences and different levels of ability.
- 4.6 We will promote all our activities and collections using accessible means of communication.
- 4.7 Information will be available in both Gaelic and English in support of the CnES Gaelic Language Plan and the terms of Section 3 of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005.

5. Access to Stored Collections for Research

- 5.1 The collections are available to the public for research and education purposes. Competing demands of access and long term care of collection items will be managed in accordance with the outcomes of a collection care risk assessment.
- 5.2 Access to collection objects, including destructive or non-destructive sampling, requires permission
- 5.3 Requests for access to objects from Museum nan Eilean's collections must be made in writing using the Collections Access application form Applications will be considered in relation to:
 - The scientific, cultural and historical importance of the object to be sampled
 - The rarity of the object
 - The condition and any potential damage caused by access
 - The needs of users, both in the present and future, will also be considered.
 - Legal and ethical issues
 - The potential significance of research outcomes and results will be taken into account

- 5.4 Museum nan Eilean reserves the right to consult relevant external professionals for advice on whether to approve a request for access.
- 5.5 A supervised study area will be made available to visitors where possible.
- 5.6 Visitors will be supervised by a member of Museum nan Eilean staff at all times. The level of supervision is at the discretion of Museum nan Eilean staff.
- 5.7 Enquirers who need to handle objects and specimens will be advised on how to do so carefully and safely.

6. Reducing financial barriers

- 6.1 We will aim to minimise financial barriers to visiting our facilities, participating in activities/ events and the use of collections wherever possible.
- 6.2 Access to the permanent galleries of Museum nan Eilean is by voluntary donation. Public enquiries are free for the first 30 minutes.
- 6.3 Museum nan Eilean reserves the right to charge for special exhibitions or services – image licensing or professional/commercial enquiries - as outlined in the Museum nan Eilean Pricing Policy.
- 6.4 Access for commercial purposes, for example photography or filming, will incur a fee.

7. Restrictions

- 7.1 Access may be restricted based on staff capacity and accessibility of stores or galleries.
- 7.2 Neither store is presently suitable for public access due to Health & Safety considerations. Where possible, objects will be made available for access in an alternative suitable location.