

REGIONAL HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORDS

Access and Cost Recovery Policy

Introduction

The regional historic environment records (HERs) compiled and maintained by the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts provide a comprehensive catalogue of archaeological and historical sites and finds of all periods throughout Wales. Currently, around 300,000 individual entries are held by the four regional records, which are constantly up-dated and expanded as new information becomes available.

The HERs fulfil a wide variety of functions including assisting in the management of the historic environment, informing planning and development, and as a source for input to local history, conservation and tourism projects. This document provides guidelines for access to information contained within the records.

The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016¹ places a statutory duty on Welsh Ministers to ‘compile and keep up to date a historic environment record for each local authority area in Wales’. Section 36 sets out a duty of access to HERs. Welsh Ministers have chosen to use the existing HERs of the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts to discharge this duty, and to display the statutory HER to the public through the Archwilio website (<https://www.archwilio.org.uk/>). However, Archwilio does not provide access to the full HER, and in order to ascertain whether the record includes additional information not available online users should contact the HER directly.

The HERs are held in a sophisticated data management system, the structure of which meets recognised national standards for the recording of a consistent level of information for each record. The HERs contain records for historic assets as well as events² which have taken place from the 16th century onwards. Recorded information comprises details such as, grid reference, community, designated status, type of historic asset, period, condition and bibliographical sources. The HERs also contain supplementary cartographic, documentary and photographic records, many of which do not exist in digital form. In many instances the records consist of a summary or index of information recorded elsewhere; the HERs therefore provide a useful signpost and starting point to information on the historic environment. It will therefore often be necessary to call upon the services of an experienced archaeologist to gauge the full significance of particular sites listed in the records.

Copyright of the HER data structure and content resides with individual Archaeological Trusts unless otherwise stated. A proportion of the costs of maintaining and developing the regional HERs is met by Cadw, Unitary Authorities and other grant funding), but additional income is raised to service the costs of external enquiries of a commercial nature.

¹ http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2016/4/pdfs/anaw_20160004_en.pdf

² An Event is defined by the Historic Environment Data Standards Working Group of Wales as any piece of archaeological work, whether it is of an intrusive (e.g. Excavation), non-intrusive (e.g. Photographic Survey), or management (e.g. Management Plan or Vegetation Control) nature.

Conditions

1. Access will normally be made available to information held within the regional HERs at all reasonable times.

In the first instance, Users are asked to fill in a request form outlining the information they require and the reason for their enquiry. Forms can be obtained by telephoning, writing to or visiting the website of the relevant Archaeological Trust. If the enquiry cannot be answered immediately, Users should expect to be told when and in what form the information can be made available. Separate enquiries may need to be made to each individual HER if the enquiry relates to more than one region.

2. Access to information held within the regional HERs will be denied if it is considered that its release may endanger the archaeological resource.

Users will be asked to declare the purposes for which information is requested, to make an undertaking that the information will only be used for the declared purpose, and that it will not be passed to a third party without the written consent of the regional HER. Misuse of the information made available may result in prosecution or in a ban to further access to all the regional HERs.

Users should ensure that expert archaeological advice is sought on the possible effects of any proposed development upon the archaeological resource.

3. Reasonable efforts are made to validate the information contained within the HERs, but Users will be responsible for checking that the information is correct.

Entries in the regional HERs have been compiled from a number of diverse sources, some of which may not have been validated.

The regional HERs welcome notification of any errors.

4. Confidential or privileged information imparted by the User and placed in the regional HERs will be treated appropriately. The HER should be informed of any such information at the time of submission.

5. Confidential or privileged information contained in the regional HERs will be withheld unless Users have obtained appropriate permissions in advance.

6. Direct access to the regional HERs by Users will be at the discretion of individual Archaeological Trusts.

Circumstances may allow Users to retrieve information for themselves from within the HERs, though it will normally be more appropriate for them to be assisted by Trust staff.

7. Users of the HERs will be expected to abide by all copyright and other legal restrictions which may apply to information held in the record.

Supplementary records may include material of which the copyright is held by other organisations. The Data Protection Act 1998 also governs the release of certain types of information.

The document 'Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records' should be consulted for details on Copyright and acknowledgements.

8. Restrictions may be made on the quantity of information released to any single User.

Restrictions may be applied if it is considered that there is a danger that this might result in the uncontrolled use of significant portions of the record or the establishment of a competing and unregulated database.

Users may be required to enter into a licence agreement before data can be released.

9. Users will be required to acknowledge the use made of the HERs in any document or published report.

The document 'Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records' should be consulted for details on Copyright and acknowledgements.

10. Users are expected to make any new or amended information available for incorporation within the HERs, within a reasonable timescale. Primacy of publication of new information will be respected when required by the contributor.

The document 'Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records' should be consulted for matters of record content, format and submission.

11. A charge will normally be made to recover the costs of servicing each enquiry.

The regional HERs are non-profit making, but Users should normally expect to pay a reasonable charge to meet the costs of providing information. Since enquiries can be extremely variable, a set scale of charges is inappropriate. If it is likely that a significant amount of work will be involved, the User should ask for an estimate of costs in advance.

Charges will normally be on a cost-recovery basis, although for informal enquiries or those involving pure research these may be reduced or waived altogether (where some account will be taken of whether the User will make new or amended information freely available for incorporation in the HER). Charges to bodies or individuals undertaking work on a commercial basis will normally be on a full cost-recovery basis, including the salary costs of staff.

Individual Trusts should be approached for their full charging structure and cost recovery rates for provision and reproduction of information.

Useful Addresses

Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

The Offices
Coed-y-Dinas
Welshpool
Powys
SY21 8RP
Tel: 01938 553670
Email: her@cpat.org.uk

Dyfed Archaeological Trust

Corner House
6, Carmarthen Street
Llandeilo
Carmarthenshire
SA19 6AE
Tel: 01558 823131
Email: info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk

Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust

SA12 Business Centre
Seaway Parade Industrial Estate
Baglan
Port Talbot
SA12 7BR
Tel: 01792 634225
Email: her@ggat.org.uk

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

Craig Beuno
Garth Road
Bangor
Gwynedd
LL57 2RT
Tel: 01248 352535
Email: her@heneb.co.uk

Cadw

Plas Carew
Unit 5/7 Cefn Coed
Parc Nantgarw
Cardiff
CF15 7QQ
Tel: 01443 33 6000
website: <http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk>

The Information Commissioner

The Information Commissioners' Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545745 / 0303 123 1113 (local rate)
website: <https://ico.org.uk/>

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW)

Ffordd Penglais
Aberystwyth
SY23 3BU
Tel: 01970 621200
Email: nmr.wales@rcahmw.gov.uk
website: <http://www.rcahmw.org.uk>

Grievances may be addressed to the relevant Trust