

**Food Policy**  
**Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford**

Date approved by Pitt Rivers Museum Executive Board: 21 May 2024

Date approved by Pitt Rivers Museum Board of Visitors: 25 February 2025

Date at which policy is due for review: February 2030

**The Museum's statement of purpose is:**

As given in the University of Oxford's regulations, the Museum's purpose is 'to assemble, preserve and exhibit the Pitt Rivers Collection and to promote the public understanding of anthropology and world archaeology, and their teaching and research, based on the Museum's collections.' see Council Regulation 4 of 2019 <https://governance.admin.ox.ac.uk/legislation/council-regulations-4-of-2019#collapse1421161>

**The Museum's mission statement:**

The Pitt Rivers Museum wants to become a welcoming space to all where stories are shared by many voices. Working collaboratively and creatively with staff, volunteers, and communities we will transform how our iconic collections are engaged with, both online and in the museum. In an increasingly disconnected world, we want to inspire empathy and deepen cross-cultural understanding.

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**1. Introduction**

1.1 The Pitt Rivers Museum stewards a collection of irreplaceable objects composed of organic materials which are highly attractive to insect and rodent pests. The guiding principles of the museum, stated in the Strategic Plan, include 'Respecting the sensitive nature of the objects we keep and treating them with the greatest of care.'

1.2 A critical part of the Pitt Rivers' Integrated Pest Management program is the control of the consumption of food and drink in areas near displays and stores to avoid pest infestation.

1.3 All staff are informed of pest management protocols in their induction and agree to adhere to food and drink guidelines to prevent pest infestation of collections areas and offices.

**2. Aims of this policy**

This policy outlines how we ensure the preservation and protection of the collections we steward and our resources and facilities.

**3. Policy**

3.1 Food is not allowed anywhere in the Museum, apart from in designated areas – currently the tearoom and the Director's office, where coffee, biscuits and lunch may be served to guests.

3.2 Staff can store and consume food and drink in the tearoom, and are responsible for cleaning up after themselves in this area. Out of date food and storage containers will be disposed of at the end of each week. Anything stored for longer should be in a sealed plastic container with the staff member's name clearly written on it.

3.3 Drinks are allowed in offices in enclosed cups – and not in areas where collections are kept.

3.4 Food is not allowed in Museum offices.

3.5 Visitors to the Museum may not consume food in the museum or gallery spaces, including landing or corridor areas. School groups may eat lunch as arranged in either the Seminar Room or Old Library.

### 3.6 Events

3.6.1 Catering for events may only be provided by approved caterers. Food served to the public may not be prepared by museum staff or Members for events – this contravenes insurance, general food law requirements and food hygiene legislation (see Food Hygiene – A Guide for Businesses [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk))

3.6.2 Our preferred caterers already have agreements with us regarding procedures such as the disposal of waste.

3.6.3 Foods that are easy to eat are encouraged, such as finger food and canapes. Foods that stain or which leave residues which are difficult to remove, such as fried food, red beverages (wine, juice, or punch) and ice cream are discouraged.

3.6.4 Post-event cleaning is important and should be scheduled directly after the event. We will ask for confirmation that cleaning has been scheduled after an event before the booking will be accepted.

3.6.5 Food and drinks for events should be moved around the building on trollies to prevent spillages.

### 3.7 Event spaces and the food or drinks requirements:

3.7.1 Old Library - Drinks and canapes for organised events. The floor is currently unsealed and will be stained if red beverages are spilt.

3.7.2 Long Gallery – Drinks and canapes.

3.7.3 Blackwood Room/Seminar Room - Food may be served during courses, meetings and events. People should be prevented from taking food and drinks into the Long Gallery when the Museum is open, unless the Gallery has been specifically booked for this.

3.7.4 Court - Food in the Court is generally restricted to canapes served with drinks. It should be noted that case C6A currently contains an object loaned under the Government Indemnity Scheme (see 'Lower Gallery' below).

3.7.5 Temporary Exhibition Gallery - Restricted to canapes, served with drinks. Exceptions may apply, depending on the exhibition.

3.7.6 Lecture Theatre - At time of booking (internal or external) cleaning after an event where food is served must have been organised and agreed, using Museum contract cleaning staff or a named staff member.

3.7.7 Lower Gallery – Food and drink are allowed at the Clore Balcony end of the Lower Gallery only. The other end of the Gallery must be barriered off so that access to the Benin case is prevented. The gallery must also be staffed at all times while an event is in progress. Material covered by Government Indemnity is displayed on this gallery. As part of the Indemnity agreement the Pitt Rivers has agreed with the Arts Council that:

- *‘Food and drink are prepared and dispensed in a space not containing indemnified objects. No heat or steam generating equipment can be used or bottles uncorked in the space containing indemnified objects.’*
- *‘Strict attention is given to the cleaning operation to ensure removal of residues of food and drink. Appropriate checks should ensure that chemical cleaning agents or extra amounts of water do not adversely affect environmental stability or the corrosivity of the atmosphere next to indemnified objects.’*
- *‘Where practicable the installation of suitable barriers is required to prevent close approach to unglazed, fragile, or sensitive exhibits. Such barriers must be a minimum of one metre distant from the indemnified object to provide a manageable sterile zone.’*
- *‘...adequate staff on invigilating duties in all exhibition spaces containing indemnified material especially if barriers cannot be installed.’*
- *‘If arrangements are made incorporating the above together with any additional measures required by Arts Council the indemnity will remain valid. If, however, there are any doubts about arrangements or where it is felt that indemnity may be affected or that different arrangements are sought, the National Security Adviser and Environmental Adviser must be consulted.’*

3.7.8 Upper Gallery - Food and drinks are not currently allowed on the Upper Gallery.

#### **4. Publication and review of this policy**

4.1 This Policy will be published on the Museum’s website and will be made available for visitors to the Museum to view on request.

4.2 All Museum staff will be made aware of this policy during induction or specific meetings.

4.3 This policy will be reviewed at least once every five years.