

MERL Privacy Notice

About us

This Privacy Notice explains the nature of the personal information that the University of Reading Museum of Rural Life (“MERL”) and Special Collections processes for the purposes of the provision of our services including access to our resources.

The University (We or Us) are data controller in respect of the information that We process about you. Our contact details are The University of Reading Whiteknights House, Whiteknights, Reading, RG6 6UR. Tel: +44 (0) 118 987 5123.

This notice explains what personal information We collect, hold and share in support of these purposes and your rights in respect of the data We hold about you.

Your privacy is important to Us, so if there is anything in this privacy notice that is unclear or you do not understand, please contact Our Data Protection Officer at: imps@reading.ac.uk

Data We collect about you

To manage its operations effectively, provide services to you, and meet certain legal requirements, We need to collect, record, store, use, share, retain and destroy (this is known as ‘processing’) your personal data. As part of managing your relationship with Us, We will collect and process a number of different types of personal data.

We collect personal data directly from you in order to:

- provide you with access to our services and resources.
- let you know about service changes which affect your use of the Museum.
- to keep you up to date with events and opportunities at the MERL
- for reporting and statistical purposes, including monitoring of equal opportunities
- for archiving purposes in the public interest
- for collecting data on visitors for the purposes of meeting our funding requirements, such as those to the Arts Council, Research England and the Higher Education Funding Council for England
- to keep records of those accessing, donating or depositing collections materials that warrant extra security protections and maintaining user audit trails for the purposes of defending future legal claims in respect of Copyright or Data Protection obligations
- to manage your relationship as a volunteer, including required security checks including checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service,

Automatic Data Collection – users of our website. We use cookies on our website.

Cookies

A cookie is a small file which asks permission to be placed on your computer's hard drive. Once you agree, the file is added and the cookie helps analyse web traffic or lets you know when you visit a particular site. Cookies allow web applications to respond to you as an individual. The web application can tailor its operations to your needs, likes and dislikes by gathering and remembering information about your preferences.

If you prefer not to receive cookies while browsing our website, you can set your browser to refuse cookies that are stored on your computer; the above websites tell you how to do this. You do not need to have cookies turned on to use or navigate through most parts of our website, although some functionality may be lost.

For further information on cookies visit www.allaboutcookies.org or www.aboutcookies.org.

The University's website Privacy Policy and Cookie Information is available here: [Privacy – the University of Reading](#)

Our lawful basis for uses of your data

Under data protection laws We must have a legitimate and lawful basis for processing your personal data. There are several lawful grounds within data protection law that apply to the categories of data that We are processing, and these are explained below:

Data collected as part of your registration, or to facilitate your usage of MERL resources will be necessary for the purposes of entering into, or the performance of, a contract or agreement to deliver the services of the MERL.

Where you have opted in to receive email communications marketing the services offered by Us this will be with your consent. You can change your marketing preferences at any time by contacting merlevents@reading.ac.uk

We may also conduct some marketing activities on the basis of our legitimate interests if you have not opted out of those communications.

We will hold some information on visitor numbers and demographics necessary for reporting to our funding regulators, and information on those accessing collections for reasons of a public task in the public interest.

If you are volunteering with Us We collect your data for some purposes connected with our legal obligations in respect of safeguarding and security checks and for meeting certain funding requirements.

Who We share your data with

We do not supply your personally identifiable data to third parties outside the University of Reading unless with your consent or if required by law.

We may share some aggregated and statistical information with our funding providers for the purposes of reporting on visitor numbers and demographics. This is data that will not identify you.

Retention of your data

We keep your personal data for the period you are registered as a user of MERL and Special Collections services.

If you have elected to receive marketing communications from Us, We will hold your data until such time as you change your preferences or request to be removed from our marketing database.

We will retain information collected for security reasons associated with access to special collections for 50 years. This is limited to some very basic information about the terms under which access to collections were granted, whether copies were taken or licenses granted.

Information regarding donations or depositing collections is kept for longer periods of time as part of our purposes of retaining historical records for archiving in the public interest, however this information will be periodically reviewed.

How We protect your data

Your personal information is stored securely within the University and our staff are trained about the secure handling of personal information. We may also use third party providers to deliver our services, such as externally hosted database, software or cloud providers. Where we do this, We have measures and terms in place with those providers to ensure that they also protect your data.

Keeping your information up to date

The accuracy of your information is important to us. You can update your information, including your address and contact details, at any time by contacting merlevents@reading.ac.uk

Your rights

Under data protection law you have the right to:

- Withdraw your consent where that is the legal basis of our processing
- Access your personal data that We process
- Rectify inaccuracies in personal data that We hold about you
- Be erased, that is your details to be removed from systems that We use to process your personal data
- Restrict the processing in certain ways
- Obtain a copy of your data in a commonly used electronic form; and
- Object to certain processing of your personal data by us

Please see the ICO website for further information on the above rights:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/individual-rights/>

If you would like to exercise your rights, or have any concerns regarding how We have handled your personal information please contact our Data Protection Office at imps@reading.ac.uk

Some rights are dependent on the lawful basis for processing your information. If We have legitimate grounds to not carry out your wishes, these will be explained to you in response to your request.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office.

Questions about this notice

If there is anything in this notice that you are unclear about, please contact our Data Protection Officer, on the contact details below, who shall be happy to answer any queries you may have concerning this privacy notice or the way in which We process your personal data.

By mail: University of Reading, Information Management & Policy Services, Whiteknights House, Shinfield Road, Whiteknights. READING, RG6 6UR, UK

By email: imps@reading.ac.uk

By phone: 0118 378 8981

Complaints can be referred to the Information Commissioners Office, the independent body who oversee Data Protection compliance in the UK.

<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

Changes to this notice

We keep our privacy notice under regular review to ensure best practice and compliance with the law. This privacy notice was last updated on 04/02/2025.

We may change this privacy notice from time to time. If We make significant changes in the way We treat your personal information We will make this clear on our website and may seek to notify you directly.

How to contact us

If you have any questions about this notice, our University Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

University of Reading

Information Management & Policy Services

Whiteknights House

Shinfield Road

Whiteknights

READING

RG6 6UR

UK

Telephone: 0118 378 8981 Email: imps@reading.ac.uk