



Buckinghamshire County Council

Minutes

Countywide Archaeological Advisory Committee

AGENDA ITEM: 3

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNTYWIDE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY
26 SEPTEMBER 2001 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 3, COUNTY HALL,
AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 2.30PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.45PM.**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Members

Mrs C M Aston
Cllr Cashman
Cllr Sir John Horsbrugh-Porter
Cllr Mrs J M Woolveridge
Cllr C B Oliver
Cllr B Morsley
Mr M Farley

Organisation

Buckinghamshire County Council
Aylesbury Vale District Council
Chiltern District Council
South Bucks District Council
Wycombe District Council
Milton Keynes Council
Bucks Archaeological Society

Officers

Mr S Kidd	Buckinghamshire County Council
Mr D Pickard	Buckinghamshire County Council
Ms J Wise	Buckinghamshire County Council
Ms J Hall	Buckinghamshire County Council
Mr A Kirkham	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Mr S Went	South Bucks District Council
Mr B Giggins	Milton Keynes District Council

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

That Mrs C M Aston be elected Chairman for the ensuing year.

RESOLVED

Mrs C M Aston in the chair

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs A Jones, Buckinghamshire County Council; Mr M Andrew, Wycombe District Council; Mr G Luton, English Heritage and Dr G Lock, Department of External Studies, University of Oxford.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Farley declared an interest as a Consultant Archaeologist.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2001, copies of which were previously circulated, were confirmed.

MATTERS ARISING

It was noted that under minute 7, page 5, a Project Steering Group has been formed and met for the first time on 1 October 2001.

MILTON KEYNES ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICERS REPORT

The Committee received a report from the Archaeological Officer, Design and Conservation, Milton Keynes Council on the current Archaeological matters in Milton Keynes.

Introducing the report, Mr Giggins stated that planning applications between 1 January 2001 and 30 June 2001 had increased consultation in respect of archaeology as a direct result of planning applications.

Reporting on the developments of mapping the Civil War defences surrounding Newport Pagnell, it was noted that a section of northern defences had been identified along the West Gate to Newport Pagnell Mill. This aligned with a small section of earthworks, now destroyed, which existed close to Queens Avenue was shown on the Ordnance Survey Map of 1881. By overlaying maps dating from 1643 part of the bastion could be identified as a road. Areas of the defences now appeared to be further south than previously considered.

Members also discussed finds from metal detectors and the problems which had arisen following a recent find currently valued at around £0.33m. It was confirmed that any items found were returned to the finder so long as permission had been granted from the Land Owner. In respect of this case the finders had followed procedures. The Committee noted the fieldwork projects undertaken.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER'S REPORT

The Committee received and noted a report from the Senior Archaeological Officer that advised Members of significant events since the last meeting.

Noting the performance indicators from the last four quarters, it was reported that the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) backlog was increasing. It seemed unlikely that additional funding would be available to appoint an additional member of staff since

English Heritage was unable to support a bid to Heritage Lottery Fund. However, the action plan had been completed and included a section on tackling the SMR backlog. Members raised concerns regarding the backlog, stressing the importance of the information to planning applications. It was noted that the current backlog of 5000, was growing at a rate of approximately 40 per month. Members recognised this as a substantial problem. In terms of resourcing the SMR, Members discussed various forms of funding, realising that the effects meant the service being provided to was not as efficient as clients would expect. It was also noted that English Heritage would look for a commitment from the Authority to match fund any bids, which, in turn became an added challenge on the budget. In light of lengthy discussion it was noted that the issue of SMR would be taken to the portfolio holder for further consideration.

An update on recent projects and fieldwork was given, with specific mention to the Bernwood Royal Hunting Forest Project, which was launched in June of this year and Whiteleaf Hill project in which a bid for a substantial grant to cover conservation and other works had been submitted.

It was noted that all projects are progressing at various stages and most had attracted external funding.

RESOLVED

- 1 That an Archaeological Planning and Conservation Post be established and that efforts made to secure funding for this appointment be supported.**
- 2 That the concerns raised by the Committee on the backlog of the Sites and Monuments Records be passed to the Cabinet Member for Community Services for consideration.**

COUNTY MUSEUM REPORT

The Committee received and noted an oral report from the Ms S Gray, representative of the Museum, who reported on two important pieces of information regarding the Museum.

It was noted that the Museum was undertaking a project to bring Archaeology to everyone. Part of the project was to ensure that any finds, paper, photographs and relics were deposited into the Museum making it the main repository for archaeology. It was noted that the County Museum, for 150 years, had been the main repository and this area recognised as a big growth area, needed managing and resourcing. It was reported that the project expected to receive approximately 600 boxes of routine material. Two large-scale archives, Eaton Rowing and Maidstone and Windsor Flood Scheme would generate a one off storage charge of £10,000. Materials were also being stored for Northamptonshire at a charge of £7000. At present there was storage space for four years, in conjunction with Milton Keynes, work to expand storage was being addressed.

It was reported that following a review of staffing, a post that had not been occupied for three years would be advertised in the near future.

Members welcomed the news that following the last meeting; Buckinghamshire had formed part of a bid, submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding towards 13 posts, one being for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes attracting 90% funding over three years. If the bid was successful, following an announcement expected in November 2001, an officer would be in place by Spring 2002.

It was recognised that in some cases metal detected articles previously unrecorded could add to the SMR backlog. It was established that only 10% of finds were reported. A member was also concerned regarding the gaps that could be caused between the archives and the SMR backlog. It was reported that the internal database was 'in touch' with SMR.

MODERNISING THE COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The report of the Senior Archaeological Officer was received and noted. Whilst reporting back on the opinions expressed on the future remit of CAAC. It was established that no consensus was reached in changing the constitution to a Historic Environment Forum or Joint Committee. The report sought the support of Members to broaden the committees approach to the historic environment together with widening membership by inviting representatives from the following organisations:

- National Trust
- Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' Rural development Service (DEFRA-RDS)
- Chilterns AONB

During lengthy discussion Members agreed that English Heritage and the Oxford Diocese should also be invited, as both would be beneficial to the work of the Committee. Concerns were raised that if the Committee became too big problems could arise with resourcing projects. Members also discussed the work of Conservation Officers in the recording of buildings, noting that Aylesbury Vale District Council had a dedicated Historic Buildings Team who was involved with planning applications and enforcements.

It was agreed that the above-mentioned organisations including English Heritage and the Oxford Diocese would be invited to nominate representatives to join the Committee and a small group would look at the constitution, reporting back to the next meeting with their views. Members also asked for clarity on who the Committee was advising.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- a) Noted that there was at present no consensus in favour of changing the constitution of the Countywide Archaeological Advisory Committee to an Historic Environment Forum or Joint Committee;**
- b) Supported the broadening of Membership to include the National Trust; Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs' Rural Development Service (DEFRA-RDS); Chilterns ANOB; English Partnerships and**

Oxford Diocese and an holistic approach to the historic environment and the desirability of CAAC encouraging and facilitating practical measures to achieve this;

- c) Supported the principle of broadening the membership of CAAC and instructed the Secretary to write to the organisations listed to invite expressions of interest in joining the Committee.**

CONSERVATION OF MEDIEVAL OPEN FIELDS IN NORTH BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

The Committee received and noted the report of the Senior Archaeological Officer that informed the Committee of the publication of an English Heritage report, *Turning the Plough*, on the survival and management of Midland open fields. The report laid out the necessity to protect and preserve these remains in North Buckinghamshire.

Presenting the report, the officer informed the Committee that Buckinghamshire came only second to Leicestershire; only half of Buckinghamshire had been surveyed of which 9 parishes/townships were identified as being priority townships, with Ludgershall having the largest surviving area of ridge and furrow.

Members recognised the importance of preserving such sites and requested information on the amount of grants required to ensure their protection and restoration.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Committee welcomed the publication *Turning the Plough* report;**
- 2. That the committee supported the efforts to ensure the preservation in-situ of the best examples of Buckinghamshire's medieval open field system;**
- 3. That the Secretary to write to DEFRA on behalf of the Committee expressing support for the proposed implementation of the Uncultivated Land and Semi-Natural Areas provisions of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive seeking proper recognition for the role of County Sites and Monuments Records in this regard and emphasising the desirability of providing further targeted support for farmers through agri-environment schemes.**

RATIFICATION OF THE VALLETTA CONVENTION

The Committee received the report of the Senior Archaeological Officer on the Government's ratification of the European Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage and review its implications for Buckinghamshire.

Members noted that there was an element of controversy in the convention as it only related to County and Museum works not all works. It was agreed that the Chairman should write a letter to the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport to emphasise the need for adequate support for local government archaeological services to enable proper implementation of the Convention.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman write to the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport to welcome the Government's ratification of the Valletta Convention raising the issues set out below and emphasising the need for adequate support for local government archaeological services to properly implement the Convention's aspirations.

EMERGENCY ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING FUND

The Committee noted the report that reviewed the operation of the emergency recording fund.

It was noted that a publication had been commissioned in May 2001 on the Wendover cremation burial. Although a sum of money had been committed to the publication there was a deficit remaining of £759. As agreed at a previous meeting, £300 was collected from each voting member organisation, David Pickard would write to Members regarding this.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Committee noted that a new all party group chaired by Lord Renfrew, proposed to pick up on debate on the recommendation for Archaeology Remains Profile. Members agreed that the five following areas of concern should be forwarded to the group:

1. Framework on Services
2. Adequate Funding
3. Protection of Land
4. Museum Services
5. Public Outreach

Members also received information on Planning for the Future, published by the Bucks Garden Group on Historic Gardens in Buckinghamshire.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 20 March 2001 at 2.00pm