



# Buckinghamshire County Council

## Minutes

### *Countywide Archaeological Advisory Committee*

**AGENDA ITEM: 3**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNTYWIDE  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY  
16 OCTOBER 2002 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL,  
AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 2.32PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.35PM.**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

##### **Members**

Mrs C M Aston (Chairman)  
Mr C Cashman  
Mr M Farley  
Cllr Sir John Horsbrugh-Porter  
Mrs A Jones  
Cllr C B Oliver  
Mr C Richards

##### **Organisation**

Buckinghamshire County Council  
Aylesbury Vale District Council  
Bucks Archaeological Society  
Chiltern District Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
Wycombe District Council  
Conservation Board, Chilterns AONB

##### **Officers**

Mr M Andrew  
Mr R Evans  
Mr B Giggins  
Mr A Kidd  
Mr D Pickard  
Ms V Scott  
Mrs C Street  
Mr B Thorne  
Ms J Wise

##### **Organisation**

Wycombe District Council  
Diocese of Oxford  
Milton Keynes Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
South Bucks District Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
Bucks County Museum  
Buckinghamshire County Council

#### **1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

##### **RESOLVED**

**That Mrs C Aston be elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.**

**MRS C ASTON IN THE CHAIR**

The Committee agreed not to appoint a Vice-Chairman.

## **2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr A Kirkham, Aylesbury Vale District Council; Mr G Marshall, National Trust; and Mr C Welch, English Heritage.

## **3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mr M Farley declared a personal interest as a Consultant Archaeologist.

## **4 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of the Countywide Archaeological Advisory Committee held on 26 September 2001 and 20 March 2002, copies of which had been circulated previously, were agreed.

## **5 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

## **6 CREATION OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM**

The Committee received a report of the Senior Archaeological Officer, regarding the creation of the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum. The report proposed amendments to the constitution of the Committee, following on from the previous meeting.

The Officer informed Members that lengthy discussion had taken place over the remit of the Committee. The general consensus was that the changes should reflect current thinking on historic environment policy. A number of amendments to the constitution were agreed in principle at the 20 March 2002 meeting of the Committee, but there were insufficient Members present for the changes to the constitution to be ratified.

During discussion of the report Members expressed the view that changes to the constitution should include the provision that four voting members be present to pass any subsequent changes to the constitution. This amendment was proposed by Mr C Oliver and seconded by Mrs A Jones.

## **RESOLVED**

### **That**

- a) **The Committee approved a change of the Committee's name to the "Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum", and approved changes to its constitution as agreed in principle at the March 2002 meeting and specified in Appendix A of the Officer's report.**
- b) **The Committee agreed the addition of an Object 2 (vi) - "To comment on existing and proposed regional and national policies affecting the historic environment seeking improvements where appropriate".**

- c) **Agreed to amend the quorum required under rule 7 (iv) from four to three voting members.**
- d) **Agreed to amend the number of assenting votes required to amend the constitution under rule 9 (i) from five to four.**
- e) **Instructed the Secretary to inform each member organisation of the changes.**

## **7 MILTON KEYNES ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER'S REPORT**

The Forum received the report of the Archaeological Officer for Design and Conservation, which informed the Forum of current archaeological matters in Milton Keynes. Attached to the report was a list of fieldwork projects (Events) that had been undertaken in the Milton Keynes area between January and June 2002.

The Officer was pleased to report that English Partnerships was now taking a much more active role regarding archaeological projects in Milton Keynes, including the fact that they had funded and organised evaluation works at Monkston Park using Northamptonshire Archaeology.

During discussion of his report, the Officer added that the Minerals Local Plan would shortly be submitted to a meeting of the Cabinet. Work was also progressing towards the second deposit of the Local Plan. The Officer highlighted the problems of going out to tender. This problem was exacerbated by the fact that English Partnerships was bound by a number of rules regarding the tendering process. The use of different contractors to carry out the evaluation and excavation of a site could cause difficulties regarding how elements of the work were presented to journals. The Officer highlighted that it was sometimes difficult to decide whether to have evaluation results published or wait until the final excavations had taken place and then have a full report made public.

A discussion followed during which Members of the Forum emphasised the fact that there was a clear need to have a definitive record of archaeological works undertaken. Members recognised however, that it was sometimes difficult to decide at which point a choice should be made to publish the records of work further. The Archaeological Officer for Design and Conservation commented that he had indicated in his report where a note of the archaeological work would appear in the relevant records, and where he intended that a full report would be written on completion of the works.

Members emphasised the fact that there were problems with slow publication in journals and noted that the ultimate sanction was to bring about enforcement actions by the Planning Authority.

### **RESOLVED**

**The Forum noted the report.**

## **8. MILTON KEYNES HOARD (Additional Agenda Item)**

Members of the Forum agreed to consider an additional agenda item concerning a letter that had been written by Mr M Farley, Vice-President of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society about the Milton Keynes Hoard.

Mr Farley had been asked by the Council of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society to raise the issue of the Milton Keynes Hoard with a view to the Forum approaching English Partnerships, who were one of the beneficiaries, to ascertain whether any of the associated reward could be earmarked for use on future Buckinghamshire archaeological projects.

In particular Members felt that some of the money should be spent on making archaeological information more accessible to the public. Members noted that a positive response to such an approach could set a precedent for any future hoards that were discovered.

### **RESOLVED**

**That the Chairman would write to English Partnerships asking whether any of the reward from the Milton Keynes Hoard could be used either on future archaeological projects in Buckinghamshire, or on making archaeological information more accessible to the public.**

## **9 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER'S REPORT**

The Forum received the report of the Senior Archaeological Officer, advising the Forum of significant events since the last meeting of the Countywide Archaeological Advisory Committee.

The Officer informed Members that some progress had been made on clearing the SMR data-processing backlog. Additional resources had been identified to appoint an SMR Assistant for a three-month period to start in the Spring of 2003 to help clear the backlog, in addition to work on the backlog that would be carried out in the Autumn of 2002 by a student.

Regarding the reorganisation of the County Archaeological Service and Best Value Review, the Officer reported that a grant from English Heritage had been received which had enabled Mr D Radford to be appointed as an Archaeological Planning and Conservation Officer for a period of three years. A paper would be presented to a future meeting concerning the archaeology conservation project. Members noted that the County Archaeological Service also comprised a Sites and Monuments Record Officer (Julia Wise).

The Officer highlighted a major success that had taken place regarding a farm at Putlowe that was thought to be the site of a small roman town, as the owner had been persuaded to put the field concerned into arable reversion over a ten-year period to prevent further plough damage.

Members noted that the recent Open Day for the Whiteleaf Hill Restoration Project had been very successful and had attracted a steady stream of visitors. School visits regarding the project had been postponed but would be taking

place in 2003. Four small excavations had been undertaken at the Project and the Officer reported that the results of these had led to a much better understanding of the site.

Of the two barrows investigated one had been identified as an entirely natural feature, although large quantities of flints had been found on it. A chalk cross had been discovered in the other burrow, which the Officer thought might be part of the foundations of a windmill. Interestingly though, only Roman pottery had been found on the site so far. The Officer commented that there was a need to find out more about the remaining burrow as it was thought there might have been a settlement in that area. Members were further informed that an environmental analysis would be carried out on samples from the cross-ridge dyke ditch to assess the changing landscape.

The Officer informed Members that a full report concerning the Historic Landscape Characterisation Project would be submitted to a later meeting of the Forum. The aim of the project was to use geographical systems to generate a map of the whole of the county, showing the historical derivation of the landscape. The map could be used to help with the strategic planning process, and with projects that aimed to conserve or enhance the landscape, for example the Chilterns AONB and the Bernwood Project. Members noted that nationally the project was about half way through its timescale.

Regarding archaeology and development, Part 1 of the Inspector's Report on the Aylesbury Vale Local Plan Inquiry had been published in August 2002. The Officer commented that the Inspector's recommendation to include non-scheduled sites on proposals maps would be totally impractical as there were thousands of archaeological sites in Aylesbury alone. However it was possible to produce archaeological notification maps which would show the areas of main interest. A web-based planning resource could be discussed with the Planning Department.

The study of the future growth of Milton Keynes had been published. There were proposals for large-scale development, which could have an effect on the Buckinghamshire landscape. Members noted that this was a subject that the Forum might like to address at a future meeting, as there was a need to identify sensitive areas that might need protecting.

Regarding planning applications, Members were informed that developers were only required to provide sufficient information for the planning authority to make a specific decision on planning applications. Members were concerned that no legal basis existed to insist that developers provided a more detailed report. A discussion followed during which Members requested that this important strategic issue be addressed at a future meeting of the Forum. The Senior Archaeological Officer agreed to present a paper on the issue of publication at the next meeting of the Forum.

## **RESOLVED**

### **That the Forum:**

- a Noted the Service's Outputs and Performance Indicators and the generally satisfactory performance in relation to the latter.**

- b Noted the reorganisation of the County Archaeological Service.**
- c Noted progress for strategic and conservation projects.**
- d Noted recent development-related archaeological casework in the county.**

## **9 COUNTY MUSEUM REPORT**

The Committee received an oral report regarding the County Museum. The following major items were noted.

Funding was confirmed to start in April 2003 for a three-year Portable Antiquities Post, based at the County Museum.

Working in partnership with the Petrie Museum, the County Museum would be examining a collection of Egyptian material in the museum that was currently not used. A 'virtual Egyptologist' had been appointed to provide a definitive list of the collections and to develop a website through which the collections could be shown electronically. The post would be starting in December 2002 and would last for three months.

A display had been set up in Princes Risborough concerning the Whiteleaf Project, in association with Oxford Archaeology.

Regarding the identification of archives, 66 sites had been notified to the Museum, which showed an increase to those finds previously recorded. The Officer commented that there was a problem with lack of depositions subsequent to the notification of finds.

Regarding the British Archaeology Questionnaire on Public Participation in Archaeology, a draft response had been compiled and was circulated to Members of the Forum. The Officer requested that Members submit any amendments or comments on the draft response to him before the deadline of 15 December 2002. A Member commented that the response would need to reflect the change in name of the Forum. It was also felt important that the response should reflect the need for appropriate levels of training in archaeology, and should also identify how young people could become more involved in archaeology, for example through voluntary organisations.

## **10 NATIONAL TRUST REPORT**

The Forum was pleased to receive the first report from the Regional Archaeologist, concerning Archaeology and the National Trust in Buckinghamshire.

Members noted the contents of the report, and requested that their thanks to the National Trust be minuted.

## **11 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT POLICY STATEMENT AND PLANNING GREEN PAPER UPDATE**

The Forum received the report of the Senior Archaeological Officer, updating Members on the Government's progress on implementing its policy statement

on the Historic Environment and those aspects of the Planning Green Paper affecting historic environment.

Members were informed that three consultations were taking place as a result of the Planning Green Paper. The second consultation, which involved the review of PPG's 15 and 16, would be issued for consultation in October 2002 for a three-month period. The third consultation regarding 'The Historic Environment: A Force for our Future', which would contain options for creating Historic Environment Records, was also not expected to be released until October 2002. As details of the consultations were not yet available, it was proposed that the nature of the Forum's response be delegated to the Secretary and Chairman, acting in consultation with the membership.

#### **RESOLVED**

**The Forum authorised the Secretary and Chairman to co-ordinate and issue a response on behalf of the Forum to the expected national consultations on the joint reviews of PPGs 15 and 16 and on historic environment records.**

### **12 UNLOCKING BUCKINGHAMSHIRE'S PAST**

The Forum received a report of the Sites and Monuments Record Officer, which detailed progress on the preparation on the Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past Project application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Officer informed Members that a large consultation exercise had taken place in order to prepare the bid. The results of the consultation had indicated a high level of interest and support from the education sector and from local groups. Members noted that the results of the circulated questionnaire generally endorsed the target audiences.

The Officer commented that there had been a deliberate delay in submission of the bid whilst information was awaited regarding an increased funding threshold. The additional funding threshold had had the advantage of enabling the Officer to build in a 'fun' element to the project, and make it much more attractive to use. The Officer had also been able to reduce the danger of project failure and project overrun by building in contingency arrangements.

Supporting evidence was being gathered for the compilation of the bid, which the Officer expected would be submitted shortly. The Officer proposed that letters supporting the aims of the project and the submission of the bid be solicited from the District Councils and other interested constituent organisations.

The Officer agreed to produce a skeleton letter from the relevant portfolio holders, for Members to use.

#### **RESOLVED**

**The Forum authorised the Chairman to report the project bid to constituent bodies on the Committee's behalf seeking their written support for the Heritage Lottery Fund application.**

### **13 EMERGENCY ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING FUND**

The Forum received the report of the Senior Archaeological Officer and Treasurer reviewing the operation of the Emergency Recording Fund.

Members noted that the Fund had been set up in March 2000 and was working work. Invoices had been issued for 2002/03 and only payment from Chiltern District Council was outstanding. The balance as reported at the meeting was £1,341. Members were reminded that from April 2002 the funding formula was weighted proportionately between the districts.

Members noted the report and congratulated the Senior Archaeological Officer and Treasurer on the success of the Fund.

### **14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Members were informed that the first volume of '*Gathering the People, Settling the Land*' had just been produced and included a CD.

A leaflet entitled, '*Do You Want to Find Out More about Milton Keynes?*' was distributed. The leaflet had been published by the Milton Keynes Heritage Association and detailed places of historical interest in Milton Keynes.

### **15 DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS**

26 March 2003 2.30pm in Mezzanine Room 3, County Hall, Aylesbury  
17 September 2003 2.30pm in Mezzanine Room 3, County Hall, Aylesbury.

**MRS C ASTON  
CHAIRMAN**