

**EMERGENCY ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING FUND**

To: Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> March 2003

Authors: Senior Archaeological Officer & Treasurer

**A. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1 To review the operation of the emergency recording fund.

**B. PROPOSED ACTION**

**2 The Committee is invited to:**

**a) NOTE the current status of the fund and DECIDE whether the fund needs to seek contributions for financial year 2003/4.**

**b) CONSIDER whether the fund can be used in Chiltern District and ADVISE Chiltern District Council of its decision.**

**C. RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

3 Invoices have been issued for 2002/3 and should stand at £3241 when payments have been received.

**D. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

6 There have been no new discoveries requiring “emergency recording” in the period covered by this report. The rate of significant unexpected discoveries since the setting up of the fund in 2000 has been generally towards the lower end of predicted range (1 to 3 per year) with two cases (Ivinghoe sword and Wendover Roman cremation burial) in 2000; one case (Milton Keynes Bronze Age hoard) in 2001, none in 2002 and so far in 2003. Only the Wendover burial gave rise to a call on the fund.

7 It is possible that the appointment of a Finds Liaison Officer by the County Museum will, by promoting good practice in relation to metal-detecting finds, lead to occasional calls on the fund. Conservation Officers could call upon the fund for emergency recording of historic buildings threatened by demolition if recording cannot be secured through the planning process. Also, the fund may be required in the event of that significant discoveries are made during Channel 4 Time Team’s Big Dig weekend on June 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> – a weekend during which the public are being encouraged to excavate their own trial pits. Arrangements and take-up for this event are still unclear but it is suggested

that if necessary an “on call” arrangement might be set up with a local archaeological contractor to deal with any situations where on-site professional advice and excavation is essential.

- 8 If demand remains at the low level noted above it there is a case for suspending payments until the existing fund is depleted. An alternative approach would be to widen the funds’ remit to include rapid pro-active recording of “at risk” elements of the historic environment, perhaps on a thematic basis such as unregistered historic parks or certain types of unlisted historic buildings.
- 9 Chiltern District Council have indicated that they will not contribute to the fund so the Forum will need to decide whether to preclude use of the fund within their area. Members will note that contributions to the fund are now on a pro-rata basis as agreed in March 2001:

	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	% Contribution
Aylesbury Vale District Council	903	20%
Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society	n/a	5%
Buckinghamshire County Council	1564	40%
Chiltern District Council	196	5%
Milton Keynes Council	309	15%
South Bucks District Council	141	5%
Wycombe District Council	325	10%

The fund protocol agreed in March 2000 is attached as an appendix.

10. In view of the imminent change to the management of County Archaeological Service it is likely to become necessary to nominate a new treasurer.

E. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Countywide Archaeological Committee Papers and Minutes for 29<sup>th</sup> March 2000 and 21<sup>st</sup> March 2001

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**Protocol for the Operation of the Buckinghamshire Emergency Archaeological Recording Fund by the Countywide Archaeological Advisory Committee (CAAC)**

**1. Purpose**

The purpose of the fund is to enable the emergency recording of important archaeological remains (including above and below ground features, artefacts and associated environmental deposits) which are unavoidably under imminent threat of significant damage or destruction without adequate provision for their recording. The fund covers the administrative areas of Aylesbury Vale District Council, Chilterns District Council, Milton Keynes Council, South Bucks District Council and Wycombe District Council.

**2. Criteria**

To be eligible for funding the following criteria must be met:

1. Where applicable, the procedures for obtaining archaeological advice set out in Planning Policy Guidance 16 must have been followed and appropriate safeguards secured through the planning process.
2. There must be good reason to believe that the remains are likely to be of more than local importance (as defined in the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Management Plan).
3. There must be an imminent threat of significant damage or destruction and all reasonable efforts must have been made to avoid or minimise that threat.
4. The cost of the proposed work should be no more than is necessary to record, and where appropriate recover, the threatened remains. *Wider survey to establish the context of discoveries is not covered. All reasonable efforts should be made to ensure that the work is undertaken in a cost-effective manner. Projects costs should include the consolidation of the archive and preparation of a summary report but not full analysis and publication which should be the subject of a post-excavation assessment submitted to the CAAC (see below).*
5. All reasonable efforts must have been made to secure funding or "contributions in kind" from the developer and other sources (e.g. English Heritage for remains of national importance). *In some cases the fund might be used to provide "match funding". Public bodies and utilities with legal obligations to the environment will be expected to discharge their legal and ethical obligations in full.*

**3. Procedure for release of funds**

Funds may be released by the Treasurer on request from the relevant Archaeological Officer or, for portable antiquities, Museum Officer to the Treasurer. The Treasurer will consult the Chair, or in their absence the Vice-Chair, of the Countywide Archaeological Advisory Committee prior to any expenditure exceeding £1000. A written report must be submitted to the next CAAC meeting explaining:

- The circumstances of the investigation
- Its outcome, including an assessment of importance
- The justification for the expenditure in relation to the criteria specified in section 2 above
- Any proposals for further analysis and publication with appropriate justifications and costings

**4. Procedure for the maintenance of the fund**

The fund is to be a rollover fund administered by the Treasurer of the CAAC. The Treasurer should seek to maintain the fund between upper and lower limits defined by the CAAC. The treasurer should report to each CAAC meeting on:

- The current level of the fund
- The need for additional contributions to the fund
- The suitability of the current upper and lower limits

The failure of any voting organisation on the CAAC to contribute to the fund may, at the discretion of the CAAC, lead to a review of this protocol.