



# Buckinghamshire County Council

## Minutes

## *Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum*

AGENDA ITEM: 3

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26 MARCH 2003 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 3, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 2.30PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.45PM.**

### MEMBERS PRESENT

#### Members

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

#### Organisation

Buckinghamshire County Council  
Aylesbury Vale District Council  
Bucks Archaeological Society  
Chiltern District Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
Wycombe District Council

#### Officers

Mr M Andrew  
Mr N Cann  
Ms R Gibson  
Mr B Giggins  
Mr D Green

#### Organisation

Mr A Kidd  
Mr G Marshall  
Mr D Pickard  
Mrs C Street  
Mr B Thorn  
Mr C Welch  
Ms J Wise

Wycombe District Council  
Work Shadow Student  
Aylesbury Vale District Council  
Milton Keynes Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
Archaeological Service  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
National Trust  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
Bucks County Museum  
English Heritage  
Buckinghamshire County Council

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs A Jones, Buckinghamshire County Council; Ms K Murray; Chiltern District Council and Ms V Scott, South Bucks District Council. Members were informed that Mrs B Jennings would be substituting for Mrs A Jones for the duration of the meeting.

### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

### **3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment held on 16 October 2002, copies of which had been circulated previously, were agreed.

### **4 MATTERS ARISING**

#### **Milton Keynes Hoard**

No response had been received to the letter sent by the Chairman to English Partnerships concerning the Milton Keynes Hoard.

#### **Historic Environment Policy Statement and Planning Green Paper**

The Forum had not issued a response to the expected national consultations on the joint reviews of PPGs 15 and 16 because the consultation had not yet been published. Officers were also awaiting a press release from Tessa Jowell, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport concerning the Review of Heritage Designations, and a review of the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), both of which are due to be released within the next three months.

#### **Constitution of the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum**

The Senior Archaeological Officer had received a letter from the Conservation and Design Officer at South Bucks District Council concerning the fact that they were not able to put forward a representative on the Forum. The Conservation and Design Officer expressed the view that the Forum's agenda content was not sufficiently central to historic building conservation to justify her attendance. Members agreed that the next agenda should include an item on Historic Building Conservation and that this would hopefully encourage South Bucks to send a representative to attend. The Senior Archaeological Officer agreed to write to South Bucks to this effect, reminding them that their Membership of the Forum was still open.

### **5 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 July and December 2003.

Members were informed that English Partnerships were continuing to support archaeological projects in the area and had also commissioned some new work. An important excavation was taking place at Monkston Park in advance of building work and some pieces of high status pottery had been found. No buildings had been discovered but there was indication of an enclosed area with evidence of agricultural work.

The Officer reported that the Milton Keynes Council website was being updated to include information from the Sites and Monument Record (SMR). It was planned that this would be available in April 2003 and would include an option for the public to search a database for information about the history of their Parish areas. Members noted the website address: [www.mkweb.co.uk/mkcouncil](http://www.mkweb.co.uk/mkcouncil)

## **RESOLVED**

**The Forum noted the report.**

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

The Forum received the report of the Senior Archaeological Officer advising the Forum of the work of the County Archaeological Service since the last Bucks Historic Environment Forum meeting.

Members noted that work was continuing to reduce the backlog in data inputting for the SMR. The completion of the recent Best Value Review had led to a restructuring of Spatial Planning with the County Archaeological Service being relocated to the new Countryside and Heritage Group within the renamed 'Planning and Environment Service' from April 2003, under the management of Mike Woods.

English Heritage had produced a report in November 2002 entitled the 'State of the Historic Environment'. The Officer commented that he hoped the report would focus attention on problem areas within the historic environment whilst also provoking discussion of challenges for the way ahead. To help inform Members about these issues it was agreed to invite Mr Bill Startin, Regional Director of English Heritage, to the September meeting of the Forum.

The Officer congratulated Julia Wise for her hard work on the submission of a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past SMR outreach project. Members noted that letters of support had been received from Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe District Council. It was hoped that a decision would be made in June for a start in September 2003.

Regarding archaeology and development, work was progressing on planning notification maps. This was particularly important for the Aylesbury Vale area where there were many planning issues being discussed. In relation to the regrettable demolition of The Kya in Ludgershall, Members acknowledged the difficulty in dating so called 'simple' buildings such as this, which could lead to the structures being under-valued. It was noted that a request for the dating of the building could have been included in the original planning application but the only condition cited was that the building should be recorded. Members agreed that planners should be encouraged to provide more details in their submissions. It was suggested that it would be useful to have a form of 'local listing' for buildings of historic interest involving both Parish and District Councils, which could help inform planners. Members agreed that a report on the subject of local listings and how this could be linked to the Local Plan, would be brought to the next meeting of the Forum.

## **RESOLVED**

**The Forum**

- a Noted the Service's Outputs and Performance Indicators and the generally satisfactory performance in relation to the latter**
- b Noted the change in the Archaeology Service's management**
- c Agreed to invite the Regional Director of English Heritage to address the Historic Environment Forum**

- d Noted progress with Strategic and Conservation Projects**
- e Noted recent development-related archaeological casework in the county.**

## **7. COUNTY MUSEUM REPORT**

Members received a report of the Keeper of Archaeology concerning the latest developments at the County Museum.

The Officer was pleased to report that the Portable Antiquities Post for a Finds Liaison Officer had been filled. The Post was joint-funded by Buckinghamshire County Council and Milton Keynes Council. The Finds Liaison Officer would be based at the museum but would cover both areas. It was suggested that the Officer be invited to the meeting after next to report on her work.

Members noted that a local bid for the 'Unlocking Aylesbury Project', which would have provided resources for the writing-up and publishing of excavations, had sadly been turned down. The Keeper of Archaeology was asked to report back to the September meeting on alternative options for publication.

## **8 NATIONAL TRUST REPORT**

The Forum received the report of the National Trust updating Members on items of interest.

Members commented on the good news contained in the report regarding the appointment of two new archaeological posts; one for a part-time Project Archaeologist for Stowe Gardens, and the second for a one-year Sites and Monuments Assistant. The remit of the SMR Assistant position would be to update the SMR for Stowe and to create records for West Wycombe.

The Officer reported that excavations at Waddesdon Manor Aviary had been successful and had uncovered unrecorded details of the Victorian flowerbed layout, which is informing the site's restorations. Excavations at Bradenham Manor were being monitored for the installation of an irrigation system.

In response to a query from a Member concerning the synergy between the Buckinghamshire SMR and the National Trust SMR, the Officer commented that he could include information from the Buckinghamshire SMR in his distribution lists and that the National Trust was looking towards making information from its' SMR accessible on a database in future. The Officer added that he hoped information from unpublished works could be included in the work of the SMR Officer.

Members had a brief discussion concerning matters of sharing information between agencies, commenting that it would be useful to have a digital exchange of data. It was acknowledged that there was some duplication of information between agencies but that they might also need the data for different reasons e.g. for planning purposes.

## **9 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION PROJECT**

The Forum received a report of the Senior Archaeological Officer advising them of progress with the Buckinghamshire Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Project, and a presentation by the Historic Landscape Officer on the same subject. Members were informed that the post of the Historic Landscape Officer was funded by English Heritage as part of a national programme of whole landscape characterisation. A copy of the Officer's PowerPoint presentation is attached for information at Appendix 1.

The Officer explained that two distinct landscapes had been recognised in Buckinghamshire, these being Aylesbury Vale and The Chilterns. In the eastern part of Aylesbury Vale, extensive parliamentary enclosures had been found whereas the west was showing an older landscape. The mapping process involved the use of a Geographical Information System (GIS) which examined field morphology. It was hoped that the project would better inform planners, giving a wider regional and national perspective.

The Senior Archaeological Officer's report noted the likely main immediate uses for HLC and highlighted the Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust's concerns regarding the lack of recognition for unregistered designed landscapes in the county. It was suggested that the Forum could promote co-ordinated action in this area.

Members were impressed by the progress with the initiative, requesting that the final report be produced in a simple format with provision to include an analysis of themes.

### **RESOLVED**

#### **The Forum:**

- 1. Noted progress with the Buckinghamshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Project and endorsed the recommendation for the Forum to consider a formal report to members in March 2004.**
- 2. Considered the desirability of the Forum taking a lead role in promoting an initiative to give greater recognition to designed landscapes.**

## **10 MILTON KEYNES AND SOUTH MDLANDS DEVELOPMENT**

The Forum received the report of the Senior Archaeological Officer advising the Forum of proposals for significant development in the Milton Keynes/South Midlands areas, and the possible implications for the historic environment.

The Officer commented that the proposals indicated plans for major development in Milton Keynes, which could extend into the Aylesbury Vale area. The Forum was informed that the Study covered the period of time until 2030, and that consultants were currently testing the proposals. It was thought that an assessment report would be submitted in April, which would inform a partial review of RPG9. It was noted that treatment of the historic environment in the original document was weak, with only designated sites being given any consideration. A statement had been prepared jointly by English Heritage and the Local Authority Archaeological Officers for

Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire and submitted to SEERA in February 2003, outlining the key issues for the Historic Environment. The Officer commented that Milton Keynes had previously managed to encompass some aspects of its historical environment into its development, viewing this as a positive enhancement but it was further noted that developers in Milton Keynes had been helped by the fact that they were managed by one authority that was able to synergise pertinent information.

It was noted that representatives from Planning and Transportation had lobbied the Minister for a public consultation, and the Forum agreed that a copy of the letter outlining this request should be submitted to the consultants.

When considering the recommendations contained in the report, Forum Members agreed that a further one should be added to send a letter to English Heritage containing the concerns of the Forum.

## **RESOLVED**

### **That the Forum:**

- a) **ENDORSED** the “Key issues for the Historic Environment” identified by the joint English Heritage/Local Government Archaeological Officers working party regarding the potential implications for the historic environment of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Study.
- b) **AGREED** the priorities for action as outlined in paragraph 11 namely –
  - i. **The need to recognise Historic Landscape Characterisation.**
  - ii. **The need to identify and promote enhancements to the historic environment.**
  - iii. **The need to recognise and protect unscheduled archaeological sites as well as scheduled ancient monuments.**
  - iv. **The need to protect historic villages and communities from damaging development and loss of historic character.**
- c) **REQUESTED** the Chairman to write to the Cabinet Member for Planned Development at Aylesbury Vale District Council, for Planning and Transportation at Buckinghamshire County Council and Milton Keynes Council and to Buckinghamshire’s representative on the SEERA Regional Planning Committee detailing the issues raised in the paper.
- d) **AUTHORISED** the establishment of a working party comprising representatives from Aylesbury Vale District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, Milton Keynes Council and English Heritage to formulate a response to proposed revisions to RPG9 on behalf of the Forum. In the event that the working party consider that a formal objection should be lodged by the Forum itself then an Extraordinary Meeting of the Forum is to be convened to consider the proposal.

- e) **AGREED that the Forum would write to English Heritage regarding their concerns over the proposals.**

## **11 THE PUBLICATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORTS**

The Forum received a report of the Bucks Senior Archaeological Officer and Milton Keynes' Archaeological Officer concerning the publication of archaeological reports. The paper contained a policy framework for dealing with publication issues concerning the historic environment. The Officer informed Members that the main problem regarding publication was that archaeological contractors sometimes failed to produce reports within required timescales or to an appropriate standard.

A Member of the Forum expressed his gratitude to the Officers for producing such a comprehensive and informative report. The Member expressed his concern over the reporting of Watching Briefs and Evaluations, which were summarised in the form of a 'note' but which often required a more thorough record. It was suggested that this could be achieved through the writing of more detailed notes and that the website for the Sites and Monuments Record could contain links to reports that were in the public domain.

Forum Members expressed concern regarding the closure of the Museum Field Unit, which had resulted in only one Officer being left to clear outstanding reports. Members requested that County Council Members on the Forum give due consideration to this lack of resources, as responsibility for this now fell within the County Council remit. It was agreed to add an additional recommendation to this effect.

### **RESOLVED**

**That The Forum:**

- a) **ENDORSED the general approach to publication outlined in this paper and**
- b) **ENDORSED the following recommended actions:**
  - i) **Local planning authorities are supported in taking formal enforcement action as a last resort to secure publication.**
  - ii) **Non-contributors to the archaeological summaries in *South Midlands Archaeology* and *Records of Buckinghamshire* be reminded of their responsibilities to the local archaeological community and urged to submit reports in future.**
  - iii) **The responsible archaeological officer and local planning authority take the site-specific actions outlined in appendix B.**
  - iv) **If individual IFA Registered Archaeological Organisations consistently fail without good cause to progress publication within reasonable timescales the matter will be referred to the Institute of Field Archaeologists.**
  - v) **The HEF consider whether it wishes to receive a further report on provision for building recording and, if so, the mechanism for producing such a report.**

- vi) **The County Council devise ways of overcoming its own publication backlog**
- c) **INSTRUCTED the Secretary to write on behalf of the Forum to all archaeological contractors operating in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes to advise them of the concerns raised in this paper and of the recommended actions. A copy of this letter to be sent to all local planning authorities.**

## **12 THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE MONUMENT CONSERVATION PROJECT**

The Forum received a report of the Senior Archaeological Officer advising them of the development of a Buckinghamshire Monument Conservation Project aimed at measuring and minimising the risk of damage to important archaeological monuments from non-development related resources.

Members requested that a summary of the aims and targets relating to the project be included in the minutes as follows:

Aims:

- a) To identify and quantify significant threats to archaeological monuments in Buckinghamshire
- b) To develop and implement a prioritised Monuments at Risk Action Plan.
- c) To seek to improve public access to monuments and interpretation of sites which can be visited.

Targets:

- a) Complete a preliminary "Monuments at risk" register covering the 139 scheduled ancient monuments within new Bucks. This will identify overall risk and, where appropriate, threat factors. The intention is to base the register wherever possible on site visits made by professional archaeologists (normally from the CAS, English Heritage or National Trust) within the past five years - this could then be rolled forward in a process of "quinquennial review". Where access cannot be obtained then aerial photography may have to be utilised as a primary source.
- b) Continue to improve information for farmers, landowners and agencies such as DEFRA and the Forestry Commission.
- c) Establish a Monument Management Project with c £10k funding per annum from English Heritage. Discussions have been opened with English Heritage on a funding arrangement based on similar projects in operation in other counties.
- d) Prepare a draft "Monuments at Risk Action Plan" for the Bucks HEF analysing the major threats to archaeological monuments in the county and proposing prioritised strategies to address them.



**RESOLVED**

**That the Forum:**

**SUPPORTED the aims and continued development of the Buckinghamshire Monument Conservation Project.**

**APPROVED the targets for the financial year 2003/4 specified in paragraph 8 of the report.**

**13 EMERGENCY ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING FUND**

The Forum received the report of the Senior Archaeological Officer reviewing the operation of the emergency recording fund.

Members noted that if all the invoices were paid there would be a balance of £3,450. Currently the balance was £1,950. No calls had been made on the fund in the period covered by the report, and it was further noted that Chiltern District Council had declined to contribute to the fund.

**RESOLVED:**

**The Forum:**

- a) **NOTED the current status of the fund and DECIDED to seek contributions to the fund for the financial year 2003/4.**
- b) **DECIDED to delay considering whether the fund can be used in Chiltern District.**

**14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

A Member reported that the Nestle Factory was due to be demolished. The Member expressed concern regarding this as the building was thought to be of economic and social value. The Aylesbury Society had put the factory forward for listing but were not hopeful that it would be included as the building had undergone significant changes. It was suggested that a condition be put on the building that would require that its existence be recorded.

**15 DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS**

Members agreed a new date for the next meeting of the Forum:

**24 September 2003 2.30pm in Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury.**

**MRS C ASTON  
CHAIRMAN**