



# Buckinghamshire County Council

## Minutes *Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum*

### AGENDA ITEM: 4

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17 MARCH 2004 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 2.35PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.45PM.**

### MEMBERS PRESENT

#### Members

Mrs C M Aston (Chairman)  
Mr C Cashman  
Mr R Evans  
Mr M Farley  
Cllr Sir John Horsbrugh-Porter  
Mrs A Jones  
Mr G Marshall  
Mr B Thorn

#### Organisation

Buckinghamshire County Council  
Aylesbury Vale District Council  
Oxford Diocese  
Bucks Archaeological Society  
Chiltern District Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
National Trust  
Bucks County Museum

#### Officers

Mr M Andrew  
Mr B Giggins  
Mr S Kidd  
Mr A Kirkham  
Mr D Radford  
Mrs C Street  
Mr M Woods

#### Organisation

Wycombe District Council  
Milton Keynes Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
Aylesbury Vale District Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies for absence were received from Mr C Welch (English Heritage).

### 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 24 September 2003, copies of which had been circulated previously, were agreed.

## **5 MATTERS ARISING**

### **Item 9 - Bucks Local Authority Conservation Provision**

There was still considerable concern regarding the level of Conservation Officer provision in Aylesbury Vale District Council. Although the Conservation Area Officer was not now leaving the Authority, the level of provision was still below the national average. Hours of work belonging to Arts Officers were being included as conservation hours distorting the actual amount of time being spent on conservation work.

It was suggested that the Senior Archaeological Officer consult with representatives from the Oxford Diocese and the Bucks Archaeological Society regarding writing a letter to Aylesbury Vale District Council to express concerns about the poor level of provision.

### **Item 10 - Milton Keynes Archaeological Officer's Report**

English Partnerships had been written to for a second time concerning the Milton Keynes Hoard. No reply had been received. It was difficult to see how this could be progressed. The Senior Archaeological Officer advised that he would be writing to English Partnerships about the planned growth and could refer to the Hoard in the same letter.

### **Item 13 - National Trust Report**

No response had been received to the Forum's request that publishing take place concerning the Ashridge Project. The officer assigned to work on Stowe House had finished and it was thought that the nearest the Forum could expect in terms of publication would be the writing up of the project. The representative from the National Trust advised that problems had been experienced implementing the protocol referred to at Stowe House. It was noted that significant funding had been spent on surveying the survival of the Roman fields system, the results of which should be published. It was suggested that this form part of the 'History of Buckinghamshire' document.

The Senior Archaeological Officer informed members that a recent case had led him to investigate the application of listed building controls to below ground structures. According to the latest advice, buried structures of historic value within the curtilage of a listed building could be considered to be listed.

## **6 HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION**

The Senior Archaeological Officer gave a presentation on progress with the Historic Landscape Characterisation Project. It was noted that the national programme was approximately half way through. Rapid progress had been made with the local project with most of Aylesbury Vale and Milton Keynes being completed.

A member queried whether work on coaxial field systems such as that surveyed at Bradenham could be portrayed. The Senior Archaeologist replied that the survey would be one way of approaching the examination of the ebb and flow of woodland in the project, adding that he was aware that studies existed in this area that he would be keen to refer to these as part of the proposed Chiltern project, if possible.

A member queried if the national aerial mapping survey carried out by English Heritage could be included as part of the project. The Senior Archaeological Officer replied that although this was not part of HLC he would be exploring this as a separate project in the future.

## **RESOLVED**

- a) **The Forum noted progress with the Buckinghamshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Project and AGREED to DEFER consideration of a formal report to members in March 2005.**
- b) **SUPPORTED the proposed Chiltern Historic Landscape Characterisation Project.**

## **7 MILTON KEYNES AND SOUTH MIDLANDS STRATEGY**

Members received the report of the Senior Archaeological Officer, which advised them of the historic environment response to the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy and forthcoming issues.

Members were informed that the main issue currently was the development of Local Delivery Vehicles (LDVs) for Milton Keynes and Aylesbury. Consultation for the Milton Keynes LDV had been rapid. Proposals were for a limited liability partnership in Aylesbury. It was noted that the south side of Aylesbury was much less constrained historically in terms of any future development.

The Senior Archaeological Officer advised that the findings of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Study were not in dispute but there were concerns about the methodology, and about developments post 2016. Members were informed that the report prepared by the County Archaeological Service would be put on the website and had been submitted to the Public Examination. Discussions regarding the strategy would be debated in Buckinghamshire before Easter.

The Chairman expressed concern that people were not being kept informed of the process regarding the proposals, which seemed to be moving very fast. It was thought that responses to the Study must be cohesive and that isolated reports should be avoided. The representative from Milton Keynes informed members that he was endeavouring to get English Partnerships to carry out archaeological work at an earlier stage. He was proposing to arrange a meeting with English Heritage to discuss this and to try to persuade them to carry out Parish-wide evaluations, which would hopefully avoid the submission of individual reports.

Members thought that the new Milton Keynes Partnership Committee should be lobbied as per recommendation 'c' in the Senior Archaeological Officer's report but it was not presently clear whom the most appropriate person would be to approach, as membership of the Committee had not been clarified. It was noted that the new Committee would have planning powers in determining applications and it was therefore suggested that its members be asked to nominate an 'Environment Champion', whose remit would include the historic environment, to report back to the Forum. It was thought that overall responsibility for land use would remain with Milton Keynes Council.

## **RESOLVED**

### **The Forum:**

- a) **NOTED the contents of the report and implications of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy for the historic environment of Buckinghamshire.**
- b) **ENDORSED and SUPPORTED the efforts of Aylesbury Vale District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council and Milton Keynes Council to highlight historic environment issues in their respective responses to the Enquiry Panel and in the establishment of Local Delivery Vehicles.**
- c) **AGREED to lobby the new Milton Keynes Partnership Committee directly to ensure proper provision for the historic environment and offering the Committee voting membership of the Forum.**

## **8. BUCKINGHAMSHIRE MONUMENT CONSERVATION PROJECT**

Members received the report of the Senior Archaeological Officer which advised them of the development of the Buckinghamshire Monument Conservation Project which aimed to measure and minimise the risk of damage to important archaeological monuments from non-development related sources.

A member asked if the four sites that it was intended to focus on in the first two years would fit into the 'Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past' project. He was informed that only two of the sites could be included as the remaining two were not easily accessible to the public. It was noted that access was a significant criteria. It was thought that the site at Desborough Castle had the highest potential for involving the local community.

A member expressed surprise at the lack of available information about the monuments, particularly as English Heritage had appointed wardens that were responsible for monitoring the monuments. It was noted that the pace of scheduling was very slow. The Field Monument Warden had not been visiting all the monuments on a regular basis but members commented that this could be a resource issue. Members were informed that the Countryside Stewardships Monument Grant was not just for scheduled monuments but could also apply to those of schedulable quality.

Members agreed that it would be prudent to write to English Heritage at a senior level to express support for enhancing their functions concerning monument conservation.

## **RESOLVED**

### **The Forum:**

- a) **NOTED progress on the targets identified in March 2003 for the financial year 2003/4.**
- b) **APPROVED the targets for 2004/5 specified in paragraph 6.**
- c) **CONSIDERED and AGREED criteria for allocating monument conservation grant aid set out in paragraph 7.**

## **9 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM: FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Members received a report of the Senior Archaeological Officer suggesting future directions for the Forum's activities, particularly to establish wider recognition for the Forum as providing a strategic overview on historic environment policy in Buckinghamshire. The officer advised that the Forum should strive to achieve a balance between archaeological matters and other areas of the historic environment such as conservation. Raising the profile of the Forum could be achieved through initiatives such as the development of a countywide strategy, the revision of the Archaeological Management Plan and the restructuring of the agenda for meetings of the Forum. It might also be possible to promote the historic environment through the use of 'champions'.

During discussion of the report a member suggested that the Chairman of the proposed working group should be the Chairman of the Forum. Members were in support of the proposals stressing that it was important to engage local members with their environment. It was felt that many members were interested in the proposed plans for development and the Forum could be advertised as way of regulating these. It was further suggested that seminars held for members in the Districts could be a way of raising awareness of local items of historic interest. It was suggested that the Forum should first approach Aylesbury Vale District Council regarding the local seminars, as they usually had a turnout of around 50%. Other interested parties could be invited.

Members agreed on the usefulness of producing a leaflet or flyer on the subject of historic environment conservation in Buckinghamshire. The flyer would be written in the name of the Forum with costings split amongst the partners.

### **RESOLVED**

#### **The Forum:**

- a) **AGREED to write to the responsible Portfolio Holder in each local authority (recommendation 'a' in the report) seeking support for promoting the work of the Bucks Historic Environment Forum through a leaflet and awareness raising events for members.**
- b) **AGREED to DEFER the proposal for an officer working party to develop a framework for an Historic Environment Strategy.**

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

Members received the report of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Officer informing them of current archaeological matters in Milton Keynes. A list of fieldwork projects (Events) that had been undertaken in the Milton Keynes area between July and December 2003 was attached to the report.

The officer informed members that the Local Plan Inquiry for Milton Keynes was to finish the next day. Developers were buying land well in advance of planning consent being obtained.

Members were informed that Michael Ryan, the Head of Design and Conservation at Milton Keynes, was retiring after 25 years of service on 31 March 2004. Members commented on the considerable knowledge of Mr

Ryan, who would be greatly missed. The officer advised that staff within Design and Conservation would be reduced to three from 1 April, and that it was likely he would need to focus more on building matters as the Design and Conservation Section was being transferred into the Specialist Planning Services Section. It was thought that Mr Ryan would be replaced but various options were being explored.

The officer informed members of a significant and eye-catching building dating from 19thC in the “New Landsdown” development area that had probably originally been a hunting lodge. The staircase and doorway dated back from around 1730 and could have originated from Whaddon Hall. Attempts were being made to get the building listed. The initiative was evidence of good partnership working between conservationists and archaeologists.

Members noted that the information concerning Events in Milton Keynes would be posted on the website.

## **RESOLVED**

**The Forum NOTED the report.**

### **11 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER’S REPORT**

Members received the report of the Senior Archaeological Officer advising them of the work of the County Archaeological Service since the last meeting of the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum.

The officer brought member’s attention to the main points of his report. Regarding item 8, Publication Update, members confirmed that they had also experienced communication problems with Network Archaeology, who had not fulfilled their publication obligations. The Senior Archaeological Officer affirmed his intention to complain to the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) about Network Archaeology, as it was one of their Registered Archaeological Organisations. However, he added that he had just discovered that Network Archaeology had not renewed their IFA registration so it was possible that his letter would sit on file for the future.

Members referred to appendix a, particularly welcoming the proposals for the restoration of Brill Windmill.

## **RESOLVED**

**The Forum:**

- a) NOTED the Service’s Outputs and Performance Indicators and the generally satisfactory performance in relation to the latter. AGREED the revised performance indicator for planning appeals.**
- b) NOTED progress with Strategic and Conservation Projects.**
- c) NOTED recent development-related archaeological casework in the county and SUPPORTED the action of Aylesbury Vale District Council in issuing an Article 4 Direction to protect medieval open fields at Ludgershall.**

- d) **NOTED progress on addressing the publication backlog and APPROVED the proposals to a) obtain legal advice on planning enforcement and b) explore referral of Network Archaeology to the IFA for non-publication.**

## **12 COUNTY MUSEUM REPORT**

Members received a report from the Keeper of Archaeology concerning the County Museum.

The officer highlighted the number of site archives that had been notified to the museum, which had increased from 28 to 57 when compared to the same period last year.

Members were informed of the concerns of County Museum staff regarding funding to purchase treasures. The Victoria and Albert Purchase Grant Fund and the new Headley Trust for Treasure scheme had fortunately been able to provide some financial assistance.

The bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Unlocking Aylesbury's Past project had failed and would not be pursued in the next financial year.

The officer was pleased to report that the County Museum had been loaned Bronze Age gold torcs, found in Milton Keynes in 2000, from the British Museum.

## **13 NATIONAL TRUST REPORT**

Members received a report from the National Trust on recent developments.

The officer advised that an archaeological brief was being prepared concerning the large project at Cliveden Hospital. There were concerns about the state of New Inn Farm, which was falling into disrepair. It was noted that negotiations for purchase of the farm were ongoing.

The officer reported on exciting dating evidence at Pitstone Windmill, which could push the date of the building back considerably to possibly the 16thC. Extensive evidence of shoe making in the form of shoemaker's waste had been found at a house on the West Wycombe Park site, under floorboards. Members commented on the need to publicise these sorts of interesting finds.

## **14 CONSERVATION OFFICERS' REPORTS**

Members received a report from the Conservation Officer for Wycombe District Council concerning conservation matters in that area.

Members discussed the report, noting that local listing of buildings was a material consideration in planning proposals, but a decision could still be made to demolish the buildings. Local listing of buildings was important in that it placed a moral onus on the owners.

Negotiations were ongoing concerning the ownership of Bledlow Homes but there was determination on behalf of the County Council that the situation would be resolved soon.

**15 EMERGENCY RECORDING FUND**

Members received the report of the Senior Archaeological Officer and Treasurer reviewing the operation of the emergency recording fund.

**RESOLVED**

**The Forum:**

- a) **NOTED the current status of the fund.**

**16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Members were informed that a TimeTeam programme was being filmed which would include excavation work carried out at Chenies Manor. Members looked forward to watching the programme in due course.

**16 DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS**

Wednesday 22 September 2004, 2.30pm, Mezzanine Room 2, County Hall  
Wednesday 23 March 2005, 2.30pm, Mezzanine Room 2, County Hall

**MRS C ASTON  
CHAIRMAN**