



Buckinghamshire County Council

Minutes

Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum

Agenda Item: 3

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 29 MARCH 2006 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 3, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 2.30PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.02PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Members

Mr C Cashman
Mr R Evans
Mr M Farley
Sir J Horsburgh-Porter
Mr R Pushman
Mr F Robinson

Organisation

Aylesbury Vale District Council
Diocese of Oxford
Bucks Archaeological Society
Chiltern District Council
Buckinghamshire County Council
Buckinghamshire County Council

Officers

Mr N Crank
Mrs K Davies
Ms A Davies
Mr S Kidd
Mr G Marshall
Mrs C Street
Mr S Pope
Mr B Thorn
Ms J Wise
Mr C Welch

Organisation

Milton Keynes Council
English Heritage
Aylesbury Vale District Council
Buckinghamshire County Council
National Trust
Buckinghamshire County Council
Buckinghamshire County Council
Buckinghamshire County Museum
Buckinghamshire County Council
English Heritage

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Mr M Andrew (Wycombe District Council), and Mr B Giggins (Milton Keynes Council). Members noted that Mr N Crank was replacing Mr B Giggins for the duration of the meeting.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared personal interests:

Mr M Farley as a Consultant Archaeologist,
Mr F Robinson as the owner of a Grade II listed house, a life member of the National Trust, a trustee of Buckinghamshire Historic Churches and Buckinghamshire Historic Buildings, and as a member of NADFAS (National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies),
Mr C Cashman as a member of the National Trust,

Mr R Pushman as a member of the National Trust, a member of the Chilterns Conservation Board, and as a District Council member on Development Control Committee

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment held on 21 September 2005, copies of which had been circulated previously, were agreed as a correct record.

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Item - 5 Matters Arising

The guidance on Modern Civic, Industrial and Military Complexes had been issued to the Planning Authorities in January.

Item - 6 Buckinghamshire Archaeological Management Plan 2005 - 2007

The Archaeological Management Plan was complete and awaiting formal approval. A copy can be accessed as an appendix to these minutes via the following link:
http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/cabinet_papers/other_county_archaeological/index.stm

Item - 7 Heritage Protection Review

The White Paper on the Heritage Protection Review was due July 2006. The next meeting of the Bucks Historic Environment Forum would be devoted to this topic. It was agreed that Paul Stamper from English Heritage should be invited back to present his view.

5 HERITAGE AND ROUTEWAYS

Members received a report from the Senior Archaeological Officer and a presentation from Shaun Pope, Chilterns AONB Transport Officer, on the Environmental Guidelines for Management of Roads in the Chilterns. A copy of the presentation can be accessed as an appendix to these minutes via the following link:
http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/cabinet_papers/other_county_archaeological/index.stm

Shaun advised that the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the recent review of the Local Transport Plan had raised a number of issues regarding new projects, smaller scale works and ongoing maintenance of the highways network, which could impact on the historic environment.

A member asked whose responsibility it was to maintain milestones. The officer replied that he thought these were highway property and would encourage that they be maintained via the Area Offices. Some of the milestones were thought to be listed buildings. A schedule of these was included in the Sites and Monument Record (SMR).

A member commented on the current Speed Limit Review being conducted by the County Council, which it was thought would be concluded by 2008. The member highlighted that this was a complex piece of work having himself been involved in one of the area working groups. It was hoped that the Speed Limit Review would have a positive impact on the environment. It was noted that changes brought about by the initiative would be reviewed after one year.

A member asked if transport issues on the built environment would be dealt with sensitively within conservation areas. The officer advised that this time the Local Transport Plan had focussed on 24 community areas, alongside this was work on Local Development Plans which, combined, should provide a more local, flexible focus.

A member asked who had responsibility for maintaining abandoned routes. The officer advised that if these were classed as highways then the responsibility would lie with Transportation. In response to a further query from a member, it was confirmed that normally the County had responsibility for mowing verges when they were owned by the County Council as part of the highway. Attempts were being made to make changes to mowing times, to make them more environmentally acceptable.

The officer was asked what progress had been made with the Quiet Lanes Initiative, which had been considered over a period of years. The officer advised that this had originally been included in the Transport Act 2000 and had undergone two rounds of consultation through the Department of Transport. Potential quiet lanes had been identified in Buckinghamshire but government had issued no statutory guidance on this matter, and therefore no further progress had been made.

A member expressed concern regarding wide verges in the Chilterns being used as informal parking areas. The officer reported that there were relatively few occurrences of this happening although there had been occasions where verges had been widened 'by stealth', where edges of the highway were overrun and damaged by traffic and later repaired with asphalt. Many of the verges were quite difficult to mount with a standard car. At one location bollards made from recycled rubber had been used as a deterrent with some success.

The Senior Archaeological Officer commented on the possibility of extending the Guidelines for Roads to cover matters such as street furniture. It was requested that any further feedback on the Guidelines be emailed to the Chilterns AONB Transport Officer and copied to the Senior Archaeological Officer, to take forward.

RESOLVED

The Forum:

- a) **COMMENTED on the matters raised in the presentation**
- b) **SUPPORTED the review of procedures for evaluating major schemes**
- c) **SUPPORTED the review and extension of the Environmental Guidelines for the Management of Roads in the Chilterns.**

6 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SCOPING REPORT

Members received a report of the Sites and Monuments Record Officer reporting on progress in assessing the costs and other implications of the Heritage Protection Review, and of meeting potential national benchmarks for Historic Environment Records. The Sites and Monuments Record Officer reminded members that they had requested a scoping paper on the resource implications at the last meeting of the Forum.

The officer requested member's comments for consideration in the final report. Members. So far, data gathering had been carried out, and meetings had taken place with District Council officers to discuss the implications of the Review and the

expansion of the SMR. Positive efforts had been made to avoid duplication of effort and maximise savings made through joint efforts. The officer had also discussed recording buildings that were on the National Monuments Record, on to the SMR. It was hoped that a report would be circulated to the District Councils in June, which would include costings and options for data sharing.

Members welcomed the officer's encouraging report. A member asked if the District Councils were compiling local lists. The officer advised that Wycombe District Council had developed one. She had discussed working towards a data set with the District Councils to share information on local lists, but thought that it might be prudent to wait until the White Paper was published before taking this any further.

There was concern that important but unlisted buildings might get over-looked. A member suggested that prime sources of information could be obtained from local groups, who might be able to give valuable input on important structures. The officer reported the District Councils were happy for listed and unlisted buildings to be included on the SMR.

The Senior Archaeological Officer suggested that, regarding Building Recording Standards, it would be useful to have a model for recording briefs, to include a set format and guidance. It was thought that Milton Keynes Council might be able to assist with this as they already carried out building recording. Further information regarding recording could be obtained from the National Trust.

RESOLVED

The Forum:

- a) **NOTED the progress report**
- b) **COMMENTED on matters which ought to be considered in the final report.**

7 UNLOCKING BUCKINGHAMSHIRE'S PAST

Members received a report of the Sites and Monuments Record Officer regarding the Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past Project.

Members were informed that the project was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund with match funding from a number of other agencies. The aim of the project was to put the SMR online, with additional educational content. The officer advised that the database was running online with records for Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe Districts, but only on the Consultant's server. It was hoped that the database would be live on the County Council's website within the next month. The officer advised that work was currently taking place on records for the Chiltern area, with South Bucks to follow.

Work was progressing well with the education modules; three had been completed and piloted in schools. Two further modules would be piloted in the Autumn. The graphics consultants had produced a number of impressive 3D reconstructions of key sites, which were available at the meeting for members to view. It was hoped that future work on the modules would include virtual reality walk throughs.

RESOLVED

The Forum NOTED the report.

8 HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION PROGRESS REPORT

Members received the report of the Senior Archaeological Officer on progress with Historic Landscape Characterisation and future plans.

Members were informed that a consultation draft report had been sent out and feedback received. The report would be finalised within the next few months.

Members were referred to maps showing the Historic Landscape Characterisation which were displayed at the meeting. Members were advised of a number of 'spin-off' projects that were underway as a result of the project, which were outlined in detail in the report.

RESOLVED

The Forum NOTED the development of Historic Landscape Characterisation.

9 EMERGENCY RECORDING FUND

Members received the report of the Senior Archaeological Officer reviewing the operation of the Emergency Recording Fund.

Members were reminded that a contribution of £1500 had been paid to the National Trust for recording New Inn Farm, Stowe. No further calls on the Fund had been made. The balance of the fund was £4450 and it had been previously agreed to maintain a balance of between £2k-£5k. Members were asked to consider the need for contributions for the next financial year. During discussion concern was expressed that just one call on the Fund could radically change the balance and that therefore contributions should continue to be made.

RESOLVED

The Forum NOTED the current status of the Fund and AGREED that contributions for the next financial year should be made.

The following reports were circulated for information.

10 MILTON KEYNES ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER'S REPORT

Members received the report of the Archaeological Officer, Design and Conservation, Milton Keynes Council.

Members discussed the report and were informed by the officer of stresses in the current staffing situation as the Team Leader Design and Conservation was to leave in two months time and another member of staff was long-term sick.

The Forum NOTED the report.

11 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER'S REPORT

Members received the report of the Senior Archaeological Officer, which advised of the work of the County Archaeological Service since the last meeting of the Forum.

The Senior Archaeological Officer paid tribute to the sterling work of Mike Farley, Consultant Archaeologist regarding the survey of Rushbed Woods site, which had accidentally been omitted from the report.

The officer referred to the London Crossrail Scheme, which would involve the electrification of The Great Western Railway to Maidenhead, necessitating the demolition of nine road over-bridges built by Brunel, two of which were in Bucks. Parts of the Great Western Railway were on the UK's proposed list of World Heritage Sites. Four of the bridges (including Dog Kennel Bridge in Bucks) were being considered for listing. Although the County Council had lodged an objection to the demolition of two of the bridges, the full cost of petitioning was £40k and therefore it was unlikely that the Authority would be able to pursue this course of action. Local MPs had been written to on the subject and it was agreed that the Forum would do the same.

A member referred to Appendix B and asked if any further progress could be made with Bierton Church Farm. The officer advised that he did not think any further action could be taken, despite years of discussion with AVDC Planners concerning enforcement action.

It was noted that the draft report submitted to Records of Bucks concerning Chesham, Sainsbury's sites was inadequate and would have to be resubmitted. A member referred to the Penn, Rose Cottage site, asking who would take enforcement action now that the Developer had gone into liquidation. The officer replied that this notification had only just been received and legal advice would need to be sought. Mike Farley suggested that in future, the Forum might want to consider allocating some of the Emergency Recording Fund monies to publishing sites such as these.

Regarding the Taplow Court site, a member commented that that this had been ongoing for a number of years and queried when English Heritage were likely to facilitate completion. He was informed that completion was likely to take place in the next few months. English Heritage had also given extra money for some geophysics work to be carried out.

RESOLVED

The Forum NOTED:

- a) **The Service's Performance Indicators and contribution to national indicators BV 205 and 219**
- b) **Progress with strategic projects**
- c) **Recent development-related archaeological casework in the County and SUPPORTED the County Council in their efforts to protect the industrial heritage of the Great Western Railway by writing to the local MP**
- c) **Progress in securing publication of archaeological reports.**

12 COUNTY MUSEUM REPORT

Members received the report of the Keeper of Archaeology and Finds Liaison Officer, updating them on the work of the County Museum.

Members were informed that the Finds Liaison Officer had produced leaflets containing information for Metal Detectors. A member asked if finds by metal detectors at the Weedon Hill site were illicit. A survey had been organised by the FLO in collaboration with Wessex Archaeology. The officer agreed there was evidence of other metal detecting on the site but no evidence as to the finds, nor was it clear if consent had been given by the landowner. The officer added that Contractors needed to be made aware of the Code of Practice concerning finds on sites.

RESOLVED

The Forum NOTED the report.

13 NATIONAL TRUST REPORT

Members received the report of the National Trust Officer on national projects.

The officer referred to the work being carried out at New Inn, where several interesting tiles had been discovered, one included a poem. It was planned that current access to Stowe gardens would be moved to the site of New Inn, where visitors would arrive and gain entry to the gardens. As New Inn was situated half a mile from Stowe gardens, a transport system might be required. Recording work was ongoing and it was hoped a report would be completed in July, which would feed into the Conservation Plan. The New Inn building might be redeveloped as an inn. The nearby quarry had been purchased for car parking, and an additional strip of land might also be used for the same purpose.

RESOLVED

The Forum NOTED the report.

14 CONSERVATION OFFICERS' REPORTS

Anne Davies (Aylesbury Vale District Council) reported that the Conservation Service continued to be very busy. There was a significant application for funding from Aylesbury Vale for a Team Member to work on conservation area proposals. The post would be advertised shortly. The officer advised that Julia Smith would be permanent as from the beginning of April.

The Historic Buildings Officer would be starting a survey of historic buildings in April. This piece of work had arisen from growing awareness of the number of buildings at risk.

Work at New Inn was progressing and the appraisals of the conservation areas at the villages of Whaddon, Nash and Newton Longville had commenced.

A member commented on the completion of 12 Townsend at Haddenham, congratulating the officer on this excellent piece of work.

The Forum NOTED the reports.

15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A member referred to a proposal that had been supported at a previous meeting of the Forum, to raise the profile of the Historic Environment with Councillors by hosting

a number of evening sessions at the District Councils. It had been decided to run the first of these at Aylesbury Vale. AVDC had been written to about this some time ago, but unfortunately the offer had not been taken up. It was agreed that a further letter should be sent to AVDC.

Mike Farley expressed concern about the future of the Quarrendon site, which it had been hoped would be acquired as Country Park. He was advised that a letter to English Heritage on this subject had been sent and would be pursued.

16 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 20 September 2006, 2.30pm, Mezzanine Room 3, County Hall, Aylesbury

Please note the following dates for 2007:

Wednesday 28 March 2007, 2.30pm, Mezzanine Room 1

Wednesday 19 September 2007, 2.30pm, Mezzanine Room 1

CHAIRMAN