



Buckinghamshire County Council

Minutes

Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2006 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 3, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 2.35PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.00PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Members

Mr R Evans
Mr M Farley
Sir J Horsburgh-Porter
Mr R Pushman (Chairman)
Mr F Robinson

Organisation

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

Officers

Mrs K Biddulph
Mr N Crank
Mr S Kidd
Mrs C Street
Mr B Thorn
Ms J Wise
Mr M Woods

Organisation

Buckinghamshire County Council
Milton Keynes Council
Buckinghamshire County Council
Buckinghamshire County Council
Buckinghamshire County Museum
Buckinghamshire County Council
Buckinghamshire County Council

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Mr C Cashman (Aylesbury Vale District Council), Mrs A Davies (Aylesbury Vale District Council), Mr B Giggins (Milton Keynes Council), Mr G Marshall (National Trust), Mr H McCarthy (Wycombe District Council) and Mr C Welch (English Heritage).

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 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 29 March 2006, copies of which had been circulated previously, were agreed as a correct record.

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Item - 5 Heritage and Routeways

Little progress had been made due to workload pressures.

Item 15 - Any Other Business - Future of the Quarrendon Site

The Chairman advised that a Heritage Open Day had taken place recently at Quarrendon. The even had been very successful and approximately 500 people had attended. The Chairman advised of proposals to create a steering group to consider the future of the site. He hoped the County Council would coordinate the group and that it would have its first meeting before Christmas. Mike Farley advised that Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society (BAS) would welcome this proposal, and asked the Senior Archaeological Officer to forward him a list of representatives in due course.

5 HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION REPORT LAUNCH

Members received a verbal report from the Senior Archaeological Officer on the launch of the Historic Landscape Characterisation Report. He circulated a mock-up of the report, which was supported by a massive amount of data on the website. The aim of the report was to raise awareness of the historic landscape. The Officer commented that the project had already been put to a number of practical uses.

A member asked if the data would be reviewed. The Officer advised that there would be a need to update the information probably within the next four years, however English Heritage, who were funding the initiative, were currently grappling with rolling the project out across the country. Reviewing the data would assist in assessing levels of change i.e. loss of downland and changes to biodiversity.

The Officer informed members that in addition to Historic Landscape Characterisation, colleagues were undertaking an integrated habitat study.

The Chairman paid tribute to the hard work of the Officer David Green, who had taken the lead on the project.

6 CROSSRAIL AND THE GREAT WESTERN WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Members received the report of the Senior Archaeological Officer updating the Forum on negotiations relating to Brunel bridges affected by the London Crossrail scheme.

The Officer advised that complex negotiations had been going on for over a year regarding the electrification of part of the Great Western Railway, and proposals to destroy a number of Brunel bridges. At one point English Heritage had joined the County Council in objecting to the proposals and had indicated that they would support a heritage objection through a parliamentary petition. However, the Officer was subsequently informed that English Heritage and Crossrail had reached an agreement to save four of the bridges, including Thorney Lane, but not Dog Kennel. The decision had been cost based but Crossrail would not transfer cost savings from

Thorney Lane to help retain Dog Kennel Bridge. The County Council was considering reading a statement to the House of Lords Committee to highlight the issues.

In parallel to this, English Heritage was consulting on proposals for designation of selected parts of the Great Western Railway as a World Heritage Site. However, the Officer advised that many of the sections included under the proposals were already protected and it was vital that the Great Western Railway was treated as a whole. Therefore, a letter had been drafted requesting the designation of a wider area. The letter, which had been circulated to Forum members, had been supported by the Historic Buildings Trust at a recent meeting. A member suggested that the Officer contact the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), regarding the consultation response.

RESOLVED

The Forum:

- a) **NOTED the current position with regard to Crossrail**
- b) **AGREED the proposed submission to the World Heritage Site.**

7 HERITAGE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Members received a report, which asked them to consider the role of the historic environment in planning for cultural and green infrastructure.

The Officer advised that green infrastructure was based on creating a liveable space for new communities. A brief for had been produced for the County's Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan to raise awareness of the issue and to help inform Local Development Frameworks.

The Chairman informed members that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Community and Environmental Services was also looking at Green Infrastructure in terms of the growth expected in and around Aylesbury. The Group Manager, Countryside and Heritage, advised of the importance of protecting sites and considering what green space people might need in the future, in terms of the health and well-being of the community. He added that technical data needed to be gained to inform the process, and a consultant was to be appointed to oversee this. Work was needed with partners to establish who would be best placed to purchase land for the green infrastructure, bearing in mind that the land would also need to be managed and maintained long term. Possible options included use of floodplain areas that could not be built on.

A member highlighted the need to ensure that there was good public access to green areas and was advised that this was being considered. The Officer was asked if a public consultation would take place regarding plans for the green infrastructure. He confirmed that initially partner organisations would be consulted.

RESOLVED

The Forum:

- a) **CONSIDERED how the historic environment could best contribute to planning for cultural and green infrastructure and how the sector's profile could be raised.**

- b) **COMMENTED on the brief for the County's Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan.**

8 UNLOCKING BUCKINGHAMSHIRE'S PAST

The Forum received a PowerPoint presentation by the Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past Project Officer. A copy of the presentation can be accessed via the following link:

http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/cabinet_papers/other_county_archaeological/index.stm

The Officer reported that the project was in the process of being migrated onto the County Council website. Members were informed that the website would include access to the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), which currently contained over twenty thousand items. Education Packs would be available for teachers to download including guidance notes for teachers, worksheets, and pictures of artefacts, educational games and a time pod with an interactive map. The education packs were being piloted in schools and very good feedback had been received so far. A virtual excavation of Whiteleaf Hill was also being developed for inclusion on the website.

In response to a query from a member, the Officer advised that teachers would be referenced to the database of old photographs of Buckinghamshire, also available on the Bucks website, which had been accumulated over the years by the Museum, Library and Record Office.

The Senior Archaeological Officer advised that discussion were taking place regarding progressing the Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past project. Consideration was being given to sourcing external funding for a Heritage Resources Outreach Officer - a post that would probably sit within the education department of the County Council.

[Post meeting note: the address for the website which is still being tested will be:
<http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/ubp>]

THE FOLLOWING REPORTS WERE TABLED FOR INFORMATION AND QUESTIONS:

9 MILTON KEYNES ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER'S REPORT

Members received the report of the Archaeological Officer, Design and Conservation, updating them on current archaeological matters in Milton Keynes.

RESOLVED

The Forum **NOTED** the report.

10 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER'S REPORT

Members received the report of the Senior Archaeological, advising them on the work of the County Archaeological Service since the last meeting of the Forum.

A member commented that a new application had been received for Penn Rose Cottage; the Senior Archaeological Officer advised that he would pursue this. He reminded members that the developer in this case had gone bankrupt before a report

on the area could be written. The onus for completion of the report was now on the new owner and Enforcement Officers were pursuing this.

The Officer advised that he was investigating the possibility of holding an Open Day at the Weedon Hill site. The event would have to be small due to health and safety regulations. He reported that the place name 'Weedon' meant 'shrine', and there was a structure on the site that might fit into this category.

The Chairman commented on the tremendous workload of the County Archaeological Service and paid tribute to the hard work of Officers.

The Forum NOTED the report.

11 COUNTY MUSEUM REPORTS

Members received County Museum Reports from the Keeper of Archaeology and the Finds Liaison Officer. At the meeting, members were also circulated with a copy of photographs of recent finds.

Members commented that Buckinghamshire had a very good record of purchasing items. However, County museum collecting did not include the area of Milton Keynes. Buckinghamshire looked after the Milton Keynes collection through a contractual Service Level Agreement (SLA). Members queried if agencies such as the Bucks Archaeological Society (BAS) might be able to raise funds to acquire items found in Milton Keynes. They also discussed plans for a Heritage Centre in that area.

The Chairman asked the Senior Archaeological Officer to liaise with officers at Milton Keynes to see if anyone could attend the next meeting of the Forum to report on the matters raised.

RESOLVED

The Forum NOTED the report.

12 CONSERVATION OFFICERS' REPORTS

No reports were received.

13 EMERGENCY RECORDING FUND

Members received the report of the Senior Archaeological Officer, which reviewed the operation of the Emergency Recording Fund.

Members discussed extending the remit of the Fund, as no calls on it had been received for the last six months and there was a balance of £4,850.

It was the consensus of the Forum that the remit should not be changed, as the balance was still relatively small and could be consumed by just one call.

The Forum NOTED the current status of the fund.

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

15 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 28 March 2007, 2.30pm, Mezzanine Room 1
Wednesday 19 September 2007, 2.30pm, Mezzanine Room 1

CHAIRMAN