



Buckinghamshire County Council

Minutes

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28 MARCH 2007 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 2.35 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 3.52 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Members

Mr C Cashman
Mr R Evans
Mr M Farley
Sir J Horsbrugh-Porter
Mr R Pushman (Chairman)
Mr F Robinson OBE

Organisation

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

Officers

Mr M Andrew
Ms F Burden
Ms A Davies
Mr S Downer
Mr M Ellison
Mr J Everitt
Mr B Giggins
Mr M Godwin
Mrs S Gray
Mr S Kidd
Mrs C Street
Mr R Thomas
Mr B Thorn
Mr C Welch
Mr C Welch
Ms J Wise
Mr M Woods

Organisation

Wycombe District Council
Aylesbury Vale District Council
Aylesbury Vale District Council
Milton Keynes Council
Milton Keynes Council
Bucks County Museum
Milton Keynes Council
Bucks County Council
Bucks County Museum
Bucks County Council
Bucks County Council
English Heritage
Bucks County Museum
English Heritage
English Heritage
Bucks County Council
Bucks County Council

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Mr H McCarthy (Wycombe District Council).

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

Mr C Cashman as a member of the National Trust and a member of Aylesbury Vale District Council Development Control Committee.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 20 September 2007, copies of which were circulated previously, were agreed as a correct record.

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising that were not already covered on the agenda.

5 MUSEUM PROVISION IN MILTON KEYNES

Members received a report by Shane Downer, Senior Heritage Officer for Culture, Milton Keynes Council, on museum provision in Milton Keynes.

Shane advised that the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between Milton Keynes Council and Bucks County Council was being re-negotiated to allow both the Councils to purchase items. At the moment, BCC could only bring items to the attention of MK Council.

The officer informed members of two key documents relating to future MK provision, the first was a planning guidance document outlining the museum and archive position for MK, and the second was the newly launched Cultural Strategy, which included the draft Heritage Strategy, currently out for consultation. Members were pleased to hear that resources had been identified from growth funds to increase heritage provision. A working group was to be put forward to review the draft Heritage Strategy.

Mike Farley expressed his support for the officers, and welcomed the proposal to expand the capacity of provision in Milton Keynes.

6 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC TOWNS PROJECT

Members received a report on the Buckinghamshire Historic Towns Project (Extensive Urban Survey) from the County Archaeological Officer. An amendment to the report was noted in that the correct amount of funding being contributed by Milton Keynes Council was £9,664.

The County Archaeological Officer advised that English Heritage were funding a nationwide program of urban survey and the project looking at Buckinghamshire would begin the following week. 30 towns were being assessed and this included historic towns in Milton Keynes.

Members welcomed Roger Thomas, Urban Survey Project Officer, English Heritage, to the meeting. The officer gave a presentation on the Urban Survey which can be accessed via the following link: http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/cabinet_papers/other_county_archaeological/index.stm He stressed the importance of the survey results being useful and encouraged members to contribute to the project.

In response to a query from a member, the officer confirmed that maps representing

different times in history were available for each area. Reports on the various surveys were available online. A member advised that there would need to be linkage with conservation documents. The County Archaeological Officer reported that he was seeking representation on a steering group to ensure that precisely these kinds of issues were looked at.

It was suggested that the following people be members of the Steering Group: Mike Farley, Roger Evans, Martin Andrew, Brian Giggins, Freya Burden and Sarah Gray.

RESOLVED

The Forum:

- a WELCOMED the support from English Heritage**
- b COMMENTED on the project design**
- c IDENTIFIED Members, Officers and others who should be involved in a Steering Group.**

7 HERITAGE PROTECTION WHITE PAPER

Members received the report of the County Archaeological Officer which introduced the DCMS White Paper, 'Heritage Protection for the 21st Century', and outlined some of the issues arising from this. The officer advised that the document had been well received by some of the larger bodies such as English Heritage and it was a good sign that the Government was recognising the importance of the Historic Environment.

Whilst this was a positive context, the officer explained that there were a number of issues that needed to be taken into account. He explained that Local Authorities would play a key role in maintaining historic environment records. This would involve significantly more work than the maintenance of the Sites and Monument Record (SMR) database, for instance there would be a need to align buildings and monuments and clarify what should be included on the register under the category 'special interest'.

Other implications for Local Authorities included:

- Empowering them to manage their own local heritage
- Increased emphasis on local heritage asset registers
- The need for greater cross-disciplinary skills development
- The impact of promised new policy guidance.

A key area of concern was how the changes would be financed. This was not specified in the White Paper. Members were adamant that government should provide proper resources for the work.

A member queried why Government was proposing to expand Certificates of Immunity. The County Archaeological Officer thought this was to give developers greater certainty that they would not get last minute listing and designations. This could have implications if a certificate was issued then a settlement found.

It was agreed that copies of the White Paper and covering report should be sent to the Conservation Officers to obtain their views on the proposals to merge Conservation Area Consent with planning permission.

RESOLVED

- a The Forum **CONSIDERED** the issues raised by the White Paper, matters to be covered in any response and agreed to **APPOINT** a Heritage Protection Working Party to initially formulate a response and as necessary consider and make recommendations on measure which would be required to implement the new system.
- b The Forum **INSTRUCTED** the Secretary and Chairman to respond to DCMS in consultation with the Working Party.
- c Members agreed to **REPORT** the views of the Forum to member organisations and **ENCOURAGE** them to take account of these views in formulating their own responses.
- d **RECOMMENDED** to Buckinghamshire County Council and District Councils that the name of the 'Buckinghamshire Sites and Monuments Record' be formally changed to 'Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record' and that the Heritage Protection Working Party further considers priorities and options for creating and operating a fully-fledged HER.

8 MILTON KEYNES ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER'S REPORT

Members received a report from the Archaeological Officer, Design and Conservation, Milton Keynes Council, which informed the Forum of current archaeological matters in Milton Keynes.

RESOLVED

The Forum **NOTED** the report.

9 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER'S REPORT

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

The officer described the range of work that had been undertaken, particularly in relation to strategic projects such as the Research Framework initiative and Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past – the latter of which was nearly ready to be signed off.

There had been a first meeting of the working party to look at future possibilities for the Quarrendon site. The working party was chaired by Chris Williams, Chief Executive at Bucks County Council.

The officer was pleased to report that the Whiteleaf Project had won the Institute of Field Archaeologists Award at the British Archaeological Awards 2007 for the best archaeological project displaying professional ethics.

The officer referred to the Wycombe Local Development Framework where concerns had been raised because advice provided by the Archaeology Service had not been incorporated into the Core Strategy or Sites Allocation. The officer proposed that the Forum should write to Wycombe District Council stressing its concerns regarding this matter.

RESOLVED

1. The Forum **NOTED**:

- a the resource issues raised by the County Council's Medium Term Plan
- b the Service's Performance Indicators and contribution to national indicators BV 205 and 219
- c progress with strategic projects
- d recent archaeological fieldwork
- e progress in securing publication of archaeological reports.

2. The Forum **AUTHORISED** the Chairman to write to Wycombe District Council to express the Forum's concern at the treatment of the historic environment in their Local Development Framework.

10 COUNTY MUSEUM REPORT

Members received the report of the Keeper of Archaeology and Finds Liaison Officer which detailed work undertaken by the County Museum.

The officer paid tribute to the work of Mike Farley who had offered to write up work on the Prebendal in Aylesbury.

A significant find was that of gold Iron Age coins found at Whaddon Chase, a small number of which were displayed at the meeting.

RESOLVED

Members NOTED the report.

11 NATIONAL TRUST REPORT

No report had been received.

12 CONSERVATION OFFICERS' REPORTS

Milton Keynes

A new Team Leader named Simon Peart had been appointed.

Aylesbury Vale

Conservation designation appraisals were being carried out at Newton Longville, Whaddon, Nash, Western Turville, Haddenham, Long Crendon, Bierton and Wendover.

Wycombe District Council

Nothing to report.

South Bucks District Council

Nothing to report.

Chiltern District Council

Nothing to report.

13 EMERGENCY RECORDING FUND

Members received the report of the County Archaeological Officer / Treasurer which reviewed the operation of the Emergency Recording Fund.

The officer referred to the find of Iron Age coins at Whaddon Chase, advising that these had been found 100 metres from another Iron Age find, discovered in 1849. It

was unclear if the recent find was an isolated hoard or part of a larger site. Methods of ploughing had changed and it could be that this was helping to throw up new finds. The officer proposed that this warranted further investigation but the site was at risk from 'nighthawk' metal detecting. It was proposed that money from the ERF be used to carry out an initial geographical survey to find out more about the site.

Members discussed the proposal. A member was unhappy with funds being used in this way as the purpose of the ERF was to record discoveries where no funding was available. However, members were agreed that the site was at risk. The Officer from the County Museum proposed that this was potentially a very significant find as it was the biggest discovery of iron-age coinage in the county, and possibility in the country.

Members voted on recommendation 'b' with the majority voting in favour of the proposal to release funding for the survey.

RESOLVED

The Forum:

- a **NOTED the current status of the fund.**
- b **AGREED in principle the expenditure of up to £2,500 on a geographical survey of the Whaddon Chase hoard site.**

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

15 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 19 September 2007, 2.30pm, Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury.

CHAIRMAN