



Buckinghamshire County Council

Minutes

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2008 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 3, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 2.30 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.02 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Members

Mr C Cashman
Mr R Evans
Mr M Farley
Sir J Horsbrugh-Porter
Mrs V McPake
Mr G Marshall
Mrs S Polhill
Mr R Pushman (Chairman)
Mr F Robinson OBE

Organisation

Aylesbury Vale District Council
Diocese of Oxford
Bucks Archaeological Society
Chiltern District Council
Milton Keynes Council
National Trust
Aylesbury Vale District Council
Buckinghamshire County Council
Buckinghamshire County Council

Officers

Mr M Andrew
Mr J Brushe
Mr S Kidd
Mr B Thorn
Ms J Wise
Ms K MacDonald

Organisation

Wycombe District Council
South Bucks District Council
Buckinghamshire County Council
Bucks County Museum
Buckinghamshire County Council
Buckinghamshire County Council

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Mr R Pushman be elected as Chairman of the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum for the ensuing year.

Mr R Pushman in the Chair.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Ann Davis (AVDC).

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Corry Cashman declared a Personal interest in agenda item 7 - Quarrendon Leas - Corry Cashman declared an interest as his partner is a Trustee of the Bucks Conservation Trust set up to safeguard the Quarrendon Scheduled Ancient

Monument.

Richard Pushman declared a Personal interest in agenda item 7 - Quarrendon Leas - Richard is a Trustee of the Bucks Conservation Trust set up to safeguard the Quarrendon Scheduled Ancient Monument.

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 25 March 2008 were confirmed, subject to the following:

Item 11, Headed Conservation Officer's Reports, pg 5, Line 15

'Bucks Archaeology Service' should read 'Bucks Archaeology Society'.

Item 11, Headed Conservation Officer's Reports, pg 5, Line 15

Seeking to 'fund' interest should read seeking to 'encourage' interest.

5 MATTERS ARISING

Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record, pg 3

It was agreed at the meeting on 25 March 2008 that a letter would be sent to the District Council in relation to the HER advising them of the Forums recommendations. Sandy Kidd advised the Forum that a letter had not been sent but that there had been discussions with the District Council and that the sense of the recommendations conveyed.

6 HERITAGE PROTECTION REFORM

Members had received a report from Sandy Kidd, County Archaeologist on Heritage Protection Reform.

The report updated the Forum on progress with the Heritage Protection legislation, including the publication of the Draft Heritage Protection bill which was presented to Parliament in April 2008. The bill represents a period of long consultation.

The report highlights that in assessing the national reaction to the draft bill, the CMS Select Committee expressed concern that the totality of the bill was not being seen as the documents came out in stages and raised concerns of unrealistic cost estimates and staff and skills shortages. The draft plan and policy statement is also still awaited.

The introduction of the bill would have implications for local authorities in Buckinghamshire as it would not be possible for a single tier of a 2 tier local government area to fulfil the requirements alone. Some of the implications identified include:-

- Consideration of how services might be structured such as in relation to the duty on the County Council to maintain an HER record and the duty on the local planning authorities to consult.
- Julia Wise advised the forum that existing IT services are being reviewed and issues concerning data sharing considered. The first draft IT report is due in October 2008, with reporting back set for January 2009 by which time the bill would have been published, enabling the Council to assess how the draft IT proposal fits in with the bill.

A member questioned whether there had been any movement on Certificates of Immunity, highlighting that in the field of Archaeology they may prove problematic. Sandy agreed it was a legitimate concern and the procedure was not clear. He suggested that sufficient evaluation should be required to demonstrate whether or not an Archaeological site meets the criteria before a decision to issue a Certificate. A member suggested that English Heritage should issue the Certificates of Immunity to ensure that they were kept separate from the planning authority.

RESOLVED

The Forum NOTED the report and AGREED to endorse the Recommended Actions.

7 QUARRENDON LEAS

Members had received a report from Sandy Kidd, County Archaeologist.

Sandy advised the forum that the report is an update on progress. The Forum was asked to note the establishment of the Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust. Richard Pushman, Roger King and Richard Gem are the current trustees and the Trust is presently looking to expand the trusteeship. Funding earmarked for 2008/9 comprises £100,000 from Growth Area Funds, upto £20,000 from English Heritage and £20,000 from Buckinghamshire County Council. This includes undertaking a contaminated land assessment, providing a surfaced route from the Berryfields MDA to the church and moat and under take essential conservation and health and safety works to the moated site. Tenders for a consultancy contract to implement the identified works are currently being evaluated.

Discussions to secure the transfer of the land to the Trust have been ongoing with the developers of the Berryfields site. However due to the current economic climate the development has been delayed and there is currently uncertainty as to a starting date. Consequently there may be a delay with the land transfer and alternatively a licence needs to be secured to start works.

Corry Cashman and Sue Polhill attended AVDC Overview and Scrutiny Environment Community Meeting the night before and feedback to the Forum. The Forum was advised that the Committee agreed with the recommended site for the Aylesbury Crematorium which was to the north of the Quarrendon Scheduled Ancient Monument (QSAM). English Heritage had written to AVDC objecting to the proposal. Corry Cashman proposed the Forum write a letter to AVDC claiming the development of the Crematorium would have an adverse effect on the site both environmentally and historically. Sue Polhill commented that locating a crematorium at the proposed site would be a way of offering protection to the QSAM. A member expressed concern that the setting of the monument was at stake as the monument was closely abutted by farmland. Sandy Kidd was asked for his views and he commented that it is difficult to agree in principle without seeing the detail and that he would need to consider the decision carefully with the Trustees of the Bucks Conservation Trust and English Heritage. Sandy suggested it would be difficult to remove the visibility of car parks in a historic landscape and that the Forums concerns should be noted.

RESOLVED

The Forum NOTED the report and the Chairman AGREED to write a letter to AVDC expressing the Forums concerns and to send a copy of the letter to the Bucks Conservation Trust.

8 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER'S REPORT

The Forum received the report of the County Archaeologist, Sandy Kidd on the work of the County Archaeological Service since the last meeting of the Forum.

The Officer highlighted the fact that there are ongoing budgetary pressures, which have precluded appointing an assistant for the HER. David Radford also left early August to take up a post at Oxford City and it is hoped the vacancy will be filled by the end of October 2008.

Sandy advised the Forum that the shortfall reads 'is' estimated at but should be 'was' estimated at £12,000 2008/09 and £18000 2009/10 as it is probably significantly less as also seeking to charge developers and consultants for certain planning-related functions.

RESOLVED

The Forum NOTED the report and resource implications and AGREED the proposed actions.

9 COUNTY MUSEUM REPORT

Members had received the report of the Keeper of Archaeology and Finds Liaison Officer.

The report highlighted that the following points:

- The *Lost and Found: detecting the past* exhibition which focused on the work of the Portable Antiquities scheme and metal detecting in Bucks has now finished a popular run in the County Museum and it is hoped that a version of the display will be staged at Wycombe Museum between January and April 2009. Treasure acquisition of the Little Horwood hoard of 75 Iron Age gold coins, was also a big success for the County Museum.
- Between March 08 – August 08 there had been 10 potential treasure cases reported in the period.
- A large amount of finds have continued to be recorded on the Portable antiquities Scheme database and the total entered on the database is now 5161. A forthcoming upgrade and redesign of the web based database aims to make these records more user friendly.

RESOLVED

The Forum NOTED the report.

10 MILTON KEYNES ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER'S REPORT

Members had received a report from the Archaeological Service in Milton Keynes.

The Officer advised the Forum that there had been no big excavations although there had been some interesting trenching work in Stony Stratford which revealed post-medieval building remains which are to be preserved.

Trial trenching in Fairfield also identified one area of Roman activity. A member asked what the response was to the Archaeological studies in the area. The Officer advised the Forum that so far there had been no excavations and that only evaluations had been carried out. But that some potential and some definitive areas had been identified and that there will be some trial trenching carried out in the future.

Members discussed where Milton Keynes exhibits their finds and it was highlighted that currently Milton Keynes does not exhibit their finds. Cllr Vanessa McPake informed the Forum that she is currently advocating to show finds from the area and that there is an opportunity to use libraries for exhibitions.

The Officer also drew the Forums attention to the next Milton Keynes Archaeology Day which is a free event to be held at MK library on Saturday 15th November 2008.

RESOLVED

The Forum NOTED the report.

11 NATIONAL TRUST REPORT

Members had received a report from Gary Marshall, National Trust Archaeologist, Thames and Solent Region.

The Boarstall Tower Excavations has been a very successful project. There were approximately 80 participants and 300 visitors. Five trial trenches were opened and three of these trenches encountered structural evidence which confirmed the size of the house. The excavations recovered fragments of decorated medieval floor tile and glazed roof tile. The pottery evidence from the site is also interesting as it suggests that it may have been occupied from the late 11th or early 12th century.

The restoration and adaptation of the New Inn at Stowe are due to commence in 2010 which are on schedule and due to be completed in 2011.

Members were informed of an item reported in the news that day that the National Trust has been gifted the Lease to Hartwell House.

RESOLVED

The Forum NOTED the report.

12 CONSERVATION OFFICER'S REPORTS

South Bucks

The Conservation Officer from **South Bucks** reported:

- Currently looking at Gerrards Cross conservation area with a view to considering enlarging the area and the post railway development which is another conservation area.
- Afterwards will be commencing work on Stoke Poges to protect the 'West End' and Stoke Park to consider revising the boundaries.

Milton Keynes

The **Milton Keynes** Conservation Officer reported:

- The Consultation has closed on Calvert conservation review. The review proposed extensions to areas.

Wycombe

The Conservation Officer from **Wycombe** reported:

- Wycombe station has been listed as it is believed Isambard Kingdom Brunel was the Engineer and English Heritage are currently investigating this.

13 EMERGENCY RECORDING FUND:

Members had received the report by Sandy Kidd on the Emergency Archaeological Recording Fund.

Members were asked to note that the current balance is £8,250.

RESOLVED

The Forum NOTED the report.

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A member from Milton Keynes advised that they were looking for support in improving the signage for historical sites and asked the Forum if they were able to suggest the names of any bodies they could apply to for a grant.

15 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 25 March 2009, 2.30pm, Mezzanine 3, County Hall, Aylesbury

CHAIRMAN