

EMERGENCY ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING FUND

To: Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum

Date: 22 September 2010

Authors: Report of the County Archaeologist/Treasurer

A. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 To review the operation of the emergency recording fund.

B. PROPOSED ACTION

2 The Forum is invited to:

- a) ENDORSE the allocation of £1000 to the National Trust for the investigation at 40 Church Street, West Wycombe; and**
- b) CONSIDER whether to request contributions for 2011/12.**

C. RESOURCES

- 3 The current balance is £8250.

D. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4. In July 2010 human remains were unexpectedly found during the excavation of a trench on the north side of the building at 40 Church Lane during July of 2010. Examination by forensic archaeologists employed by Thames Valley Police confirmed that the remains were likely to be ancient. The trench was excavated to allow for the construction of a retaining wall and the continuation of the excavation was therefore monitored by Northamptonshire Archaeology, leading to the recording and exhumation of four skeletons. No finds or artefact material were associated with the graves, which assumed a north-south alignment, suggesting that they may not be Christian. One of the interments was made face down. The results of radio carbon dating on one of the skeletons are awaited, as is the osteo-archaeology report, which should tell us the date and sex of the individuals buried. Other similar but poorly recorded and undated finds in the area suggest the presence of large cemetery. West Wycombe is a known focus of Iron Age, Roman and medieval settlement so establishing the extent and date of the cemetery is of significant archaeological interest.
5. The overall cost for the watching brief, dating and post-excavation reporting will be £3160, plus VAT. As the discovery was unexpected and the work fell outside of planning control, a contribution of £1000

from the emergency recording fund was approved by the chairman in order to enable full investigation and radiocarbon dating.

6. At the 25th March 2008 meeting it was minuted that £8250 was considered to be a 'reasonable reserve'. No contributions were therefore required for the 2010/11 financial year but members will need to consider whether to request contributions for 2011/12.

E. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Information supplied by Gary Marshall, National Trust Archaeologist

CONTACT OFFICER: ALEXANDER (SANDY) KIDD 01296-382927