

Minutes

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM HELD ON THURSDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2014 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 3, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 2.30 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.27 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Members

Mr C Cashman
Mr M Farley
Mr H McCarthy
Mr W Chapple OBE
Mr W Whyte
Mr R Pushman

Organisation

Aylesbury Vale District Council
Bucks Archaeological Society
Wycombe District Council
Buckinghamshire County Council
Buckinghamshire County Council
Bucks Heritage Champion

Officers

Ms J Wise
Mr P Markham
Mr S Newell

Organisation

Buckinghamshire County Council
BCC
PAC Service Environment

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies for absence were received from Gary Marshall, Martin Andrew, Brett Thorn, Eliza Alqassar and Nick Crank.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared an interest;

Mr Chapple as Trustee of the Aylesbury Museum
Mr Whyte, Mr Cashman and Mr Pushman as they are members of the Archaeology Society
Mr Cashman as his partner has an interest in Quarrendon Leys

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2014 were agreed subject to the following amendment;



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Brudenell Rail Building to be amended to Brunel Rail Building.

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Oxford Diocese Representative

The Oxford Diocese has advised that the post is vacant. The Diocese will be contacted to clarify who is in post.

Action: Julia Wise

Conservation Officer reports

Reports are not being received from certain District Councils. A reminder is to be sent asking for a written report to be submitted if the Conservation Officer is unable to attend the meeting.

Action: Chairman

Development Land Transfer at Quarrendon Leys

Richard Pushman advised that discussions are taking place with Aylesbury Vale regarding the ownership of the hedge on the north side and Highways want assurance on maintenance. The issue is in the hands of solicitors and the legal team. The documents should be signed by the end of October.

5 CONSTITUTION

Members reviewed and discussed the Constitution.

The following comments were made.

- In terms of meeting attendance, Conservation Officers from some of the District Councils have not attended a meeting of the Forum for a while. There is nothing in the Constitution to advise where the business of the Forum goes to i.e. are the minutes fed back into the County Council. There is the worry that the Forum alone cannot achieve very much. Should the minutes of the Forum be reported back to relevant Cabinet Members?
- Input from non-voting members is very important. At the moment this is an area which is lacking. Conservation Officers have their own Forums for feedback.
- The Forum has a lot of good knowledge and information which used to go via District Officers.
- Wycombe District Council is losing their Conservation Officer. There is concern about continuity and a loss of existing knowledge.
- Buckinghamshire Historic Environment is a useful Forum. It cannot make decisions but there is the danger of losing the interchange of information and ideas as attendance reduces.
- How can the Forum be made more attractive bearing in mind Local Authority cuts?
- The concern is how attractive can the Forum be if there is no longer input from District Council Officers?
- There was a debate about three years ago about having one big meeting rather than two smaller ones which would make it important to attend.
- The Forum meeting coincides with the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & Berkshire (BOB) Conservation Group meeting in Oxford which Conservation Officers attend. It has been agreed that the 2015 meetings dates for the Forum will be sent to English Heritage who organise the BOB meetings.

Action: Julia Wise

- In terms of reporting back to the County Council and Cabinet Members, the understanding was the expectation that Members of the Forum would report back to their own organisations. Wider distribution of the minutes needs to be ensured.
- The minutes of the Forum are distributed informally. There is no reporting structure.
- One benefit of the Forum is the mixture of Members and Officers. The needs to be some element of cascading information to Members which they wouldn't otherwise receive.

It was proposed that the minutes of the Forum are sent to the Heads of Planning Departments in Local Authorities.

Action: Clerk

The elected representatives from Planning and Transportation and Community Services are to meet with the relevant Cabinet Members on a three monthly basis to provide a report on the Forum.

Action: Warren Whyte/Bill Chapple

In terms of additional members missing from the Forum, an invitation will be extended to the Conservation Officer, The Royal Institution of British Architects for Buckinghamshire to attend the Forum as a non-voting Member. It would also be appropriate to invite the Officer from Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust to attend Forum meetings as the Trust receives land for Quarrendon.

Action: Chairman

Members of the Forum agreed the following amendments to the Constitution.

Part 7 – Quorum and Procedure

Add - Attendees of the Forum meetings are to be reminded about their duty to disseminate information appropriately.

Part 8 – Admission of the Press

Title to be amended to Admission of the Media and Public

The wording of the paragraph is to be amended to 'the Press and members of the public shall be admitted to meetings of the Forum unless excluded by resolution of the Forum'.

Part 9ii – Variations of the Constitution is to be deleted

It was agreed that these changes would be ratified at the March meeting of the Forum.

Action: Forum Members

A copy of the revised version of the Constitution is to be circulated to Members of the Forum.

Action: Clerk

6 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE REPORTS

Phillip Markham, Senior Archaeological Planning Officer, gave the following update

Richard Pushman, Eliza Alqassar, Archaeological Planning Officer and I recently attended English Heritage workshops and provided advice on the National Heritage Protection Plan.

Significant archaeological investigations include;

Aston Clinton Stablebridge Road Site

A reserved matters application for 48 houses was granted consent for the erection of 48 houses earlier this year which included an archaeological recording condition recommended by Eliza Alqassar. The outline application was allowed on appeal.

Previous evaluation works for the outline application included a geophysical survey and trial trenching. This recorded an important trackway or road which crosses the site to join up with Akeman Street. In addition, at least one Iron Age roundhouse was uncovered along with the remains of rectangular buildings, enclosures and pits, all suggestive of a roadside settlement dating from the Iron Age to Roman periods.

This year a conditional written scheme of investigation was agreed and the site has been stripped by University of Leicester Archaeological Services and has been monitored by Eliza. This has uncovered further areas of the Iron Age/Romano-British settlement, inhumations and has revealed a large section of major routeway likely to be Lower Icknield Way. This work is ongoing.

A public open day was arranged and over 200 school children were shown around the site together with local residents. This was a great success and was reported in a number of papers, on local radio and TV.

The following questions were asked;

Bill Chapple said that as the Local Member, he received an invitation to attend the open day. The visit to the site was fascinating. It shows how Lower Icknield Way has changed over the years. There is clear definition of a roundhouse and a Roman House. It was pleasing to see youngsters taking such a keen interest.

Who picks up the cost of the digging i.e. the developer? There is a lot of land around Aylesbury which means that there is the need to invest in a similar site over the next 10 years. The officer confirmed that the developer pays for excavations. Archaeological Officers are part of the planning process i.e. the pre-planning application stage to provide advice and recommendations on what would like to be seen. There is the possibility that an application could be deferred to allow geophysics and trenches to be carried out.

There are some protected buildings in the Broughton area that must be steeped in history. It will be expensive to dig in this area. The history needs to be catalogued. It needs to be ensured that funding is available to do this. The Officer explained that Conservation Officers provide advice on developments and support master planning. Trial trenches, field walking and geophysics can be carried out to get an idea of the archaeological significance. If there is a significant find, we need to make sure that this can be incorporated as early as possible and that a full excavation is carried out if the master-plan can't work around the area.

Applications should come in small tranches. The current system works well. Developers are required to comply with recommendations from Planning Officers. There are a lot of Anglo Saxon finds at Quarrendon. This needs to be carefully monitored.

If applications come in tranches, there is the opportunity for developers to put in planning applications as there is currently no Local Plan in place. If an s106 objection is put in and lost, this could be a viable cost. The Officer explained that from an archaeological point of view, this is the opportunity for developers but there is planning guidance in place. The National Policy Planning Framework guides planning

issues. This includes the possibility of deferring a planning application to allow further information to be ascertained.

There is concern about the ability to cope with the number of potential planning applications. The Officer said that resources will always be an issue. If a significant number of applications come through in May, top slicing may have to be looked at.

Does the County Council get any pre-application fee for giving good advice at the early stages of planning permission? The Officer said that it is his understanding is that a fee is not received. Planning Officers give recommendations as early as possible. Early consultation can save a lot of duplication and money.

Part of the planning process includes discussions with Highways about early intervention with developments i.e. site layout and entry etc. From a transport perspective, we as a county seem to get involved quite late in the process. The Officer advised in Cornwall there are early meetings before land planning. This includes representation from archaeological advice, ecologists etc. This could be built into the process in Bucks. The issue of early intervention at developments, site layouts and entry etc will be discussed with the Director of Growth and Strategy, PAC service.

Action: Chairman

The Archaeological Planning officer is part time but covers all Districts in Buckinghamshire. This is an enormous responsibility. The County is asking a huge amount from Officers. It is a question of monitoring what is taking place with available resources. Aston Clinton is an example of an enterprising approach whereby the Planning Officer requested an evaluation of the site. This is a new Roman road which was previously not known about. It is a really important find both locally and nationally as it could be a strategic road from Dorchester.

Some aggressive planning applications are being made with very tight timelines. The officer said that in terms of planning applications, the Local Authority has to try to be pragmatic but archaeology has to be protected where possible. It was raised that, 'there are large vehicles accessing the site in Aston Clinton and the application is still pending as there is a lot of local opposition'. This site has been granted planning consent and the archaeologists have finished one site.

Publication update

The Oxford Archaeology East and Network Archaeology jointly published their excavations on the Hardwick to Marsh Gibbon gas pipeline in Volume 54 of Records of Buckinghamshire.

The Historic Towns Project

The summary publication had a 'soft launch' in May with a press release which promoted a number of articles in local newspapers.

The following comments were made.

- The Chairman reported that this project has received very good feedback.
- The project was executed without post excavation. There was some random destruction. It is quite a job for archaeology to carry on monitoring the reports which are well overdue. In many cases, properties are already built.
- Concern was expressed about discharge of planning conditions prior to occupation and commencement. If planning conditions are not discharged, the property should not be occupied. It was asked if planning conditions were worded properly. The officer explained that there are a number of stages included within planning

conditions covered by 'written schemes of investigation', which are agreed with the Planning Case Officer. These stages include investigation, analysis, reporting and archiving.

Julia Wise added that the difficulty is there is sometimes a lack of awareness of the issue of fulfilling archaeological conditions within Planning Departments which results in things being missed. In terms of Berton and Buckingham, the conditions are rigorous. A Planning Officer can usually advise against planning conditions being discharged early if work is still required. As a service, there needs to be more interaction in case work and with the enforcement teams where necessary.

Does a meeting need to be called with Case Officers for this to be raised as an issue? The officer advised that this issue has been discussed with Planning/Case Officers. We are in the early stages of putting together a road-show for local Planning Authorities to increase awareness for Planning/Case Officers.

During discussion of the major archaeological excavations projects at the post excavation stage concern was expressed about 80 Aylesbury Road, Berton (enforcement action initiated in March 2007) and Bridge Street, Buckingham (the non-receipt of the post-excavation assessment which commenced in September 2010). A letter is to be sent to Sue Polhill, Aylesbury Vale District Councillor (copied to Forum Members)

Action: Corry Cashman

Tingewick Triangle update

The landowner has employed CgMS as their archaeological consultant. Their director Rob Bourne first contacted us in July and supplied a geophysical survey report undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in 2011. We recommended that the site be trial trenched to assess the geophysics results and gain an understanding of the significance of the expected archaeology.

CgMS employed Foundations Archaeology to undertake the trial trenching and they supplied a written scheme of investigation, which we approved.

We do not appear to have been informed of the start date for these works as Rob was on holiday when the landowner said that that works could take place. Foundations began work assuming Rob had informed us.

Local people became aware of the works and contacted us. Eliza made a site visit on the 10 September.

I made a site visit with Rob and the Managing Director of Foundations Archaeology on the 17 September. We checked every trench, the works current undertaken and the propose works. Foundations will be getting more people on site to undertake this. I recommended a couple of extra trenches to better assess the possible earth works in the east field.

A probable Romano-British wall has been uncovered dates by associated pottery. This wall may continue at right angles as traces have been found in another trial trench. A probable Iron Age enclosure has been recorded in the west field. Most of the trenches contained variable geological features.

This work will continue and further monitoring visits will be made. A full report of the investigations will be made available as soon as possible following the field work. This report will help enable us to make appropriate recommendations to the local planning authority when the application is made.

During discussion, the following comments were made.

A member said there is a local issue in Buckingham concerning St Rumbold's Well and the field in which it is located. A number of properties have been developed on the area adjacent to the field. Work took place on the field a while ago. The site has a superb presentation of ridge and furrow as well as a scheduled ancient monument. It seems a prime site for medieval potential. Evaluation trenches have now been dug in the field. It is about the whole of the field, the well and the land slip. If there is a Roman spring, you could get more than you bargained for by trial trenching. The officer said there is a lot of local interest in this site. There are no current planning applications for this site although we understand that one is imminent for residential dwellings. If/when a planning application is received and is in the public domain, planning recommendations will be made when the report is received. The exclusion of certain areas of the site could be recommended or at the very least, a full excavation. Planning Officers provide advice and guidance to the Local Authority when and as required.

The Neighbourhood Plan for Buckingham is being put together. This area will be a serious consideration for the Plan to take into account.

Is it worth contacting the clerk at Buckingham Town Council about the pre-consulting stage? The officer advised that the clerk has already been contacted.

Historic Environment Record (HER) report

Julia Wise referred Members of the Forum to the information shown on page 15 of the agenda pack.

Richard Pushman reported that a large amount of spoil was dumped at the Quarrendon site which included brick and rubble for a newt habitat. A letter was sent to the Chairman of English Heritage which resulted in prosecution.

7 MILTON KEYNES ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER'S REPORT

During discussion of the report from the Senior Archaeological Officer, Milton Keynes Council, the following question was asked.

Point F2 of the report advises that the Conservation and Archaeology team are currently in discussions with AVDC with regard to delivering further Conservation Area Reviews. A brief progress report on the matters being discussed would be useful and informative.

Action: Clerk/Conservation Officer Milton Keynes

8 EMERGENCY RECORDING FUND REPORT- VERBAL UPDATE

Phillip Markham, Senior Archaeological Planning Officer reported the following;

- The current balance of the Bucks Historic Emergency Recording Fund is £7617.
- £7267 was carried over from the financial year 2013/14
- £350 has been paid in (£150 from Milton Keynes and £100 from Wycombe DC is still awaited)

Action: Eliza Alqassar

- There has been no expenditure to the end of August.

Milton Keynes and Wycombe need to be reminded to send purchase orders so they can

be invoiced.

9 COUNTY MUSEUM REPORT

Mr Chapple gave the following update;

Buckinghamshire County Museum Trust has had one meeting since its formation. The documents enclosed with the agenda pack are to be agreed by Trustees. The members of the Trust have a vast amount of experience which includes representation from Wycombe Museum. There are some good ideas coming forward to make opening to members of the public easier i.e. Halton has a vast number of pieces that are not financed by the county. Discussions are taking place to try to look at ways to raise funds to buy artefacts.

During the update, the following questions were asked and comments made;

Has the Trust been in contact with Buckingham Museum? They have previously advised that it has been very difficult to get an exhibition at the county museum. Mike Farley explained that the Archaeological Society owns 70% of the collection at the County Museum. There are also some legal issues about the lease of the building. Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society and Buckinghamshire County Council need to agree a formal document for the under lease between the County Council and the Trust. The state of the building is another issue. Details of the programme of works have been requested. The county is the leaseholder and is responsible for the condition of the buildings.

10 NATIONAL TRUST REPORT - VERBAL UPDATE

The Regional Archaeologist was unable to attend the meeting. A report will be requested.

Action: Clerk

11 CHURCH ARCHAEOLOGY

The post of Diocesan Archaeology Advisor is currently vacant. An email is to be sent to the Diocese requesting an update.

Action: Julia Wise

12 CONSERVATION OFFICERS' REPORTS

No reports had been received from Aylesbury Vale District Council Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council.

Members of the Forum are to speak to relevant portfolio holders to express the importance of Conservation officer's attendance of Forum meetings.

Action: Forum Members

Hugh McCarthy (Wycombe District Council) reported the following;

Brunel Railway Building

Discussions about the Brunel Railway Building are continuing. There has been some interest but nothing substantive at the moment.

Grange Farm

This building has been empty since the eviction action taken by British Flora last summer. Concern has been expressed about the length of time the building has been unoccupied and unsupervised. Options for use are being discussed including the possibility of a scheme for business use. Unfortunately a purchaser has not been attracted as there is a business on the adjacent land.

13 HS2 UPDATE - STANDING ITEM

Phillip Markham, Senior Archaeological Planning Officer, gave the following update.

Following the formal petitioning stage, the County Archaeological Service has provided more detail on individual petitioning issues and how we would like these to be resolved by HS2 Ltd. The biggest issue is the lack of sufficient archaeological information on which to base mitigation proposals. The petitioning Select Committee for Buckinghamshire is unlikely to be held before Christmas.

Julia, Eliza and I had a meeting with the HS2 assistant archaeologist and the archaeologists from Mott MacDonald. We provided detailed comments on a draft WS1 for geophysical and field walking surveys.

Ten survey areas have been proposed following a risk based approach to characterise the areas and to target potential high risk sites where little is known or to better assess known sites.

Further stages of evaluation are anticipated following the results of this stage.

No field work has started, but the results of this work are expected to be available in some form by the 1st quarter of 2015.

We will not be formally monitoring any of the works but may be invited for site visits where we will be able to raise any concerns. How this is to be achieved has not yet been arranged.

Currently the proposed commercial archaeological contractors are GSB/Stratscan for geophysics and Cotswold Archaeology or Museum of London Archaeology, Northampton.

The proposed sites are at; Hyde End, Jenkins Wood/Bury Farm Area, Grim's Ditch, Stoke Mandeville DMV, Putlowes Farm, the Roman small town at Fleet Marston, Doddeshall Estate, the proposed maintenance depot near Steeple Claydon and Turweston.

There is an HS2 Heritage Sub Committee meeting in Birmingham at the end of September during which the monitoring issue will be raised.

Resourcing issues for HER data entry were raised. We were asked to raise this through the Planning Forum. This issue has been noted by our HS2 Planners and will be raised at the Forum.

Overall it looks like we will have little real input, but we are doing what we can where we are able and at least HS2 are actually talking to us. Currently Northamptonshire and Warwickshire are finding the same.

During discussions, the following questions were asked;

Is anything known about the proposed excavations at St Mary's? The officer explained that the County Archaeological Service is part of the Heritage Sub Committee but unfortunately the outcomes are not being made available at present. Lots of work has previously taken place along parts of the route from Stoke Mandeville to Twyford and attention has been drawn to other potential finds. St Mary's Church, Stoke Mandeville has a very big public face. The Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society is anxious about the cost limits. The profile needs to be maintained to ensure that an archaeological mitigation strategy is put in place. There is an open day at the Church on the 19 October to raise awareness of the site.

The Communications Team, BCC will be contacted about the possibility of issuing a press release for the open day.

Action: Bill Chapple

There is some doubt that the land is consecrated. A letter has been received from the Diocese saying the land has been deconsecrated. The objective is to raise the issue of this particular site which includes the Manor House, water mill and the graveyard.

The Leader of BCC has reported that Buckinghamshire is expected to give oral evidence in October/November/December.

The Parliamentary Select Committee for HS2 will not meet until after the election. Therefore continuity goes out of the window.

Letters have been written promoting the Stoke Mandeville Legacy garden idea. There are 2600 burials to be stored in the village and Parish. This would give the unique opportunity for burials to be retrieved for further investigation in the future.

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Aylesbury Vale District Council are undertaking a de-cluttering programme in town centres. An update can be given at the March meeting.

Action: Chairman

15 DATE, VENUE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 2nd March 2015, 2.30pm, venue to be confirmed

Future meeting dates

Monday 21st September 2015, 2.30pm, venue to be confirmed.

The issue of alternate meetings being site based has previously been discussed. A letter is to be sent to Conservation Officers asking for suggestions of meeting venues if areas of interest are raised.

Action: Chairman

CHAIRMAN