

Minutes

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM

**MINUTES OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM HELD ON
MONDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2017, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY,
COMMENCING AT 2.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.04 PM.**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Bill Chapple OBE (Chairman), Mike Farley, Hugh McCarthy, Gary Marshall, and Clive Harriss
IN ATTENDANCE

E Alqassar, P Braithwaite, J Carver, K Frost, S Newell, S Shave, D Sutherland, B Thorn, C de
Carle, M Woods.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Mr Chris Williams was appointed to the committee as a member.

Apologies were received from: Mrs J Hunt, Mr N Crank, Mr C Williams, Mr P Markham,
Mr P Clements, Mr R Pushman, Ms S Oborn

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2016 were agreed as a correct
record and signed by the Chairman

4 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

Mr B Chapple was confirmed as Chairman and Mr C Harriss was appointed as Vice-
Chairman.

5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Mr M Farley asked about progress in making maps accessible on the County Council's
website. Mr Chapple would discuss this with Mr M Hall, Director of Digital.

ACTION: Mr Chapple

6 BUCKS GARDENS TRUST

Ms C de Carle, Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust was welcomed to the meeting and presented a slide show for members.

It was noted that this was a long term project to record details of the historical gardens within the County. The National Gardens Trust had an initiative to register 20th Century gardens; both large and small.

Mr J Carver asked if any of the unregistered gardens abutted the line of HS2.

Ms De Carle confirmed that they had concentrated their efforts on registering gardens close to the route.

7 HS2 AND THE IMPACT ON THE BURIAL GROUND AT STOKE MANDEVILLE

Mr Carver, Lead Archaeologist, Fusion was welcomed to the meeting.

Fusion was a joint venture between three construction companies and Mr Carver had been appointed as lead on the archaeology for the HS2 central section. The central route had been divided into nine sections or packages to enable the design to be dealt with on a holistic basis. Geophysics had been used to identify areas of interest. The work package plan was being put in place for St Mary's Churchyard at Stoke Mandeville and would include:

- Site clearance
- A comprehensive gravestone survey
- A borehole to sample the soil
- The church fabric would be recorded.

Keele University was interested in deploying a student to undertake some further research of the site. Mr Carver was keen to involve the community in recording surface remains and items on the site. Work would include the eastern boundary of the site where archaeological work would be done alongside the main construction contractor.

Mr Franklin asked if the design could be impacted by any archaeological finds.

Mr Carver confirmed that the detailed design would take account of any archaeological finds, including identifying any areas for preservation, although in practice this could be difficult. The route of the line at St Mary's Church was unlikely to be affected by archaeological finds as it would be built on an embankment and this would not lend itself to preserving the archaeology in situ.

Mr Farley congratulated Mr Carver on his phased approach to the archaeological investigation of this site. In response to Mr Farley's questions Mr Carver confirmed:

- That he was aware of the desire of the local community to rehome the human remains within the parish and was in discussion with relevant parties. A forum may be held on this subject before the end of the calendar year.

- The archaeological contractor would be confirmed in due course.
- The HS2 Historic Environment Research and Development Strategy document was available on line. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-phase-one-historic-environment-research-and-delivery-strategy>.)
- Volunteers may be invited to dig at this and other sites at the appropriate time.

The committee discussed the following items:

- There was approximately two hundred tons of built church rubble in the churchyard and this would be removed and stored. It was hoped that this may be used at the place of storage/burial of the human remains on the site, including the church floor if it was still on site.
- Publicity regarding archaeological finds would be by newsletter, by publishing on a public website and by public events, details would be confirmed.
- It was noted that all graves and wills relating to this site had been documented and transcribed by the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society (BAS) and the information was available in the Bucks County Council (BCC) Study Centre.
- Mr Carver said he was time limited with respect to investigating this site (and others) but that this was a publicly funded project and he had no concerns on the budget.
- The Museum would need advance notice of large numbers of archaeological finds to arrange appropriate storage and or display. They would be interested in items being available on loan for temporary display (particularly those mentioned in publicity).

Mr Chapple asked if Mr Carver would return to the next meeting and he agreed.

8 QUARRENDON ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT

Mr M Woods, from the Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust was welcomed to the meeting to talk about the Quarrendon Archaeological Project.

The Quarrendon Leas site was handed over to the Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust in 2015. Since this time the Trust had:

- Worked with local farmers to ensure it was appropriately grazed.
- Installed and maintained gates.
- Stabilised the remains of St Peter's Church, two villages and an Elizabethan manor house within the site.
- Undertaken hedge planting as part of a five year programme (commenced January 2016).
- Worked with Rights of Way officers at BCC to divert a path.
- Held an open day in July 2017 in conjunction with the BAS and BCC.
- The Trust had longer term plans to create a small car park and visitor centre at the site although this would require some funding.

The Trust would be interested in collaborating with other sites in Buckinghamshire and would be willing to take on further land holdings.

Mr Chapple thanked those involved in the open day and for the work undertaken by the Trust.

9 BCC REPORT

Ms E Alqassar, Archaeological Officer, presented the report and the following points were noted:

The officers were working with HS2, East West Rail and Heathrow regarding the possible new runway. Recent notable finds included a Roman ladder settlement at Taplow and a Neolithic site at Marlow.

10 UPDATE FROM NATIONAL TRUST

Mr G Marshall presented a report for information and an update on the Cliveden Terrace.

The Terrace was a Grade 1 listed structure, built in the 1670's for the Duke of Buckingham and acted as a retaining wall for the mansion. The terrace had undergone many changes over the years including:

- It was re-faced circa 1870, covering up the niches in the original design.
- The central staircase was added at a later date.
- Cement render and gilded gates were added.
- Inside the terrace there were two large water tanks, probably added after the fire of 1849. These are now home to bats and have had to be preserved.
- The sounding chamber had had a cement render applied which trapped moisture. When the render was removed two light wells were discovered in the ceiling to allow natural light into the chamber.
- On removal of the paving stones on the top of the terrace, two cavities were found that were thought to hold glass to allow light into the Orangeries below.

The National Trust was also undertaking a project to refurbish the generator house at Cliveden. It dated from 1890's and contained a steam boiler that was used to generate and supply electricity to the house. The roof consisted of asbestos tiles from circa 1914 and it was hoped to restore it using a similar looking product.

The Blenheim Pavilion dated from 1730's. The original lime render was removed in 1970's and replaced with cement render that was trapping moisture. This cement render had now been removed and would be replaced with a lime render in future.

The Flint House in the wider landscape was also being researched prior to being restored.

An article may be published on the restoration of the terrace in due course.

11 AN UPDATE ON THE COUNTY MUSEUM

Ms S Shave, Museum Director was welcomed to the meeting.

Ms Shave had recently arrived at the County Museum having worked at the Chiltern Open Air Museum. Her priorities for the short term were:

- Looking at mission and vision for the Museum.
- Build on the Arts Council recognition of the Museum as a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) and bid for grants aimed at expanding the agenda for diversity and community engagement.
- Arrange further fund raising events including offering the Museum as a wedding venue.
- Expand the Halton site to house a learning programme including history and science workshops.

Mr Thorn provided an update on the Lenborough Hoard;

- The Lenborough Hoard had now been purchased via funds obtained through grants and local donations, with part of it currently on display in the Museum.
- Research on the hoard would continue whilst funding was sought to employ a PHD level researcher. A recent Heritage Lottery Fund bid had not been successful but it was hoped that NPO status may help when resubmitting it in the future.

Recent successes:

- Over 8 thousand visitors attended the Lego Exhibition that was held over the summer, many of whom looked at other exhibits in the Museum at the same time.
- The outside David Bowie cinema event was a great success.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ms Alqassar flagged up a report from Historic England highlighting that the number of Archaeological staff employed in Local Authorities had fallen over recent years.

The BAS was preparing to celebrate its 175th anniversary – events would be organised in due course. The BAS were hoping to hold an event in 2018 on HS2.

13 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

5 March 2018 venue County Hall
10 September 2018 venue County Hall

CHAIRMAN