

Minutes

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM HELD ON MONDAY 4 MARCH 2019 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 2.09 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 3.54 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Members

Mr C Williams
Mr G Marshall
Mr N Crank
Mr W Chapple OBE (Chairman)
Newcombe

Organisation

Natural Environment Partnership
National Trust
Milton Keynes Council
Buckinghamshire County Council
Aylesbury Vale District Council

Officers

Ms J Wise
Mrs E Alqassar
Mr P Markham
Ms M Breen-Haynes
Mr P Clements
Ms A Williams
Ms L Lawrence
Mr J Carver

Organisation

Buckinghamshire County Council
Buckinghamshire County Council
BCC
AVDC Heritage team

Buckinghamshire County Council
HS2/ Fusion

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Mr R Pushman and Mr H McCarthy.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2018 were **AGREED** as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

In the previous meeting an action had been assigned to Ms S Taylor, Committee Assistant, to include an update on the archaeology and mapping website in the agenda of the next meeting. This item had been added and would be discussed during the meeting.

5 HS2 UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Mr. J Carver, Lead Archaeologist, Fusion to the meeting. Mr Carver delivered a presentation on a HS2 update, appended to the minutes. Following the presentation the following points were highlighted and discussed:

- It was part of the project plan to include a level of public involvement in excavations during the summer.
- Concerns had been raised over the potential effect that HS2 work could have on local burial grounds. The reburial options report was in the process of being developed by HS2 with the potential for some of the head stones and human remains to be relocated.
- Concerns had been raised over the relocation of local and national grassland. This would involve the grassland being regrown in a different area. It was confirmed that the area selected for relocation would be big enough to accommodate this.
- There was the potential for a pylon to be relocated and a new road built to accommodate this. Concerns were expressed that the area and route would be left in a poor condition. It was confirmed that there were no current plans to begin this work.
- A percentage of the surface area of the cemetery of St Mary's Church, Stoke Mandeville had been tested. The results of this had concluded that there were no historical cemeteries or burials outside of the churchyard. More research would take place to identify the historical purpose of the church.
- It was highlighted that if a public exhibition took place within the church then members of the forum would be invited.

ACTION: Mr Carver

- Upcoming opportunities for displays in local museums would be discussed.

The Chairman thanked Mr Carver for his presentation and requested that he present another update to the forum when he felt it was most relevant. It was requested that the presentation be circulated with the minutes.

ACTION: Ms A Williams

RESOLVED: Members of the forum NOTED the information delivered in the presentation.

6 BUCKS NATURAL ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

An update was delivered by Mr C Williams, Chairman of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership (NEP) and the following points were

highlighted:

- Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes was one of 27 local NEP groups nationally. The NEP's profile had been raised over the last 18 months and they had become a key voice for the environment.
- The NEP was active in responding to national and regional consultations that could impact the environment. They had recently delivered a presentation to Buckinghamshire County Council Cabinet Members.
- Local plans were going through an approval process. The Milton Keynes Local Plan would be the first to be approved in March or April. There were no objections from the NEP to the environmental policies.
- The Green Infrastructure Opportunities Mapping for the main green areas in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes was highlighted. This showed the characteristics of the areas and the potential threats of each one.

<http://bucksmknep.co.uk/projects/gi-opportunities-mapping/>

- The biodiversity accounting scheme was highlighted, where areas were assigned a monetary value to biodiversity loss. This would involve an investigation where the potential effects on wildlife in the area would be scored. If biodiversity was not increased onsite then there was the opportunity to purchase the land within these areas.
- Public consultations on biodiversity were mandatory and proof of an overall NET increase for local plans was required. The NEP was waiting for final comments from development control managers to implement the scheme.
- Buckinghamshire NEP led the work to create an environmental vision for the Oxford to Cambridge route.
- The scheme 'Bucks Buzzing' was highlighted, which advocated the promotion of wild life, wild flowers and sites for pollinators. There had been a significant reduction in the number of insects which could have an impact on agriculture. Work was being carried out to create insect friendly sites, and the scheme would provide resources to parish councils and schools for wildflower sites.

Following the report the following points were highlighted and discussed in response to questions by members of the forum:

- When asked for clarification of how the biodiversity scheme would be implemented, The Kingsbrook development in Aylesbury was given as an example. An ecological survey would be carried out on the land before development started. This would be assessed to see if there were ecological provisions against high score areas in the initial survey. If the developers were unable to provide sufficient space for wildlife within their boundaries, then they would be required to make a payment.
- The work completed on green infrastructure mapping needed to be assessed to see if a wildlife corridor could be implemented. Due to the part time nature of the NEP employees there was a tight time schedule on this.

The Chairman thanked Mr Williams for his update.

RESOLVED: Members of the forum NOTED the information provided in the update.

7 BUCKS COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE (BCAS) REPORT

An update was provided by Mr P Markham, Senior Archaeologist and the following points were highlighted:

- A new member of staff had been recruited: Ms L Lawrence, Archaeological Officer. The Chairman welcomed Ms Lawrence to the forum.
- There had been a high number of major infrastructure projects within the last six months including multiple small housing developments.
- The archaeology page on the Buckinghamshire County Council website had been updated.

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/culture-and-leisure/archaeology/buckinghamshire-county-archaeological-service/>

- Various public outreach activities had taken place over last six months.

Ms J Wise, Historic Environment Records Officer provided an update on the Ariel Photography (AP) Project:

- Work had been expected to start March 2019, but had been put on hold for a year at the request of Historic England. The work was now expected to start March 2020.

Following the update the following points were highlighted and discussed in response to questions by members of the forum:

- The timescales for the AP project seemed out of sync if historical environment information was to be included. A discussion was held over whether existing information held by the Environment Agency and HS2 could be used. It was highlighted that the new project would gather fresh datasets.
- Scheduled 17 works- planning applications were outside of parliament and therefore not automatically covered by the act.
- An update on the building works on the site of Quarrendon in Aylesbury was requested. It was highlighted that a management plan had been put in place. Ms E Alqassar, Environment Manager would provide an update at the next meeting.

ACTION: Ms Alqassar

RESOLVED: Members of the forum NOTED the information provided in the update.

8 UPDATE FROM THE CONSERVATION OFFICERS

No conservation officers from Chiltern, South Bucks or Wycombe District Council were

present to provide an update. The conservation officer from Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) provided an update on the Aylesbury Vale area and highlighted the following points:

- AVDC had recruited three permanent conservation officers and were in the process of advertising for another permanent role.
- Mentmore Towers had been placed on the buildings at risk register. Historic England had funded a conservation area proposal which was due to go out for consultation in April. It was clarified that Mentmore Towers would not be turned into a hotel.
- Broughton Barn had been on the buildings at risk register for some time. A temporary roof had been installed and made it wind and water tight. This temporary solution had resulted in Broughton Barn being made a lower priority on the risk register.

RESOLVED: Members of the forum NOTED the information provided in the update.

9 NATIONAL TRUST UPDATE

An update was provided by Mr G Marshall, Archaeologist, The National Trust and the following points were highlighted:

- Archaeological investigations had taken place for potential restoration projects on sites in Stowe Gardens.
- Work was being carried out to find alternative parking sites at Clifton House.
- There was currently no work scheduled to take place in the Water Garden at Cleavesdon. Last year the Chinese temple had been restored.

RESOLVED: Members of the forum NOTED the information provided in the update.

10 MK UPDATE

Mr N Crank, Archaeologist, Milton Keynes Council provided an update and highlighted the following points:

- There had been a high number of excavations in the last year.
- Medieval activity had been found as a result of an excavation in Green End.
- Multiple building conservations were underway, with a number of new listings including 20 war memorials
- It was highlighted that there were a number of smaller cases also in progress, but details could not be disclosed due to confidentiality.
- The 'Outreach' scheme was highlighted. This scheme aimed to promote community archaeology and had been funded by the Commoners Association. An event had been held and 70 members of the public had volunteered to assist with the running of the event.

- Milton Keynes Archaeology Day had been successful.
- It was highlighted that members of the public who were involved with these events needed to receive the correct briefing to ensure health and safety procedures were adhered to on the day.

RESOLVED: Members of the forum NOTED the information provided in the update.

11 COUNTY MUSEUM UPDATE

There was no one in attendance to present the update.

12 DATA LOSS ISSUES - BCAS

Ms Alqassa, Environment Manager, provided an update in which details were given of a data loss incident that had occurred in April 2018. The incident had resulted in a deletion of human resources and archaeological data. It was highlighted that this was both a human and technology error. Only files dated to 2014 were able to be restored, therefore the data base was missing four years of case work.

Microsoft had tried to recover the meta data but it was not retrievable. Assurance was given that the incident had been correctly escalated in accordance with legislation.

13 HBSMR-WEB AND THE ARCHAEOLOGY WEB PAGES – BCAS

Ms Alqassa, Environment Manager, provided an update and the following points were highlighted:

- The website had been improved and rewritten. This would provide more resilience for data and should be implemented within the next couple of months.
- IT was in the process of trying to fix mapping problems on the webpage. The Historic Environment Records mapping was available on the main Buckinghamshire County Council website and this would be used until a more permanent solution had been found.
- In response to a question by a member of the forum, Mr D Sutherland, Head of Planning and Environment agreed to find out if the team had been involved with the sponsoring of landscape work, and would provide an update at the next meeting.

ACTION: Mr Sutherland

RESOLVED: Members of the forum NOTED the information provided in the update.

14 AONB CHALK CHERRIES CHAIRS PROJECT - BCAS

Ms Alqassa, Environment Manager, provided an update and the following points were

highlighted:

- The project was a landscape partnership scheme and had received local government and HS2 funding.
- The project would commence in Spring and run for five years.
- The aim of the project would be to address issues such as ancient woodland, HS2 and a general disconnect between people and their landscape, as well as encourage members of the public to appreciate their historic and environmental surroundings.
- Buckinghamshire County Council would be involved in the project.
- The team were in the process of recruiting project officers.

RESOLVED: Members of the forum NOTED the information provided in the update.

15 UNITARY UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Mr R Goodes, BCC Programme Director for Transformation, who provided an update on unitary and highlighted the following points:

- The new council would come into effect on 1 April 2020. This would be a brand new council and would build on the expertise of the existing councils.
- The new organisation would be called Buckinghamshire Council. It would have 147 elected members (3 per ward), but this would be reviewed. The elections would be held in May 2020, and the members would serve a five year term.
- A shadow authority and shadow executive would be implemented to oversee the work to create the new council.
- Legal challenges had been made by three of the district councils, but this had not halted progress.
- The new council would serve as an opportunity to provide better services for residents and save public money.
- It was highlighted that the current services and change programmes had to continue as “business as usual” to ensure that service delivery was unaffected.
- It was highlighted that staff were critical to the successful implementation of the new organisation. The programme would be inclusive of all members and staff.

Following the update the following points were raised and discussed in response to questions by members of the forum:

- Mr Goodes would attend the next meeting to provide a further update.
- Concerns were expressed that changes to funding processes within the new authority may have an impact on the parish councils. It was highlighted that the shadow authority would make decisions on funding which would be carried into the new council.
- The process for biodiversity would need to be changed when moved into the new

authority.

- Concerns were expressed that partnership boards would have to be re-established and existing bodies would need to be fed through to the new council.
- Central Government would request 5 years to develop a new local plan for the new council.
- Following the elections of the new members, discussions would take place over how the existing boards would be taken forward into the new council.

RESOLVED: Members of the forum NOTED the information provided in the update.

16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members of the forum requested that future meetings were held on alternative week days, as Mondays were not convenient for the conservation teams. An email would be circulated to members of the forum to confirm preferred days.

ACTION: Ms A Williams

17 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

9 September 2019, 2:00pm, Mezzanine Room 2

CHAIRMAN