



# Buckinghamshire County Council

## Minutes

### *Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum*

Agenda Item: 3

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2005 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 2.30PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.45PM.**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

##### **Members**

Mr P Bartlett  
Mr C Cashman  
Mr M Farley  
Mr R Pushman  
Mr F Robinson

##### **Organisation**

Milton Keynes Council  
Aylesbury Vale District Council  
Bucks Archaeological Society  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council

##### **Officers**

Mr J Britton  
Mr J Brushe  
Ms A Davies  
Mr D Green  
Mr S Kidd  
Mr G Marshall  
Mr P Stamper  
Mrs C Street  
Mr B Thorn

##### **Organisation**

Buckinghamshire County Council  
South Bucks District Council  
Aylesbury Vale District Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
National Trust  
English Heritage  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
Buckinghamshire County Museum

#### **1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

##### **RESOLVED**

**That Mr R Pushman be elected Chairman of the Forum for the ensuing year.**

**MR R PUSHMAN IN THE CHAIR**

#### **2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP**

Apologies were received from Mr C Welch (English Heritage), Mr H McCarthy and Mr M Andrew, (Wycombe District Council), and Mr B Giggins (Milton Keynes Council).

### **3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following members declared personal interests:

Mr M Farley as a Consultant Archaeologist,

Mr F Robinson as the owner of a Grade II listed house, a life member of the National Trust, a trustee of Buckinghamshire Historic Churches and Buckinghamshire Historic Houses, and as a member of NADFAS (National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies),

Mr C Cashman as a member of the National Trust,

Mr R Pushman as a member of the National Trust, a member of the Chilterns Conservation Board, and as a District Council member on Development Control Committee

Mr Paul Bartlett as a trustee of the Milton Keynes Museum and as a member of Milton Keynes Planning Committee.

### **4 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment held on 30 March 2005, copies of which had been circulated previously, were agreed.

### **5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

#### **4 Matters Arising**

##### **Item – 5**

No progress had been made regarding obtaining a nomination for membership of the Forum from the Bucks Garden Trust.

##### **Item 7 - Milton Keynes and South Midlands Strategy**

A representative of the Forum had attended a 2031 strategy meeting and offered support regarding issues relating to the historic environment. No further response had been received.

#### **5 Future Of Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum**

No further progress had been made regarding joint working with the Historic Buildings Trust.

#### **6 Guidance on Modern Civic, Industrial and Military Complexes**

This matter would be carried forward to the next meeting of the Forum.

#### **7 South East Plan**

In June, SEERA had indicated that it had made a decision to delete the policy on the historic environment. Strong objections had been raised by officers, which had been supported by David Shakespeare, the Leader of the Council. Members were informed that subsequently SEERA had decided to reinstate the policy.

#### **9 Emergency Recording Fund**

Invoices for the Fund had now been issued.

### **6 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT PLAN 2005 - 2007**

Members received the report of the Senior Archaeological Officer, which informed them about progress with updating the Buckinghamshire Archaeology Plan to cover the period 2005-7.

The Senior Archaeological Officer had attended a meeting of the Community Services Policy Advisory Group, which was chaired by the Cabinet Member for Community Services, to discuss how best to align the Plan with County Council priorities. The Officer was advised to place weight on matters related to the growth agenda and protection of the environment. The idea was not to stop development, but to ensure areas of interest were recognised and protected or, where appropriate, investigated before development took place.

## **RESOLVED**

**The Forum NOTED the report to the Community Services Policy Advisory Group and the outcomes from it.**

## **7 HERITAGE PROTECTION REVIEW**

Members received a report of the Senior Archaeological Officer, which introduced a presentation by Paul Stamper from English Heritage on the national Heritage Protection Review. The government was planning to implement a major reform of the protection system, which had been split into two parts; a short-term package, which had commenced in April 2005, and a longer-term package, which would require primary legislation. Mr Stamper advised members that the white paper on the Heritage Act was due Spring 2006.

English Heritage was holding a number of regional consultation seminars regarding the Review; the next one was to be held in Reading on 12 October. English Heritage and DCMS had produced a discussion document to be used at the seminars. The Senior Archaeological Officer would obtain a copy of this paper from Mr Stamper and distribute it to members.

It was anticipated that the review would lead to a new single form of consent regime. This would hopefully be an improvement on the current system, which was unwieldy and complicated.

It was planned that the new system would:

- Maintain current levels of protection
- Ensure appropriate stewardship but not act as a barrier to change
- Be more comprehensible
- Reduce bureaucracy
- Introduce a new integrated register of historic sites and monuments, which would be known as 'The List'. This would include a written element and GIS map information
- Introduce a system of two grades for everything
- Introduce explicit criteria for historic buildings.

It was noted that complex sites would have a two-tier entry on the list. The process would be managed by English Heritage. There would also be a local element, which would be compiled by the local authority, which would involve recording sites of local significance. Mr Stamper thought that the criteria for historic buildings would involve

more consultation with owners. Owners would be able to appeal and challenge the description against the criteria for new designations and re-grading.

Members queried the nature of the Appeal Body. Mr Stamper advised that the membership of this was not yet clear. He was asked if the list would make it easier to register sites, and responded that this was certainly the aim. The DCMS had stated that there were strong arguments for making local authorities the single access for consent. Mr Stamper had been advised that sites previously registered would be automatically transferred onto the list. Members were keen to establish how conservation areas would be looked at, and world heritage sites, under the new system. They were also interested to find out how the locally recorded information would be used in terms of protection, but these matters had not yet been finalised.

It was proposed and agreed that Mr Stamper should be invited to report back on progress with the Review to a future meeting of the Forum. The notes of the regional meeting in Reading would be circulated to members of the Forum in due course.

## **RESOLVED**

### **The Forum:**

- a**     **AGREED that the Senior Archaeological Officer should draft a response to the proposed new criteria for listing buildings**
- b**     **AGREED that the Senior Archaeological Officer and the Sites and Monuments Record Officer would scope the further work required to comply with the draft national HER benchmark criteria**
- c**     **AGREED on the need for the Forum to engage with the Heritage Protection Review in the key areas of the Unified Consent Regime and Local Lists.**

## **8 HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION REPORT**

Members received a report of the Senior Archaeological Officer and a presentation by the HLC Officer, on progress with the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Historic Landscape Characterisation Project.

The Officer explained that the project used map-based evidence to define areas through a digital mapping system. An underlying database provided attributes for the 55 different landscape types. The system showed the diversity of landscape and settlement morphology. It was possible to produce regressive maps. The system also used aerial photographs which were updated approximately every 10 years, ordnance survey maps and county surveys.

HLC could be used as a tool for the SMR and for academic research. It had also been used in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Study and in village design statements. A member commented on the role that HLC could play in the planning process, alongside ecological maps.

The Buckinghamshire project, which had commenced in 2002, had completed its mapping phase and a draft report was being edited before being sent out for external peer review. Members had been circulated with a list of proposed consultees for the report.

## **RESOLVED**

- a** Members **NOTED** progress towards completion of the HLC project
- b** **AGREED** the circulated list of proposed consultees for the draft report.

## **9 PROPOSED HISTORIC TOWNS SURVEY**

Members received the report of the Senior Archaeological Officer, which sought support for a proposed survey of historic towns to enhance the County's Sites and Monuments Record and management of historic urban areas.

The Senior Archaeological Officer explained that the survey would help define the character of market towns in Buckinghamshire and would help to inform management of the historic environment within its urban area. The Officer's report contained a summary of the national programme being carried out by English Heritage and of Buckinghamshire's proposals for a bid. Members were asked if they supported the idea of a Buckinghamshire Historic Towns Project in principle, and were circulated with a list of proposed towns to be included in the survey, for member's comment. The list was broken down into medieval and modern towns. No Roman towns had been selected as there were none underlying modern settlements.

Members thought the list was very well thought out. They commented that the towns of Wolverton and New Bradwell should be considered together. They queried how the funding would be used, and were informed that up to approximately £5k would be allocated for each town in order to undertake a detailed characterisation study. A member asked why West Wycombe had not been included in the list of towns. He was informed that places could only be considered to have been medieval towns if they had received a market grant, as well as meeting other criteria.

The following people were identified to form a steering group to work on the draft project design: Malcolm Godwin, Mike Farley, Jan Britton and John Brushe.

## **RESOLVED**

### **The Forum:**

- a)** **SUPPORTED** the principle of a Buckinghamshire Historic Towns Project
- b)** **COMMENTED** upon the long list of towns and the selection of those to be included in the study
- c)** **IDENTIFIED** Members and Officers who should be consulted on the draft project design, and who might be involved in a steering group.

## **10 EMERGENCY RECORDING FUND**

Members received the report of the Treasurer, which reviewed the operation of the Emergency Recording Fund. Members were advised that invoices had been issued. No definite calls on the fund had been made.

## **RESOLVED**

**The Forum NOTED the current status of the Fund.**

**The following reports were circulated for information.**

### **11 MILTON KEYNES ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER'S REPORT**

Member's received the report of the Archaeological Officer, Design and Conservation, Milton Keynes. Member's welcomed the news that English Heritage had agreed to fund a new archaeological post for three years in order that the Sites and Monuments Record could be updated to meet the requirements of an Historic Environment Record.

## **RESOLVED**

**The Forum NOTED the report**

### **12 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER'S REPORT**

Member's received the report of the Senior Archaeological Officer, which advised them of the work of the County Archaeological Service since the last BHEF meeting.

The Senior Archaeological Officer was pleased to report the good news that funding of £55k had been approved for the Solent-Thames Regional Archaeological Research Framework.

A member referred to the fact that Network Archaeology had been commissioned to carry out work on the Stoke Hammond Bypass. Problems had been experienced in the past with Network Archaeology not publishing reports on work carried out. The Senior Archaeological Officer explained that the County Council had not instigated their employment - the work had been sub-contracted through McAlpine. The Senior Archaeological Officer had met with the County Council's Highway Engineers and McAlpine, and it had been agreed that a high level of monitoring of the fieldwork and archive record being created by Network Archaeology would be required. The Senior Archaeological Officer assured members that the strongest possible safeguards had been put in place.

## **RESOLVED**

**The Forum NOTED:**

- a) the Service's Performance Indicators and contribution to national indicators BV 205 and 219**
- b) adoption of the Archaeology Enforcement Policy**
- c) progress with the Getting to Know Bernwood, Historic Landscape Characterisation, Monument Management and Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past Projects**
- d) recent development-related archaeological casework in the county and SUPPORTED the County Council and South Bucks District Council in**

**their efforts to protect the industrial heritage of the Great Western Railway**

- e) **progress in securing publication of archaeological reports.**

### **13 COUNTY MUSEUM REPORT**

Members received the report of the Keeper of Archaeology and Finds Liaison Officer, updating them on the work of the County Museum. The Officer reported on the appointment of Jamie Everitt, the New Collections Officer, who would be looking at regional archives and expanding storage space at the museum. A member asked if transferral of the location of portable antiquities finds to the SMR had taken place. The Officer advised that this had not yet taken place, but agreement had been reached to arrange for data transfer and processes for the transfer had been put in place. The timescale for the actual transfer was unclear.

#### **RESOLVED**

**The Forum NOTED the report.**

### **14 NATIONAL TRUST REPORT**

Members received the report of the National Trust Officer, who updated members on work at New Inn. Work was progressing slowly but the building had become very unstable. Emergency protection works had been put in place to resolve this. Architects had been commissioned to produce a Conservation Plan for the site. It was hoped that a measured survey would be carried out within the next 3-4 weeks. The overall plan was that the National Trust would raise sufficient funds to allow for New Inn to become the access point to Stowe Gardens.

#### **RESOLVED**

**The Forum NOTED the report.**

### **15 CONSERVATION OFFICERS' REPORTS**

John Brushe (South Bucks District Council) reported that work was underway at Dropmore on an agreed scheme, which would take 2-3 years to complete. The aim was to convert the mansion into apartments, and to create a new wing of apartments. Efforts were being made to ensure that the parts destroyed by fire were being rebuilt with integrity.

Anne Davies (Aylesbury Vale District Council) reported that the appraisal of Crafton Conservation Area had been completed and formally approved by Aylesbury Vale District Council. Work on the re-appraisal of the villages of Haddenham and Long Crendon had commenced. Repair work on a 'building at risk' at 12 Townsend, Haddenham, was nearing completion and had progressed very well. Work on another 'building at risk', Weir Cottage, East Claydon, had been completed and the property was now being offered for sale.

**The Forum NOTED the reports.**

**16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman paid tribute to the work of the previous Chairman of the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum, Mrs Cherry Aston. Mrs Aston had been committed to the work of the Forum and members were appreciative of her work in helping to protect the historic environment.

**17 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 29 March 2006, 2.30pm, Mezzanine Room 3

**CHAIRMAN**