



Buckinghamshire County Council

Minutes

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM HELD ON TUESDAY 25 MARCH 2008 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 3, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 2.30 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 3.32 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Members

Mr R Evans
Mr M Farley
Mr B Giggins
Mrs V McPake
Mr R Pushman (Chairman)
Mr F Robinson OBE

Organisation

Diocese of Oxford
Bucks Archaeological Society
Milton Keynes Council
Milton Keynes Council
Buckinghamshire County Council
Buckinghamshire County Council

Officers

Mr S Kidd
Mrs C Street
Mr B Thorn
Ms F Morris

Organisation

Buckinghamshire County Council
Buckinghamshire County Council
Bucks County Museum
Aylesbury Vale District Council

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Sir John Horsbrugh-Porter (Chiltern District Council), Hugh McCarthy (Wycombe District Council), Gary Marshall (National Trust), Julia Wise (Bucks County Council) and Sarah Gray (County Museum).

The Chairman welcomed Vanessa McPake (Milton Keynes Council), to her first meeting of the Forum.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mike Farley declared a personal interest as a former County Archaeologist.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2007 were agreed as a correct record.

4 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

5 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER'S REPORT

The Forum received the report of the Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Officer on the work of the County Archaeological Service since the last meeting of the Forum.

The Officer highlighted the fact that the County Archaeological Service was having to recover a proportion of the cost of archaeological planning advice currently provided free of charge to the District Councils, as the Service's income target had been increased. South Bucks District Council had indicated a favourable response when approached on this subject but there had been no reply from any of the other District Councils. In response to a query from the Chairman, the Officer confirmed that the County and District's Pathfinder initiative was not part of the discussions, at this stage.

The Officer was pleased to inform Members that £100k Growth Area Funding had been secured for the Quarrendon Leas ancient monument site. The Quarrendon Working Party had been established to safeguard the site.

The Officer advised that the Historic Towns Project was moving forward and had received funding mainly from English Heritage with further support from Buckinghamshire County Council and Milton Keynes Council. A Steering Group had been formed to support the Project and was due to meet that Friday.

RESOLVED

The Forum NOTED:

- a The resource issues raised by the County Council's Medium Term Plan**
- b The Service's Performance Indicators and contribution to national indicators BV 205 and 219**
- c Progress with Quarrendon Leas, the Bucks Historic Towns Project and other strategic projects**
- d Proposed amendment to the environmental policy of the Wycombe Local Development Framework**
- e Recent archaeological fieldwork**
- f Progress in securing publication of archaeological reports.**

6 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD

The Forum received the report of the County Archaeologist and Historic Environment Record (HER) Officer. The report presented the final version of the HER Scoping Report and related BCC decision to change the name of the Sites and Monuments Record.

It was noted that progress with the new HER system was subject to confirmation of District Council contributions to the planning advisory service referred to under the last agenda item. The HER Scoping Report's conclusion was that the preferred option for the future was to operate the HER through Service Level Agreements.

The Officer advised that an IT appraisal was needed to look at IT options and funding for improved access to the HER. It might be possible for the funding for the IT appraisal to be found from within the County Archaeological Service's budget – but the political will from all the Councils would be required to ensure the success of the initiative.

It was agreed that a letter should be sent to the District Council's on behalf of the Forum, advising them of the recommendations that the Forum had agreed in relation to the HER.

The Chairman paid tribute to work of the Officers in compiling a thorough and informative report. The Member from Milton Keynes Council was particularly keen to hear more about progress with the resident's panels, and expressed an interest in receiving a copy of the monthly publicity focused around the 'Site of the Month. The Officer advised that monthly publicity information was published on the BCC website.

RESOLVED

The Forum:

- 1 ENDORSED the HER Scoping Report as a basis for prioritising HER development work and negotiations between the County and District Councils over implementation of the proposal in the Heritage White Paper for Historic Environment Records to be accorded statutory status.**
- 2 AGREED that a letter should be sent to the District Council on behalf of the Forum, advising them of the recommendations that the Forum had agreed in relation to the HER.**

7 COUNTY MUSEUM REPORT

The Forum received reports by the Keeper of Archaeology and the Finds Liaison Officer at the County Museum.

A Member asked if the Museum was likely to be able to raise funds to acquire the hoard of Iron Age gold coins referred to in the report. The Officer thought the prospect of raising the funds was fairly good. It was estimated that the cost would be approximately £25k. The museum had three months to raise the money and had several bodies that it could approach for this.

Members were informed that the major archaeological exhibition planned for 2010 was to be run by the Museum with Bucks Archaeology Society, who would be launching a book at the same time.

RESOLVED

The Forum NOTED the reports of the Keeper of Archaeology and the Finds Liaison Officer at the County Museum.

8 METAL-DETECTING

The Forum received the report of the County Archaeologist, which sought member's views on the interpretation and application of national policy on metal-detecting in order to better advise relevant bodies.

The Officer reported that there had been several requests for advice on metal detecting recently. National guidance had been developed for metal detecting by the DCMS and Heritage Lottery, and the Council for British Archaeology. Although the guidelines had many features in common, there were differences which made giving advice a complex issue.

The Officer advised that sometimes metal detectors targeted areas of interest and caused damage to earthworks sites leading to a loss of historical information. This

could cause conflict between the right to carry out metal detecting and concerns about conserving areas of archaeological value.

Members discussed whether it would be better to concur with the national guidance already in existence, compile a locally agreed interpretation of national policy, or develop a local policy. It was thought that the most useful way forward would be to compile the locally agreed interpretation of national policy. The County Archaeologist agreed to put together a draft and circulate this to members for comment. The Chairman suggested that the issue should be brought to the attention of the Rural Forums.

RESOLVED

The Forum AGREED that a locally agreed interpretation of national guidance on metal detecting should be compiled.

9 MILTON KEYNES ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER'S REPORT INCLUDING MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL HERITAGE STRATEGY

The Forum received the report of the Senior Archaeological Officer and Archaeological Officer, Design and Conservation, Milton Keynes Council, informing members of current archaeological matters in Milton Keynes.

Highlights included excavations near the Radcliffe School, Wolverton and to the north of Broughton Village. The Officer was pleased to advise that a heritage centre was to open in Milton Keynes shopping centre in May – this would be able to house a number of small displays.

The Officer reported that the HER audit was almost complete, and the Council's Heritage Development Officer was in the process of developing Milton Keynes Heritage Strategy as part of the Council's Cultural Strategy.

A very successful Council Archaeology Day had been hosted by Milton Keynes Council on 17 November 2007, and was to be followed up by a successor event on 15 November 2008.

RESOLVED

The Forum NOTED the report.

10 NATIONAL TRUST REPORT

The Forum received the report of the National Trust Officer, which advised members of the recent work of the Trust.

A member advised that progress had taken place regarding plans to run an excavation and survey project in the grounds of Boarstall Tower as part of National Archaeology Week 12-20 July 2008. Bucks Archaeology Service had provided some funding for the event, which would take the form of an Open Day. The event would also be promoted by the County Archaeological Service.

RESOLVED

The Forum NOTED the report.

11 CONSERVATION OFFICER'S REPORTS

The Conservation Officer from **Aylesbury Vale District Council** reported:

- The conservation area application for Bierton and Dinton had been reviewed and a new design put forward
- Other conservation area applications expected included Haddenham, Long Crendon and Maids Moreton
- Brook House was in the process of being sold.

The Milton Keynes Archaeological Officer on behalf of the Conservation Officers for **Milton Keynes** reported:

- The conservation area review for Wolverton was nearly complete
- The application for Broughton was underway
- Future reviews included Olney, Newport Pagnell and Calverton
- The small conservation team was stretched to capacity.

Members noted that there had been a change of staffing at Wycombe District Council. Martin Andrews was now working part-time – other staff were assisting with conservation work at WDC.

Mike Farley advised that the Bucks Archaeology Service was seeking to fund interest in historic buildings that were pertinent to the growth of the Historical Environment Record.

12 EMERGENCY RECORDING FUND

The Forum received the report of the County Archaeologist / Treasurer, which reviewed the operation of the emergency recording fund. The current balance was £8,250, which members considered to be a reasonable reserve. Members were reminded that the purpose of the fund was to facilitate the recording of unexpected archaeological discoveries.

RESOLVED

Members NOTED the report.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

14 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 24 September 2008, 2.30pm, Mezzanine Room 3, County Hall, Aylesbury.

CHAIRMAN