

# Minutes

## *BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM*

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2009 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 2.30 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.17 PM.**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

#### **Members**

Mr C Cashman  
Mr R Evans  
Mr M Farley  
Sir J Horsbrugh-Porter  
Mrs B Jennings  
Mrs V McPake  
Mr R Pushman (Chairman)

#### **Organisation**

Aylesbury Vale District Council  
Diocese of Oxford  
Bucks Archaeological Society  
Chiltern District Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
Milton Keynes Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council

#### **Officers**

Mr M Andrew  
Mr N Crank  
Ms J Foster  
Mr S Kidd  
Ms K MacDonald  
Mr B Thorn  
Ms J Wise

#### **Organisation**

Wycombe District Council  
Milton Keynes Council  
Aylesbury Vale District Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
Bucks County Museum  
Buckinghamshire County Council

### **1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

#### **RESOLVED**

That Mr R Pushman be elected as Chairman of the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum for the ensuing year.

**Mr R Pushman in the Chair.**

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

Apologies were received from Gary Marshall, Sue Polhill and Chris Welch.

The Chairman advised the Forum that County Councillor Francis Robinson did not stand



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



for re-election at the County Council elections held in June, which resulted in a County Councillor vacancy on the Forum. The Chairman welcomed County Councillor Brenda Jennings as the new Member of the Forum.

### **3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Brenda Jennings declared a personal interest as she was a Member of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society.

Richard Pushman declared a personal interest as he was a Member of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society.

### **4 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2009 were confirmed.

### **5 MATTERS ARISING**

Sandy Kidd advised that at the previous meeting he had asked if Members would like to receive a presentation on the Solent-Thames Research Frameworks Project. The Officer advised that this project was not moving forward at the moment and suggested that this item be deferred to another meeting of the Forum subject to the progress of the project.

**The Forum AGREED to defer the item to a future meeting.**

### **6 PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 15: CONSULTATION**

Members had received a report from Sandy Kidd, County Archaeologist.

The Officer advised that the proposed new Planning Policy Statement 15 (PPS 15) is a key element of the non-statutory reforms and that it was accompanied by a draft Practice Guide issued by English Heritage. He said that the overall purpose of the PPS 15 aims to provide a more strategic and focussed national policy framework. Its key features include:

- Updates policy to reflect changes to the planning system.
- An emphasis on recognising and protecting what is deemed 'significant' about heritage assets and retaining existing levels of protection. Developers will be expected to assess 'significance' before submitting applications.
- Places greater emphasis on locally significant assets and consulting the local community
- Aims for closer integration with other objectives of the planning system; notably place-shaping, economic regeneration and addressing climate change.

The Forum was advised that there are 'demolition tests' to see if removal of an asset is justified. Resource implications and difficulties for some two tier authorities were also highlighted. The Officer advised the Forum that a fully integrated HER would cost approximately £60k to set up and approximately £10k a year to maintain.

The Officer tabled a report at the meeting 'Draft Buckinghamshire County Council PPS 15 Consultation response'. The Forum discussed the suggested responses and made the following comments:

- Members commented that point 5 and 7 were important and that they were glad those responses had been included.
- Milton Keynes will be submitting a response. The Cabinet Member for Milton Keynes commented that the Home and Communities Agency (HCA) can give planning permission. She said that would like the principles to apply to a government quango as outline planning permissions are often out of their hands.
- Buckinghamshire Archaeology Society will also be making a submission.

Sandy Kidd said he would prepare some comments and include a general comment with key points to look at. Julia Foster said AVDC will be responding with reference to the Historic Buildings side. Sandy Kidd invited Members to forward comments on the key points or on the Historic Buildings aspect.

It was noted that a response will be sent from Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire County Council, Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum and other district councils.

**The Forum commented on matters of interest and concern and authorised the Chairman to submit comments to DCLG and English Heritage reflecting those concerns.**

## **7 HERITAGE AT RISK: UPDATE**

Members had received a report from Sandy Kidd, County Archaeologist.

The report updated the Forum on the outcome of English Heritage's Heritage at Risk survey of 2008.

The report updated the Forum on the current situation in Buckinghamshire compared to the averages for the South East and England. The report supplements the information received by Members at the March meeting as the list of specific at risk assets was confidential at the time of the last meeting but is now available. Members were invited to note the conclusions of the survey.

Members discussed the Heritage at Risk 2009 survey. A Member commented that they were unable to ascertain from English Heritage regarding what criteria they were looking for when conservation areas were deemed to be 'at risk'. Another Member commented that some Council's were not aware that the survey was to be published.

### **RESOLVED**

**The Forum NOTED the report.**

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

The Forum received the report of the County Archaeologist, Sandy Kidd on the work of the County Archaeological Service since the last meeting of the Forum.

The Officer highlighted that after a dip last year there had been a noticeable return in case work, which was close to normal levels of activity.

The Buckinghamshire HER website came second in a national web-based poll of online historic environment records. The site has approximately 4000 users a year compared to approximately 150 personal visits to see the HER a year. The high numbers of website users highlights the value of the website.

The service has handled a large number of planning applications mainly within the Aylesbury Vale area.

Members discussed the completed restoration of Brill Windmill and the Officer highlighted that a group has been convened to help raise funds for restoration of Coombe Hill Monument. The Langley Park Restoration Project is well underway focussing on works to the Rhododendron Garden, new paths and the Lake.

## **RESOLVED**

**The Forum NOTED the report and AGREED the proposed actions.**

## **9 COUNTY MUSEUM REPORT**

Members had received the report of Ros Tyrell, Finds Liaison Officer.

Members discussed the report and how they could advertise the County Museum better and to increase awareness of all County Councillors of the Service. Brett Thorn advised that as part of promoting the museum, tours including behind the scenes tours were organised. Members discussed the possibility of holding an exhibition at the museum which County Councillors could be invited to. It was agreed that this be considered later in the future directions/Initiatives agenda item.

A Member thanked Ros Tyrell for their time and commitment to Treasure Finds.

The Forum was advised that the Portable Antiquities Scheme is 90% funded nationally and that the Finds Liaison Officer is 90% funded by the British Museum.

The report from Brett Thorn, Keeper of Archaeology, Buckinghamshire County Museum was tabled at the meeting.

The report advised that the museum is currently planning a major archaeological exhibition for 2010, to run from March to July. We are hoping to borrow from the British Museum some key items from the county, some of which have never been displayed here, including part of the Taplow Anglo-Saxon burial, the very fine Roman glass from Radnage, and the hoard of Late Bronze Age gold torcs from Milton Keynes.

## **RESOLVED**

**The Forum NOTED the reports.**

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

Members had received a report from the Archaeological Officer, Conservation and Archaeology, Milton Keynes.

The Officer informed the Forum of the name change of the service from Design and Conservation to Conservation and Archaeology.

The report, which included photographs, highlighted three excavations: Manor Farm Quarry, Wolverton, Passenham Quarry, Calverton and Brooklands, Broughton.

The Officer highlighted that the 'Cursus' at Wolverton was the first for the County. A

Member enquired what a cursus was and the Officer informed that it was two parallel ditches, which were over 300m. There is much mystery around cursus and it is not known what they were used for. It was commented that this is Buckinghamshire's first link to Stonehenge. Samples for radiocarbon and Optically Stimulated Luminescence dating have been taken.

The Passenham Quarry, Calverton excavations have focussed on the continuation of the Iron Age pit alignment alongside the discovery and excavation of a substantial stone-built Romano-British 2<sup>nd</sup> C AD mortuary structure which was filled with cremated remains.

In Broughton excavation of five areas as part of the Brooklands expansion area has revealed early Iron Age to late Romano-British occupation.

The Officer advised that Milton Keynes Council has been awarded a grant from English Heritage to enable the HER records to be made available online via the national Heritage Gateway web portal before the end of the year.

A Member enquired how the Council was managing the HER since the previous officer had retired. The Officer advised that there was a backlog but that this had been mitigated to some extent due to the poor economic situation reducing the number of fieldwork reports submitted.

The Officer informed the Forum that Milton Keynes Council had organised an Archaeology Day and invited Members of the Forum to attend.

## **RESOLVED**

**The Forum NOTED the report.**

### **11 NATIONAL TRUST REPORT**

Gary Marshall, National Trust Archaeologist, Thames and Solent Region was unable to attend the meeting. A report was tabled at the meeting.

## **RESOLVED**

**The Forum NOTED the report.**

### **12 CONSERVATION OFFICER'S REPORTS**

#### **Aylesbury Vale**

The conservation area review priority list has been amended. Settlements have been identified in the Core Strategy and district wide management plan, which has been completed but not yet published.

Aylesbury Vale Conservation Officer Anne Davies is currently off sick and is unlikely to return before the end of October 2009.

#### Rookery Farm, Ludgershall.

An application was submitted to demolish the listed building. The Council did not feel the building justified demolition and the application was refused. The decision was appealed and went to a public enquiry. As a result the appellants withdrew the appeal and the Council are now working with the owners to save the building.

### Woolpack Public House

Officers worked with the owners and encouraged them to use professional advisors for the restoration. The public house is aiming to re-open at the end of October 2009. It was noted that the building has 16<sup>th</sup> Century origins and that the fire destroyed much of the ground floor area and the adjacent thatched building.

Buildings at risk officer, (Lorraine Carter)'s contract has expired.

### **Chiltern**

Within Chesham conservation area Officers are currently dealing with a planning application for a casino in a grade II listed building.

### **Wycombe**

Two buildings have been added to the register of listed buildings. Both buildings are modern; Lyde End, which was designed by Paul Collinge and a modernistic church in the grounds of Fawley Court.

Permission has been granted to restore High Wycombe Station to its original Brunel designed form.

The Council have received a letter from British Telecom (BT) informing them that BT are handing over responsibility of the boxes to Parish Councils with the District Councils as administrators and facilitators. The Council are in the process of identifying iconic phone boxes and in discussions with the Parish Councils regarding taking over the phone boxes.

## **13 EMERGENCY RECORDING FUND:**

Members had received the report by Sandy Kidd on the Emergency Archaeological Recording Fund.

The Officer advised that he would need to confirm the position of the Fund at the next meeting.

### **RESOLVED**

**The Forum NOTED the report.**

## **14 FUTURE DIRECTIONS/INITIATIVES**

The Forum had received the report of the County Archaeologist, the purpose of which was to inform the Forum on the English Heritage guidance on Overview and Scrutiny and consider its future priorities.

Members discussed the following:

- Possibility to tie in with an exhibition at the museum
- How the profile of the historic environment could be raised and how is the authority purporting to deal with key historic assets for the future.

Sandy Kidd suggested that Members think of some ideas for a conference, which may include short talks, issues around conservation and consider other issues around how we address the Historic Protection Reform assuming the introduction of Policy Practice Statement 15 (PPS 15) and for these to be discussed at the next meeting of the Forum.

Implications of addressing PPS 15 was also raised and how to implement this as a whole in a two tier area. It was highlighted that this requires a joined up approach between County and District Councils. Members were asked to consider this issue and feedback any comments to Sandy Kidd.

The Chairman advised that in his role as Chairman of Buckinghamshire County Council he holds a series of receptions and suggested this may be an opportunity to exhibit some display boards such as for the County Museum, or the possibility to display in the main reception at County Hall. Members were advised to contact Joe Bradshaw, Executive Assistant to the Chairman of Buckinghamshire County Council.

## **RESOLVED**

**The Forum NOTED the report.**

### **15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The possibility of holding a future meeting at Bletchley Park was discussed.

### **16 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Forum is to be held on Wednesday 10 March, 2.30pm, Mezzanine Room 2, County Hall, Aylesbury

- Wednesday 22 September, 2.30pm, Mezzanine Room 1

**CHAIRMAN**