

Minutes

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10 MARCH 2010 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 2.30 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.14 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Members

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

Organisation

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

Officers

Mr M Andrew
Mr S Kidd
Mr B Thorn
Ms J Wise
Ms K MacDonald
Mr N Crank
Ms M Miller
Mr R McDonald
Ms E Hands
Mr S Peart

Organisation

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

Aylesbury Vale District Council
Aylesbury Vale District Council
Milton Keynes Council

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Brenda Jennings and Hugh McCarthy.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 10 March 2010 were confirmed subject to the



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



following change:

Page 4, Agenda Item 9, The Archaeological Service in Milton Keynes has changed its name to the Conservation & Archaeology Team and therefore line 1 should read "Members received a report from the Conservation and Archaeology Team, Milton Keynes".

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Members were advised that in relation to the Heritage Protection Reform a project review meeting had been arranged for April 2010. The Officer also informed the Forum that the current position for Planning Policy Statement 15: Consultation could be published around Easter but that there was uncertainty due to the General Election.

The 'Illustrated History of Early Buckinghamshire' book was circulated at the meeting for Members and it was commented that this was a positive piece of work.

Mr Kidd highlighted that he may put forward the ruin Church in Quarrendon as a site at risk.

5 CONSERVATION AREA POLICY

Members had received a report from Emilia Hands, Conservation Officer, Aylesbury Vale District Council.

The AVDC Conservation Areas Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been prepared to provide additional guidance to parties about the interpretation and application of the Council's Conservation Area policies. The Conservation Area SPD explains the policy framework for this guidance and summarises the process by which Conservation Area within Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) are designated, appraised, monitored and managed.

The draft supplementary planning document is available on the AVDC website or can be accessed via the following link:

<http://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/search/?s=a&k=SPD>

The SPD forms part of the emerging AVDC Local Development Framework, (LDF) and acts as an important linking document between the LDF policies and AVDC's Conservation Area Appraisals, Management Plans and associated documents.

The Conservation Area Management Plan - District Wide Strategy is a document produced by consultants for AVDC.

The Officer informed the Forum that there is a District wide Conservation Management Plan which has been produced by consultants on behalf of AVDC and said it is a working document that provides short, medium and long term programmes for addressing generic management issues in the Conservation Areas throughout the district. The document informs the Conservation Area Supplementary Planning Document and will inform the individual Conservation Area Management Plans which will be produced for each of the Conservation Areas within the district. AVDC received a grant from English Heritage. The Officer said Members should contact her if they required a paper copy of the document.

A Member asked if there was a similar process in other Council's and the Officer advised that she was not aware of any although all Council's have Local Delivery Frameworks.

She stressed that AVDC had fought hard for conservation. Milton Keynes did have a couple of area actions plans but said that these were cut for the core strategy and said that they did not have a linking document.

A Member asked if appraisals are underneath SPD as they had difficulty in getting a reference to conservation in their District Core Strategy.

The Forum supported the document and congratulated those involved in the initiative.

6 PROMOTING HERITAGE AWARENESS WITH POLICY MAKERS

Sandy Kidd, County Archaeologist, gave the following update:

Promotion of awareness amongst key decision-makers of heritage issues relating to both the historic environment and museums was discussed at the last meeting. An idea is for an event to be held at the County Museum to coincide with the museum's 'Human' exhibition to showcase the public value of heritage, and debate future heritage policy. There would be several speakers with a regional or national profile.

An event in mid June has been proposed and the Officer said he had been speaking with Sarah Gray, Bucks County Museum to try and co-ordinate this.

The Officer said it would be helpful for Members of the Forum to identify other opportunities for engaging with decision-makers and highlighted that The County Archaeology Services is to hold a training event for the Chiltern HLC Project with the Chiltern AONB as well as a series of promotional events for the Buckinghamshire Historic Towns Project which are being jointly organised with the District Councils.

The Forum was advised that the Milton Keynes Archaeology Day is to be held on Saturday 13 November 2010 10am-4pm, Milton Keynes Central Library.

It was commented that the aim is to try to attract high earners to Milton Keynes and that leaflets have been distributed to new developers and large employers with the aim to made contact with local businesses and gain support for Heritage.

An Officer made the suggestion of opening the event invitation to be held at Bucks County Museum to key businesses.

A Member suggested that the invite be extended to members of the Historic Churches Trust.

A Member asked how people are going to be targeted apart from the invitation and it was suggested that support may be needed from the Districts.

A Member asked if Chiltern Museum could contribute to Bucks Museum. In response an Officer commented that Bucks County Museum has contacts and commented that Chiltern Museum is private and that joint working was difficult as Chiltern Museum is a museum of buildings.

A Member commented that Bucks County Museum is difficult to find. He went on to say that there should be a signpost in town and that promotion of the Museum's existence was needed.

An Officer asked if the Forum was happy with the proposal and asked if Members would consider helping out at a stall.

The Forum AGREED the proposal.

7 MILTON KEYNES ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER'S REPORT

Members had received a report from Nick Crank, Archaeological Officer, Milton Keynes Council.

The Officer drew Members to the Archaeological events in Milton Keynes from July to December 2009

Members were informed that there had been 84 consultations in respect of archaeological matters between 1 July and 31 December 2009.

The Historic Environment Record was consulted by external researchers 13 times between July and December 2009.

In November a Heritage Theme was launched on the MKi Observatory website. This digital mapping resource includes Historic Landscape Characterisation, Viatores routes, historic fields and woodlands alongside building, monument and event data: <http://www.mkiobservatory.org.uk>

The Forum NOTED the report

8 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGIST'S REPORT

Sandy Kidd, County Archaeologist, gave the following report:

Use of the Historic Environment Record (HER) by direct enquiries remains at a modest level. Volunteers are continuing to make inroads into the remaining collections backlog.

A grant has been obtained from English Heritage to make Historic Environment Record (HER) information available across the national Heritage Gateway portal whilst at the same time the UBP website will be migrated to the new software compatible with that system.

English Heritage in partnership with the Institute of Historic Buildings Conservation and the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers is developing a strategy for HPR compliant HERs. It is envisaged that implementation of this strategy will take place between 2010 and 2015, subject to funding. In 2010/11 English Heritage are intending to invest a sum of £400k in assist HERs move towards full HPR compliance in England. The scheme opened for project proposals on the 15th February with a deadline of the 15th April 2010.

Members were advised that guidance has been issued and he talked Members through an extract of the guidance.

The Officer said that there are a number of possible projects and said that he would produce a report by February 2011 but that the focus would be on improving people's understanding and that it would be a desk based exercise.

The Officer said he would be approaching the Chiltern AONB for support for the proposal.

The Officer invited comments on the proposal and Members made the following points:

A Member suggested that the Farmers Union should be approached for support in

advance.

A Member then asked if the Forum needs to see any published outcome and the Officer said that there needs to be consideration about what can be achieved. There would have to be a report and a summary would also be desirable as the project must enhance the HER.

The Officer was asked if Milton Keynes could feed in to the evidence base barn and he responded that it might be possible to include Milton Keynes in this or to look at the possibility of a joint bid. The Officer said he would discuss with the Milton Keynes Archaeology Officer.

Action: Nick Crank to confirm with Sandy Kidd

The Officer advised the Forum that the scheme is sufficiently interesting to be of appeal to English Heritage as it is using established methodology. A Member asked if it would be better to target the project more and the Officer advised that this had been considered but that it was felt better not to keep it wider.

A Member asked if it would be more appealing to reach some agreement with Milton Keynes and in response the Officer advised that Milton Keynes have been unable to reach an agreement as present. The Officer said he would need to speak to English Heritage to see if they have been penalised or not regarding whether a different HER is required or if it is acceptable to be different authorities.

The Officer then went on to provide the Forum with an update of projects with a strategic, conservation and/or interpretation nature. This included the following:

Buckinghamshire Historic Towns Project
Chiltern Historic Landscape Characterisation Project
Solent-Thames Research Frameworks Project
Quarrendon Leas
Langley Park Restoration Project
Aylesbury Vale LDF Core Strategy

Funding has been secured from English Heritage for a popular publication and training day to promote the Chiltern Historic Landscape Characterisation Project. The publication is to be available for the training day on Friday 30th April.

The Forum was advised that the Buckinghamshire Historic Towns Project has not gone out to consultation as yet but that this would be happening shortly.

It was commented that two speculative plans had been received for the Aylesbury Vale LDF Core Strategy in Fleet Marston and the Quarrendon fields. The Forum was advised that Buckinghamshire County Council and English Heritage had recommended the Quarrendon application be refused. It was highlighted that the Fleet Marston application had been withdrawn but that the Quarrendon application had not yet been determined.

Draft proposals have been received by English Heritage for listing Cold War rocket research structures at the former Westcott Royal Ordnance Factory.

The Taplow Court excavation has been published by Oxford Archaeology, funded by English Heritage detailing the Bronze Age and Anglo Saxon settlement monument.

A Member commented that they would be interested in Windmill and asked if any information was available. In response the Officer advised she had seen only one

proposal for Bucks and said that the physical impact is modest but the visual impact is huge. Members were advised that English Heritage has guidance on wind farms.

Two new planning policies are out for consultation. They are not on Historic Environment but we need to ensure that Historic Environment is recognised in both of those and that we are consistent with what the Policy Practice statement says on these matters.

A Member asked if Officers are aware of the proposed link from London to Birmingham and highlighted the implication for the historic landscape.

9 COUNTY MUSEUM REPORT

Members had received the report of Ros Tyrell, Finds Liaison Officer and Brett Thorn, Keeper of Archaeology.

The new exhibition *Human* will feature at the County Museum from the 6 March until the 11 July 2010. *Human* tells the story of Bucks from the Ice Age to the Tudors through the people and objects left behind.

The Chairman congratulated the team for the wonderful exhibition and the very thorough survey of that period.

10 NATIONAL TRUST REPORT

Members had received the report from Gary Marshall, National Trust Archaeologist, Thames & Solent Region.

Stowe New Inn

Contractors are currently on site with restoration works scheduled to commence in early March 2010 with a completion date for the 6th June 2011. Demolition work has to be done before the restoration and reconstruction can start.

Stowe Gardens

There have been a number of minor 'interventions' into the gardens at Stowe, including digging of about 40 tree pits and excavation of a series of drainage trenches. Watching briefs are being maintained over all such excavations as they can reveal valuable information about the development of the gardens.

Boarstall Tower excavations

The archaeological report on the excavations undertaken in July 2008 has been sent to HER and is due for publication in March 2010.

25 High Street, High Wycombe

This building requires some improvements to bring it up to standards for a 21st century commercial tenancy. Improvements are required not only to the provision of services (water, electric, drainage) but also to ensure that the building achieves the best possible environmental standards. The Trust usually maintains a watching brief over such works, and in this case the work has revealed changes to fireplaces and window openings.

Buckingham Chantry Chapel

Works have recently been carried out to allow for the installation of a toilet in the building. The building has been taken back in hand by the Trust and is now run as a second-hand bookshop and café.

Clifton

Have been doing a conservation plan process which is due for completion end of March/beginning of April.

A Member enquired what the National Trust's interest was in Hartwell House. In response the Members was advised that the National Trust is the owner of the lease.

An Officer asked what the emerging proposals for the golf club at Stowe were. In response the Forum was advised that the Trust had acquired the Parkland and that the golf course was to be moved from the garden to the park landscape. He said that the plans of design had not been drawn up as yet. The Trust feels that the golf course is detrimental to the garden.

11 CONSERVATION OFFICERS' REPORTS

(i) AYLESBURY VALE

The following was reported:

The number of planning applications being received has dropped off but listed building applications have increased.

Work has started again in Prebendal Park.

(ii) CHILTERN

The following was reported:

With regards to conservation areas, the planning process takes into account the high proportion of green belt and areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONB).

(iii) SOUTH BUCKS

The following was reported:

The conservation area review process is continuing. Part of Farnham Royal has been declared a new conservation area and becomes the latest of 19 conservation areas in the District. South Bucks District Council has designated the area around Church Road to help protect its distinctive character and to celebrate the history of the village where life revolved around the parish church and manor farm.

It is hoped that the community of Stoke Poges can be encouraged to join in the process of the review.

Kingsmill cottage is to be included on the Buildings at Risk register.

(iv) WYCOMBE

The following was reported:

A timber war memorial at Wheeler End Common has been added to the list. It is one of very few memorials made of wood.

Malcolm Blanksbe has been appointed as Heritage Manager.

Work is being carried out on the High Wycombe conservation area appraisal.

A Member asked if restoration of the Brunel shed had been agreed. The Officer advised that this has been agreed and said that there are a number of leases to sort out but it is hoped that work will commence this year.

(v) MILTON KEYNES

The following was reported:

Milton Keynes has recently appointed as full time conservation officer that shall be responsible for the Bucks Archaeological Register

Conservation area reviews are ongoing

There are spare funds for Bletchley Park from English Heritage

The planning projects at Wolverton Park are about to be completed. There are two listed buildings which has resulted in a major re-generation scheme

Vanessa McPake advised that Milton Keynes Council are to invest money into their own Council owned Grade II listed buildings.

12 EMERGENCY RECORDING FUND

Members received the report of the County Archaeologist/Treasurer and were asked to review the operation of the emergency recording fund.

It was highlighted that the current balance of the fund was £8250 and that no contributions for 2010/11 financial year were therefore required.

Members NOTED the current status of the fund

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Roger Evans, Oxford Diocese, apologised for being unable to present a Diocesan report but said that he hoped to provide an update for the September meeting.

14 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Forum is to be held on Wednesday 22 September, 2.30pm, Bletchley Park, Milton Keynes.

CHAIRMAN

Note on the AVDC Conservation Areas Supplementary Planning Document:

Emilia Hands, Conservation Areas Officer, Aylesbury Vale District Council

The AVDC Conservation Areas Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been prepared to provide additional guidance to parties about the interpretation and application of the Council's Conservation Area policies. The Conservation Area SPD explains the policy framework for this guidance and summarises the process by which Conservation Areas within Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) are designated, appraised, monitored and managed.

The Council shares the objectives of the planning system to protect and manage the built historic environment. Careful management of new development and monitoring change within the District's Conservation Areas is crucial to ensuring the future preservation and enhancement of the historic built environment. The SPD is made up of four main sections :

Section 1

- Introduction and Purpose of the document

Section 2

- Conservation Area Review – setting out the Councils approach

Section 3

- General Principles of Conservation Area Management– setting out the broad approach to common themes in Conservation Area Management

Section 4

- Achieving the General Principles- setting out the advisory and regulatory powers available to the Council, and how local communities can preserve and enhance their areas.

The SPD has been out to Public Consultation since late January. The consultation ended on the 3rd of March and we have received some helpful suggestions from Sandy relating to additions to the document and minor amendments to wording.

We will be writing a report on the consultation responses and making the necessary revisions to the document soon. The SPD then has to be signed off by AVDC Councillors and formally adopted. Formal adoption cannot take place until the AVDC Core Strategy has been adopted. The earliest date that we have for Core Strategy adoption is September 2010, but this may happen later in the year or early 2011.

Other AVDC Conservation Area Documents:

The SPD forms part of the emerging AVDC Local Development Framework, and acts as an important linking document between the LDF policies and AVDC's Conservation Area Appraisals, Management Plans and associated documents.

Conservation Area Appraisals

Conservation Area Appraisals contain the written justification for designation. They are an essential tool within the planning process and are used to inform design proposals and planning decisions within a Conservation Area.

Conservation Area Management Plans

Due to the number of Conservation Areas within the District and the length of time it would take to produce management plans for each one, AVDC has adopted a two stage approach to Conservation Area

Stage 1: Aylesbury Vale District Wide Strategy (AVDWS)

The AVDWS identifies key management issues which are found throughout the District, and sets out short, medium and long term goals for their monitoring and management.

Stage 2: Conservation Area specific Management Plans

Individual Conservation Area Management Plans draw on the Conservation Area Appraisal and the AVDWS to provide detailed design guidance and identify the management issues specific to each Conservation Area.

In addition, AVDC have the following document which is not referenced in the SPD:

Model Strategy for Conservation Area Management Plans:

This document was written at the same time as the AVDWS, in partnership with English Heritage. It is intended to be transferable, so that English Heritage can distribute it to all LPAs to provide extra guidance on the preparation of Conservation Area Management Plans.

Project Proposal

HER21: Historic Farms and Fields of Buckinghamshire

Aims: To improve understanding of the distribution, character and condition of farm buildings and farming landscapes across Buckinghamshire, the recording of those assets within the County HER and awareness of their conservation priorities.

Objectives:

1. To map within the HER the character and survival of historic (i.e. 19th century or earlier) farms using the English Heritage Historic Farmsteads methodology.
2. To enhance the HER with information from the Chiltern Historic Building Group (Barns Survey), AVDC listed building condition survey and other sources.
3. Work with volunteers to explore the potential of record office research to define the extent of landholdings historically associated with selected farms.
4. Work with volunteers to undertake site visits to selected farms to ground-test the results of the characterisation survey.
5. To review and summarise the published literature on pre-modern farming practices in Buckinghamshire to identify distinctive historic trends, practices, landscapes and structures which can inform the significance of heritage assets.
6. To analyse farming landscapes through the relationship between farms and fields comparing farm characterisation data with Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) and historical documents to better understand a farm's historic significance, setting and context.

Business case: The modern county of Buckinghamshire is a relatively small administrative county (1500 km²) which nonetheless straddles three contrasting types of rural landscape. In the north (broadly Aylesbury Vale District and the northern extremities of Wycombe District) there is a planned clayland landscape of parliamentary and earlier post-medieval fields with nucleated villages with farms historically located either in the villages or dotted in isolation across the landscape. The north is traditional cattle-rearing country, although extensive ridge and furrow demonstrates the former importance of arable cultivation. Despite modern development pressures, large tracts of the north are still quite remote and rural by the standards of the South East of England. Across the centre of the county is the Chiltern AONB, an area of protected landscape with ancient field systems, commons and woodlands and a more dispersed settlement pattern. South of the Chiltern AONB the landscape of the Thames Valley has been so greatly affected by twentieth century development and related land use changes that agriculture is now for most part a marginal activity. Historically food production for the London market was an important economic driver across Buckinghamshire, but with different and changing emphases.

The Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service has successfully undertaken historic landscape characterisation projects for the county, the Chiltern AONB and the Colne Valley Regional Park. It is also conducting an extensive urban survey and contributing to the Solent-Thames Research Framework Project. The Buckinghamshire HER has a track record of investment in public engagement, most notably through the HLF-sponsored 'Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past' website and engagement in the Heritage Gateway project. 'Historic Farms and Fields of Buckinghamshire' would both utilise the expertise of the in-house team and also draw upon a wealth of wider expert contacts and partnerships built up over the past decade.

The particular business case for 'Historic Farms and Fields of Buckinghamshire' is therefore:

- The county straddles three distinct geographical zones with different historic and present day trajectories allowing cross-comparison
- The project will build upon existing characterisation projects which are integrated into the county HER and regularly used to inform land management, planning and conservation
- The County Archaeological Service has a proven track record of delivering comparable projects working closely with a wide range of partners.
- The project has the support of partners through the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum and Chiltern Historic Environment Group.

Method statement: The project would largely follow existing methodologies for farm characterisation developed by English Heritage and implemented by BCAS in the Colne Valley Regional Park (Beckley, 2007) but the work would be fully integrated into the HER from the outset, not undertaken separately and deposited as a 'stand-alone' dataset at the end.

Stages, Products and Tasks: to be completed

Project scope: The project will consider all documented farms with pre-20th century origins within the study area. A sub-set will be selected for documentary study and site visit.

At present there are just over a thousand farm buildings recorded in the HER, the majority of which will be listed. The number of 19th century farms in Buckinghamshire is not known but could range from one to three thousand - further assessment would be necessary.

Interfaces: Aylesbury Vale Buildings at Risk Survey
Chiltern Barns Survey

Proposed Project Team: to be completed

Estimated overall budget: must be <£40,000.

Project officer for 8-9 months

Expenses

Report

Project management

Consultancy? (historic farming/farm buildings specialist)

Estimated overall timescale: report must be submitted by 1st February 2011