

Buckinghamshire Archaeological Officers' Report

To: Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum

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A. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 To advise the Forum of the work of the County Archaeological Service since the last BHEF meeting.

B. PROPOSED ACTION

2 The Forum is particularly invited to NOTE:

- a resources and performance measures**
- b strategic issues and projects**
- c recent planning-related archaeological work**
- d progress in securing publication of archaeological reports.**

C. RESOURCES

- 3 The County's archaeological service forms part of the Planning, Advisory and Compliance Service's Environment Team within Place Services. Following the departure of Sandy Kidd in March 2013, Sheila Keene was appointed as Environment Lead Officer (June 2013), Sarah-Jane Farr as Senior Planning Archaeologist (July, fixed-term contract). Eliza Alqassar (Archaeological Planning Officer, part-time) returned from maternity leave at the end of September 2013; her post was covered from July 2012-August 2013 by temporary staff. Julia Wise remains as the HER Officer.

D. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4 Strategic Issues/Projects

High Speed 2 – Detailed comments on the Draft Environmental Statement were submitted to HS2 Ltd in early July 2012 as part of the County Council response. Concerns remain regarding the approach to

EIA and lack of any meaningful detailed archaeological and wider historic environment information and assessment. Comments were sent on a 'Draft Heritage Memorandum' consultation in September 2013 and the HS2 Blueprint V2 document, a County Council produced document which has gathered and raises particular local mitigation and compensation requests and may inform the County petitioning process.

Priorities for future **scheduling of monuments** in Buckinghamshire – four new scheduled monuments have been confirmed in AVDC since the last meeting:

- Crafton Deserted Medieval Village
- Medieval settlement of Eythrope
- Preceptory of the Knights Hospitallers, Hogshaw
- Moated site and section of hollow way 200m SW of St Michael's Church, Stewkley.

No further action has been taken on submitting c10-12 sites to English Heritage for scheduling consideration (from the list of sites circulated to BHEF after the last meeting). Comments would be welcomed on the sites listed in Appendix C.

Historic Towns Project – David Green is currently preparing a summary publication which should appear later this year.

6 Planning related archaeological work

| Volume measures | 3rd Quarter 2012 | 4th Quarter 2012 |
|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Total number of consultations handled | 142 | 130 |
| Number of planning applications handled | 101 | 94 |
| Planning applications responded to within 14 days (target 90%) | 73% | 38% |
| Number of development-related archaeological fieldwork projects | 27 | 10 |
| Success rate at appeal (target 50% annual success rate) | 0 of 0 | 0 of 0 |

| Volume measures | 1st Quarter 2013 | 2nd Quarter 2013 |
|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Total number of consultations handled | 110 | 100 |
| Number of planning applications handled | 78 | 83 |
| Planning applications responded to within 14 days (target 90%) | 82% | 45% |
| Number of development-related archaeological fieldwork projects | 11 | 9 |
| Success rate at appeal (target 50%) | 0 of 0 | 0 of 0 |

| | | |
|----------------------|--|--|
| annual success rate) | | |
|----------------------|--|--|

A full list of development-related fieldwork from July 2012 to June 2013 is provided as Appendix A.

Significant archaeological investigations include an early Roman ditched enclosure at the **South-East Aylesbury SDA** (Hampden Fields) in Weston Turville identified by geophysical survey and subsequently by evaluation trial trenching. The enclosure appears to have been a military site possibly contemporary with the construction of the Roman road of Akeman Street and may have continued in use as a villa. The contractors have produced an interim draft report but we have still to receive the final evaluation report. At **90 High Street, Marlow**, excavation to the rear of the existing street frontage building found a medieval pit with disarticulated human remains - parts of the skeletons of two adolescents. Backyard burial is unusual for a medieval town centre site so close to the churchyard, and radio-carbon dating of the bones will hopefully clarify whether these are earlier remains that have been reburied in the medieval period, or if we have a medieval murder mystery on our hands.

RAF Daws Hill, High Wycombe WW2 and Cold War Strategic Air Command Bunker has recently been listed at Grade II* along with an associated generator building listed at Grade II. At Westcott a number of Cold War missile testing structures have been listed at Grade II and II*.

7 Publication update (Appendix B)

Wessex Archaeology published their excavations at the Weedon Hill MDA (Buckingham Park) in the 2013 volume of Records of Buckinghamshire.

8 Historic Environment Record (HER) report

The HER performance indicator statistics are shown in the tables below:

| Performance Indicator | 3rd Quarter 2012 | 4th Quarter 2012 |
|---|--|--|
| Historic Environment Records data inputting backlog (targets: reports < 30 by March 2013) | Reports = 23 Collect = 516 Total = 541 | Reports = 27 Collect = 518 Total = 545 |
| | 1st Quarter 2013 | 2nd Quarter 2013 |
| Historic Environment Records data inputting backlog (targets: reports < 30 by March 2014) | Reports = 29 Collect = 518 Total = 547 | Reports = 38 Collect = 518 Total = 556 |

| Volume measures | 3rd Quarter 2012 | 4th Quarter 2012 |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | | |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Number of Higher Level Stewardship applications handled | 2 | 3 |
| Number of reports received by the HER | 64 | 14 |
| Number of Historic Environment Records enquiries handled: | 17 | 13 |
| commercial | 15 | 8 |
| non-commercial | 2 | 5 |
| | 1st Quarter 2013 | 2nd Quarter 2013 |
| Number of Higher Level Stewardship applications handled | 3 | 2 |
| Number of reports received by the HER | 9 | 40 |
| Number of Historic Environment Records enquiries handled: | 27 | 14 |
| commercial | 26 | 13 |
| non-commercial | 1 | 1 |

HER enhancement

Members will remember that at the last meeting I reported on progress with enhancing the HER's recording of historic buildings by inputting local buildings of note. This has now been completed for the whole county although additional records will be needed as new conservation area appraisals are produced.

HER volunteer recording projects

At the last committee meeting I reported on progress with a volunteer project to record war memorials in the HER. Nearly 500 memorials have been recorded by the two volunteers and data entry is now complete. The next stage is to visit the accessible memorials, photograph them and carry out a condition survey. Another HER volunteer is currently inputting records of milestones and mileposts – with 184 recorded to date and will soon move on to recording turnpike roads. A new volunteer has started inputting records of historic public houses, using surveys produced by the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society's historic buildings group.

E. BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Archaeological Reports submitted to the Bucks HER

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