

# Minutes

## *BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM*

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM HELD ON MONDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2015 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 2.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.30 PM.**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

#### **Members**

Mr M Farley  
Mr H McCarthy  
Mr W Whyte  
Mr R Pushman  
Mrs C Paternoster

#### **Organisation**

Bucks Archaeological Society  
Wycombe District Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
Bucks Heritage Champion  
Aylesbury Vale District Council

#### **Officers**

Mr B Thorn  
Ms J Wise  
Ms E Alqassar  
Mr P Markham  
Mr S Newell  
Mrs C Capjon  
Ms M Breen-Haynes  
Mr D Sutherland  
Ms S Farr

#### **Organisation**

Bucks County Museum  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
PAC Service Environment  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
Aylesbury Vale District Council  
  
Buckinghamshire County Council

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

Apologies were received from Nick Crank, Gary Marshall, Bill Chapple and Anne Davies.

Morwenna Breen-Haynes, Assistant Heritage Officer, was introduced as the new Aylesbury Vale District Council representative.

Carole Paternoster was welcomed as the new Member representative from Aylesbury Vale District Council.

### **2 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

### **3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



There were no declarations of interest.

#### 4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

##### *Membership of the Forum*

The Chairman would continue seeking representation from the Royal Institution of British Architects in Buckinghamshire.

**Action: Chairman**

##### *County Archaeological Service Report*

Mr Markham reported that whilst funding may be possible for individual sites, it was not available to support the Council's team. Consideration was being given to the potential of Service Level Agreements with the District Councils.

##### *Historic Environment Records*

The issue of access to the online database was raised and limitations of available capacity to update and maintain acknowledged. The potential to use prisoners or the amateur community was discussed but the need for staff supervision considered to be a limiting factor.

#### 5 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE REPORTS, OVERVIEW AND HIGHLIGHTS

Mr Markham presented his report (attached) to the Forum highlighting the following points:

- An HER Assistant post was to be advertised in the near future
- Ms E Alqassar was set to return from her secondment to Historic England in October 2015
- HS2 select committee was timetabled for October and discussions are on going
- DCMS had recently listed Flackwell Heath, Turweston and Chesham war memorials (all at Grade II).
- The Norman defensive ditch enclosing the town of Buckingham had recently been found during excavations behind Market Hill.
- A section through Grim's Ditch had been excavated by Chiltern Archaeology as part of an evaluation for a proposed housing development.
- An Iron Age Hillfort had been confirmed north of Long Crendon east of the Chilton Road by pre-application geophysics and trial trenching.
- A large scale development had been proposed which lay adjacent to the Magiovinium Roman Town scheduled monument.
- The archaeology team engaged with approximately 350 members of the public through various outreach and publicity events.

In relation to the Norman ditch in Buckingham, Mr Markham reported that evidence indicated the ditch was 11<sup>th</sup> Century but that he would keep the Forum informed of developments.

Mr Markham reported that archaeological assessment of the ditches in relation to the hill fort had identified iron age pottery. An application had now been received and advice provided. In response to a question, Mr Markham confirmed that scheduling of the site was not required as the development would leave the area intact, however this would be reviewed if plans changed.

In response to a question relating to HS2, Mr Markham stated that he understood work was still continuing in Camden and that further work was proposed.

Ms J Wise presented her report and updated members with the statistics, which were:

- In quarter one there were 30 backlog reports and 517 collections, totalling 537;
- In quarter two, 53 backlogs and a collection of 517, totalling 560.
- The number of reports received were 22 in quarter one and 29 in quarter two.

Ms E Alqassar presented a report on the Emergency Recording Fund, bringing members' attention to the fact that the fund had been depleted as a result of work on the roman casket burial. Ms Alqassar reported that the fund needed to be topped up to £10k and that the five Councils within Buckinghamshire had been approached for further funding. The Forum heard that Wycombe, Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils had responded favourably and Mr M Andrew confirmed that a contribution of £800 would be processed in the Council's next cheque run. Ms Alqassar reported that the Bucks Archaeological Society had been approached for a donation of £400 and that consideration was being given to seeking contributions from metal detection groups.

**Action: Ms Alqassar to update the Forum at the next meeting on contributions to date and the level of the Fund.**

## 6 HS2

Mr Markham updated the Forum on developments in relation to HS2. The Forum was told that the Commons Select Committee would be hearing evidence from Buckinghamshire for a week to a week and a half from the 12 October.

Mr Markham informed members that he attended the HS2 heritage sub-group which met monthly and that the group had raised issues & commented on documents throughout the process. The Forum was told that the group had been successful in securing amendments to documents which now better reflected best practice and the NPF. The work done to date related to high level documentation but it was felt this was important to ensure later site-specific documents included areas of particular importance. The sub-group would be considering the research and delivery scoping report and the community engagement consultation in the near future.

Mr Markham reported that he was meeting HS2 colleagues and the Leader in relation to petitioning and the issue of monitoring of archaeology. It was felt that the cost of additional work required should be reclaimed from HS2 and that these should be included in high level cost recovery documents published by the Council.

Mr Markham reported that there were currently approximately 20 listed buildings which could be blighted by HS2. HS2 Ltd was looking at each to address issues and would subsequently publish a shortlist at which point the Local Authority would be consulted.

Mr Markham confirmed that the next meeting of the sub-group would be during the week of 7 December 2015.

During discussion, Mr Markham confirmed that although best practice guidelines were available, they were difficult to find.

**Action: Mr S Newell to send guidance to Mr M Farley**

This issue of sub-works, contractors compounds and adequacy of HS2 land-take was raised. Mr Markham reported that work was being done to ensure these issues were raised and included within documentation.

The Forum acknowledged the importance of ensuring public access to sites during

archaeological work.

The issue of archiving was discussed and the Forum was told that there were currently two views, one for a single, digital archive, and one for local archives. Mr Markham said that it was likely there would be a mix of both.

In relation to timescales, Mr Markham told the Forum that once the Bill was approved there would be 4 years of intensive archaeological work including consultancy work, which would take up a large proportion of the team's time and risk resourcing capacity for the wider growth agenda locally. It was noted that there had been a growth in agencies in and around the County over the recent past, in preparation for HS2.

## **7 HER**

Ms J Wise explained that the HER Assistant position would hope to address some of the backlog issues raised by members. The Forum was told that the closing date for the post was 11 October and interviews would be held on 22 October. Ms Wise asked Forum members to circulate the vacancy to any interested parties.

In relation to strategic issues, Ms Wise brought members' attention to a couple of legal challenges about the provision of environmental information under environmental information regulations. Ms Wise explained that it was not clear whether HER fell under these regulations. The Forum was told that Buckinghamshire County Council supplies information under copyright licence through the reuse of public sector information regulations and the outcome of a forthcoming legal challenge in East Sussex may affect our approach in future.

In addition, Ms Wise reported that HS2 Ltd was challenging the Council's copyright licencing charges and specialist advice had been sought. The Forum was told that the outcome may have wider implications in relation to income generation and, as the HER Assistant was being funded through this, on the team's ability to plan longterm.

The currency of website information and mapping tools was acknowledged as a concern and Ms Wise informed the Forum that two pieces of work were being commissioned from software suppliers to address these issues. It was anticipated that the HER Assistant when appointed would enable more frequent updates to be made.

Ms Wise was thanked for the work undertaken.

## **8 QUARRENDON LEAS**

Mr R Pushman provided the Forum with a history of the project, highlighting particularly the challenge for the Trust of securing funding, the lost potential in not being entrusted with the whole of the Council's green estate, and delays in acquiring land. The Forum was told that the project had moved on, with the site acquired in April 2015 and a management plan being implemented by a management committee with members from a wide range of interested parties.

Mr Pushman told the Forum that currently the project was working on fencing the site; recruiting volunteer wardens; erecting signs; working with the local school; and developing a management plan for arable areas and sheep grazing. Mr Pushman also informed the Forum that an application for approximately £6-7k was being made to the Stewardship Fund.

In discussions, publicity options, an open day for early summer 2016 and parking & access issues were raised. A suggestion was made for an autumn workshop to consider

the vision for the site.

Mr Pushman was praised for the success to date of the project.

## **9 SCHEDULED SITE PROPOSALS**

Mr S Newell reported that as there was no possibility of all suggested sites being scheduled, the Forum should prioritise five sites to enable the team to produce detailed information for Historic England to take forward. The Forum agreed the approach and full discussions would be held at the next meeting.

**Action: Ms Wise to circulate with risk information**

## **10 LENBOROUGH COIN HOARD**

The Forum was told that 5248 Anglo-Saxon coins had been found in Buckinghamshire in 2014, one of the top three largest hoards found in the country. Mr B Thorn explained that 21 of the coins were currently on display at the County Museum.

Mr B Thorn advised the Forum that the Lenborough Coin hoard was likely to be declared treasure by the Coroner and in anticipation, the Museum was looking at raising funds for a potential purchase. To date over £5k had been pledged and Mr Thorn asked members to share the information and pass on any contacts that may be interested. It was noted that Buckingham Old Gaol had pledged a donation of £1000 and that three of the coins found in the hoard had come from the Buckingham mint.

In answer to questions raised, Mr Thorn confirmed that two independent valuers would provide a valuation based on information from the British Museum. The local museum and landowner would have the opportunity to comment on valuations before a final decision being made by the valuation committee. The Forum was informed that after this point, the Museum would have four months to raise the money and bid for the Hoard. Mr Thorn anticipated a six figure sum valuation.

## **11 ADDITIONAL REPORTS: HIGHLIGHTS AND QUESTIONS**

It was noted that a report from the Milton Keynes Archaeological Officer would be presented at the next meeting.

Reports from the County Museum and the National Trust were noted.

Ms Wise confirmed that contact had been made in relation to the Church Archaeology representatives and reports.

Ms M Breen-Haynes outlined the changes within the AVDC team. It was noted that Ms A Davies would be leaving the organisation in April 2016 and Ms A MacDonald would be returning to work 4 days per week in 2016. The Council was looking to see what further could be done to attract staff.

## **12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms E Alqassar reported that she and Mr S Kidd had been invited to make a presentation at the launch of the Solent Thames Archaeology Framework on 28 November in Reading.

Ms Alqassar also informed the Forum that Heritage England would be starting to charge for pre-application advice from 12 October.

**13 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

14 March 2016.

**CHAIRMAN**