

Minutes

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM HELD ON MONDAY 14 MARCH 2016 IN MEZZ 1, NCO, AYLESBURY., COMMENCING AT 2.05 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.30 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Members

Mr M Farley
Mr H McCarthy
Mr G Marshall
Mr W Chapple OBE
Mr W Whyte (Chairman)
Mr R Pushman

Organisation

Bucks Archaeological Society
Wycombe District Council
National Trust
Buckinghamshire County Council
Buckinghamshire County Council
Bucks Heritage Champion

Officers

Mr B Thorn
Ms J Wise
Mr P Markham
Ms M Breen-Haynes
Mr P Clements

Organisation

Bucks County Museum
Buckinghamshire County Council
BCC
AVDC Heritage team

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were given from Mr M Franklin, Ms E Alqassar, Mr S Newell, Mr N Crank and Mr D Sutherland.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests.

3 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Item 4: The Chairman reported that Mr M Franklin, representing the Royal Institute of British Architects, would be attending meetings in future.

Item 5: See Agenda Item 5.

Item 6: Mr Farley explained that no further guidance was required at this time.

Item 9: Ms Wise had circulated the information requested.

5 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE REPORTS, OVERVIEW AND HIGHLIGHTS

Appendix A

Mr P Markham introduced the report highlighting:

- that the Heritage Team had connected with over 1300 people through outreach work
- the projects currently ongoing
- that a part-time HTMLLO had been appointed
- that a lessons learned exercise from the Stocklake Road widening had been undertaken, and
- that SLA discussions with HS2 were taking place.

Mr Markham expressed concern that funding secured in relation to HS2 may not be available to the team to back-fill for capacity taken up by the project. The Chairman explained that from April 2017 when construction started, that there would be similar pressure on a number of teams within the Council.

Mr M Farley thanked the team for the work undertaken in Wing.

Appendix B

Mr Markham explained that there had been no new expenditure from the fund since the last meeting and that top-up funds had been pledged by all organisations bar AVDC.

ACTION: Ms M Breen-Haynes to progress within AVDC

Ms J Wise highlighted that the Roman casket burial found north of Whitchurch had been reported as good practice and reflected the good communication between officers, together with the importance of the Emergency Recording Fund.

ACTION: Ms Wise to investigate whether there are any outstanding issues relating to the find.

Appendix C

Ms Wise introduced the report. Concerns were raised about the accessibility of maps on the County Council's website.

ACTION: Ms Wise to seek resolution with ICT.

The issue of formatting of finds reports from officers was raised. Ms Wise explained that contractors were not consistent in grid referencing, and that the team sometimes had alternative interpretations of findings given their local expertise.

ACTION: Ms Wise to ensure all briefs for contractors included the need for shapefiles.

6 LENBOROUGH COIN HOARD UPDATE

Mr B Thorn updated the Forum on the Lenborough Hoard and made the following points:

- the Hoard was a large hoard of Anglo Saxon coins found in late 2014
- the Hoard had been declared treasure in November 2015, which meant that the Museum Trust had an opportunity to acquire
- if successful, the Hoard would be displayed by Buckingham, Milton Keynes and Bucks County Museums (although wholly owned by the County Museum)
- The full appeal would not be launched until the valuation had been agreed, but £13k had been pledged to date by local people
- The Museum Trustees had agreed to a part-purchase should the full valuation not be raised
- Should no purchase be possible, the landowner would be at liberty to sell the hoard to any interested party
- The Mint of Norway (a private company) had expressed a wish to acquire the hoard

In response to the Committee's questions, Mr Thorn confirmed that:

- Only a UK accredited museum could purchase treasure
- The Museum would have four months to raise the funds, which may be extended if funds were close to the purchase price
- In response to the trend of unapproved metal detecting on properties, Thames Valley Police had an effective heritage crimewatch officer but capacity was stretched

7 PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE NATIONAL HERITAGE DESIGNATIONS

(i) NATIONAL TRUST REPORT

Mr G Marshall provided a report from the National Trust which has been attached to the minutes.

8 MILTON KEYNES ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER'S REPORT

Ms Wise presented the report on behalf of Mr Crank who was unable to attend the meeting.

Members of the Committee were asked for their views on prioritisation of the long-list for possible designation by English Heritage, which were:

- Pullingship Wood, Medmenham
- Quarrendon I and II
- Quarrendon III
- Taplow Court
- The Rye, High Wycombe
- Manor Farm, Weston Turville, and
- Common Wood, Penn

Ms Wise explained that a second tranche would be proposed in 2017.

In response to questions and discussion Ms Wise made the following points:

- The existing schedule in relation to Quarrendon was out of date, which could cause difficulties at public inquiries
- Future communications would be made clearer with the Quarrendon Trust
- The Quarrendon site could be extended both to the north and south
- Landowners were not given forward notice of potential designated sites
- Sites which may be affected by HS2 would not be progressed until the HS2 Bill had been passed
- That no sites were currently at threat from local development plans
- Reflecting the interest on the site, Boarstall Decoy would be a priority for the 2017 applications
- That the last site scheduled by English Heritage in Buckinghamshire was in 2012
- That the WW1 trenches at Whiteleaf had not been included as there were better examples

AGREED: The Committee agreed the priorities for proposing to English Heritage as set out by Ms Wise

Ms Wise brought the Committee's attention to the proposal for Ritchings Park to be placed on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr G Marshall provided a report from the National Trust.
The Chairman requested feedback on the content and format of meetings.

ACTION: All members to consider current format and identify improvements for future.

10 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 19 September 2016 in Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury

CHAIRMAN

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Bucks Historic Environment Forum meeting

14th March 2016

National Trust report

Bradenham

With the assistance of the Risborough Countryside group the National Trust has been excavating and recording an exceptionally well-preserved 'bloomery' or iron smelting furnace in one of the ploughed fields at Bradenham near the Clare Charity Centre. This consists of a clay-lined shaft extending to a depth of 0.7m set within a larger pit which was used for tapping slag from the bottom of the furnace. The shaft shows evidence of several episodes of firing. 160 kg of slag has been recovered from the excavations, together with several sherds of pot dating from the 1st or 2nd centuries AD. We hope to be obtain more accurate dating via radio carbon dating of charcoal samples.

Stowe

Recent excavations (actually undertaken with a carefully guided JCB bucket!) have successfully unearthed evidence for gravel paths in the area known as the 'Western Garden' linking Queen Caroline's Monument with the east Boycott Pavilion. As with so many of the historic 18th century paths at Stowe the evidence consists of a bright yellow sandy gravel derived from quarry pits on the edge of the estate, laid to a width averaging 3.3m. Where it survives in-situ, as is the case with the Western Garden, it is possible to precisely relocate the path on its original alignment, though usually 20cms above its original height once the build up of later topsoil has been taken into account. These evaluation excavations usually throw up a few surprises and the Western Garden has proved no exception as we have found a mortared stone base beside Queen Caroline which probably marks the site of one of the British Worthies statues before they were relocated in the 1730s. Several stone, brick and clay drains have also turned up, suggesting problems of waterlogging were just as common in the mid 18th century as they are now. Unfortunately we have been unsuccessful in finding the stone base for a statue group known as the Roman Wrestlers but a wider spread of gravel coming off the main path probably suggests a gravel terrace created around this feature.

Current restoration projects at Stowe include the recreation of the early 19th century Coade stone Gothic Cross in the Elysian Fields and recreating the Circle of Dancing Faun with its attendant shepherds and shepherdesses in the Grecian Valley. This is part of a wider project to tackle 50 outstanding restoration projects within the gardens.

Cliveden

We have carried on employing the services of Oxford Archaeology to maintain a watching brief over repairs to the South Terrace at Cliveden. A key discovery has been a pair of inclined arches ascending from the roof of the sounding chamber under the terrace – we think these were probably light wells running under the south wall of the mansion to the sounding chamber. Restoration of the central staircase to the terrace was completed in December 2015. Major works proposed for 2016 are to dig up and renew the drainage on the top of the terrace. This will involve excavating a drainage run below the terrace where we know from previous excavations that there are substantial brick foundations, possibly for an earlier mansion. The services of Oxford Archaeology will be retained for this work.

Another current Cliveden project is the restoration of the 1890s generator house at Cliveden. Unfortunately the interior was stripped of steam generator sets and dynamos, probably in the 1950s, however, the recent clearance of the interior (generously assisted by members of Bucks Archaeological Society) has led to the recovery of parts of the original glass cell batteries and parts of the large marble screen on which the switch gear was mounted. The Trust are still considering options for the long term use of the generator house but public access will be an important consideration. Current proposals are that it could be used as a classroom or study base or exhibition space.

Gary Marshall
National Trust Archaeologist 8/3/2016