

Minutes

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM HELD ON MONDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2016 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 2.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 3.35 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Members

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

Organisation

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

Officers

Mr B Thorn
Mrs E Alqassar
Mr P Markham
Mr S Newell
Mr D Sutherland
Mr K Frost
Mr P Clements
Mr M Franklin
Mr R Oram
Ms S Griffin

Organisation

Bucks County Museum
Buckinghamshire County Council
BCC
PAC Service Environment

Aylesbury Vale

Royal Institute of British Architects
Oxfordshire County Council

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were given from Mr N Crank and Mr H McCarthy.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 14 March 2016 were agreed as a correct record subsequent to the following minor amendment:

Item 8 – Milton Keynes Archaeological Officer's Report

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

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Item 4 – Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service Reports

Emergency Recording Archaeology Fund

Mr Newell 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: Mr Newell to progress with AVDC

Roman Casket Fund

A member of the public had donated £1000 which had been used towards the urgent part of the conservation. A grant application had been resubmitted to the Haverfield Bequest for additional funding.

Accessibility of maps

The issue of about the accessibility of maps on the County Council's website remained unresolved.

ACTION: Mr Newell to seek resolution with ICT.

Formatting of finds reports

Members were advised that the problem with formatting of grid referencing had been addressed and the issue had been resolved satisfactorily.

5 PRESENTATION ON LIDAR

Mr R Oram, Archaeologist Oxfordshire County Council, was welcomed to the meeting.

Members received a presentation on the Light Detection and Ranging system (LiDAR), during which the following key points were highlighted:

- The Environment Agency pioneered the civilian use of LiDAR in the 1990s using LiDAR as a tool for creating cost-effective terrain models of flood risk areas.
- The use of LiDAR for identifying archaeological features had been undertaken within the last 15 years.
- Information from the LiDAR system was consulted as a matter of course as part of the planning information process at Oxfordshire County Council.
- Some mapping took place from LiDAR but a composite image also had to be produced.
- New sites identified by LiDAR included Nethercote DMV, Cornbury Park, Lee's Rest Hunting Lodge, Whitehall DMV, the North Wessex Down field system, Thame and Wytham Hall.
- The LiDAR had produced details about areas of Ridge and Furrow in Oxfordshire which had been useful in steering large housing applications from areas of

archaeological importance.

- The LiDAR system was initially used by the Environment Agency for their own purposes in terms of mapping out areas prone to the risk of flooding. However the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Conservation Board were undertaking a programme of LiDAR work using lottery Heritage funds.

The Chairman thanked Mr Oram for the very informative presentation.

6 THE FOLLOWING REPORTS ARE TABLED FOR INFORMATION AND QUESTIONS:

Members of the Forum received the following updates:

Buckinghamshire Archaeological Officer's report

Mr P Markham referred Members of the Forum to the report included with the agenda, from which the following key points were highlighted:

HS2

- Negotiations and advice were ongoing especially around the Service Level Agreement which was expected shortly.
- Schedule 17 applications were expected from October.
- There was a difference of opinion between HS2 officers and the Local Authority officers in terms of the amount of work that would be required.

Woodlands

- Excavation had recorded at least five archaeological sites of Iron Age to Roman date, of which three were significant settlement sites.

Eaton Leys

- The area for the proposed housing development in Milton Keynes had been trial trenched from which very little field information had emerged.
- Geophysics carried out further south had shown some quite important Roman remains.

New road in Weston Turville

- Excavations had shown the location of a possible roman tavern.

Stoke Mandeville (HS2)

- The church graveyard had been identified as a significant archaeological site. A heritage consultant had been contracted by HS2 to write a report about what was currently known about the site, what could be investigated and the appropriate method of investigation.
- Two other major graveyards had also been identified along the HS2 line.
- A meeting had taken place with members of the relevant Church bodies about the more recent interments and burials in the graveyard as discussions would need to take place with living relatives about the possibility of moving remains.

Mr Farley, Bucks Archaeological Society advised that Leicester University had expressed an interest in carrying out an ancient DNA project at the church in Stoke

Mandeville and that the idea of a legacy garden had been proposed where the remains and archaeological fragments from the church would be stored. Mr Farley also advised that a member of the Archaeological Society had partly transcribed the Parish register several years ago.

Emergency Recording Fund report

Mr S Newall, Environment Team Leader advised that there was money still available in the Emergency Recording Fund and that no requests for funding had been received since the last meeting of the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum.

Buckinghamshire County Museum report

Mr B Thorn, Keeper of Archaeology Collections, gave the following update:

- The value of the Lenborough Anglo Saxon coin Hoard had been officially confirmed at £1.35m. £20,000 had been raised by the Museum, Friends and Patrons as well as a further £20,000 locally towards the potential purchase of the coin Hoard. Grant applications had also been submitted to the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Art Fund, the Headly Foundation and the Rothschild Foundation for additional funding.
- A free exhibition of the Hoard and lectures at the Old Gaol, Buckingham had generated a large amount of funding and pledges. A meeting at Stowe House had also generated some additional pledges.
- The Mint of Norway, a private company, had expressed an interest in acquiring the Hoard, with the possibility of the collection touring around Scandinavia and the publication of a coffee table book.
- The Hoard had been designated as treasure and as the property of the Crown under the terms of the Treasure Act.
- The Act gave any registered museum the right to acquire the Hoard if the funding could be raised within a 4 month period. If funding could not be raised the Hoard would be returned to the individual to sell as they wished. There was the opportunity of the Museum acquiring some of the Hoard if all of the funds could not be raised.
- No extra security would be required as the museum already insured paintings of Hartwell House, which were equally valuable.
- A bid had been submitted for the re-development of the ground floor of the Museum. In the short term the display would be in the Georgian Room with the intention of the coins being displayed as part of the main lottery exhibition.
- In terms of the security for the storage and display of the Hoard, insurance indemnity was in place for the Museum and Hartwell House.

National Trust report

Mr G Marshall highlighted the following key points from the report:

- Restoration works on the 17th century south terrace at Cliveden continued.
- The restoration was being undertaken by Oxford Archaeology and had included major drainage works on the top of the terrace, across the two lawns at the ends of the terrace and on the parterre below the terrace.

- The original 17th century elevation had been uncovered behind the current structure as well as light wells in the chamber. The drainage work had also uncovered 17th century foundations which were thought to be the terrace from the previous mansion.
- Mr P Markham said that a well preserved Roman pottery kiln had been uncovered at Stowe as well as pits, ditches and a possible well, also of Roman date. The numerous findings had highlighted the significance of the landscape. A report on the kiln would be published on the National Trust website in due course and in *Records of Buckinghamshire* in due course.

Milton Keynes Archaeological Officer's report

Members of the Forum noted the report.

District Council Conservation Officer's report

Mr K Frost, Aylesbury Vale District Council gave the following update:

- The Heritage Team continued to be busy, with casework and requests for informal advice on historic building repairs, alterations and extensions, the team having received to date this year some 500 proposals for comment, which was higher than for the same period last year.
- The Heritage Team had recently undergone some major staff changes with Anne Davies and Julia Foster both having left earlier in the year. In the meantime Morwenna Breen-Haynes had been taken on earlier in the year as a Heritage Assistant, with Keith Frost having recently joined the team as Senior Heritage Officer. Emilia McDonald was also due to leave the Heritage Team in October, after 10 years with AVDC. As it stood the Management Team at AVDC were keen to ensure there continued to be sufficient staff for the work and were keen to see Emilia's post was filled when it became vacant.
- Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust had been hard at work producing some rather good research papers on various historic gardens (some designated, others not) around the County. AVDC have been sent pdf copies of the relevant studies for the Council's files but they were also available from [the Trusts' website](http://www.bucksgardensrust.org.uk) www.bucksgardensrust.org.uk

Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust report

Mr R Pushman gave the following update:

- There had been a small grass fire at Quarrendon Hills.
- A water pipe across the stream had fractured and had subsequently been repaired by Thames Water.
- The area had now been secured by a fence.
- The introduction of a Management Programme had not been possible as yet due to lack of resources. Dealing with breaches of the fence etc. was very time consuming and required extra resourcing.
- Extra full-time staffing is beyond us at the moment and would be wishful thinking!!
- Many thanks and kind regards

- The Conservation Trust had been obliged to take action in respect of the decline of the old church building. The church ruins had been formally placed at risk by Historic England meaning it would now be possible to access grant funding.
- Some income had been received from the Countryside Stewardship scheme and the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).
- Field work was planned during the coming winter months. The possibility of using the new school car park at weekends had been discussed as there was currently only an agricultural entrance which made access to the site difficult.
- The response to a flyer circulated about the membership of the Trust had not been as good as expected.

ACTION: Mr Pushman and Mr Farley to discuss the possibility of holding an open day to publicise the Conservation Trust.

7 WOODLANDS PROJECT

Ms E Alqassar gave a presentation on the Woodlands project, during which the following key points were highlighted:

- A planning application had been submitted for a major development area to the east of Aylesbury.
- Extensive trial trenching and a full coverage geographical survey had taken place. The results of the trenching were generally bearing out the results of the geophysics and any anomalies would be targeted.
- A large amount of bone, pottery, tesserae from mosaic floors and floor and roof tiles had been found which indicated the presence of at least one high status Roman building. The significance of the sites would be determined before any recommendations were made to Aylesbury Vale District Council.
- The excavation of the areas on Hamden Fields had been well covered. The proposed Roman site had been preserved in situ.
- There were no LiDAR overlays of the area but aerial photographs had analysed and officers were satisfied with the desk-based assessment that had taken place.

8 DISCUSSION OF PUBLIC OUTREACH WORK

Ms E Alqassar gave the following update:

- 5 public outreach events had taken place including a presentation on the role of HERs in Planning to the National Gardens Trust in March, a careers event at Thomas Harding Junior School, a display about Buckinghamshire's Horrible History at the Waterside Theatre to coincide with a week of Horrible History performances, a display about Romans in the Vale, and an open day in Stone.
- Forthcoming events included a presentation at Bucks Local History Network Conference on the 1 October and a presentation to the Association of Local Government Archaeology Officers UK and the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists on

standards and guidance in producing fieldwork project designs.

Mr Farley advised that the Buckinghamshire Local History Network Annual Conference 2016 would be held on Saturday 1 October 2016, 10am, The Oculus, Aylesbury Vale District Council Offices. The conference included talks on topics such as Human Activity in the Buckinghamshire Middle Thames from 10,000 BCE to Roman times, the evidence of Kingsmead Quarry, Horton and Researching the Iron Age and Roman landscapes around Aylesbury.

The Chairman advised that as part of Heritage Open Days, the Tower Block County Hall, Aylesbury Crown Court and the Judges Lodgings had been open for visitors on the 10 September which has been very well attended.

ACTION:

A document giving details of the history of the buildings would be circulated to Members of the Forum – Committee Assistant / Chairman

9 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC BUILDINGS TRUST

Members were referred to the briefing note giving an update on activities undertaken by Buckinghamshire Historic Buildings Trust from which the following key points were made:

- The Trust had an active small grants programme for projects in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.
- The rescue of a very dilapidated Grade 2 building in Newport Pagnell was current being undertaken.
- A Friends' of BHBT Programme was being created to give the Trust a wider base.
- A part time project officer had been appointed in May 2016, mainly to drive forward the Newport Pagnell project.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members of the Forum were advised that an all Parliamentary briefing had been published on the future of Government Archology Services, details of which could be found via the following links:

<http://www.appag.org.uk/>

http://www.appag.org.uk/future_arch_services_report_2014.pdf

ACTION:

Future Agenda items

- **An update on Cliveden Terrace – Gary Marshall**
- **An update on Bucks County Museum, Richard de Peyer, Museum Director**

11 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 13 March 2017, 2pm, Mezzanine 1, County Hall, Aylesbury

CHAIRMAN