

Minutes

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM HELD ON THURSDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2019 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 2.05 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.25 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Members

Mr W Chapple OBE (Chairman)
Mr M Farley
Mr C Harriss
Mr H McCarthy
Newcombe
Mr C Williams

Organisation

Buckinghamshire County Council
Bucks Archaeological Society
Buckinghamshire County Council
Wycombe District Council
Aylesbury Vale District Council
Natural Environment Partnership

Officers

Mrs E Alqassar
Mr P Clements

Ms L Lawrence
Levitt
Shave
Ms J Wise

Organisation

Buckinghamshire County Council
Buckinghamshire County Council - Historical
Records Officer
Buckinghamshire County Council
Aylesbury Vale District Council
Buckinghamshire Museum Trust
Buckinghamshire County Council

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Mr N Crank, Mr G Marshall, Mr M Petchey, Mr B Thorn, Mr A Wood, Mr D Sutherland and Mr P Markham

The Chairman gave his apologies for needing to leave the meeting at 3.30pm. Mr H McCarthy would step in as Chairman from that point.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3 MINUTES

The following changes would be made to the minutes of the last meeting:

- Ms E Alqassar's name would be corrected throughout.
- Under item 7 – “Scheduled 17 works- planning applications were outside of parliament and therefore not automatically covered by the act.”
 - The full name of act would be included - “HS2 Schedule 17 applications for works are not covered by the Phase 1 Act of Parliament.”

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2019 were AGREED as an accurate record with the above changes and signed by the Chairman.

4 MATTERS ARISING

The following points from the meeting held on 4 March 2019 were discussed:

Item 5 – HS2 update, relocation of grassland habitat.

- It was confirmed that the relocation site was large enough to include the requested 120% like for like replacement of habitat at just over 2 hectares.

Item 7 – Quarrendon, Aylesbury, site update.

- Ms E Alqassar, Environment Manager, Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC), had had no further communication about building works. Ms Alqassar would invite the Bucks Conservation Trust to report at the next meeting.

ACTION: Ms Alqassar

Item 13 - HBSMR-web and the archaeology web pages – query over link with Landscape First project

- Ms J Wise, Historic Environment Records Officer, BCC, confirmed she had been involved with the project but had not seen the recently circulated draft paper. Ms Wise would contact Mr D Sutherland, Head of Planning and Environment, BCC, for more information.

ACTION: Ms Wise

5 HS2 UPDATE

Dr D Hounsell, Fusion, gave a presentation a copy of which would be appended to these minutes.

Dr Hounsell highlighted the following areas:

- Updates on the sites in C1 of the programme.
- An overview of the upcoming actions for C2a and C2b sites.

The following points were discussed as a result of questions from members of the forum:

- Dr Hounsell stated the long house at site C2a North Portal, Great Missenden was approximately 8m by 15m with datable material from 7th Century.
- Dr Hounsell stated there would be further examination of a Roman farm at Doddershall deserted medieval village (DMV).

- A member of the forum asked what would happen to St Mary's churchyard in the event of HS2 being cancelled. It was felt there should be mitigation work to restore the churchyard as well as the publication of information gathered to date. Dr Hounsell would raise the issue with HS2 colleagues.

ACTION: Dr Hounsell

- There were concerns that HS2 had not been sharing findings with the wider public as promised. It was noted that no Historic Environment Records (HER) had been published in some time. Dr Hounsell confirmed that Fusion and HS2 were still in discussions as to what form the archive would take. Likely options were to use existing local storage authorities or to create their own central database. Following Heritage Sub Group meeting on 18 September Ms Lawrence would approach HS2 if there had been no satisfactory update.

ACTION: Ms Lawrence

- Dr Hounsell confirmed that Fusion would be working to a programme and did not expect there to be any changes to timescales if expected HS2 delays were formalised.
- Members of the forum asked that a representative from HS2 be invited to the next meeting so questions could be addressed directly.

ACTION: Ms Alqassar

RESOLVED: Members of the forum NOTED the update.

6 BEACONS OF THE PAST

Dr W Morrison, Chiltern Conservation Board (CCB), gave a presentation **a copy of which would be appended to these minutes.**

Dr Morrison highlighted the following:

- The Chilterns LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) Portal was now online at <https://chilternsbeacons.org/wp/>:
 - The portal contained data from a bespoke LiDAR survey of the Chilterns and some surrounding areas which was now available to view online. Dr Morrison had also presented Buckinghamshire County Council's Archaeology staff with a hard drive containing the data.
 - The survey was the largest LiDAR survey for archaeology purposes in the country covering 1400 km².
 - The project was seeking volunteers to review data flagging potential sites of interest. Free e-learning would be provided and anyone could join.
- Tier one projects:
 - Magnetometer surveys at Desborough Castle had been inconclusive. Natural England had been sympathetic to plans for trench work in 2020.
 - Work at Seven Ways Plain, Burnham Beeches, was ongoing with the support of volunteers.
- Education and outreach:
 - The CCB were in the process of building an online portal to support teachers with continued personal development (CPD) and delivering

- prehistory lessons. The aim was to promote the inclusion of prehistory on the National Curriculum and to provide accurate teaching resources.
- CCB were working with local artists to produce work based on the LiDAR survey.
- Various pop up and training events were planned.
- Events:
 - Chilterns Walking Festival, 5 – 10 October 2019.
 - Aylesbury Waterside Festival 14 September 2019.
 - Historic Routeways Walk, CCB - 13 October 2019
 - Grimm’s Ditch Walk, CCB – 16 October 2019

Dr Morrison agreed with Ms S Shave, Buckinghamshire Museum Trust (BMT), that she and colleagues would promote the Buckinghamshire Museum Trust’s own prehistory events.

<https://www.buckscountymuseum.org/museum/schools/our-workshops/prehistory-workshop/>

RESOLVED: Members of the forum NOTED the update.

7 NATIONAL TRUST UPDATE

An update had been received from Mr G Marshall, The National Trust, and circulated as a supplement to the agenda.

RESOLVED: Members of the forum NOTED the update.

8 BUCKS NATURAL ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

Mr C Williams, Natural Environment Partnership (NEP) gave a verbal update.

Mr Williams highlighted the following:

- The partnership currently had three areas of focus:
 - Ensuring all local plans addressed environmental issues and biodiversity offsetting. Included commenting on local proposals such as the Heathrow expansion consultation.
 - The Oxford/Cambridge arch proposal. The partnership had produced a map and environmental strategy for the ARC. Their proposal was currently out for consultation with five partnership agencies and would be shared once finalised.
 - Project work on:
 - River Ouse.
 - Parkland garden.
 - Aylesbury Garden Town woodland including the planting of black poplar trees.
 - Reopening Milton Keynes to Bedford canal branch.
 - Burnham Beeches.

The following points were discussed as a result of questions from members of the forum:

- It was confirmed the NEP and Ms E Alqassar, Environment Manager, BCC, had already spoken about the issues of pasture verses woodland and the importance of supporting the historic environment
- Local Area Plans would help to identify preferred areas of development. NEP would be asking for a 20% replacement of biodiversity along with carbon offsetting for all schemes either directly or via funding.
- It was confirmed the NEP would work within urban areas for example with the Aylesbury Garden Town (AGT) project. For AGT this would involve supporting the inclusion of wooded areas around the town, promoting green areas on new estates and joining green areas across different estates to form green walkways.

RESOLVED: Members of the forum NOTED the update.

9 CONSERVATION OFFICER UPDATE

Jo Horton, Aylesbury Vale District (AVDC) gave a verbal update.

The following points were highlighted by the AVDC officers:

- A review of the [Mentmore conservation area](#) would be out for consultation from Monday 16 September until Friday 8 November 2019.
- The [Little Horwood conservation area](#) review had been completed. Proposed boundary changes would go before AVDC Cabinet Members at their Council meeting on 18 September 2019.

The following points were discussed as a result of questions from members of the forum:

- Mentmore Towers – there had been proposals put forward for work on the tower but those were on hold. AVDC were currently working with the owner to ensure the building was watertight. There would be no further plans for restoration following the construction of the golf course.

RESOLVED: Members of the forum NOTED the update.

10 MUSEUM UPDATE

Ms S Shave, Director of The Bucks Museum Trust (BMT), gave a verbal update.

Ms Shave highlighted the following:

- Current exhibitions at the County Museum included:
 - Buckinghamshire prehistory.
 - Wildlife gallery.
 - How people live.
 - A new multi media guide based on Cecily Baker, one of the first curators of the museum, had been developed. The hard launch would be in the November half term however guides were already available on request.

- Building works to be undertaken included:
 - Improvements to the downstairs galleries which included the creation of a flexible learning space. Possible start date was March 2020.
 - Improvements in the Tudor rooms.
 - The wider museum would remain open during the works with individual areas being unavailable as necessary.
- BMT were actively developing relationships with members of the community who might not normally use the museum. To support this goal they had been hosting events such as:
 - Community Iftar celebrations.
 - Festival of Colour celebrations.
 - Festival of Light celebrations.
 - LGBTQ Pride (November 2019).
 - Touch tours for disabled visitors.

RESOLVED: Members of the forum NOTED the update.

11 MK UPDATE

Mr N Crank, Senior Archaeological Officer, MKC, had sent his apologies.

12 BUCKS ARCHAEOLOGY TEAM

Ms L Lawrence, Archaeology Officer, BCC, tabled a report **which would be appended to the minutes.**

Ms Lawrence highlighted the following:

- The policy had been written in response to issues relating to a large hoard of coins found during a metal detecting rally on the Hambleden Estate in March 2019.
- The policy acknowledged that BCC did not have the resources for officers to attend such events. Instead the policy would give detectorists and officers clear information about their responsibilities and the implications of failing to meet them.
- The policy would be available on the BCC website and would be publicised among large groups and organisations of detectorists.

The following points were discussed as a result of questions from members of the forum:

- There was concern that the policy put the onus on the detectorists to pay a private company to assess finds. It was acknowledged that some people may not follow the policy but that it aimed to balance limited resources with advising on best practice.
- Officers were asked to review the terminology used to ensure accessibility. It was also queried if reference to detectorists rallies should be removed

ACTION: Ms Lawrence

- It was confirmed that Ms Lawrence, Ms E Alqassar, Ms A Wood, Mr B. Thorn and

Mr N Crank had reviewed the document which had not been published online yet.

RESOLVED: Members of the forum AGREED the policy subject to the changes listed above.

13 BUCKS AND MILTON KEYNES METAL DETECTING POLICY

Ms L Lawrence, Archaeology Officer, BCC, tabled a report **which would be appended to the minutes.**

Ms Lawrence highlighted the following:

- The policy had been written in response to issues relating to a large hoard of coins found during a metal detecting rally on the Hambleton Estate in March 2019.
- The policy acknowledged that BCC did not have the resources for officers to attend such events. Instead the policy would give detectorists and officers clear information about their responsibilities and the implications of failing to meet them.
- The policy would be available on the BCC website and would be publicised among large groups and organisations of detectorists.

The following points were discussed as a result of questions from members of the forum:

- There was concern that the policy put the onus on the detectorists to pay a private company to assess finds. It was acknowledged that some people may not follow the policy but that it aimed to balance limited resources with advising on best practice.
 - Officers were asked to review the terminology used to ensure accessibility. It was also queried if reference to detectorists rallies should be removed
- ACTION: Ms Lawrence**
- It was confirmed that Ms Lawrence, Ms E Alqassar, Ms A Wood, Mr B. Thorn and Mr N Crank had reviewed the document which had not been published online yet.

RESOLVED: Members of the forum AGREED the policy subject to the changes listed above.

14 EMERGENCY ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING FUND

Ms E Alqassar, Environment Manager, BCC, tabled an updated copy of the protocol a copy of which would be appended to the minutes.

Ms Alqassar highlighted the following points:

- The forum held a small emergency fund toward the cost of recording findings that may otherwise be lost or harmed. The fund was rarely used.
- The terms of the fund would need to be reviewed following the creation of the new council, however there were no confirmed timescales at the time of the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: Ms Alqassar asked if the forum whether they wished to seek a top up payment into the Emergency Archaeological Recording Fund.

RESOLVED: Members of the forum **AGREED** Ms Alqassar would request a top of payment be made to the Emergency Archaeological Recording Fund this financial year.

15 UNITARY UPDATE

The Chairman referred to the report circulated with the agenda and offered to answer questions.

The following points were discussed as a result of questions from members of the forum:

- Ms E Alqassar, Environment Manager, BCC, confirmed relevant officers across all five councils were already working together to reflect on how they could combine their knowledge and workloads.
- The Chairman confirmed that the Shadow Executive had already begun budget discussions for the new council. However there had been no decisions as to when budget scrutiny and publication of those budgets would take place. The Chairman stated that he would continue to advocate for consistent funding levels for the immediate future.
- It was confirmed there would be no additional monies available from central government to support the transition including integrating computer systems. Existing local arrangements would remain in place as of 1 April 2020. Officers from across all five councils were working with the Transition Team to confirm the service's requirements in the longer term.

RESOLVED: Members of the forum **NOTED** the update.

16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

17 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 05 March 2020, 2-4pm. Mezzanine 3, NCO - Provisional.

Thursday 10 September 2020, 2-4pm. Mezzanine 3, NCO - Provisional.

CHAIRMAN