



Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum held on Thursday 10 September 2020 in Virtual meeting via MS Teams, commencing at 2.00 pm and concluding at 4.15 pm.

Members present

C Harriss, P Hogan and M Petchey

Others in attendance

E Alqassar, M Crook, P Clements, J Dodd, A Kenward G Marshall, P Markham, L Levitt, L Lawrence, N Shepherd, J Wise,

Apologies

S Oborn, J Foster, N Crank, M Woods, S Shave, B Thorn, D Sutherland and M Farley

Agenda Item

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Ms S Oborn, (Buckinghamshire Council) (BC)), Ms J Foster, (BC), Mr N Crank, (Milton Keynes Council (MKC)), Mr M Woods, (Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust), Ms S Shave, (Buckinghamshire County Museum), Mr B Thorn, (Buckinghamshire County Museum), Mr D Sutherland (BC) and Mr M Farley, (Buckinghamshire Archaeology Society).

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes for the last meeting

Under attendance Mr Petchey would be changed to a member and Mr Crank to an officer. Mr Petchey's name would be corrected throughout.

Item 7a

Radar work at Stowe House had been carried out by the London Museum of Archaeology (MoLA).

Item 10

Ms S Body would provide maternity cover for Ms A Woods.

RESOLVED:

Members of the Forum AGREED the minutes of the meeting held 5 March 2020 subject to the changes outlined above.

4 Election of Chairman

RESOLVED:

Mr P Hogan was confirmed as the Chairman of the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum for the ensuing year.

5 Revising the Constitution / Terms of Reference

A revised draft of the constitution was circulated with the agenda.

Members of the Forum discussed the following points:

- Whether there should be two councillors from Milton Keynes Council to match the two from Buckinghamshire Council.
- Whether the Milton Keynes Museum should be represented alongside Buckinghamshire County Museum Trust. It was noted that historically this had not been the case because Buckinghamshire Museum Trust had been responsible for archaeological finds across both authorities. It was not clear if this was still the case.
- Whether the Milton Keynes Heritage Association should be represented on the Forum.
- Whether additional officers from Milton Keynes Council should be invited to mirror attendance by Buckinghamshire Council, for example planning officers.
- Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust wished to become a voting member of the Forum. They were currently a non-voting member.
- Members of the Forum felt that voting members should be kept low in number to remain relevant. Additional organisations would be invited to present to the Forum if they wished to join as either a voting or non-voting member.
- Mr J Dodd, Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, would like to see clearer clarification of member's legal responsibilities. The Chairman explained this was an advisory forum with members not taking responsibility for decisions which were made by officers.
- Mr Dodd had other queries about the depth of the constitution and the consultation to change it which would be discussed further outside the meeting.

RESOLVED:

Members of the Forum AGREED to amend the constitution to allow two elected councillors from Milton Keynes Council

ACTION:

Officers would check who was responsible for archaeological findings in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes before the Forum decided to admit Milton

Keynes Museum.

ACTION:

Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust would be asked to provide further information to support their request to become a voting member.

ACTION:

Milton Keynes Heritage Association would be asked to provide further information to support Mr Petchey's request that they join the Forum.

6 Emergency Recording Fund contributions

Ms E Alqassar, Environment Manager, Buckinghamshire Council, gave an update on the emergency recording fund.

The following points were discussed:

- Historically the contributions totalled £1000 per annum, which was split 80% Buckinghamshire county and district councils, 15% Milton Keynes Council, and 5% Buckinghamshire Archaeology Society.
- Ms Alqassar proposed the new unitary council take over the 80% contribution with no further changes.
- The current fund stood at approximately £6000.
- No funds had been spent since 2013 for a roman casket burial.

RESOLVED:

Members of the Forum AGREED that going forward Buckinghamshire Council would take over the 80% contribution rate. Other figures would remain unchanged.

7 Agenda items going forward

The Chairman asked for ideas for agenda items for future meetings to ensure the meeting remained relevant.

The following points were discussed:

- The Forum would continue to comment on relevant consultations such as the recent White Paper on planning.
- More frequent updates from partner agencies.
- Having an area of focus for each meeting, i.e. archaeology, natural environment.
- Meetings could be heavily archaeology focused, members would like to see more balance.
- Using the Forum to share best practise.
- When meetings were held in person this allowed colleagues from different organisations the opportunity to catch up face to face after the meeting, something that may not happen otherwise.
- Remaining alert to changes to the built environment i.e. HS2 and changes of use due to Covid-19.

ACTION:

Any further ideas for future meetings should be sent to Ms Alqassar.

8 HS2 Update

Mr N Shepherd, HS2, gave a presentation.

Mr Shepherd raised the following points:

- Historic environment work was being undertaken by Fusion with the support of appropriate sub-contractors. Mr Shepherd's job was to ensure this work met the requirements of the HS2 Act.
- There were 210 interventions to complete within Buckinghamshire.
- The focus of this report was below ground archaeology. Details of other areas such as historic buildings and landscapes could be reported at future meetings on request.
- Until all evaluations were completed the scale of work needed locally would remain unknown.

The following points were discussed as a result of questions:

- The BBC had commissioned Lion TV to produce several films following archaeological work along the whole route. The first films, covering excavation of cemeteries in Birmingham and London, would be shown from the week beginning 14 September. There were no dates for filming in the Buckinghamshire area but the excavation at Stoke Mandeville Church may be featured.
- There had been difficulties accessing the Aylesbury Golf Course site leading to delays with surveying the area around Hartwell House. Surveys had now been completed but final reports were outstanding. Initial feedback suggested little of interest but trench work would still be carried out.
- The long term storage of **finds** would be discussed on an authority by authority basis with financial contributions made. However handover was not expected to take place for several years, leaving time for detailed discussions.
- Members of the Forum would like to see more frequent updates as field work progressed. Mr Shepherd acknowledged that SharePoint was not easy to use and consideration was being given to how communication could be improved.
- Plans to keep the public updated and involved included:
 - Each major excavation had its own public relations strategy.
 - Information sharing at the annual Buckinghamshire Archaeology Conference or Bucks Local History Network.
 - Fusion had been attending schools and community group to give presentations prior to Covid-19 restrictions. Fusion were still responding to requests to give online talks.
 - Webinars as part of Heritage Open Days and the Festival of Archaeology.
 - Documentaries for the BBC by Lion TV.

- Press releases were made when important discoveries were made.
- Wellwick Farm had been featured in an archaeology magazine.
- Longer term plans would include public facing output as well as academic papers.
- Plans for open days at excavation sites had been halted due to Covid-19. It was hoped there could be an open day when the Stoke Mandeville Church was excavated.

RESOLVED:

Members of the Forum NOTED the update.

9 Updates from Heritage Organisations

Buckinghamshire Archaeology Team

Mr P Markham, Senior Archaeology Officer, referred to the report circulated with the agenda.

The new Buckinghamshire Heritage Portal was now available to view online.

<https://heritageportal.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/>

Heritage Officers

Ms L Levitt, - Aylesbury area

- Mentmore House remained a building at risk but had not received recent visits due to covid-19. The building had been in private ownership for five years but the owner no longer planned to live there. The Mentmore Conservation Area Boundary had been updated.
- A Conservation Area Appraisal had been published for Mentmore and Little Horwood with another under construction for Brill.
- There had been a dip in applications but this was starting to rise again.

Mr M Crook – Chiltern and South Bucks area

- Development management had been very busy with a growing backlog of work.
- There had been some issues with data sharing but this had been improving.
- There had been good progress with protecting endangered buildings.
- Working to ensure older and listed public houses maintained building standards when making Covid-19 adaptations.
- Working with the National Trust to support issues raised by the Black Lives Matter movement.
- One new inclusion on the graded building list.

Buckinghamshire County Museum Trust

No update.

Milton Keynes Council

Mr M Petchey, Milton Keynes Councillor, gave the following update:

- In February 2020 the Milton Keynes Development Control Committee had refused a planning application on the basis it needed mitigation by design. This had been upheld on appeal.

National Trust

Mr G Marshall, National Trust, gave the following update:

- Much work over the last six months had been impeded by Covid-19.
- Work at Stoke Poges golf course had uncovered the outline of a pond dating back to 1720.
- The LiDar data collected by the Beacons of the Past would be used to review local Trust properties.
- Mr Marshall would be leaving the Trust shortly as part of the recent redundancy drive. Members of the Forum thanked Mr Marshall for his work and support.

- Buckinghamshire Natural Environment Partnership

No update.

10 Any other business

Planning White Paper

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future>

The following points were discussed:

- Ideas were felt to be aspirational but lacking in detail. It was not clear how the planning process would be affected by the White Paper. Prior to Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 and latterly the National Planning Policy Frameworks introduction there had been significant loss of heritage and feedback should highlight this.
- Each affected service area of the council would be making individual responses as well as an overall corporate response.
- There were concerns that the proposed process relied heavily on digital input and not everyone was digitally literate.
- Officers had been involved with the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO) and other professional bodies to give feedback.
- Historic England had not commented to date but seemed to feel there would be later changes made

ACTION:

Mrs Alqassar would collate responses and draft the Forum's response to be circulated before submission. Feedback would be submitted to the local authorities and central government.

11 Date of next meeting

To be confirmed.