



## Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum held on Thursday 23 September 2021 commencing at 2pm and concluding at 4.15pm

### Members present

Cllr M Angell (BC), Cllr B Chapple (BC), N Crank (MKC), Cllr C Harris (BC), Cllr P Irwin (BC), G Marshall (Bucks Archaeological Society), Cllr V McPake (MKC), W Morrison (Chiltern AONB Conservation Board), M Wood (Bucks Conservation Trust),

### Others in attendance

E Alqassar (BC), R Currie (Wycombe Museum), R Excel (MK Heritage Association), B Griffiths (MK Museum Trust), A Kenward (BC), P Markham (BC), A McEvoy, P Rhymes (BC), S Shave (Discover Bucks),

### Agenda Item

#### 1 Election of Chairman

##### **RESOLVED**

**Members of the forum voted to confirm Cllr B Chapple as Chairman for the ensuing year.**

#### 2 Apologies/Changes to Membership

Apologies were received from Mr D Wilkinson (Historic England), Amersham Museum and Ms S Oborn, Conservation Officer.

#### 3 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

#### 4 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The following alterations would be made to the minutes of the 26 April 2021:

- Ms N Cohen, National Trust, would be removed from the attendance.
- Under item 6 MKGH would be amended to MGLCG.

##### **RESOLVED**

**The minutes of the meeting held 26 April 2021 were AGREED as an accurate record pending the above alterations.**

## 5 Introduction to BHEF

Mrs E Alqassar, Historic & Built Environment Manager, Buckinghamshire Council, gave an overview of the history of the forum and welcomed ideas for themes/talks going forward.

It was noted the written reports circulated with the agenda were less substantial than in the past. It was confirmed that an email and a reminder had been circulated to all partner agencies. Officers would continue to request written updates ahead of the meeting.

A member of the forum asked if there was adequate representation from the Oxford Diocese, the Chiltern Conservation Board and Historic England. Ms W Morrison was present on behalf of the Chiltern Conservation Board. Historic England had sent their apologies. The diocese had been invited but had not attended in some time, Ms Alqassar continued to reach out to them.

Feeding into local plans, and ultimately the local plan for the entirety of Buckinghamshire, was felt to be an important part of the forum's role going forward.

The Chairman would reach out to Dr Moir of the Buckinghamshire Historic Buildings Trust to find out more about Buckinghamshire Council representation and their role and plans going forward. **Action: The Chairman.**

## 6 Chosen Focus: Museums

Guests from local museums gave presentations, copies of which would be appended to these minutes.

Ms S Shave, Discover Bucks, formerly Bucks County Museum.

- The museum had seen 40-60% of pre-covid attendance over the summer for their dinosaur exhibition.
- The museum's main galleries remain closed due to refurbishment and Ms Shave gave an overview of what the new galleries would look like.
- The refurbishment had experienced delays linked to covid and Brexit. It was hoped the galleries could open in November 2021.

Mr B Griffiths, MK Museum Trust.

- The museum sought tell the stories of New Milton Keynes and ancient Milton Keynes.
- The new Milton Keynes gallery building was now complete. A further £2m in funding was needed to install exhibitions and a new Archaeological Heritage grant application would be made.
- Currently there were temporary exhibitions in place in the new building. The older farm buildings and their exhibitions were still in use.

Ms R Currie, Wycombe Museum

- Ms Currie was the new director in post for 6 weeks at the time of the meeting.

- The museum had held digital experiences during lockdown. Currently had a pop-up exhibition in the Eden Shopping Centre collecting Windrush stories.
- Fundraising for a new store was needed to adequately preserve their chairs.

FCC Community Foundation was recommended as a possible source of funding for local museums.

The Chairman suggested that future meetings could be held at venues, such as local museums, to allow for them to be combined with site tours.

A member of the forum raised issues with accessing museums from public transport, namely the distance from the nearest stop to the museum entrance causing difficulties for the disabled. The Chairman would take away this issue for further consideration. **Action: The Chairman**

## **7 Urgent Works Notices**

This item was deferred from the April 2020 meeting. Mr P Rhymes, Heritage & Archaeology Team Leader, gave an overview of urgent work notices and recent work carried out under this power.

The following points were highlighted:

- There was no statutory requirement for the owners of listed buildings to keep them in a good state repair meaning sometimes local authorities needed to become involved. Initially this would involve working informally with owners but could progress to an urgent works notice being issued.
- S54 of Planning, Listed Buildings and Conservation Act 1990 allowed Urgent Work Notices to be served allowing local authorities to carry out listed actions that were urgently necessary for the preservation and safety of unoccupied buildings. Incurred costs could be reclaimed by listing a land charge against the property.
- In 2020 a notice was issued against Manor Farm, Gawcott, a grade II listed building.
- Historic England's "Stopping the Rot" was a good overview of these powers. <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/stoppingtherot/>.
- Locally there were:
  - 202 conservation areas.
  - 5000 listed buildings.
  - 32 registered parks and gardens.
  - 126 scheduled monuments.
- There were currently only 4 full time Heritage Officers working within Buckinghamshire which left officers relying on others to flag issues. It was hoped more Heritage Officers could be recruited.

**RESOLVED**

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

## 8 Update From Members and Partners

Buckinghamshire Archaeology Society, Mr G Marshall

- The society had approximately 400 members with an active archaeology group taking part in projects and field work.
- Recent works included:
  - HaHa wall excavation at Milton Keynes.
  - Researching Check Road Mill.
  - Publishing information on William Lowndes of Winslow.
  - Preparing for local history fair in October 2021, subject “Shops and shopping”.
  - Active lecture programme.
  - Digitalisation of Milton Keynes monographs.

Conservation Board for the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Ms W Morrison

- There were 10000+ users on LiDAR website. The Beacons of the Past project had been extended to 1 September 2022.
- Capital works moving forward for priority sites. Two of these sites had been added to the Heritage at Risk list.
- The Chalk, Cherries and Chairs project continued to grow.
- Community Heritage Officer, Samuel Johansen had left. His role would be divided among remaining staff.
- Farming and Protected Landscapes (FAPL) had now taken effect and Ms Morrison was working with officers to identify area that could benefit from this, for example historic pond restoration.
- A new project “Not Bourne Yesterday” looking at the past, present and future of chalk streams, had been approved and applications for funding were underway.

Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust, Mr M Wood

- The Trust was working with Buckinghamshire Council (BC) and the Green Ways and Cycling group regarding a cycling lane to go through the Quarenden Leas site. Several applications had been put in to get the relevant licences.

Milton Keynes Council – Heritage/Archaeology, Mr N Crank

- Mr Crank referred to a presentation and report copies of which would be appended to these minutes.

Buckinghamshire Council (BC) Archaeology, Mr P Markham

- Mr Markham referred to documents circulated with the agenda.

BC Heritage – Mr P Rhymes

- Planning applications up by a third and had led to a pause in conservation area reviews. A priority list existed for when work starts up.
- Team changes:
  - A Senior Heritage Officer had been recruited to the South team with

- A Heritage Officer joining the North team in November.
- A Project Officer had joined to support the Local Heritage List project.
- The Local Heritage List project had launched 1 September. This involved identifying buildings that were not listed but were of local historic interest to be included in the HER. <https://local-heritage-list.org.uk/buckinghamshire>

Historic England

- Not present

Oxford Diocesan Advisory Committee

- Not present.

Milton Keynes Heritage Association, Mr R Excell

- Made up of 70 different heritage groups in and around the Milton Keynes area.
- Had just had this years Heritage Open Days and had seen levels of attendance in line with pre-covid.
- They had received project funding for a professional archivists to give voluntary groups training, physical and online, on how to preserve and archive for themselves.

The association had a well-read email newsletter and website. <https://www.mkheritage.org.uk/>.

## **9 Heritage Champion**

Mr P Rhymes, Heritage & Archaeology Team Leader, gave an outline on the role of the Heritage Champion.

The Chairman asked interested parties to put their name forward via email to Ms Alqassar and Ms Kenward. Formal appointment would be made by Cllr G Williams, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration.

## **10 Date of the next meeting**

Dates for meetings in March and September 2022 would be circulated.