



Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum held on Thursday 9 March 2023 in Paralympic Room, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF, commencing at 2.00 pm and concluding at 3.40 pm.

Members present

P Brazier, B Chapple OBE (Chairman), C Harriss, V McPake and R Matthews

Others in attendance

E Alqassar, C De Carle, N Crank, K Farooqi, P Markham, G Marshall and J Wise

Agenda Item

1 Apologies/Changes to membership

Apologies were received from Mike Woods (Conservation Trust), Cllr Charlotte Hall (Milton Keynes City Council), Briony Hudson (Amersham Museum), Joanna Horton (Heritage and Archaeology Team Leader, Buckinghamshire Council), Cllr Bradburn (Milton Keynes City Council) and Wendy Morrison (Chilterns ANOB).

2 Declarations of interest

There were none.

3 Minutes of the last meeting

The following points were raised as changes to the minutes:

- P2 Bucks Archaeology Trust should read Bucks Garden Trust.
- P2 remove the word not in front of national list
- P2 typo young archaeologist club

Subject to the above changes the minutes of the meeting held 29 September 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

4 Moment of reflection for Roger Evans and Robert Excel

The Chairman gave tribute to Roger Evans (former Historic Building Officer) and Robert Excel (Milton Keynes Heritage Association). A minute's silence was held.

5 Chosen Focus: Historic landscapes in Buckinghamshire

Clare De Carle, Bucks Garden Trust gave a presentation on historic landscapes in

Buckinghamshire.

The following points were highlighted:

- The Bucks Garden Trust was working with Buckinghamshire Council to produce the local heritage list. In February 2021 the government provided funding for the pilot project with twenty-two authorities selected including Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Councils.
- The Trust had worked closely with the Council over the past two years to research and record findings. A team of volunteers and officers met regularly to review local heritage sites and produce a website featuring public nominations.
- The Bucks Garden Trust celebrated its 25th anniversary last year and the presentation highlighted some of the stunning gardens in Bucks including Wormsley walled garden, Langley Park, Turn End Haddenham and Chenies Manor Gardens.
- The 1998 local register review reported there were 400 parks in Buckinghamshire. The data was based on the pre1974 boundary with five areas listed. Due to the elongated shape of the county volunteers were needed in the south and north to assist with their Research and /recording Project. In 2013 over 100 sites were researched which feature on the Trust's website, this project has now been scaled back after ten years.
- The presentation highlighted a map of the north and central planning areas, historic parks and gardens in the county. 'A list' gardens had largely been reviewed as they covered bigger areas of greater interest. Areas which were affected by HS2 were also prioritised as they were most at risk of development. 'B list' areas were reviewed in less detail and were examined for sites of interest.
- An example of a completed research dossier produced for each site assessed was highlighted. Site visits were encouraged alongside online research, checking archives and writing to land owners. In addition, aerial views and OS mapping software was useful to determine the boundaries of historic designed landscapes.
- Buckinghamshire has a wide variety of designed landscapes. The presentation highlighted the different types of gardens with pictures as examples. The arts and crafts gardens included Chalfont Park, Newlands Park, Rignalls, Little Hailings in Denham. Town house gardens which were often smaller with vast history included Princes Risborough Manor House, Amersham Museum herb garden, Orchard House Olney and Discover Bucks Museum Aylesbury. Cemeteries and crematoria gardens were often designed landscapes and included Aylesbury, Wycombe Cemetery and Chilterns Crematorium. Workplace gardens included Chalfont Park, Sefton Park Country House, The Bury in Chesham and Lowndes Park. Trees in arboretums included Priest Field arboretum near Kingshill, Winslow, Buckingham and Haddenham. Public parks included Woollen in Milton Keynes and Lowndes Park Chesham. Artists gardens were often privately owned and site visits were more challenging. Examples included Mary Sargent Florence Lords Wood, Jo Piper's House Fawley, John Nash's Woodlane House in Iver and

Alexander Jameson's Burnside in Weston Turville.

- The Garden Trust were supporting Buckinghamshire Council with planning applications. The Trust is a national body and statutory consultee for national parks and gardens. Key developments the Trust were advising on locally were Grendon prison, Stoke Park, Stowe and Dropmore.
- The Trust were assessing sites for the local heritage list including Gipsy House, Roald Dahl's house in Great Missenden, Hitcham House in Burnham, Vale Park in Aylesbury, Castle House in Buckingham and a number of other properties.
- The 'B List' sites of interest were being assessed by volunteers. The Coppins in Iver was frequented by the royal family and requires further investigation. In addition, the link between the garden designer Percy Cane and the Germains in Chesham was being investigated.

A member queried why garden kitchens were not included as part of the categorisation of gardens. Kitchen gardens were often part of the larger garden and there were very few left as many were sold or developed over. There was no reason why a kitchen garden couldn't be added to the heritage list.

A member asked how many of the gardens listed were open to the public for viewings. It was highlighted not many gardens were open to the public as they were part of private houses however, the National Garden Scheme would show local gardens that could be open for the day. The Garden Trust do advertise gardens available to visit and certain charities host open days too.

It was advised Fenny Stratford Cemetery in Milton Keynes is on the local heritage list.

Members were encouraged to check the local heritage list map which includes gardens, buildings and archaeology sites [Map - Buckinghamshire's Local Heritage List \(local-heritage-list.org.uk\)](http://local-heritage-list.org.uk).

6 Progress report on the Aerial Investigation and Mapping (AIM) project in Buckinghamshire

Julia Wise, Historic Environment Records Officer gave a presentation on the aerial investigation and mapping project. The Aerial investigation project is being carried out in the north of Buckinghamshire by Skylarkeology on behalf of Historic England. The project funded by Historic England commenced in December 2021 with the first stage to be completed by August 2023. Approval had been granted for a follow up project looking south at the central area of Buckinghamshire.

- The presentation showed the map with progress to date including areas which had been investigated like the east and south of Bletchley and Winslow. Work had started on the west side by Buckingham and the bulk of the mapping was medieval furrow. The surviving ridge and furrow were standout areas nationally.
- A 1946 RAF vertical aerial photo of Soulbury ridge and furrow corrugated

earthworks was highlighted.

- Pictures of Stoke Hammond showed crop mark site with bronze age ring ditch which had been ploughed out to show the remains of a barrow surrounding ditch. There were mortuary enclosures left with surrounding ditches. A more detailed crop mark photo highlighted the geology coming through with glacial areas and features from the last ice age.
- The photos from Whaddon Chase highlighted a ditched enclosure and private deer park in the medieval period. There were pockets of woodland remaining which largely fell in the 19th century.
- Pictures of Little Horwood highlighted a hillfort on a slight ridge with two double ditches and a single bank enclosure. Iron age enclosures at Briars Bank Farm, Great Horwood had been discovered with a Roman road towards Buckingham.
- A shrunken settlement at Beachampton showed the surviving ridge and furrow from a medieval settlement. The earthworks around the present village settlement were more extensive than previously discovered.
- RAF Stoke Hammond was used as a World War Two telecoms and radio centre site linked to Bletchley Park. The pictures highlighted the surviving buildings and many aerial masts within the perimeter fencing. The telecoms site was constructed in 1942 and closed in 1973. The structure from the compound remained in use by the MOD however, the aerial masts have been removed. Numerous small huts were erected alongside roads prior to D-Day in order to gather ammunition and provide fuel depots.

The next stage of the project would focus on the middle of Aylesbury Vale and one of the aims of the project was to inform advisory and planning services to identify historic sites easily. The project would also inform sites which could be added to the local heritage list. Historic England have provided the project free of charge for the Council to use its research.

It was highlighted there was already good aerial coverage of the county particularly in the southern areas due to the ANOB project. The rest of the county was covered by the Environment Agency LIDAR agency information which was available for free online. There would be no new flights commissioned to capture further aerial data.

A member commented the county could promote its connection with World War training camps by mapping walking trails for residents and visitors. Further information relating to the war camps and sites was being revealed due to the official secrets cycle expiring.

There was a certain element of overlap with Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Bedfordshire aerial projects. Historic England were using the current project to look at similar projects in Northamptonshire, Hertfordshire and Milton Keynes.

7 Update From Members and Partners

Members and partners provided verbal updates.

Gary Marshall, Buckinghamshire Archaeology Society.

- Volume 63 of the Bucks Archaeology Journal will be issued at the May AGM. The records have been produced for the past 150 years.
- The project to scan and digitalise old editions of records from Bucks was ongoing. A grant was received from the HS2 community fund to assist with the project which would make records accessible online.
- The society had taken part in digging at Great Linford. A Parks Trust project which was in its third year to redisplay landscape at the manor house. The archaeology team were examining the line of the ha-ha and the project was expected to finish soon.
- S106 funds were available for Stanton Low and the Parks Trust country park to the north of the housing development and area of nature reserve. The landscape garden was from the late medieval period.
- The Local History Network Conference would take place later this year with a range of speakers attending. The topic will be the Local Heritage List.
- Membership to the Buckinghamshire Archaeology Society remained at a steady level despite a small increase in the membership fee.

Phil Markham, Senior Archaeology Officer, Buckinghamshire Council presented a report appended to these minutes.

- The majority of HS2 fieldwork has been completed with remaining assessments to take place over the next few years.
- Discussions were ongoing with HS2 and EKFB regarding the design and methodology for Grim's Ditch. A meeting would take place soon and Buckinghamshire Council will inform on the archaeological survey of the site. Works to the monument will be undertaken by a Schedule 19 application which will need to be approved by the Secretary of State under Historic England's guidance.
- The team were dealing with Schedule 17 applications and there were twenty-four post excavation assessments which would require comment from the team.
- The team were also working on applications from large developments, South-East Aylesbury link road, the Hampden fields evaluation, new trial trenches to inform excavations and solar farm applications. Discussions were ongoing with the former applicant at West End Farm Buckingham regarding post excavation works and DNA testing on eighty bodies found in the burial site.
- The team were assisting with supplementary planning documents for the Aylesbury Garden Town proposals. The HER (historic environment records) committee had produced a large number of searches. The team were also working on the local heritage list and outreach events.

A member queried if solar farm applicants were advised an archaeology survey was required before development could commence. It was highlighted the Archaeology department was often consulted and any excavation works or archaeological evaluations would be completed before the planning application was submitted.

Nick Crank, Archaeological Officer, Milton Keynes Council:

- The Local Heritage At Risk Register had been updated with the latest version available online [Heritage at risk | Milton Keynes City Council \(milton-keynes.gov.uk\)](https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/heritage-at-risk)
- A conservation review was underway of twenty-seven conservation areas; sixteen areas had been assessed.
- The New Town Heritage Register project was underway and will focus on Milton Keynes new city. The consultation period had finished and communications were ongoing with commercial property owners in the city. In May the first 160 nominations would be examined by the selection panel whilst taking into consideration any representations received during the consultation period. The start of the list would be completed by June taking into account the first tranche of nominations.
- A full audit of the historic environment records was completed in 2021 and an enhancement of the national mapping programme was underway to combine records into HER (historic environment records).
- In regards to community and outreach work the Milton Keynes Archaeology day would be held on November 4th at the central library with further details to follow. The department was successfully working with Bucks Archaeology Society on a number of projects.
- Work was underway on Bury Field Common with Newport Pagnell community archaeology project on civil war defences.
- The team were involved in fieldwork on the east urban extension north side of Olney. There were similarities with the Fleet Marston roadside Roman settlement. The site of the proposed Aldi supermarket revealed three rooms and wall foundations of a Roman villa with an intricate mosaic. The area would be preserved in-situ meaning the building area would be outlined with the development built on top. It was noted the mosaic pattern was similar to others around the country.

Eliza Alqassar, Historic and Build Environment Manager, Buckinghamshire Council:

- There were 771 sites adopted to the local heritage list in January. There were over 3000 nominations for consideration with the next tranche of sites adopted to the list by November 2023.
- The team had been working on a number of projects including a public enquiry for the new Grendon Prison site. New staff had been appointed to the team to assist with any outstanding queries. The review of conservation areas would commence shortly with the local plan team assessing urban areas first.

Members highlighted queries had been received from residents regarding the local heritage list and implications for obtaining mortgages or planning permission. It was highlighted properties added to the local heritage list did not impose restrictions on buildings and would not be a defining factor for planning officers when considering further applications. FAQs were available online [Frequently asked questions - Buckinghamshire's Local Heritage List \(local-heritage-list.org.uk\)](https://www.local-heritage-list.org.uk) and property owners with any concerns were encouraged to contact the heritage team.

8 Date of the next meeting

TBC September 2023

It was highlighted the next meeting could be held at Milton Keynes Council.