

MINUTES OF MEMBERS MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY ON WEDNESDAY 24TH MARCH 2021

PRESENT

Robert Excell (Chair)	Individual Member
Dave Muston (Vice Chair)	Calverton Records Project
Mike Wittle (Hon. Sec.)	St Mary's Church, Bletchley
Charlotte Hall (Treasurer)	Woughton Heritage Group
Alan Cooper (IT Officer)	New Bradwell Heritage
Jennifer Cooper (Social Media Officer)	New Bradwell Heritage
Neil Loudon (Exec)	Milton Keynes Museum Society
Anna McEvoy (Exec)	Stowe House Preservation Trust
Cheryl Butler (Exec)	Deanshanger Village Heritage Society
Catherine McIntyre (Exec)	MK City Discovery Centre
Steve Bacon	CLASP
Tim Skelton	MK Forum
Peter & Tricia	Bucks Family History Society
Rachel Chapman	Living Archive MK
Peter Barnes	Simpson Historical Society
Geoffrey Swindells	Cowper Newton Museum
Chris King	Yardley Gobion
Helene Hill + 1	Old Goal Buckingham
Amanda Molcher	Cowper & Newton Museum
Athina Beckett	Buckingham Canal Society
Ron Johnson	RLHS Roade
Beatrice Thomas	Cowper & Newton Museum
Brian Giggins	Towcester & District Local History Society & Historic Survey
Dianne Sutton	New Bradwell Parish Heritage Group
Aggie Canning	MK Central Library
Brian Baldwin	Individual member
Michael Held	TVAT (Milton Keynes Village)

APOLOGIES

Chris Stapleton	North Crawley Historical Society
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1. Welcome

The Chair, Robert, welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Minutes of Virtual Members Meeting dated 25th November 2020

Agreed - no amendments required.

3. Matters Arising

None

4. HoD's 2021

It was noted that HoD's is due to be held between the 10th & 19th September 2021. The theme being 'Edible England / Food & Farming'. In 2020 some 3500 people attended HoD's despite COVID restrictions. A number of virtual events were held. The Bucks Archives event attracted some 600 attendees. Members were reminded that MKHA grant money can be made available to help fund these events to max sum of £750 per group (*subject to 18 month membership rule*) if applied for.

5. Festival of History 2022

It was noted that funding for this event was in doubt and word on the block was that it is unlikely to take place in 2022.

6. Treasurer's Report

Overall amount in Bank Account is £29405.36 (*see slide 8 for breakdown*).

NB: It was noted that figure was a little top heavy as it still included money for MKHA Archive project.

Treasurer proposed that MKHA renewed the 'Hampshire Bank' signatory mandate. This was seconded by Mike Wittle (Secretary to MKHA) and unanimously passed and adopted. **Action: CH / EXEC**

7. Grants

- **Grant Report** (*see slide 9*)

2020/21 - MKHA received grant for £2465 from MK Council.

Applications to MKHA have been low over lockdown but all funds are ring fenced.

- **Grant Report - New Grants** (*see slide 10*)

Applications in line with MKC Creative and Cultural Strategy

Not Just Business as Usual – programme proposals that test out new ideas and approaches to cultural delivery within the city, enabling organisations, artists and cultural practitioners to push creative boundaries.

Collaborations and Partnership Working – particularly across art-forms, heritage area and other sectors.

City-wide Cultural Offer - where cultural activity is being delivered in contexts that will encourage citizen engagement and participation.

Cultural Step-Change - cultural programmes that deliver a step-change in reaching and engaging with the diversity of MK's communities

Supporting heritage events – HODS and Festival of History

Recovery from pandemic lockdown

7.1 Armchair Heritage (see slides 11/12/13)

A wide discussion was held on researching, writing and cataloguing on-line and digitalising materials. Implications around public access and engagement with the public was discussed together with members experiences thus far. Key benefits seen as:-

- >Wellbeing and mental health
- >Keeping occupied and busy
- >Fun and enjoyment
- >Keeping in contact with friends & members
- >Group engagement
- >Group activities
- >Maintaining heritage interests
- >Progressing heritage projects
- >Getting ready for post-lockdown

Research, writing and cataloguing was also looked at (see slide 12).

On-line activities – heritage connections considered (see slide 13):-

- >Updating and refreshing webpages
- >On-line meetings – Zoom, Webex, Skype, Teams
- >Set up heritage discussion groups on-line – heritage topics
- >Set up recorded webinars (meet the ‘expert’)
- >Arrange training sessions for group members
- >Maintain engagement with your members – quizzes and competitions
- >Share heritage photographs and stories
- >Prepare heritage events and activities for post-lockdown
- >Connections with wider world – local, regional, national, global

8. ARCH MK Report

Anna outlined background and gave a verbal update on this project. It was noted that the project had been both worthwhile and successful and that the training sessions had been recorded if anyone wished to look at them online. Every other week on a Friday morning an online surgery is held. Eight groups are up and running to-date and it is hoped in late May / early June to run a meeting physically restrictions allowing. The project has been very suited to being online over this very difficult ‘lockdown’ period. More info can be obtained via Anna.

9. Guest Speakers - Alan Cooper, Brian Giggins & Rachel Chapman plus (Mike Neale's contribution) - (see slides 15 to 23)

Alan Cooper and Brian Giggins spoke about recent developments online using as examples the MKHA websites and Facebook. They also featured how Mike Neale had created a protocol to stimulate local interest and track the improvements gained. Rachel Chapman will talk about her online work with Living Archive Milton Keynes.

The basic premise was about how social media (*such as Facebook*) is helping to promote many heritage sites interests to a wider audience and how this is a 'win/win' to all concerned. The example of Towcester Local History on Facebook and Olney History Hub were looked at along with other examples. Rachel from the Living Archive also shared her experiences as well as Beatrice Thomas from Olney.

It was felt that the 'benefits' very much outweighed any 'negatives'.

For full details please see the slide's ...

10. Members Reports (mainly verbal) - (see slides 24 to 30)

Verbal reports were presented by the following people:-

David Muston – No Report (*deferred until next meeting*)

Steve Bacon – CLASP

- It was noted that TWO digs were expected to go ahead over August & September 2021.

Mike Wittle – St Mary's Bletchley

- It was noted that the building has been closed to public much of the time.

Chris King – Yardley Gobion

- It was noted that cataloguing photographs continues...

Helene Hill – Old Gaol Buckingham

- It was noted that lots of maintenance has been undertaken whilst closed. It was also hoped that the Highways Agency was looking at changing the road system due to a number of damaging accidents to the building on the outside.

Aggie Canning – MKC Library

- It was noted that MK Central Library is closed and running as a testing centre. Click & collect was in operation at other libraries 9(*including local study materials*). It was hoped all libraries (except MK Central) will reopen from 12th April 2021.

Amanda Molcher – C&N Olney

- It was noted that the garden was due to reopen on 14th April and the house hopefully on 17th May 2021.

Brian Giggins – Towcester

- Zoom meetings continue. A grant has enabled a plaque to be erected to the Suffragettes. A reminder that if anyone wanted further information about the buildings in Towcester this is available.

Athena Beckett – BCS - Visual Slide Report (slides 25-27)

- Dredging continues at a pace. It was hoped that work parties will be back in place from 1st April 2021.

Peter Barnes- Simpson - *nothing to report*

Jennifer Cooper – New Bradwell - *nothing to report*

Geoff Swindells - C&N

Tim Skelton – MK Forum

- Public meeting held via Zoom but had too many participants. However this showed benefits of being on-line. Questions around the 'Deep Archive' and whether this is safe as digitalisation moves forward. It was felt that the original materials in the 'Deep Archive' were in danger of being destroyed. To lose these KEY documents would be unacceptable. It was noted that even digitalised records go out of date as technology develops. It was noted that the New Town Heritage Register was still outstanding despite the 3 year gap and no panel being appointed. This was disappointing.

Cheryl Butler – DVLHS Deanshanger

- It was noted that the 'Good Neighbours Trail' was available over Easter. The European City for Sport continues across 2020 into 2021.

Anna McEvoy – Stowe House

- Restoration continues at Stowe. It was hoped the house will be open again from half-term in May 2021. There is a YouTube channel that shows the hidden secrets of Stowe House. Revenue was down due to COVID19.

Catherine McIntyre – CDC

- CDC videos are available about Bradwell Abbey. Cataloguing of images continues.

Neil Loudon – MKM

- It is hope that the MK Museum will reopen in mid May 2021 with timed tickets. There will be new settings and displays in place.

Beatrice Thomas – C&N Olney

Dianne Sutton – New Bradwell

- Home World 40 year anniversary plus walking tours available. It was noted that photographs needed to be taken of the 1960's blocks of flats before they are pulled down.

Charlotte Hall – Woughton

- Conservation of velum documents was an issue. Any contacts would be appreciated. Planning issue still exist in respect of 'Woughton on the Green'.

Ron Thompson – RLHS Roade – Visual Slide Report (slides 28 & 29)

- It was noted that 800 archives were being updated along with website. Four 'Facebook groups' were endeavouring to harvest images and memories for posterity (i.e Roade Remembered, Pianoforte Supplies Ltd, Roade Secondary Modern School and Towcester Grammar School).

11. A.o.B

Ron Johnson observed that the MKHA membership was very light on members representing 'Black History'. This was accepted and noted by MKHA and members.

12. NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed but hopefully the next meeting will be in June 2021 possibly at the City Discovery Centre (*depending on COVID 19 and restrictions*).

Meeting closed

Signed

Dated

Robert Excell

Chair of MKHA