

IN CONFIDENCE

HISTORIC MONUMENTS COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE 141st MEETING HELD IN
QUB, ELMWOOD AVENUE
ON
FRIDAY, 26TH OCTOBER 2007 AT 1.30PM

PRESENT:

Mr R Black– Chairman
Mr B Black
Mrs R Evans
Mr D Flinn
Mr I Hill
Mrs H Lanigan Wood
Mr C Mallon
Ms A Moreno
Mr J Moore
Dr F McCormick
Dr K Muhr
Dr E McShane
Mr P Walsh

IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr B Williams, EHS
Ms M Gormley, EHS
Mr P Logue, EHS

Dr E Murray, QUB
Dr P Reiner, QUB

Mr C Francey, Secretariat

VISIT TO THE SCHOOL OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND PALAEOECOLOGY

Dr Finbar McCormick, QUB and member of Council gave a brief overview of the history of the School of Archaeology and Palaeoecology and its work. Archaeology had been amalgamated with Palaeoecology since 2004. QUB and EHS had a partnership arrangement covering archaeological fieldwork and currently QUB was contracted to provide this work for a 5-year period. He pointed out that Dr Williams was instrumental in recognising the benefits to archaeology through this contractual arrangement.

Dr Emily Murray, QUB gave a short presentation on the work of the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork. She outlined some of the work undertaken including excavations, geophysical surveys and monitoring. Dr Murray pointed out that reports on excavations and their findings are available on-line and also published in the Ulster Journal of Archaeology. She also highlighted some of the sites recently excavated by the Centre.

Dr Paula Reimer, QUB gave an outline of the work of the Chrono Centre for Climate, the Environment and Chronology. She highlighted the state-of-the-art acceleration mass spectrometer facility used for radiocarbon dating. This equipment uses much smaller samples of materials compared to the old carbon dating system. Dr Reimer informed members of some aspects of the work the Centre is involved in such as quality assurance, analytical work on the prehistoric population, chronological tools and environmental monitoring and remediation.

Dr Williams commented that EHS was delighted to have a contractual arrangement with QUB. It had been a very positive and worthwhile venture with many advantages for the work of archaeology in Northern Ireland.

Members were given a guided tour of the various archaeology labs in the School.

The Chairman thanked Dr McCormick, Dr Murray and Dr Reimer for a very interesting morning.

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

2.1 REGNI Workshop

The Chairman informed members that a workshop for the 3 SACs to discuss the REGNI recommendations is to be held soon. The workshop will be managed by a facilitator appointed by the Department and he, along with the other Chairs, is to meet the facilitator on the 8th November. Members had some concerns about the future of the built heritage in any proposed EPA and it was felt therefore that it was important for Council to discuss its views on these recommendations before the workshop. It was agreed to hold a special meeting of Council before the end of the November to discuss the issues. The Secretariat is to arrange a suitable date and inform members and at the same time it is to send them information on the facilitator.

ACTION: Arrange special meeting of Council and send information on facilitator **Secretariat**

3. MINUTES OF 140TH MEETING of 29th AUGUST 2007

The minutes of the 140th Meeting of the 29th August were agreed.

4. MATTERS ARISING REPORT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE 140th MEETING.

4.1 Donaghmore Cross

The Chairman is to meet a local resident of Donaghmore to discuss the protection of the Cross. He is to be joined by Mr Mallon, Ms C Foley and Ms M Gormley.

ACTION: Set up meeting with resident **Secretariat**

4.2 Mourne Water Scheme

It was agreed to refer this item on the best form of protection for dams and reservoirs back to the JCIH.

5. ANY OTHER MATTERS ARISING NOT ON MAIN AGENDA

There were no other matters arising not on the main agenda.

6. PRESENTATION ON SMITHSONIAN FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL

Ms Gormley gave a presentation on the Built Heritage participation in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival held recently in Washington DC. She commented that this festival gave EHS the opportunity to showcase the historic environment of Northern Ireland. Ms Gormley outlined some of the exhibits, particularly the artefacts and archaeological features on display.

Members noted that the display included a replica of the Boa Island stone figure. They suggested that it would be a good outreach opportunity for EHS to exhibit this replica in the Fermanagh County Museum instead of having it put in storage.

The Chairman thanked Ms Gormley for her very informative presentation.

7. DALWAY'S BAWN

Mr Logue gave a brief presentation on the history of Dalway's Bawn. He informed members that the Bawn was of 1609 origin and some of the buildings are of a later period i.e early-19th century. The Bawn is a monument in state care and under guardianship. It was recently sold and this gave rise to some concern about the future of the Bawn. However, EHS has been in touch with the new owner and it transpires that he has arranged for Consarc to act as his agent in maintaining the monument. The owner has no problem with the status quo and is keen to carry on with the guardianship arrangement. In so doing the owner will have the benefit of planning gain and EHS can look forward to having no loss of heritage. The only likely problem could arise from access to the rear of the house which could see the loss of the right of way when the adjoining house is sold. In order to safeguard the future of the Bawn, EHS is to bring a scheduling proposal to Council which will cover all the buildings.

The Chairman thanked Mr Logue for his report.

Members felt that as this was such a good news story highlighting the benefit of cooperation between the public and government to give a positive focus on protecting the built heritage, EHS should take the opportunity to send out this message to the wider public.

8. HMC REPORT

The Chairman reported that most of the various articles had been edited by Mrs Evans and a number of photographs have been selected for inclusion in the Report. Two other articles are due for editing and he will then prepare a foreword for the Report.

9. HMC WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman met with Dr Williams and Mr J O'Keeffe on the 22nd October, to discuss some of the areas to be covered by the HMC work programme. Generally the programme should fit with whatever EHS can deliver. Issues to be addressed should include thematic topics, freshwater archaeology, the use of the MBR, North/South Links and the economic benefits of heritage.

Members suggested that it would be useful to have a view from the NI Tourist Board on the importance it attaches to the built heritage and how it promotes this. It was agreed that the Chief Executive of the NI Tourist Board be invited to give a presentation to Council on measures it has in place to recognise the contribution the built heritage makes to tourism.

ACTION: Invite Chief Executive to Council Chairman

10. JCIH

Mr Moore reported that there were no current issues arising from the last meeting of JCIH to discuss. The next meeting of the Committee is due to be held on the 30th October.

11. LOWER BANN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (LBAC)

Dr K Muhr stood in for Mr Moore at the previous meeting of the LBAC. She reported that there were no substantial issues relating to the built heritage discussed at this meeting.

12. MEMBERS REPORTS

12.1 Talk on Role of HMC

Dr McShane reported that she gave a talk on the 19th October, about the role of HMC to members of the Bangor West Probus Club. The gathering was very interested about the work of Council and the protection of historic monuments and generally there was a positive feedback from those present.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1 Boa Island Carved Stone

Mrs H Lanigan Wood raised the question of progress relating to the conservation status of the Boa Island stone. Ms Gormley reported that at the last stakeholder meeting led by a facilitator, options for preventing the deterioration of this stone were discussed. It was felt that the stone was unlikely to split but some pieces could fall off. A consensus of stakeholders took the view that a canopy over the figure would be the most suitable option at this stage. The effectiveness of a canopy would be closely monitored. Ms Gormley pointed out that the conservation report had still to be completed. In the meantime, she agreed to send members a copy of the facilitator's notes of the meeting.

ACTION: send members copy of notes Ms Gormley

Members expressed the view that there was a need to ensure that the public was aware of the issues about carved stones. In the case of laser scanning it was important for a decision to be made and the matter taken forward. Mr Williams informed Council that this will be dealt with soon.

ACTION: Consider decision on laser scanning EHS

13.2 Archaeological Policies in RoI

Mr Walsh informed members that the Minister in the RoI has called for a review of the archaeological policies in the RoI. He indicated that a short submission on the review document, Archaeological Policies and Practice in Ireland - Identifying the Issues, would be welcome from HMC. He will arrange to send a copy of the document to the Secretariat for distribution to members.

**ACTION: Send copy of document to the Secretariat Mr Walsh
Circulate document Secretariat
Send comments to the Secretariat Members**

13.3 Lough Erne Advisory Committee

The Chairman reported that in view of the lack of built heritage issues on the agenda of this Committee, Mrs H Lanigan Wood felt that there was insufficient business to warrant her attention and decided that she could no longer carry on. He had written to the Committee explaining the situation and not wishing to close the door on any future developments, he asked that HMC be copied into minutes of meetings and also have the opportunity to raise issues when necessary.

Dr Williams drew the attention of Council to the archaeological dredging of the River Shannon and the potential this has for freshwater archaeology.

13.4 NI Archaeological Forum (NIAF)

Following the official launch of the NIAF on the 18th October, members agreed that Nicki Whitehouse and Sue Christie should be invited to give Council a presentation on the role of the Forum.

ACTION: Invite NIAF to give presentation to Council Secretariat

13.5 O'Neill Country Historical Society

Dr McShane reported that during the course of her attendance at the launch of the NIAF on the 18th October, she was approached by a member of the O'Neill Country Historical Society regarding its development of a local history tour. In order to move this on the Society required 'brown signage' but all its efforts to secure this type of signage had proved fruitless. Members recognised their difficulty because of the problems other organisations have had in sourcing signage. Mr Mallon undertook to contact the Society to encourage its members to continue seeking signage for its tour.

ACTION: Contact historical society Mr Mallon

13.6 Belfast History Centre

Mr Flinn informed members that Belfast Civic Trust has been involved in promoting a Belfast History Centre and he felt that it would be useful for the Trust to have the views of HMC on establishing this Centre.

ACTION: Consider proposal for history centre Members

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Council is to be held on the 12th December 2007.