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**MINUTES FROM THE FIRST MEETING OF THE ADVISORY GROUP FOR  
THE GREATER YORK COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT  
WEDNESDAY 11<sup>th</sup> MAY 2005, 10.30am  
YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST'S OFFICES, CROMWELL HOUSE,  
OGLEFORTH, YORK**

**PRESENT** Catrina Appleby (CA), Timeline YP / SAAS  
Gareth Dean (GD), Heslington Archaeology Project  
Eliza Gore (EG), Community Archaeologist  
Rachel Jenkins (RJ), Dunnington Through the Ages  
Ted Kendall (TK), Poppleton Archaeology Group  
Elizabeth Smith (ES), Friends of Hob Moor  
Michelle Wayper (MW), Fulford Battlefield Society

### **1. Receipt of Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received from Charles Jones (Fulford Battlefield Society) and David Petts (Heslington Archaeology Project).

### **2. The purpose of the Advisory Group**

EG outlined the purpose of the Advisory group, highlighting its key role in helping to develop and shape the project over the five years. The sharing of ideas and the creation of links between the project and the community groups will be invaluable. EG hoped this project would break down barriers between community groups and those who work in the archaeological profession, and help to increase the overall understanding of the development of York's hinterland.

EG described how the Advisory Group is specific to the project, allowing focussed discussion on community matters, which would be reported back to Timeline York Plus (TYP) and York Archaeological Forum (YAF). EG reminded members that they can sit in on Project Board meetings (although without the right to vote).

### **3. Development of the project so far**

EG outlined the publicity the project has received since it started in March 2005. This included articles in the Yorkshire Evening Press and the Yorkshire Post and an advert in the Local Link magazine. EG has also discussed the project on BBC Radio York, while visiting the BBC Community Bus. This bus travels around the villages of North Yorkshire with computers and internet access on board. The bus team encourage local people to record old stories (eg. wartime stories) for future generations on the bus, with help from friendly staff. For further information contact the bus team or Katie Wright on 01904 540323 or see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/northyorkshire/bus/busblog.shtml>

EG also mentioned that project leaflets have been distributed to all York libraries and parish councils, and the workshops have been advertised widely. A project website is also live at <http://www.yorkarchaeology.co.uk/community.htm>

EG mentioned that new groups were starting to make contact; including those at Strensall, Haxby, Holgate Windmill Preservation Society, Friends of St. Nicholas Fields and the Young Archaeologist's Club. EG has also met with Future Prospects, a learning and work advice centre, to discuss the possibility of getting young people involved from Tang Hall, Foxwood and New Earswick.

### **4. Training workshops**

EG outlined the programme of workshops, which is being advertised in local libraries. Take-up for the workshops has been limited but all agreed that people would probably just turn up without notifying EG. CA said that the workshops were most important for new groups and local history groups who might want to branch out into archaeology, such as Bishopthorpe Local History Project. EG said she would be contacting these groups and RJ requested that they be invited to the next Timeline YP meeting in July.

EG outlined what the first workshop would entail. Groups would be encouraged to bring along a sample of their finds. They will receive talks on how to identify pottery, brick and tile, and flint. They will look at reference collections, discuss the possibility of starting their own mini reference collections, and learn how artefacts should be recorded. CA said that a local farmer in Acaster Malbis had a huge collection of pottery and clay pipes from his land and perhaps he would be willing to let some of that be used as a reference collection for community groups. RJ asked where groups might be able to get hold of wooden cabinets with small drawers/trays for storage of pottery and tile.

Gaining access to reference collections held by YAT and YMT was considered difficult. RJ highlighted the case as she wants to find the pottery that was excavated by YAT on a pipeline project in Dunnington. It would be useful to compare it to the Iron Age pottery they have recovered from their own

excavations but she cannot find out where the collection is. EG said she would look into the problem and find ways to improve access.

David Petts had suggested that a workshop on Health and Safety issues would be useful. EG said this would go on the programme next year. CA asked that the workshop on Oral History be reinstated. EG explained that because there had been requests for workshops on reading historic documents she had had to sacrifice that workshop for this year, but that it would go on the programme next year. EG said that next year's programme would be more mixed and varied.

TK mentioned that Poppleton History Society had carried out an oral history survey some years ago and that the archive material had just been left unused. He was concerned that many of the people interviewed were now dead and that something should be done with that existing material before any new oral history surveys are done. CA said there was a similar situation in Copmanthorpe and that groups should re-use old material and not reinvent the wheel.

CA suggested that a day covering what research has already been done in the York area would be a useful workshop or event. She suggested that Steve Roskams or English Heritage could take the lead on this. This would give the community groups a better idea of what is known and what is still unknown about York and its hinterland area. GD suggested that the main units (FAS, Onsite, YAT, MAP and Mike Griffiths) should be involved in this, as they need to know what the community groups are finding, just as the community groups need to know about their work. EG suggested that an annual day school on this topic might be useful, but it would have to be focussed on Greater York, rather than the whole of Yorkshire, which is covered by the CBA Yorkshire annual event. CA asked whether all the information from units and groups could be pulled together to reveal the bigger picture, for example Greater York in a period by period context. This would be more useful than people simply standing up and announcing what they have found. CA also said that groups must look beyond the boundaries of their parish to understand the bigger picture.

## **5. Community Resource**

EG outlined an up-to-date list of what is available to borrow from the Community Resource. New items would be added this month, following consultation at the last Timeline YP meeting and approval from HLF. These would include a digital projector, an audio system, a tape recorder, first aid kit and a couple of mattocks. ES asked if it would be possible to get a Hearing Loop. MW said that it shouldn't be the Community Archaeologist's responsibility to provide that, but the venue's responsibility. There was some discussion about their cost and level of complication and EG said that she would probably stick to the audio system that was used at the last Timeline YP meeting, as this had been ok for members with hearing difficulties.

RJ pointed out that Dunnington Through the Ages has obtained a GPS device and they had found it very useful when fieldwalking. EG mentioned that there were three of these in the Community Resource and that Fulford Battlefield Society also had three.

## **6. Info packs**

EG asked for ideas for content in information packs, that would be prepared by the Community Archaeologist and given to new groups. RJ said that this could be mentioned at the next Timeline YP meeting. EG said the packs would list funding sources and where to go for information. GD suggested that useful websites be included, such as English Heritage's Pastscape (<http://www.pastscape.org.uk/>), Victoria County Histories online (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/>), Funder finder (<http://www.funderfinder.org.uk/>), Genuki (<http://www.genuki.org.uk/>), Old maps (<http://www.old-maps.co.uk/>), Ordnance Survey (<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/getamap/>) and aerial photograph sites (<http://www.multimap.com/>). TK asked that the info packs provide signposts on where and how to obtain information.

## **7. Recording systems**

EG explained that she met with John Oxley (JO) to discuss recording systems for community groups. JO had said that until the future of the SMR/HER was certain he would be happy to receive paper archives for the time being. These could include the basic information that he needs for the SMR/HER, such as type of event (fieldwalking/hedgerow survey/excavation), grid references, what was done, what was found, landowner, finder etc. JO also suggested that new groups could fill out a preliminary enquiry form, detailing their SMR enquiry, intentions and contact details.

CA said it is very important to create a standardised recording system and that all the groups should be encouraged to use the same format. This would enable comparisons of results between parishes. By following MIDAS standards and keeping recording consistent the community groups' work would be on an equal footing with the professional units. EG said she would be happy to design some pro-forma recording sheets for different types of survey (eg. fieldwalking, resistivity survey), with advice from CA and JO. This could be developed further with building recording and oral history recording sheets. RJ said pro-forma sheets would be incredibly useful and the sooner they are ready the better.

GD asked if groups should be producing excavation reports. EG said that for now, the most important thing is to make sure JO gets the basic information. If groups want to produce a full excavation report then that is up to them, although some groups are using archaeological units who will write the report for them. GD said that the Heslington group are planning to produce a report on their

website, but are electronic copies enough? Should they produce a hard copy as well? EG said it would be a good idea to have both.

RJ raised the issue of confidentiality. These reports would contain data about where the sites are and whose land they are on. This would not be welcomed by some farmers. GD said that similarly, the University of York have granted them permission to do fieldwork on their land but they would not want the results to be made public. CA suggested that only the minimum information is put on websites (eg. only 4 figure grid refs). EG will look into the issue of confidentiality by looking at EH guidelines for records on the NMR and SMR. GD suggested that a pro-forma report that groups can download from the web would be useful. CA agreed that a condensed version of MAP2 would be good, outlining the information that must be included in a report. It was agreed to leave this idea until further into the project, but that EG would go ahead with designing basic pro-forma recording sheets, which will be distributed at the next Timeline YP meeting and given a trial period.

## **8. Working with Timeline York Plus**

EG said she would continue to attend Timeline YP meetings. RJ said that Timeline YP is fulfilling a very useful purpose. It has a pool of resources and expertise and will be expanding to include local history and family history groups. They are a democratic organisation and they must be represented at YAF and on this Advisory Panel (CA has been elected by TYP to be their representative).

The next meeting of Timeline YP will be focussing on Chicory and Turnpikes. It will be held at Dunnington on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2005.

EG brought up the idea of having a network of parish archaeology wardens based in the community, who could liaise with John Oxley; drawing on examples in Leicestershire and Lincolnshire. RJ said that Timeline YP has a more holistic approach to the past and needs all the different perspectives (local history, family history, archaeology etc) to make it work. The idea of parish wardens as part of TYP might not work, but the idea could be developed outside TYP in the future.

## **9. Date for the meeting of the Project Board**

Unfortunately this has not been arranged yet, but EG said she would let members of the Advisory Panel know a date as soon as she hears back from Steve Roskams.

## **10. Any other business**

ES was concerned that discussions at this meeting had been too group oriented. How would the general public know what was going on? She suggested that a newsletter should be published every three months. EG said that this is already

in the project design and that she would be producing a newsletter about the project every six months. EG asked if groups would be willing to contribute a paragraph about their own projects to go in the newsletter – all agreed that this was a good idea. Newsletters will be sent to all libraries and parish councils. MW asked to make sure that newsletters are sent to the mobile library, which is essential for villages without a library, such as Fulford. ES suggested EG also contact Ward Committees and try to meet up with them or get them to mention the project in their newsletters.

EG said that she has had a number of enquiries about what is going on in the area and asked the groups if they were happy for their phone numbers to be given out in the event of an enquiry; all groups agreed that they were.

RJ mentioned that John Kenny from the Young Archaeologist's Club (YAC) had got in touch with her, via EG, and that they were a very useful contact to have. The YAC hope to do some excavation with Dunnington Through the Ages later in the summer, and YAC would be willing to work with other groups too. They have their own experienced supervisors and equipment.

RJ felt that at the moment the project has a lot of meetings (Advisory Group and Project Board) and this should be reviewed after the first year. If the project continues to go smoothly then perhaps the number of meetings could be reduced in the second year.

CA said that the programme of training workshops had been very well-received by the South Ainsty Archaeological Society (SAAS).

EG thanked everyone for coming. The meeting closed at 12.30pm.

## **ACTION POINTS**

- EG to raise issue of a Research Agenda / Research Day with Project Board and York Archaeological Forum
- EG to consult with JO and CA and design some pro-forma recording sheets for fieldwalking surveys and geophysical surveys. These will be distributed at next Timeline YP meeting.
- EG will look into the issue of confidentiality in EH guidelines for records on the NMR and SMR
- EG to look into how community groups can access archives and reference collections
- EG to contact Ward Committees and notify them of project

- EG to ask for ideas on content of the Information Packs for new groups at next Timeline YP meeting