

Minutes of a Committee Meeting of The KAS Fieldwork Committee (FWC) held on 23rd January 2021 at 10am on Teams

Present: Chris Blair-Myers (CBM), Clive Drew (CD), Shiela Broomfield (SB), Elizabeth Blanning (EB),
Kevin Fromings (KF), Anne Sassin (AS), Sue Oldham (SO)
Not Present: Keith Parfitt (KP), Kerry Brown (KB)

The meeting opened at 10.23am.

1. Welcome and Introductions

CMB took the chair as KP was unable to attend. SO was introduced as the new Secretary of the FWC.

2. Covid-19 and Zoom Lectures/Talks

KAS has purchased business-level Zoom account (300 participants) and Teams account (20,000+ participants). The Strategy Group is initiating a series of fortnightly Zoom lectures, starting on 11th February (8pm) with an interview between KB and Richard Taylor on Caesar's landing site. It is intended that these would be a mixture of formal lectures, interviews, or short presentations about a specific item. Local history groups could also be approached for contributions. Lectures may be pre-recorded or live and would be posted to the KAS website after the event. Invitations including the Zoom link will be sent to members via e-mail, posted on the website, and on social media; they will be free of charge and open to all (not just KAS members).

CD will ask KB who should send out the invitation (SB or Fred Birkbeck) and who would run the Zoom call. A volunteer to run with the program would be appreciated. All are asked to contribute ideas for guest speakers and/or topics for CD to take back to the Strategy Group.

3. Budgets

The FWC has an available budget of £2000. Payments of up to £1000 can be approved by the FWC, and above that via recommendation and approval of Council. The budget has not been fully spent in the last 2 years, but if there are more applications than funds available, then the FWC can apply for a surplus if necessary. Anyone can apply for funding of fieldwork, post-ex projects, items of equipment, training and education-related projects, and unforecastable emergency expenses (this last is max £500). The application form is on the website.

There is no fixed deadline; any applications received will be sent to the FWC for review and discussion at the next committee meeting. Conditions will be laid out, such as reporting of outcomes in the KAS newsletter or ArchCant, so that the committee can validate that the funding is properly used.

There is a separate budget for the Conference, which is submitted to the Treasurer.

4. Conferences

CD proposed that 2 conferences (Archaeology and History) should be organised in November. AS noted that there is a CBA conference on Church Archaeology on November 27th, which will involve a number of local speakers.

No specific budget is required; ticket pricing should cover the costs, and any surplus is paid as a bursary to the university for the use of premises. It would be preferred not to do this online but to have it as a special event to get people back together. The conference would therefore be cancelled if it could not be held in person and there would be no cancellation costs as there are no overheads.

It was suggested that a multi-period theme on recent works in Kent would appeal to the broadest audience, with keynote speakers for each period (pre-history/Roman/Anglo-Saxon/ Medieval/ Industrial). This would also mean that we could engage local speakers and avoid long-distance travel.

Suggestions for future conferences could include Community Archaeology, the Darent Valley, and the

original topic of the cancelled 2020 conference ('Attack and Defence in Kent from the Roman Times to Royal Observer Corps in the 1980s' – Victor Smith).

KP will be asked to lead the decision on the date and the theme for 2021 since this is a FWC event; this should be made in the next 4 weeks. CD will ask Sheila Sweetinburgh to book the venues.

5. Research Groups

A. Palaeolithics

Pete Knowles has approached KAS to propose starting a Palaeolithics research group. He is currently doing an MA at Durham and is doing curation work on the Palaeolithics at Herne Bay museum. KP is supportive of creating such a group under the FWC and Frank Beresford is also interested in being part of the group.

It was agreed that the FWC would be broadly supportive of this but that the group should be broadened to encompass all Lithics. The FWC should provide direction to ensure a focus on training and open sharing of knowledge and expertise, and with a view to reviewing and recording assemblages; in-house experts may also reduce post-ex expenses to be reduced. The research group would not require a budget to get going but could apply for funding in due course.

CD will ask Richard Taylor to go back to Pete Knowles, saying that the FWC is happy to support a Lithics research group, and asking him to provide more details of his proposal and what he is requesting in terms of support, Webspace requirements etc, so that we can discuss further.

B. Ceramics

There was a Council decision in 2018 to create a Kent county pottery reference collection,. Discussions have recently re-started, proposing that KAS builds and hosts it. CD has applied for a grant under the government Covid Kick Start program of just under £300,000, of which around £100,000 would be earmarked for a wider digitisation project, which would include the county pottery reference collection set.

EB said that we need to ensure best practice to manage the sequence, citing the Worcester collection (done in collaboration with HE) as a good example; also that HE is expected to publish standards for creating pottery archives.

AS talked about possible consultation from Ed Biddulph and Louise Rainer from Archaeology South East, who worked with Surrey on their project and produced the guide; they may also be able to advise on how to take images with 40x magnification. Budget from Darenth Valley is already allocated to the ceramics identification training run by Ed, and may be able to help further with consultation fees.

Previous feedback is that people want the collection to be physically and readily accessible. Only 2-3 example sherds of each type of pottery would be required for the collection. Examples can be sourced from unstratified finds or mixed contexts in Church Field and Lullingstone, and Commercial groups and the CAT could also be approached. The physical collection should be replicated in different parts of Kent, so that is easily accessible; location and storage would be future decision points.

It was therefore proposed and agreed to create a Ceramics research group under FWC to help with the management of the building and running of the collection.

CBM volunteered to start the project, initially focussing on the online database structure - data elements to be captured, form of description, classification and cross-reference with MOLA and CAT codes, and other existing collections in Surrey, Kent and London. It can start with Roman pottery, but would be expanded to all periods. EB will support with physical examples.

CD suggested that Gerald could be approached to chair this and liaise with groups who may be

prepared to share material.

6. Covid Kick Start Grants

A. County Pottery Reference

KAS is submitting a grant request to the Covid Recovery fund of just under £300,000. Decisions will be made by the end of March with an expectation to start on April 1st, but projects do not need to be completed within a specific period of time. The proposal is to use some of the funds both for digitising heritage assets (paperwork, collections, webplate slides etc) and the county pottery reference collection. £42,500 of this is to re-develop the website to hold unlimited images for both initiatives, and to enable easy remote access. It also includes £15,000 to purchase 3 trinoculars with cameras to record the images properly. These will be spread across the county to record collections locally and will need secure, insured storage and access – suggested sites could be Dover and Marsham St and another site in West Kent.

If the request is approved, the pottery research project would be fully funded in the short to medium term, and both the heritage and pottery projects will be able to fund consultants if we need further expertise.

B. Lees Court Estate

The grant request also includes £50,000 for 3-4 years funding of work on Lees Court.

7. Fieldwork Forum

CD would like to restart the forum bring all the affiliates to an online meeting before the end of March. In the first meeting, KP will go through this meeting's outcomes and post-Covid re-start ideas, followed by a round table discussion and Q and A. Subsequent meetings could include presentations, with guidelines set out beforehand as to time limits/slide limits.

The meeting will be held on **Saturday March 20th** at 10am via Zoom.

CD and SO will send out an e-mail to hold the date, and then an invitation in mid-February with the Zoom link. The Fieldwork Committee will have a short meeting to discuss agenda, speakers and details on **Saturday February 20th** at 10am via Zoom.

The meeting closed at 12.16pm.