

## **Minutes of a Committee Meeting of The KAS Fieldwork Committee (FWC) held on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2022 at 10.30am on Teams**

Present: Chris Blair-Myers (CBM), Clive Drew (CD), Elizabeth Blanning (EB), Kevin Fromings (KF), Sue Oldham (SO), Anne Sassin (AS)

Not Present:

The meeting opened at 10.32

1. Welcome

KP opened the meeting.

2. Minutes of last meeting

These were accepted as a true and accurate record.

3. Review of November 20<sup>th</sup> Conference

There were a few glitches which would not have happened if there had been a delegated conference co-ordinator, and the chairing of the day was impacted by problems with Kerry and Richard's attendance. Other observations were that the lecture room was very cold, and there should have been signage to the lecture room. Other venues would be available if required and should be considered next time. However there was praise from the attendees for the content of the conference.

CD said that the FWC has total budget of £4000 to host 2 conferences in 2022. (There is further funding for 2 history conferences which is with Sheila Sweetinburgh).

The date of the next conference would be in October or early December, so that it does not clash with the CBA SE conference (Nov 5<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup>) or the Sussex Archaeology conference (last Saturday in November).

The History conference is also planned to be around that time.

It was agreed that we revisit the previously-suggested subject of Kent Coastal Defences from Caesar through to 1980s, a program for which had originally been scoped out by Victor Smith for the Defence Committee. CD will contact Vic to see if the original work is still available and if someone from the Defence Committee would be prepared to organise and confirm the speakers, agenda and chair the conference.

CBM volunteered to assist whoever is nominated from the Defence Committee. The FWC will support the venue, ticketing and refreshments. An entrance fee of £20-£25 was suggested, and tickets will be available through the KAS website. Potential subjects would be the French invasion, Dover castle, Caesar's hillfort at Harbledown, interpreting hillforts of Kent, Royal Engineers Museum, Fort Amhurst.

4. Fieldwork Forum

The proposed date of March 12<sup>th</sup> was re-confirmed. CD will ask Liz Roberts to see if the barn at Badlesmere is available and heated. We would expect 30-40 attendees. An additional group visit in the afternoon was also suggested.

5. 2022 CBA South-East Conference

The theme of the CBA conference will be revisiting Roman sites, e.g. Richborough, Fishbourne. The proposed dates suggested in this meeting are November 5<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> – to be confirmed by EB and AS.

6. Budgets

The FWC budget of £21,000 for 2022 was agreed on the 5<sup>th</sup> December. This covers the 2022 archaeology conferences (2x£2000), Direct Grant awards (£3000 – up to £500 for each award), Pottery Reference collection (£3000), Curator (£3500), Equipment Maintenance (£1700), YACS support (£3500), and fieldwork support (£21000). The cost of conferences is usually recovered in ticket sales with any surplus

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from the conference donated to Steve Willis as a bursary.

YACs Grants - There was discussion on how best to engage the YACs and encourage them to apply for funding. There are 3 groups in Kent (Bexley, Canterbury and North Downs). CBA also has funding available and tends to target funds at smaller afterschool clubs. Take up is poor, partly because the clubs are not aware that funding is available. Money is available for specific projects, or we could potentially run an event for them. Events suggested were fieldwalking and negotiation with some of the dig managers to run a YAC event/weekend. CD will contact Rachel Hills, asking for grant ideas by mid-February.

Equipment – KAS needs to build a group of experts in using the Bartington and GNSS surveying equipment that has been acquired. Formal training days should be provided for a small group of society members, who would then be able to do surveys for local community groups. Insurance cover for the equipment is valid if the KAS itself provides the expertise. The basic plotting would be done by the team, but the resulting files and maps would need to be vetted and edited before being made available to the community groups and for publication. We should decide if Res and GPR equipment should be purchased, along with specialised software to support the interpretation and plotting. The overall project should build a team to have longevity and contribute as a charitable remit to Kent community groups in the same way as the Hastings group is supporting the Bilsington survey, and also to contribute to the overall mapping of Kent.

CD will contact Richard Taylor to see if he would be happy to be the lead trainer, and ask him to speak on it for 5 minutes as the 1<sup>st</sup> item on the agenda at the Fieldwork Forum on March 12<sup>th</sup>. The aim is to set up a geophys survey team.

## 7. Grant Applications and Payments

1. Dr Alex Hibberd for HAARG expenses for Bilsington Priory – This is a site that has not been looked at before, so the project would contribute to the overall knowledge of the county. Dr Hibberd has made multiple applications to various bodies in respect of the same amount of funding. The funding is required to support the expertise which the Hastings group will provide but has currently been pitched as travel expenses. Travel expenses per se cannot be covered by grant awards; however reasonable expenses for providing specialist expertise is permitted. AS said that the CBA has decided to award a portion of the funding, but they also required it to be re-pitched it as volunteer expenses for providing professional services rather than travel. A condition of the award is always that a professional report or survey is made available to the body that provides the funding. We should also ask for a software file of the geophys results so it can be added to the county map.

The committee agreed to award funding on £250, on the condition that the application is re-written to refer to support for specialist services. CBA may be able to increase their portion to cover any shortfall. Any request for further funding would need to be submitted separately and referred to council. SO will revert to Dr Hibberd advising that the committee is prepared to offer £250, subject to a revised application.

2. PAS write ups – EB had some e-mail correspondence in November in respect of 3 specific site write ups which need to be documented, probably requiring a couple of days each. It was agreed that this should not be seen to set a precedent, and that it should be commissioned as freelance work, not through KCC. As such, we would need to have more details on what is required, naming the freelance specialist contracted to write the report and the rates paid. EB will ask Jo to complete the FWC grant application form, providing this information.

3. Website Updates re: Grants – the FWC grant application form is not accessible through FWC page, and returns are automatically directed to CBM instead of SO. CD has made a change to the alias links in the

website so that SO should receive the applications in future. SO should also have editing rights to the website, but in the interim CBM will upload any information needed.

#### 8. Research Groups Update

The Pottery Reference collection is currently being piloted with 6 known pieces of pot that have MOLA codes and CAT codes. These are being imaged in, before moving forward to create the rest of the reference collection. CBM has focussed on Roman pottery as that is his area of expertise and is building a cross-referenced concordance chart to join multiple collections. He has a large number of sherds and will also look at finds relating to specific kilns. Physical storage space is required. Imaging will be done using the trinocular camera in Marsham St.

No update on Lithics.

#### 9. Fieldwork Projects

##### 1. Lees Court

Some limited work may take place in April, but no excavations and no report writing will take place for a couple of years until the new strategy is up and running (i.e. Geophys training, pottery reference collection etc.). Funding is not available to cover excavation; however the experimental archaeology project to build a roundhouse may go ahead as the land, people and materials are available. The owner is currently out of the country for some weeks but may be expecting progress on the roundhouse on her return.

The site per se is pretty well advanced. Woods Court field has been documented by KP. The write up of the hoards is delayed because British Museum has not yet done the reports. It was thought that the documentary research could be progressed with no real expense, but requires volunteers to come forward. It was also noted that Lees Court was supposed to provide all members of society with an active role.

##### 2. Trottscliffe

CBM has completed the project design which has been distributed for comment. Since the new KAS strategy is not to fund specific projects, a self-financing affiliated group will need to be established to run it. The next step is to arrange a meeting with the landowner to discuss the project.

The plan for the whole site includes a potential ring ditch, cemetery, and magnetometry survey of 2 adjacent fields. The main issue will be raising sufficient funding for professional reports; if there is no degree of funding assurance then no excavations will take place. The site proposals are therefore fully costed to ensure this is considered.

The landowner is favourably disposed towards projects that are more environmentally friendly and may be willing to have set-aside over the top of villa. The proposal includes ideas for long-term protection as a wildflower meadow, as test pitting has shown that there is only 40cm of soil over the subfloor and that it is being degraded by plough scars, so the villa is under considerable threat. Security must also be reviewed as the field is open-ended and next to a well-used bridleway.

CBM is approaching Kent Wildlife Trust and Plantlife for grants. AS reported that DEFRA has a Farming and Protected Landscape grant scheme for heritage and archaeology projects.

#### 10. Any Other Business

AS reported that DEFRA Farming and Protected Landscape committee is planning a Surrey and Kent LIDAR project to add a 25cm resolution environmental data survey to the portal. An initial small project would look at processing the Environmental Agency data for the Kent Downs at a cost of £15k, followed by a proper high-resolution survey costing in the region of £60k. Surrey Hills would cost about half that amount because it is half the area. The project needs matched funding to make it feasible. Partners would have access to the processed and imaged data so any funding available from KAS would allow this to be used on

the website. The current Environmental Agency data excludes the Downs so there are large holes in the data especially in wooded areas where LIDAR is very effective. This is a bespoke survey that would be put out to tender.

AS will put a document together which can be used at the trustees meeting at the end of February, so that feedback can be received. The aim is to have some idea of matched funding by April, but survey will not be until January 2023. CD said that the selling point to Trustees would be completion of the overall geophys map of the county. The hosting on LIDAR portal does not need funding; the funding is for the flying and processing the data, but the Environmental Agency data will also be processed and put up.

CD is awaiting delivery of George Dowkers' field notes. These have been offered to the Society by his great-granddaughter.

KP reported the death of Geoff Halliwell.

KP reported that in November metal detectorists near Ringlemere discovered a layer of roman coins just under ploughsoil. There are about 1500 coins found within 2sqm, and the lower half of coarseware pot of bronze coins was found just below plough ruts, cut into the Roman occupation layer and a fragment of millstone. Most coins are Carausius, from about the 270s, and have been sent to Sam Moorhead at the British Museum.

11. Next Fieldwork Committee Meeting Date  
June 11<sup>th</sup> to be held online

The meeting closed at 13.11.