

Minutes of a Committee Meeting of The KAS Fieldwork Committee (FWC) held on 17th June 2023 at 10.30am in the KAS Library

Present: Keith Parfitt (KP), Chris Blair-Myers (CBM), Kevin Fromings (KF), Sue Oldham (SO), Anne Sassin (AS)

Apologies/Not Present: Andrew Ward (AW)

The meeting opened at 10.30am

1. Welcome

KP opened the meeting.

2. Acceptance of the Minutes of the meeting on February 18th 2023

The minutes of February 18th 2023 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

3. Conferences

November Conference Planning

KP will contact Richard/the Defence Committee to confirm whether or not they are happy to organise the November conference.

If not, then it is suggested to organise a conference on Prehistoric Kent. Potential speakers include:

- John Smythe - Lees Court bronze age hoards
- Sophie Adams - Iron Age/Bronze Age brooches
- Dana Goodburn-Brown
- Barbara McNee – pottery
- Emily?? From Christchurch Canterbury – subject??
- Tania Wilson from Canterbury Trust – Prehistoric site at the Meads Sittingbourne
- Dr Lindsey Büster; Lecturer in Prehistoric Archaeology, School of Humanities and Educational Studies - ancient DNA and isotope analysis
- Miles Russell – Durotriges in Dorset

If the FWC is to organise the conference, the above will be contacted for their availability and details will be given to the Outreach Officer to progress further.

4. Fieldwork Forum on March 18th

The forum was a rather last-minute arrangement and focussed on prehistoric flint identification at the barn in Badlesmere. This was a great opportunity for people working at Lees Court to learn about struck flints. Keith hosted most of the day and it was very well received. The venue was good and comfortable for the 25 people that attended, many of them bringing along flints for identification. The number of attendees was quite small and it was suggested that the number of reps per society should be increased from 2 to 6, but this would mean changing the venue, as the barn cannot hold a greater number.

The 2024 forum will be on Saturday March 16th, with a suggested theme of a series of short talks on Techniques and Best Practice of Fieldwork. AS volunteered to provide a talk on the benefits of environmental archaeology, and it was suggested that someone could provide an overview of Kent HER.

There was a discussion on how to ensure that the list of affiliated societies, and their contact points is kept up to date. This would also be really useful for SO to answer queries from volunteers so they can be directed to their local society, and also for the Volunteer Co-ordinator to pro-actively give information out to the volunteers that have signed up to the central list.

Concerns were expressed that no one is pro-actively managing the list of volunteers that was promoted by the Society earlier this year. SO has had feedback that no one has acknowledged the people that have contacted the Volunteer Co-ordinator on her recommendation. It is hoped that whoever takes on the membership and online Direct Debit role would be able to help bring together a list of affiliated societies,

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maybe from a start list from Shiela Sweetenburgh or Ann Watson.

5. Budgets

Budgets are agreed for this year. There was no further discussion on this topic.

6. Grant Applications and Payments

The new bank account is now active and 2 people are authorised for electronic transfers.

Payment of Grant to DROP - Paid

Payment of Grant to SPAB for Boxley Abbey funding - Paid

Grant for Lyminge – Gabor Thomas – this was approved by the Trustees and has already been paid

Grant for Sts Peter and Paul Church Project - Ken Dark – this has not progressed and was not presented at the Trustees meeting last weekend. Last update was that there were inappropriate expenses which needed to be removed.

Grant for Slayhill Saltings Kiln Analysis/Upchurch Pottery Archive – Louise Rayner (UCL)

Richard and CBM went to see the collection, which fills 4 sheds. A lot of good work has already been carried out in recording this. The aim is to get a professional write up for kiln 3 which produced early oxidised pottery which is very important in Kent, but currently poorly understood. The original submission was from UCL; we asked them to resubmit this as coming from a group which is acceptable under the KAS charitable remit, and so this has now been submitted from the charity arm of UCL, which is an exempt charity under the Charities Act 2011. The total requested (£10535) is well beyond the remit of the FWC (max £1000) and must be reviewed by the Trustees; unfortunately the revised grant submission arrived the day after the Trustees' meeting. It was noted that we do not want to open up a precedent for other large grants by supporting this in full.

In summary, the FWC believe this is a very worthwhile project for KAS to support, and CBM will recommend support for this to the Trustees, so that they can decide how much funding they are prepared to give. The next Trustees meeting is in September, but an extra Zoom meeting could be called to make a decision. UCL will be advised that they should also look for funding from other sources such as CBA SE. They had also requested that KAS advise them of what we could support by August 1st so that they can apply to another funding source.

New SPAB Grant Request – Kimberley Gordon

This is the 2nd grant from SPAB, with KAS having provided a grant of £1400 in 2022 on the understanding that we would receive a copy of the report for publication; this condition has been fulfilled. This 2nd submission is not specific in detailing how the grant would be spent and includes travel and accommodation costs which we cannot support. There is also a lot of paid staff time included, which neither KAS nor CBA are keen to fund. We would be happy to fund specific elements of the plan, e.g. sample analysis and drawings. SO will revert to SPAB on this basis.

SPAB has also extended an invitation to KAS to their open day in July. SO will confirm whether this is an open invitation and if so, will see if this can be put into the KAS newsfeed.

Follow up on Bilsington Grant Awarded in 2022 – Alex Hibberds

Alex Hibberds has been in touch to request details of the terms of the report to be provided to KAS. He has stated he would prefer it to be published in ArchCant, and he has also offered to give a talk on this to the Society. Contact points in KAS are currently Richard Taylor and Peter Joyce, but it is understood that there is a new Arch Cant editor who would be responsible for receiving this.

7. Research Groups Update

CBM has almost finished the pottery spreadsheet which cross-tabulates all the different cat codes. He is incorporating the Oxford system, which categorises pottery at high level and adds more detail as it is known. Ed Biddulph's pottery identification sessions are really well attended and very informative; this is still coming out of AS's Darent Valley budge, and she would like to extend this to include Medieval. The

sessions have really helped in terms of dating the pottery from Church Field in Otford. The collection still needs a permanent home.

The Flints research group has not progressed. There was no field walking support at Lees Court for flint identification.

AW had sent in a question about re-establishing the Marshes sub-committee, partly to counter increasing mudlarking problems which originally escalated during lockdown. It was noted that the islands are actually owned, and so any unauthorised presence is actually trespassing. There is a pot of money for use for Marshes group, which was never formally dissolved, but fizzled out when the Secretary did not respond to communications. Via e-mail, AW wrote... *'I am going to arrange a meeting with Izzy to discuss how the KAS can work more closely with the PAS, but I would appreciate hearing any thoughts on the matter.'*

8. Fieldwork Projects

Lees Court

The Lees Court fieldwork lasted twice as long as originally intended and only finished on June 16th, rather than mid-May. The ring ditch was revealed to have an external diameter of about 27m, internal 20m, width of 3.5-4.5m and depth frequently more than 2m. Little was found in the ditch except for some crushed pottery of uncertain prehistoric date. In the centre of the enclosure, the middle was stripped out by ploughing to the chalk base. No central burials remained. Jules Holland is to visit, and Harry Hill already visited.

Lady Sondes was happy with the progress and laid on a hog roast for the volunteers. She is keen to have the prehistoric findings written up in a monograph. She is also keen for KAS to return next year.

KP remarked on the somewhat poor volunteer turnout from KAS and that there must be assurance in future that people will turn up. It was noted that the site is difficult to get to without a car. However, over the period, there were over 30 enquiries about joining KAS.

Decisions need to be made on where to dig next year, as not all of this year's questions were fully answered. This will include sectioning the ditch around the standing mound.

Trottscliffe

This is scheduled for 2 weeks from mid- to late-September and the project will again be led by Richard. The landowner has a few issues with the tenant farmer, which may affect the crop cycle, and some discussion was had on supporting plantlife by a 100m buffer around the edge of the field which would also stop repeated ploughing of the building walls. However she is very happy for us to return; she provides a large, lockable shed for finds processing and storage, water, and Portaloo. She is happy for KAS to open up the whole of the Eastern range. Features from the lower range are not yet understood, and the mag survey needs to be extended to investigate 2 features just south of the bathhouse which could be wells. KP will look for volunteers from Dover, but due to the travel distance, accommodation in village may be useful.

As an aside, it was noted that the Millers writing up the hypocaust findings from Otford, which currently has no match European-wide.

9. Any Other Business

Website Queries

Discussed in item 4 above

KAS-Accredited Museum

AW provided the following update by e-mail as he was unable to attend the meeting

'I've stepped into the role of Curator for the KAS full time. I can be reached at my society email address andy.ward@kentarchaeology.org.uk (Internal) or curator@kentarchaeology.org.uk (External).

I am in discussions with the South East Museum Support Group's Accreditation Advisor. I am going to be having a meeting with myself, Clive, and the advisor to discuss a couple of items which need to be met in order to meet the Arts Council England Accreditation requirements. This involves potentially our wording within the charity's constitution; to include "museum" and "long-term curation". Once we meet the requirements we would then have 3 years to complete the application while having access to grants, supports, training during that period.

The first batch of the Ozengell Collection has been conserved by Dana Goodburn-Brown and is on display at

Maidstone Museum until December 2023 alongside the Aylesford 'Torcs', material from Hartlip, Otford, and Elham Valley. The rest of the collection is being catalogued by myself with the aim of starting the next batch of conservation work subject to some further fundraising.

We are running a festival of archaeology event on the 15th of July at Maidstone Museum to promote the society and its collections.

The MoU between KAS and the museum is up and running, with discussions to be had about getting me better access to their store so we can better understand what is held by the museum and what is held by us.'

Digitisation

CBM said Jacob Scott has converted all of Arch Cant to HTML, which will be uploaded to the website, and therefore searchable online.

10. Next Fieldwork Committee Meeting Date

Saturday October 7th 2023 to be held in the KAS Library at Maidstone Museum at 10.30am.

The meeting closed at 13.02.