

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Conservation Advisory Group 21st April 2004
Leader & Conservation Portfolio Holder
AUTHOR/S: Conservation Manager

PROPOSED PILOT SCHEME : COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECTS – 2004/05.

Purpose

1. To seek support for a new pilot initiative within 2004/5 aimed at developing community based archaeology projects within South Cambridgeshire.

Stephen Macaulay, Project Manager, Cambridgeshire Archaeology (Cambridgeshire County Council) will make a presentation on this item.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2. The project proposal seeks to both instigate and provide the support to allow communities to develop archaeology projects throughout South Cambridgeshire. It will allow non-professionals to develop and maintain an interest in their local heritage and provide a template to develop similar projects. The project meets both the county council and South Cambridgeshire District Council's objectives by :
 - Delivering high quality services on historic sites and landscapes and provision to local communities.
 - Improving countryside access and interpretation to local communities.
 - Contributing to sustainability by ensuring that local communities become involved in understanding, protecting and maintaining their heritage.
 - Delivering substantial partnership projects, directly involving Cambridgeshire County Council, English Heritage, English Nature, the Beds & Cambs Wildlife Trust. Importantly the Local Heritage Initiative have been involved in similar projects (Thriplow, Fulbourn, Bourn and Boxworth) and will be approached to be involved as a partner in most future schemes.
3. The project will contribute to meeting the Annual Priorities for 2004/05 by :
 - Improving access to countryside and heritage services.
 - Contributing to the understanding of local heritage and the establishment of effective management procedures for historic sites within and around the growth areas.

Background

4. Members will be aware that the concept of supporting 'Community Archaeology Projects' evolved after the successful AFU archaeological training project which

was held at Fulbourn in August/September 2003. Officers have, therefore, examined possible ways of supporting parish initiatives based on examples of similar successful projects notably supported by grant aid from the Local Heritage Initiative and the County's Archaeological Field Unit. Examples of these within South Cambridgeshire (all with LHI support) include :

- Thriplow Archaeological Society – parish survey project (this is developing into other possible projects in Melbourn and Babraham)
- Fulbourn Village History Society - parish survey.
- Bourn Society - research and investigations into the Moutlon Hills, Roman Barrows
- Boxworth project – an ambitious site investigation including excavation, currently in development. (see paragraph 5 below).

Outside of South Cambridgeshire similar community archaeology projects are underway in Sutton (Sutton Conservation Society), and at Thorney.

5. *The Boxworth Project 2004-5 (Example of large project)*

This ambitious project has been led by a local amateur (who attended the AFU Training Excavation). The project aims to study and record the redundant village green and carry out an excavation of its Roman and Medieval remains. Part of the site was featured on the Time Team's Big Dig Project last year. The project team will be led by locals and comprise villagers, supported on site by professional archaeologists who will act as supervisors to ensure the final archaeological record is correctly compiled. The project will involve the local schools, local workshops, research into the villages history and a festival and exhibition planned at the end.

The total project costs have been calculated at £40,000. A grant from the LHI has already agreed to pay a grant of £25,000 with the residual £15,000 to be met by local sponsorship and volunteer labour.

6. The purpose of the proposed pilot scheme for Community Archaeology Projects in 2004/05 is, therefore, to help other villages within the district to develop archaeology projects and thereby generate an interest and involvement in local heritage. Understanding local history is considered to be particularly relevant to the district at a time of impending substantial new growth.

It is also noted that the modern development of the more commercial nature of archaeological investigation has resulted in less opportunities for this type of amateur, local involvement in interpreting parish history. Support for such an initiative would also link with existing partners (County/HLF/EH) who also seek to develop this area and commit to supporting local communities in the County.

Considerations

7. The proposed *Community Archaeology Projects- 2004/05* would be an initial one year pilot scheme, funded from the Heritage Initiative Fund. It will be evident that the existing fund is already designed to allow for the support of such projects. However, it is considered that identifying a specific funding source and promoting a specific scheme via the South Cambs. Magazine and by working with the county archaeological field unit that greater access and interest will be generated in the development of such local initiatives.
8. It is not intended that the pilot scheme would solely fund local projects, rather that it would contribute to a package of funding and help secure more substantial funds (such as from the HLF) where required. The emphasis would, however, be on those projects which can be undertaken and delivered by local community groups and consequently will tend to remain small scale.
9. The scheme would be directly managed by the Archaeological Field Unit, reporting via the Conservation Manager to CAG and the Portfolio Holder. Support for individual project proposals would be based on submission of 'Project Design' which will demonstrate their *validity* as a contribution to local history knowledge and *viability* as a project capable of being delivered by the local group.
10. The proposed *Community Archaeology Projects-2004/05* pilot scheme is, therefore, designed to :
 - Provide support, advice and expertise for the development of community archaeological investigation proposals.
 - Approach communities with proposals linked to local heritage.
 - Provide advice on securing HLF and other partnership funding (including via the County Council) for projects.
 - Provide financial support to act as partnership funding to lever major grant funding where necessary.
 - Provide financial and technical support for the production of interpretative material etc. linked to the projects.
11. It is suggested that, where possible, schemes which might be supported under the banner of the *Community Archaeology Projects-2004/05*, should also help facilitate other local initiatives which contribute to enhanced access to the countryside. These might include Village Greenspace projects.

Given the on-going development of the scheme at Boxworth it is suggested that the local group might be invited to submit a project design to seek support via the proposed *Community Archaeology Projects-2004/05*. It is understood that in this instance grant support might a display board of the village's history and project after the excavation.

Options

12. Support for this initiative is entirely discretionary, therefore, the Conservation Advisory Group are asked to consider the following options :
- (a) To support the development of a pilot project to develop Community Archaeology Projects in 2004/5, and recommend that the Conservation Portfolio Holder allocates a sum of £5,000 from the Heritage Initiatives Fund to support the development of individual projects during the financial year, subject to approval of individual project design (to include evidence of partnership funding).
 - (b) Not to support the development of a specific pilot project to develop Community Archaeology Projects in 2004/5, rather to recommend that consideration is given to support individual projects from the Heritage Initiatives Fund, as and when they arise.
 - (c) Not to support the development of Community Archaeological Projects, rather to recommend that the Heritage Initiative Fund is used for other purposes.

Financial Implications

13. The proposed project funding of £5,000 to support the pilot scheme could be allocated from the Heritage Initiatives Fund in 2004/05. It is recommended that a contribution of upto £2,000 is made available to support individual projects and consequently it is considered that a maximum of 3 schemes per annum could be supported within the pilot year (2004/05).

Legal Implications

14. None Specific

Staffing Implications

15. None specific. The AFU (Contracts section of Cambridgeshire Archaeology) have the recognised expertise and experience within its Outreach and Design teams for this undertaking and have a dedicated Outreach Officer, as well as excavation staff.

Consultations

16. Each project will have a different range of objectives and aims which will be defined in the 'Project Design', which will be subject to consideration and approval by the Conservation Portfolio Holder and CAG. Specific consultation will depend on the nature of the project.

Conclusions/Summary

17. This proposed project aims to build on the success of other archaeological partnership projects with the County Archaeologists, such as the Fulbourn Training Excavation, Car Dyke Project and Milton Landfill site, as well as the Local Heritage Initiative schemes at Fulbourn, Bourn and Boxworth. It will also provide a platform for a much broader range of projects where local communities can become directly involved in their understanding and interpreting their heritage.

Recommendations

18. It is recommended that the Conservation Advisory Group :
- (a) resolve to advise the Conservation Portfolio Holder to endorse option 12(a) above, to support the development of a pilot project to develop Community Archaeology Projects in 2004/5, and recommend that a sum of £5,000 is allocated from the Heritage Initiatives Fund to support the development of individual projects during the financial year, subject to approval of individual project design (to include evidence of partnership funding).
 - (b) request that the County Archaeologists are invited to present a six-monthly progress report to the Conservation Portfolio Holder and Conservation Advisory Group on the development of Community Archaeology Projects to enable consideration of effectiveness and future direction.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: None

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