



**Minutes of Branch Committee Meeting:
Friday April 26 2013
at St Martins House Leicester & Richard III Exhibition**

Present: Jane Roylance, Stephen Bradwell, Fiona Newton, Rob Walker, Alex Stevenson, Hilary Brindley, Chris Collison, Liz Blood, Rose Thompson, Chris McKinney, Michael Taylor, Susan Dobby, Simon Bird, Roy Lewis, Elizabeth Bryan, Charles Glenn, James Crane, Chloe Oswald, Philip Grover & Neil Robertson.

Guest: Jenny Timothy

Apologies: Julie Ann Middleditch, Mark Strawbridge, Liz Mayle, Rachel Booth, James Edgar, Eva Long & Jason Mordan

Jane welcomed the Members to the April Branch meeting and the visit to Leicester, inviting general discussion on the business items in the agenda.

1. **Minutes of Last Meeting:** The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true record.
2. **Chair's Report:** Jane noted that the Branch AGM had agreed to arrange Branch Away-Days outside of the usual meetings in Newark. So in addition to this visit to Leicester, Jane was also looking to arrange a visit to Lincoln Castle for the Branch AGM, to inspect the recent repair work to the Castle walls and to visit the new heritage skills centre.

Jane also commented that five new members had recently joined the Branch and she would be writing welcome letters to these new members.

3. **Branch Representatives Report:** Roy reported that he had been unable to attend the previous meeting but that Rose had stood in as substitute.

Rose reported that the IHBC Treasurer had reported that the IHBC finances were ahead of expectations and he had been able to increase the Hardship Fund.

Fiona noted that the purpose of the fund was to provide assistance towards membership fees for members suffering various types of hardship, and details were available from the IHBC website.

Rose also noted that the IHBC had now completed the capacity survey of conservation staff for Scotland and the report of findings would now be published.

Bookings were also being taken (and going well) for the Annual School in Carlisle and unusually there was to be a contested election for the post of Chair of the IHBC.

In the future the IHBC Annual Schools would be held in Edinburgh and East Anglia, in 2014 and 2015 respectively.

Rose also noted that John Preston had reported that the Government's Green Deal could affect a quarter of the total building stock and a report is to be circulated. (Rob Walker noted that he had recently had a 'Green Deal' enquiry wanting to replace timber windows for upvc on the basis that this was all they could afford under the Deal). There was also confirmation that PPS5 Practice Guidance was still being used, although the English Heritage replacement document is being delayed by DCMS as a consequence of the Government's initiative to reduce the amount of published guidance.

Bob Kindred's Survey of Conservation Officer posts has also revealed that there were no nationally advertised Conservation Officer posts in the last quarter.

4. **Treasurers Report:** Rose noted that she had requested £650 from the central fund, a further £800 from the Buxton fund. The Branch current accounts now stood at £1,068.09, with £444 having recently been paid out for the Bursary Award; and £189.95 in the Reserve Account.

5. **Membership Report:** In response to Mark's comments about querying reasons for Membership resignations, Fiona noted that the IHBC always asked resigning members to complete an 'exit' survey asking whether anything could be done to retain their membership, what people had valued most about the IHBC and also offered help from the Hardship Fund, if that was appropriate. In some cases people were prepared to stay in the IHBC, but perhaps changing their membership status. The response from the surveys are reported to Full Council.

6. **County Representatives Report**

Derbyshire: Neil reported that the previous Conservation Officers' meeting had had a tour of the recently completed St Helens House.

Lincolnshire: Liz Mayle had submitted a written report noting that the County group had been to see a demonstration of the new lead imprinting system that is intended to deter metal theft.

Northamptonshire: Rachel Booth had submitted a written report, noting

that the last Conservation Officers' meeting, in March 2013, was hosted by East Northamptonshire at Lyvedon Manor, near Oundle. The National Trust, which manages Lyvedon New Bield, has recently acquired the "Old Bield", which was the venue for the meeting. The NT is currently exploring options for the future of the building and its incorporation into the public tour to further enhance visitor experience and understanding of the history of this fascinating site.

The key agenda item was the recent decision on the Barnwell Manor windfarm judicial review. This was a legal challenge to the High Court, brought jointly by ENC, English Heritage and the National Trust, against a Planning Inspector's decision to grant planning permission for four wind turbines near Lyvedon New Bield, a grade I listed Elizabethan Lodge and garden. The Judge found that the Planning Inspector failed to fulfil his statutory duty under section 66 of the Planning (LB & CA) Act 1990, which requires decision-makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings. The Judge also found that the Planning Inspector failed to properly interpret or apply the relevant planning policies on the effect the development would have on the setting of Lyvedon, or give adequate reasons for his decision. (A copy of the judgment is attached.)

Officers also reported on a number of major Council-led town centre redevelopment projects, each posing significant threats to cultural heritage (as well as opportunities for regeneration and investment), that have either recently been given permission (Fish Market, Northampton; Moat Lane, Towcester), are at the application stage (Sites 1 & 5 proposals, Daventry), or are at the options appraisal stage (Kettering town centre). These cases highlight the difficulties faced by in-house conservation specialists in helping to achieve a successful outcome where the Council is both the planning authority and the landowner/developer.

Nottinghamshire: In Jason's absence there was no report.

Leicestershire: Liz noted that there had been no recent meetings.

7. **Communications:** Chris McKinney noted that at the AGM there had been discussions about content for the Branch web page, since then more pages had been developed and Leicestershire had trialed a page providing information about the County groups activities.

Jane noted that the idea was to provide information from all of the County groups and information for publication could be passed through the Branch representatives and this would help to promote communication and opportunities for participation at the County level.

Chris also noted that with this additional information it was hoped that the Branch web-page would be used as the first port-of-call for information about the Branch.

Chris noted that the Leicestershire page demonstrated that there was actually a lot of things going on in conservation at the local level and this could provide examples of work that could be used elsewhere, and help to spread ideas and good practice.

8. **Any Other Business:** In response to Rachel's comments about the Barnwell Moor wind farm, Rob noted that it emphasised the importance of referring to primary basic legislation as it was all too easy to get bogged down with the nuances of later guidance and the NPPF.

Roy, who had been involved in this appeal, agreed with this, noting that it placed considerable importance on the provisions of S66(1) as a separate test that is more demanding than that outlined in the NPPF, and the need to fully articulate the contribution that setting makes to the heritage asset and its significance, when too often the only consideration of significance is vested the fabric of an asset. Roy did however think that the Barnwell Moor decision was likely to be challenged.

Chris Collinson noted that this case seems to show that PINS appear to work to guidance that no one else is told about, such as the degree of weight to be given to energy generation over the conservation of heritage assets.

It was also noted that the Taylor Review of planning guidance may lead to the production of one planning guidance document.

**Date of Next Meeting:
Tuesday 16th July – Fox & Crown, Newark**
