

AAG Committee Meeting: 1.30pm, 13th January 2016

Museum Room (3rd Floor), Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, W1J 0BE

Minutes

Present: Duncan Brown (Chair), Rebecca Sillwood (Secretary), Helen Parslow (Treasurer), Lorraine Mepham, Sam Paul, Ellen McAdam, Steve Baker and Anooshka Rawden

1.	Apologies	Action
	None	
2.	Minutes of previous meeting	
	<p>Accepted – some points to carry over.</p> <p>From point 4.3 – Competency Matrix – as far as we know this is completed and the revisions done.</p> <p>From point 6.3 Duncan to approach HLF to enquire whether they have guidelines for community groups, and if mention is made of archives.</p>	DB
3.	Committee Matters	
3.1	<p>Steve Baker needs official election at the AGM.</p> <p>We have several options for extra committee members for which there will be two places – Becky to put out call for nomination via newsletter/Lianne, and see what we get.</p> <p>We may need to encourage those who have already been mentioned – Katie Green, Amanda Forster, John Hart, etc. – to put in formal nominations.</p>	RS
4.	Representation to CIfA governance and in all CIfA activities	
4.1	<p>Advisory board meeting update – Helen advises that the latest meeting was mainly to do with reorganisation of CIfA and everyone’s role within the institute. There has been no archive specific stuff to discuss as yet – but as and when there is Helen will pass on to the committee for discussion.</p>	
4.2	<p>RAO monitoring – copies of the full form have been circulate.</p> <p>Many questions have arisen – extra questions such as, ‘Why haven’t archives been deposited?’ and is the company actively seeking to deposit archives? Are these things checked up on? How would that even be done?</p> <p>There are not the staff in museums to check up on such things, whether an archive is up to standard and conforms to standards and guidelines.</p> <p>HLF/HE survey annually.</p> <p>DB suggested we need more information on the process and as LM has had the most experience in this area she is to look at the process, and whether we can offer anything to it.</p>	LM

4.3	Travel costs – Helen to do an updated survey of costs for members of committee. It may be more cost effective to have committee meetings in Birmingham and AGM meetings in London.	HP
5.	Promote awareness of archaeological archives; hold seminars, workshops	
5.1	Workshop for AGM – Almost all finalised by SP. One speaker has not been in touch since she agreed to speak, so an alternative is being sought. LM to be a stand-in if necessary.	SP/LM
5.2	Publicity; newsletter, website, social media, group e-mail, banner, postcard Newsletter to go out after meeting – Becky will do. Website is up to date. Emails responded to as and when needed – Becky and Helen check nearly every day. The banner and postcard are being organised by CIFA. Need to check where we are with this. May need banner and postcard for AGM.	RS LB
5.3	New logo added to Facebook/Twitter. HP said maybe when we call out for new members we could specify someone who is able to run our social media.	
5.4	Draft of Lorraine’s CBA article has been circulated. All are happy with it – just one or two tweaks to do. Lorraine to add that there may be costs for deposition of archives as this is not mentioned in the article. Also a bit at the end was going to be added to advertise the group, and to say we are happy for community groups to contact us for advice.	LM
5.5	HEPP article – this is to be by Helen regarding the outcomes of the Archives Group workshops. No deadline for this. Helen to work on when she can.	HP
6.	Focus on issues of standards, best practice, advocacy and access	
6.1	Discussion of Sussex Museums Group ‘Selection, Retention and Disposal Guidelines’. Everyone was really pleased to see such a document – which clearly took a lot of work. One or two issues with it are being collated by Anooshka to be presented back to the authors as feedback. One of the main things noticed was that there seemed to be a bias towards animal bone in the document. Terminology may need to be looked at ‘Disposal’ for instance. Maybe a difference in museum/archaeological terminology here.	AR
6.2	Discussion of the Norfolk Museums Service decision to charge £600 per site for archive deposition (more for more than 6 boxes). At no point was it	

	<p>thought wrong that they should charge, as it is a necessary cost, but concerns were raised regarding how this figure was arrived at. DB in particular said that charging an amount for deposition purely to fund a member of staff was not good. DB to approach head of NMS to discuss. Becky to provide a name and email address for Duncan to do so.</p> <p>Concerns regarding charging for a single folder on a negative watching brief were raised. Maybe more appropriate to deposit with ADS in this instance?</p> <p>Also noted that contractors may start to rationalise archives themselves, with a regard to costs, and so a selection policy from NMS would be a good idea.</p>	RS/DB
6.3	<p>Ellen discussed the cuts facing museums.</p> <p>There was much discussion on this subject. The outlook being bleak for many museums. What happens to archives when a museum closes? Will more museums start to sell off parts of their collections, like Northampton? Some places redeveloping museum buildings. Las struggling to keep up with their statutory obligations due to lack of staff/funding, etc.</p> <p>Fees charged should be to cover costs. What is the real cost of archiving a site in perpetuity? Is the cost for deposition in the brief?</p> <p>A detailed survey of costs was carried out in Cambridgeshire by Quinton Carroll – and they have gone down the route of deep store. A medium term solution. Quinton may be able to help with how costs were arrived at.</p> <p>Ellen to collate.</p>	EM
6.4	<p>West Midlands Scoping Project – SP has received an approach from Helen Johnson, the West Midlands Collections Officer, who has got funding to produce guidelines for archaeological archives in West Midlands. There may be scope in her project to make this a more national project. SP has provided Helen with what she needs at present. This may present opportunities for the future.</p>	
7.	Group Aims	
	<p>The group aims were discussed.</p> <p>Training was mentioned – online follow up to the workshops. Duncan to lay out what the workshops entailed. Lorraine to look at online methods that her company are using/going to use for training.</p>	DB LM
8.	AOB	
	None	
9.	Date of next meetings	
	<p>Proposed dates only (any problems let me know):</p> <p>Wednesday 18 May 2016</p> <p>Wednesday 7 September 2016</p> <p>Wednesday 18 January 2017</p>	ALL