Voluntary and Community Special Interest Group Community Archaeologist Survey Report

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Contents

Executive Summary

At the end of 2017 the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Voluntary and Community Special Interest Group (SIG) undertook a survey of community archaeologists to help inform the direction and the focus of the SIG over the next few years. The aim of the survey was to:

- gain a better understanding of who is working within community archaeology
- create a profile of the profession
- understand the needs of the profession in terms of support and training
- identify what the SIG could do to support the needs of the profession and promote best practice and standards in community archaeology across the UK

The survey was primarily aimed at people working in a professional or semi-professional capacity and engaged in, or directly supporting, community archaeology projects and groups. It was open and promoted across various channels (social media, CBA and local county community group networks, CIfA etc...) to both CIfA and non CIfA members. We know that a number of our members are employed as "community archaeologists" for archaeological units, local authorities, and charitable organisations or are actively involved in Young Archaeologist Club (YAC) and Council for British Archaeology (CBA) regional groups. They are involved in various types of projects, including Heritage Lottery Funded projects, Landscape Partnership Schemes, charity run or local authority coordinated work.

The survey results show that there is a genuine need to support community archaeology across the sector, whether it is community archaeologists working with groups, developing and running projects, or the community groups themselves. The main recommendations after analysis of the survey and subsequent discussions are that the CIfA Voluntary and Community Special Interest Group (SIG):

1. plays an advocacy role within CIfA and within the professional sector (in particular commercial archaeology) to promote the value and profile of community archaeology
2. promotes an increase in the number of specialist community archaeologists in the profession, in particular in commercial organisations
3. works with sectoral partners, including the CBA and the HLF, to have a more strategic overview of the community archaeology sector
4. works with partner organisations (including community representatives and other CIfA groups, (eg Equality and Diversity, Finds, Archives etc…) to identify and contribute to resolving shared issues and concerns
5. collaborates with sectoral representatives to develop a strategic framework of community archaeology learning
6. promotes the importance of acquiring "people skills" for working with volunteers and identifies ways to develop this area of understanding for community archaeology
7. works with partners within the wider cultural heritage sector to learn how they are approaching the engagement of harder to reach audiences
8. works with sectoral partners to develop or redevelop (if one exists) an online collaborative space that will be fit for purpose across community archaeology.

Background to the CIfA Voluntary and Community Special Interest Group

Although the Voluntary and Community Special Interest Group has existed for a while it had become rather moribund and was relaunched with a new committee at the 2016 Leicester CIFA conference. The role of the SIG is to promote the value of community archaeology (within CIfA and across the sector) and in particular to support those working in a professional or semi-professional manner on community projects. The relaunched SIG had an early aim of defining its relationship and working more closely with the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) – whose focus is more directly associated with supporting community groups themselves. In developing this survey we worked closely with the CBA in particular as they were to undertake a survey of community groups themselves, and therefore the results of this survey and that of the forthcoming CBA report will be invaluable to support all those working on community projects and promoting the value of community projects as a whole.

The Survey

The online survey ran from December 2017 until the end of January 2018. It was made up of 16 questions and included a mix of multiple choice questions along with free text answer options. The survey was promoted through CIfA, the CBA (including regional groups), and various county and local community networks. It was completed by 138 respondents and apart from question four, in which respondents were asked to self-identify where they undertook work and projects, no personal data was collected. The results are set out below.

Survey Results

Location of work undertaken

The survey respondents predominantly work in the UK. In England, the South East region had the highest percentage of respondents (28%), with the East of England and the South West close behind. This weighting towards the South East of England may just reflect the dissemination and take up of the survey, rather than the predominance of community work in this region. The results of the Assessing the Value of Community-Generated Historic Environment Research project (Hedge, R, Nash, A. 2016) and the forthcoming CBA report on Community Heritage, both show a more evenly distributed number of responses across the country. However, the survey results may also reflect the fact that there is more archaeological work taking place in the South East in general (and employing more community archaeologists) or the commonly held belief that there is better resourcing for community projects in this region.

LOCATION BY COUNTRY

Values: 11, 8, 6, 1, 114

Legend: United Kingdom, Scotland, Wales, Outside UK, England, Guernsey

LOCATION BY ENGLISH REGION

Legend:
- North West
- North East
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- West Midlands
- East Midlands
- East of England
- South East
- London
- South West
- Central Southern

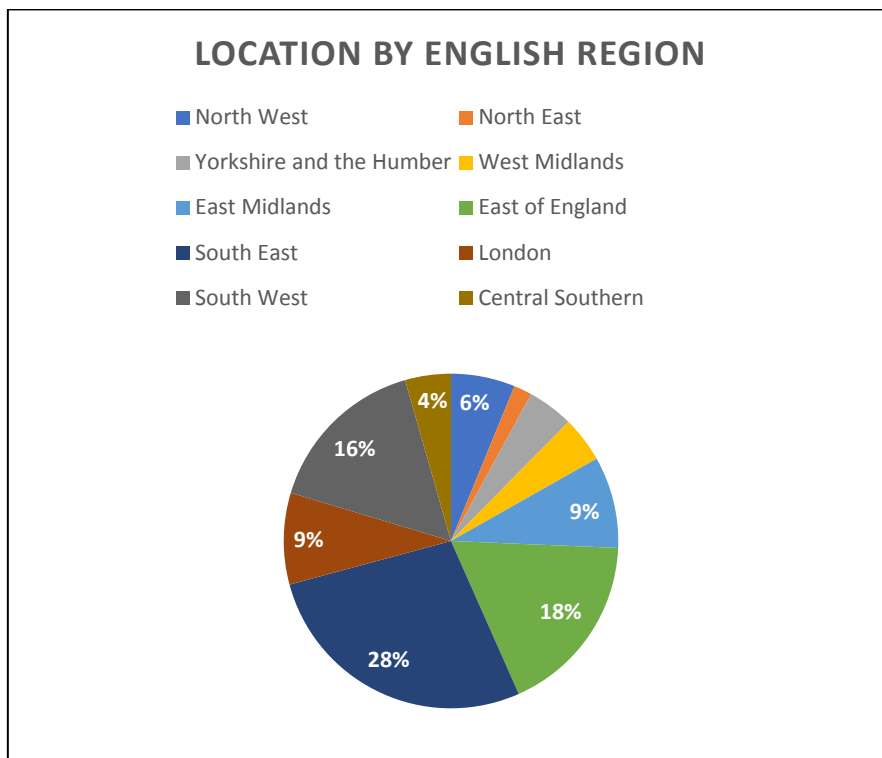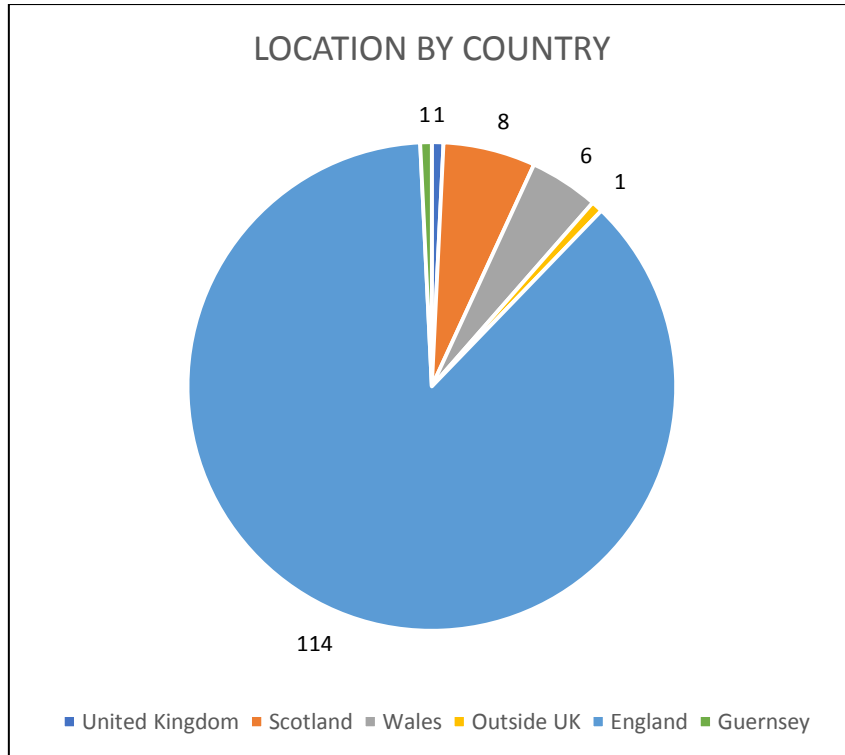Values: 6%, 9%, 18%, 28%, 9%, 16%, 4%

Figure 1: Question 4: Where do you work?

Profiling Community Archaeology

This section of the survey (questions 1 – 3) focused on understanding the profile of community archaeologists in terms of how they describe their role, the amount of time dedicated to community archaeology and the types of organisations they work within.

Answered: 139   Skipped: 0

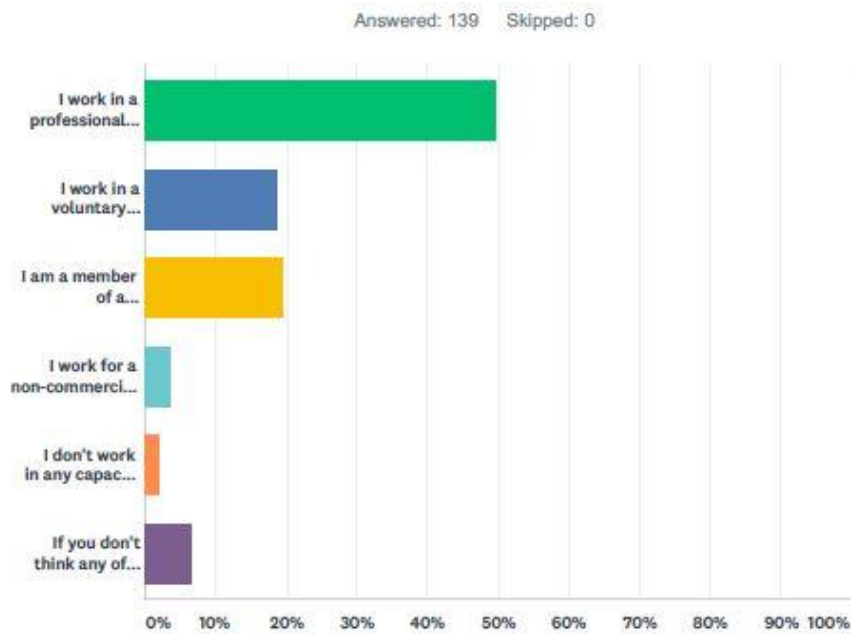| ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I work in a professional capacity with community/voluntary groups	49.64%	69
I work in a voluntary capacity with community/voluntary groups	18.71%	26
I am a member of a community/voluntary group	19.42%	27
I work for a non-commercial charity that works with community/voluntary groups	3.60%	5
I don't work in any capacity with community/voluntary groups	2.16%	3
If you don't think any of the above options describe your situation very well then please specify your role and relationship with community/voluntary groups here	6.47%	9
TOTAL		139

Figure 2: Question 1: How would you best describe your relationship with community/voluntary groups?

Although nearly 50% of respondents work within a professional capacity, the results show that the whole story is a lot more complex with many community archaeology roles straying into more than one of the options. Though this may not be a big revelation to those working within community archaeology, it does reinforce the perception that community archaeology, and the role of individual community archaeologists, is varied and can be difficult to define.

A follow on question asked about how much paid time was spent working on community archaeology projects. The results for this (Figure 3) demonstrate a very even split across the board (ranging from none to full time). Over 15% are full time with 30% spending more than 50% of their time on community archaeology work. It appears that community archaeology may just be a

component of their work, or that they have additional responsibilities outside of their community archaeology role. More than 36% report that they have no paid time allocated for community projects suggesting that there are a large number of people who work in a voluntary capacity outside of their professional role to help deliver community projects and support archaeology groups, societies, and CBA regional groups.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Full time	15.22%	21
>50%	15.94%	22
<50%	15.94%	22
Minor Role	15.94%	22
None	25.36%	35
None of my paid time involves working with volunteers, but I do volunteer in my own time to work with or advise community/voluntary groups (please specify hours a week if you can?)	11.59%	16
TOTAL		138

Figure 3: Question2: How much of your paid work is dedicated to community work?

The final part of this profiling section focused on the employment situation for community archaeologists – for example the types of organisations they work for (Figure 4).

Around 30% replied that they were employed by commercial or commercial/charitable trust type organisations and c. 10% were employed by local authorities. This reflects the shift across the archaeological sector in the archaeology funding model, where 20 years ago, community archaeologists were often employed by local authorities, to now, where they are employed more by commercial organisations. This may also show a shift in focus for some of the organisations, in particular those with a charitable status and a requirement to engage with local communities and stakeholders through their work. An additional impact that cannot be ignored is funding changes within the sector and a growing reliance on the Heritage Lottery Fund to deliver community projects.

Showing a similar trend to the answers to the earlier question on how much paid time is spent on community archaeology, 35% of respondents said that they do not get paid for their community archaeology work. Both these questions and comments received indicate strongly that a number of the respondents are undertaking community archaeology projects as volunteers alongside their day job. For the other category, the 15 respondents were mainly working for charities, on HLF projects or with local societies.
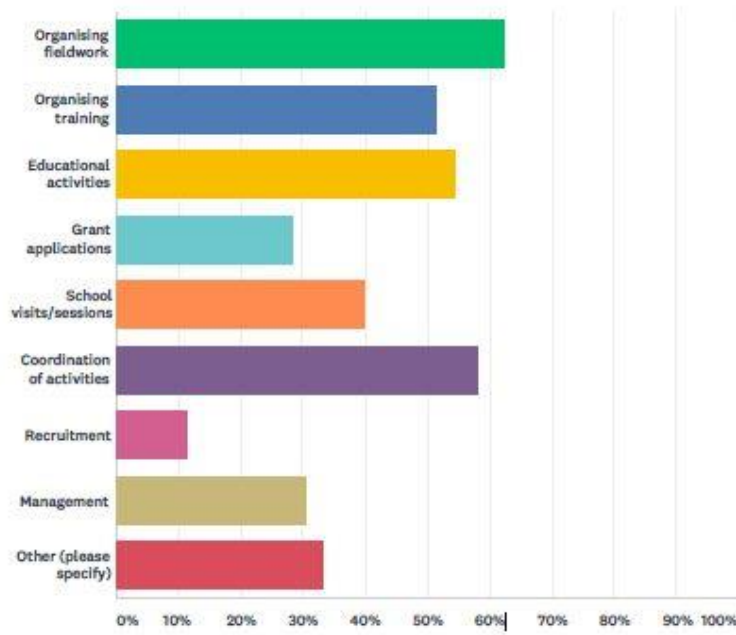
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Individual	5.19%	7
Commercial	10.37%	14
Commercial (with charitable status)	19.26%	26
Local Authority	9.63%	13
Academic	5.19%	7
National	3.70%	5
As I said above I don't get paid to work with community/voluntary groups but do so in my own time	35.56%	48
Other (please specify)	11.11%	15
TOTAL		135

Figure 4: Question 3 What type of organisation do you work for if you get paid to work with community/voluntary groups?

Community Archaeology Activities

The results from question 5 of the survey: What are your main activities involved in your community archaeology work? showed that as well as undertaking and organising field work, training and other project activities, community archaeologist also undertake a wide range of activities associated with project and volunteer management, including fund raising, developing policies, communication, etc. These responses confirm just how varied and complex the role of community archaeology can be and how extensive the suite of personal skills required is. This in turn is a good indicator of the range of training and support that may be required for community archaeologists (see section on training needs (qtn 10) below).

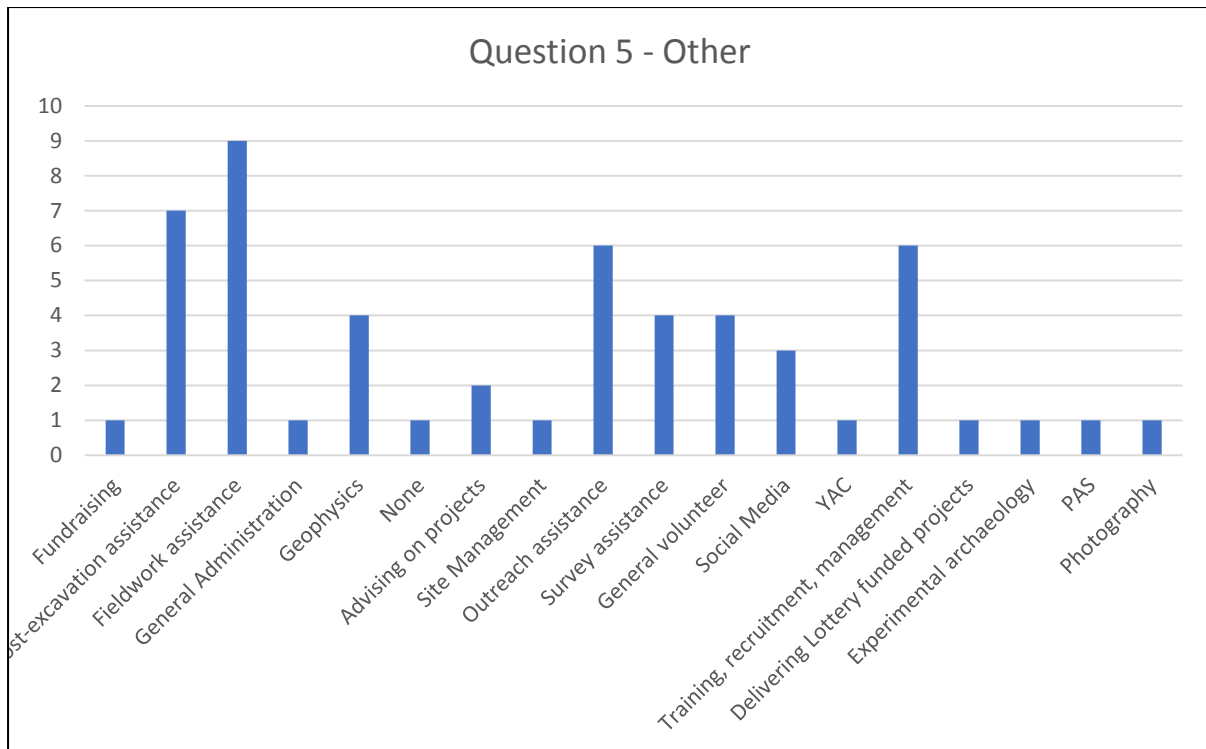| ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Organising fieldwork	62.32%	86
Organising training	51.45%	71
Educational activities	54.35%	75
Grant applications	28.26%	39
School visits/sessions	39.86%	55
Coordination of activities	57.97%	80
Recruitment	11.59%	16
Management	30.43%	42
Other (please specify)	33.33%	46
Total Respondents: 138		

Figure 5: Question no 5: What are your main activities involved in your community archaeology work?

Questions 7 & 8

Engaging different audiences questions 7 and 8 considered the audiences that our respondents primarily engaged with and asked which (if any) audiences community archaeologists had less engagement with. Most respondents answered that they were engaging with schools, local societies, general public and mixed audiences (Figure 6), with only 8% indicating that they engage with BAME audiences. This may be down to the fact that BAME make up other audience categories, eg general public, school children, local societies, however the lack of engagement with BAME audiences is reflected in the second set of answers which shows that over 25% of respondents find it difficult to engage specifically with BAME audiences. Comments associated with these responses recognised the issue of engaging BAME communities in archaeology in general and included some geographical reasons – eg that BAME communities are not residing in their areas of work.

Other groups that were recognised as being harder to reach audiences were school groups (difficulties in engaging with schools) and young adults as well time poor/working adults between 21 and 45.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Mixed	40.58%	56
School children	38.41%	53
Local societies	63.77%	88
General public	65.94%	91
Ethic minority groups	7.97%	11
Place based groups	27.54%	38
New audiences for each project	17.39%	24
Repeat audiences	26.09%	36
Students	28.26%	39
Mature Students	21.74%	30
Other (please specify)	7.97%	11
Total Respondents: 138		

Figure 6: Question 7: What types of audiences do you primarily engage with?

Interestingly over 40% of respondents say that they don't have any issues engaging with any particular audiences. On the face of it this could be considered a success and that community
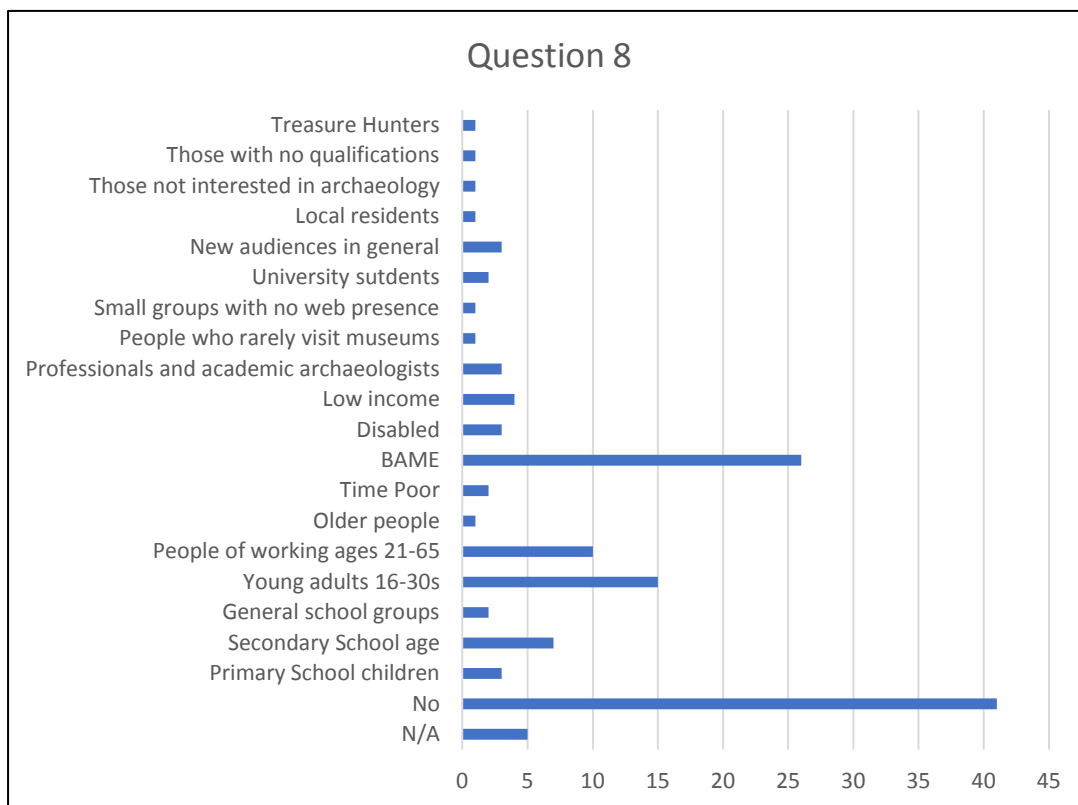

Figure 7: Question: Are there audiences that you struggle to engage with?

archaeologists are successfully engaging everyone in their communities. Though, it may also reflect the lack of diversity in some of the communities where community archaeology projects are taking place and the traditional audiences that community projects engage.

Support & Training

One of the main aims of the survey was to identify what support and training was available for the profession and to see what the SIG could do to support any training needs. Figure 8 shows where community archaeologists currently receive support and advice for undertaking projects (survey question 6).
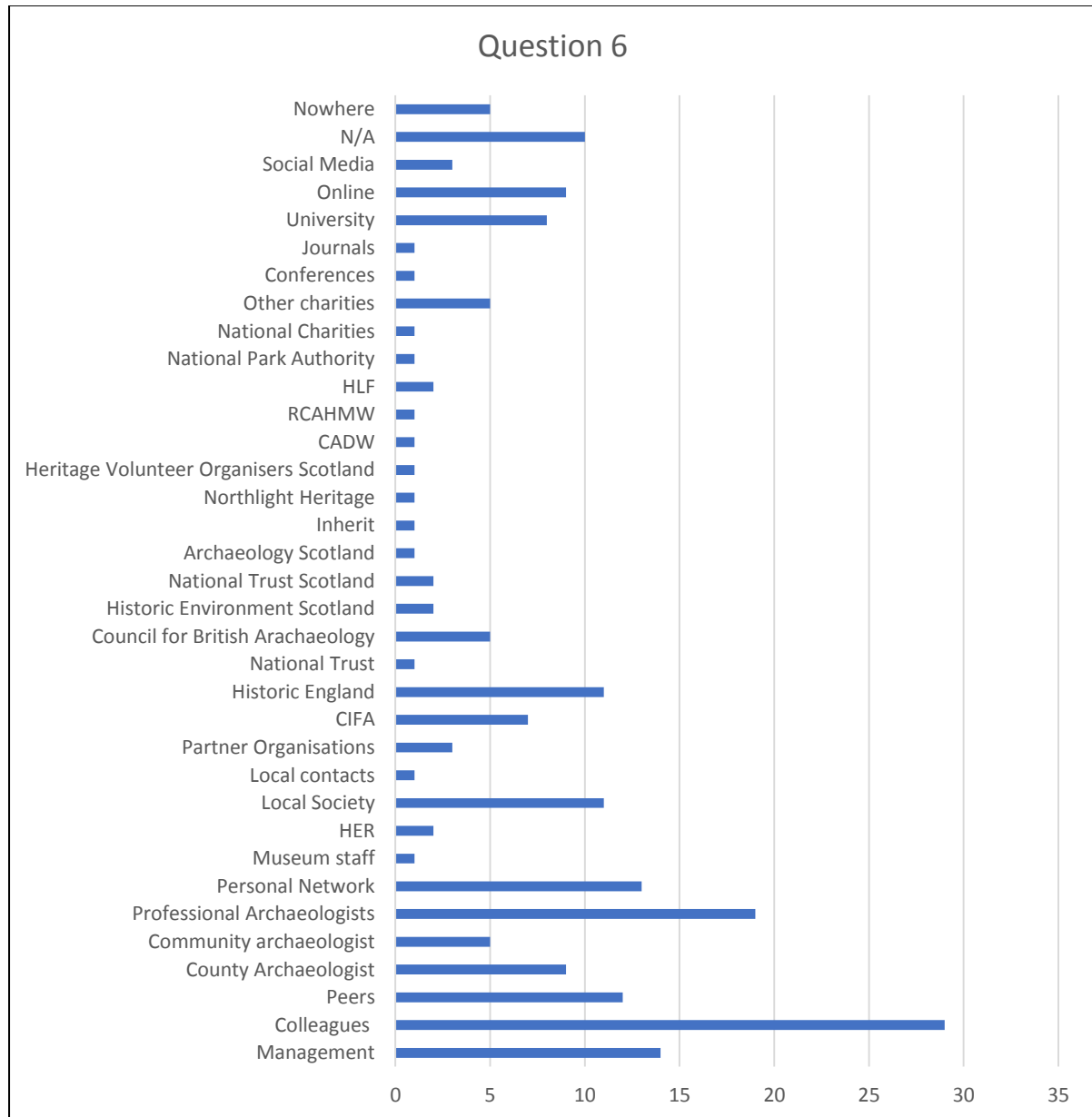

Figure 8: Question 6: Where do you get support/advice for your role?

Responses were weighted towards asking our friends and colleagues through personal networks. Management and professional archaeologists (including county archaeologists) also scored well. However, the answers to this question are actually difficult to analyse with any certainty due to the ambiguity of the prepared list of possible answers and not knowing the respondent's position – ie a professional archaeologist/community archaeologist or a volunteer who engages with community archaeology. For example; what is the difference between professional archaeologists, colleagues

and peers if the respondent works as a professional archaeologist? This question in hindsight was not well constructed.

However, a general interpretation of the results is that respondents like accessing local knowledge or from people they trust; building up a network of contacts is hugely important for accessing support as illustrated by one of the free text responses:

'I regularly consult other experienced colleagues in my place of work. I have contacts in community archaeology and heritage volunteering from past roles. I think there's an active community of people working in public archaeology on Twitter and I often check for news, events and opinion. I also think it's important to consult with your audience for projects and activities so I'm always looking for feedback from participants and partners.'

Training Needs

Subsequent questions asked whether respondents would like the SIG to organise training, and if so what would this cover. 55% responded positively with only 10% answering no. Additional free text comments were generally positive about the SIG organising training events. Some were wildly in favour, others were positive but have had mixed experiences with organised training events or feel that more details need to be forthcoming.

An important question (10) sought to identify specific training needs identified by community archaeologists. In order to facilitate this, a limited number of suggested opportunities were provided to start with to get the respondents thinking and provide people with the opportunity to select 'other' and add additional choices (Figure 9).

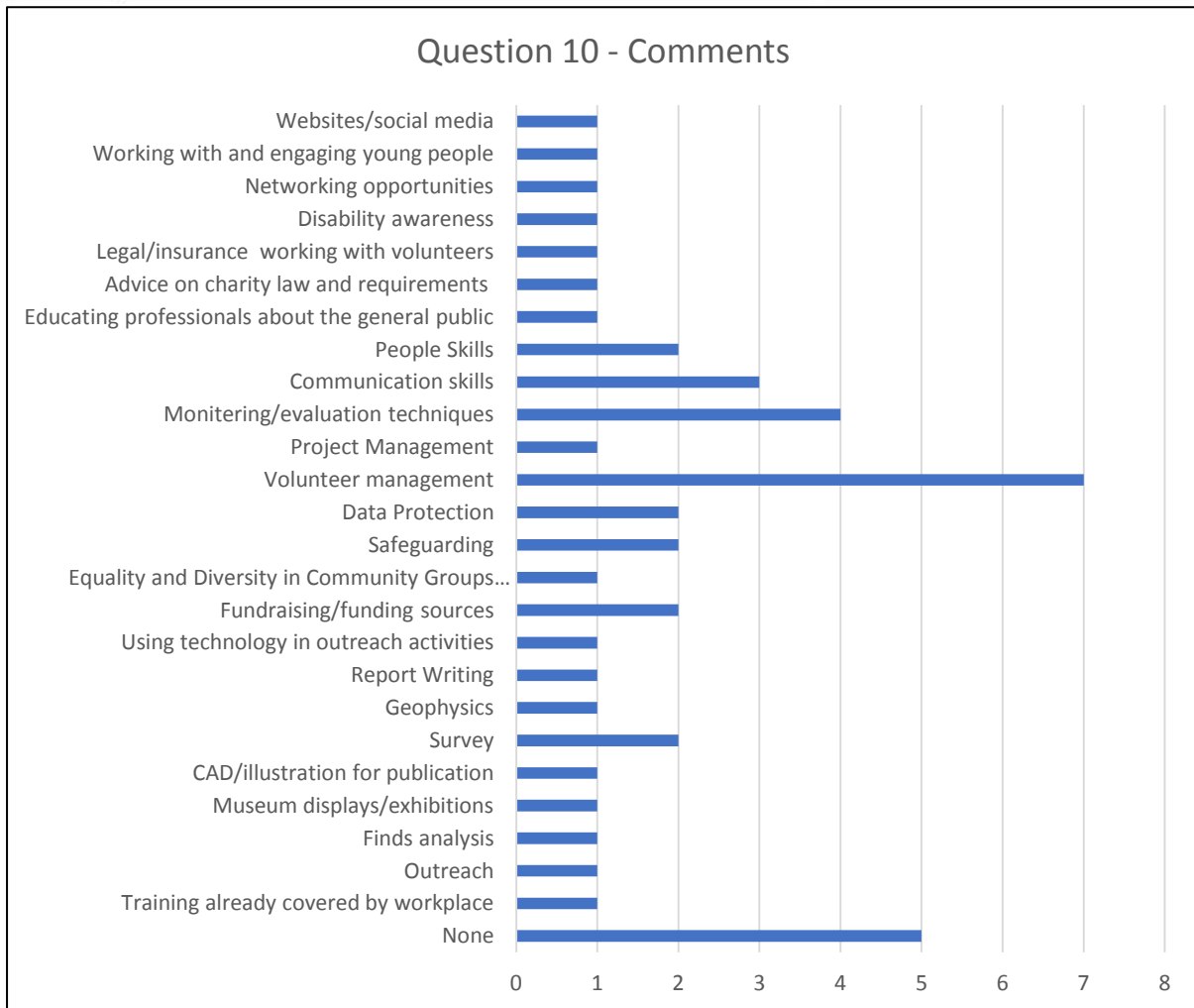| ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
GIS	31.07%	32
Grant Applications	53.40%	55
Setting up groups/charities	20.39%	21
producing interpretation	39.81%	41
producing education packs	42.72%	44
working with the National Curriculum	47.57%	49
Social media	25.24%	26
Total Respondents: 103		

Question 10 - Comments

Figure 9: Question 10: What areas of training would you like to have?

The range of training needs identified cover the whole spectrum of activities that community archaeologists are engaged in – (see question 5) – from practical training on GIS, survey, excavation, post ex and report writing, to more transferable skills required to start up and manage projects, administration, communication (including social media), fund raising, legal requirements and people skills including volunteer management. Volunteer management was the training need most highlighted independently in the free text comments section.

In the comments section there were some references to the perceived poor attitude of some professional archaeologists and a lack of people skills when involved in working with communities. A need for people skills type training and for professionals to have "training in the general public" were noted. The need for this type of training has been highlighted recently at the 2017 Glasgow Community Archaeology Conference and the CIfA Annual conference at Leicester (2016).

Developing a Collaborative Space

Questions 11, 12 and 13 sought to test out the perceived SIG committee assumption that there was a need to establish a new collaborative space for community archaeology (to replace the now redundant voluntary jisc mail group) and to capture what this could entail and include. In a similar vein to the delivery of training there was strong support for the idea of a collaborative space for community archaeology with 67.5% saying yes and only 5% saying no. 56% of respondents also agreed that this was something that the SIG should look to set up. However additional comments – received on both these questions - need to be considered. These included the feeling that there were enough online spaces, eg online forums/social media that included community archaeology and there was no need for another to be set up.
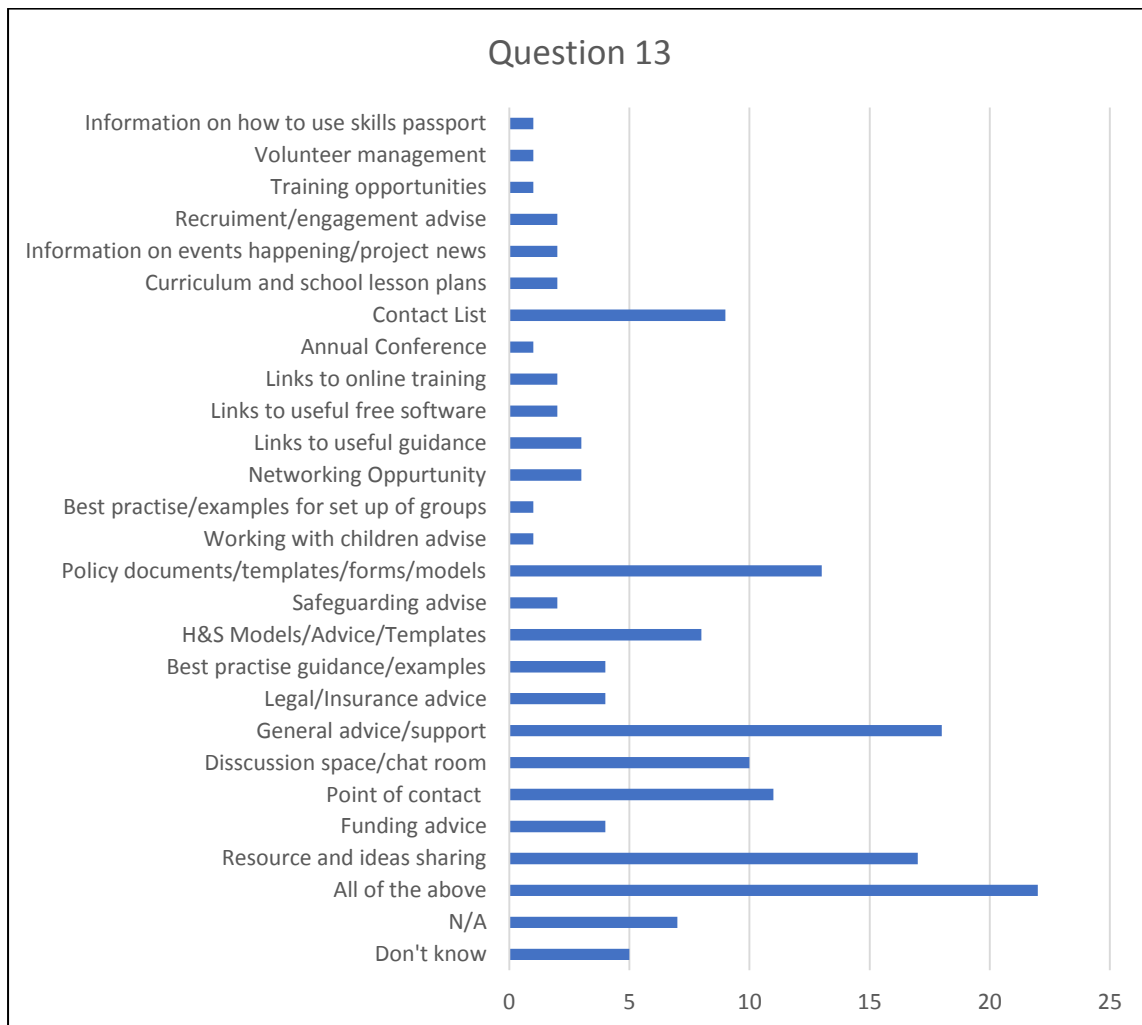

Figure 10: Question 13: What would you like to have on this? Eg model H&S forms, idea store, advice forum, point of contact with people?
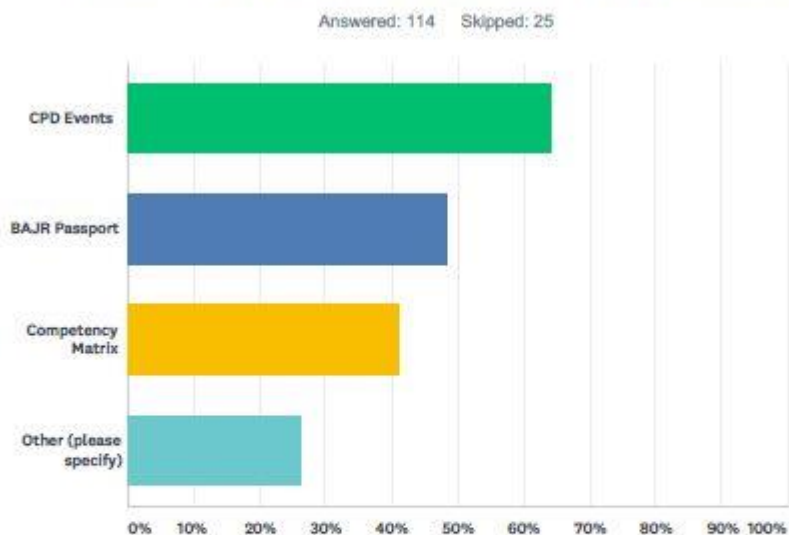
The subsequent question sought to identify what such a space might contain (Figure 10). The main recurring themes were for an open discussion space to ask for support and advice; a space to share templates for safeguarding/H&S/project designs etc; resource and idea sharing; contact lists by specialisation; and equipment sharing. Respondents recognised that collaboration within community archaeology would be a good thing for all.

The Role of the CIfA Voluntary and Community Special Interest Group for community archaeology

Some aspects of the role of the SIG have already been covered in the support, training and collaborative space questions above. The last couple of questions in the survey focused on asking the audience what the SIG should be championing or developing and then more open ended questions to capture any further feedback.

Q14 Do you think the Vol & Com SIG should be supporting or championing and developing any of the following

Answered: 114   Skipped: 25

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
CPD Events	64.04%	73
BAJR Passport	48.25%	55
Competency Matrix	41.23%	47
Other (please specify)	26.32%	30
Total Respondents: 114		

Figure 11: Question 14: Do you think the Vol & Com SIG should be supporting or championing and developing any of the following

Responses to the question of whether the SIG should be championing some already existing mechanisms within archaeology were varied. As shown in fig 11 there was support for the SIG to develop CPD events, to support the already existing BAJR passport and to develop a Competency Matrix (as has been developed by other CIfA SIGs). There was some confusion over this question, with some respondents not knowing what CPD or the BAJR passport were.

The final questions were very open ended in order to try and sweep up anything else we should be aware off, and this led to a mixed bag of responses (Figure 12).

Question 15

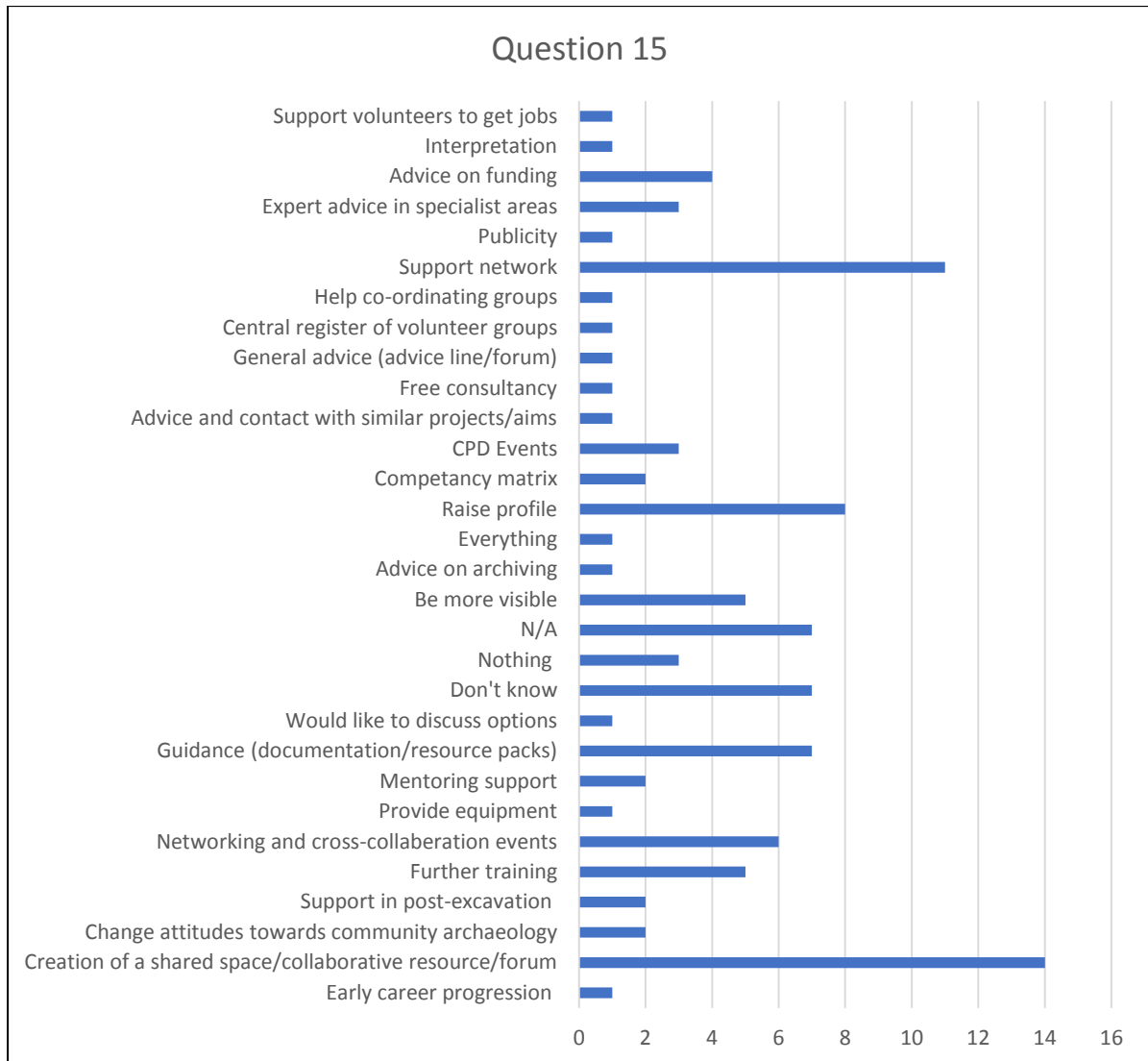| Category	Value
Support volunteers to get jobs	1
Interpretation	1
Advice on funding	4
Expert advice in specialist areas	3
Publicity	1
Support network	11
Help co-ordinating groups	1
Central register of volunteer groups	1
General advice (advice line/forum)	1
Free consultancy	1
Advice and contact with similar projects/aims	1
CPD Events	3
Competancy matrix	2
Raise profile	8
Everything	1
Advice on archiving	1
Be more visible	5
N/A	7
Nothing	3
Don't know	7
Would like to discuss options	1
Guidance (documentation/resource packs)	7
Mentoring support	2
Provide equipment	1
Networking and cross-collaberation events	6
Further training	5
Support in post-excavation	2
Change attitudes towards community archaeology	2
Creation of a shared space/collaborative resource/forum	14
Early career progression	1

Figure 12: Question 15: What would you like to see the Vol & Com SIG do to support you in your work?

The three biggest themes were for the SIG to be a support network, to raise the profile of community archaeology and to develop a shared or collaborative space/forum.

Importantly, respondents commented that they want the SIG to be more visible and active and to raise the profile of community archaeology across the sector. There is a big challenge around identity; some respondents are struggling with the perception of community archaeology in commercial units, especially when many projects have funding issues and are pushed to the back.

Also of note were concerns as to who SIG training would benefit – the professional archaeologist or the volunteer. One comment suggested community archaeology shouldn't be the default training mechanism for those wanting a job in commercial archaeology, whilst another suggested we helped people further with pathways to a career from the community sector (especially for mature audiences).

This question also identified lots of cross-over into the areas covered by other CIfA SIGs – in particular New Generation; Finds; Archives and Equality and Diversity) as well as the CBA and HLF.

Analysis and Recommendations

The survey results show that there is a genuine need to support community archaeology across the sector whether it is community archaeologists working with groups, developing and running projects, or the community groups themselves.

The CIfA Voluntary and Community SIG has a role to play in this, but it cannot be done in isolation. There is a need to work closer with other representatives of the sector – within CIfA and with other national and local bodies and networks, including heritage agencies, FAME, ALGAO, the CBA and the HLF – on all aspects of community archaeology. The shared needs of all involved in community archaeology highlight the need for a more linked up and collaborative approach for dealing with these.

1   Promoting community archaeology within the professional sector

From the survey and subsequent discussion, there is a clear need for the Community and Voluntary SIG to have a much more focused advocacy role within the professional sector to promote the value of community archaeology and develop strategies so that it becomes embedded culturally within commercial organisations and undertaken within a positive and inclusive framework.

Recommendations

1.1   The CIfA Community and Voluntary SIG plays an advocacy role within CIfA and within the professional sector (in particular commercial archaeology) to promote the value and profile of community archaeology

1.2   The SIG should promote an increase in the number of specialist community archaeologists in the profession, in particular in commercial organisations

Actions

1a   The SIG should promote and highlight the value of community archaeology at CIfA Advisory Council level and through CPD events directly to the sector eg: training and workshops, CIfA conference, community (national, regional and local) conference and events.

1b   The SIG should begin discussion with representatives of CIfA and the commercial sector (eg FAME) to promote the employment of community archaeologists.

1c   The SIG should continue to develop a CIfA competency matrix for community archaeologists

1d   The SIG should be aware of the current sectoral apprenticeship scheme and identify opportunities for developing a community archaeologist apprenticeship

2   Working in partnership across the community archaeology sector

The survey has shown that the boundaries between professional community archaeologists and those involved in community groups are very blurred and will likely become more so. There are relatively few fulltime community archaeologists employed at the present time, and many who are paid to do archaeology in some form or capacity also volunteer for or support community groups in their spare time. The needs of the whole community archaeology sector should be addressed holistically and the SIG needs work closely with other organisations – community group representatives (eg the CBA), national and regional agencies and organisations as well as other CIFA SIGs on shared issues, concerns and opportunities that are associated with or can have an impact on community archaeology.

Recommendations

2.1   The CIfA Voluntary and Community SIG works with sectoral partners, including the CBA and the HLF, to have a more strategic overview of the community archaeology sector

2.2   The CIfA Voluntary and Community SIG works with partner organisations (including community representatives and other CIfA groups, (eg Equality and Diversity, Finds, Archives etc…) to identify and contribute to resolving shared issues and concerns

Actions

2a   The CIfA Voluntary and Community Group does not work in isolation to develop new resources or tools solely for professional community archaeologists.

2b   The CIfA Voluntary and Community Group works with groups to develop best practice and standards in community archaeology – for example archiving, finds reporting, environmental studies, codes of conduct etc….

3   Developing learning and training for community archaeology

The range of training needs identified cover the whole spectrum of activities that community archaeologists are engaged in from archaeological practice to more transferable skills: how to start up and manage projects, administration, communication (including social media), fund raising, legal requirements and volunteer management.

This survey has highlighted the real need for more transferable and "people" skills rather than "archaeology" skills. It is not enough to be a "great" archaeologist to be involved in community archaeology. Understanding, or at least having an awareness of participant needs (as well as your own), is fundamental to working in community archaeology.

A recent project looking at the provision of guidance for archaeological community groups by the New Forest National Park (forthcoming by OAU East) needs to be considered as the training needs of

the community sector may not just be fulfilled through direct training but through different forms of guidance. In fact we should be talking about "learning needs" rather than "training needs" and think about the whole area in a more holistic manner – the communication and interchange of knowledge and advice through a whole range of approaches and formats.

With this in mind we can identify a number of areas in which the SIG could seek to provide learning opportunities for its members, but it would be much more beneficial to do this within a wider strategic framework of community archaeology learning. This would enable people to have a better understanding of the range of learning approaches that are available – across the sector – and for the SIG to be able to identify specific needs that it could address. This cannot be done in isolation and it needs the involvement of other sectoral representatives.

Recommendations

3.1   The SIG collaborates with sectoral representatives to develop a strategic framework of community archaeology learning

Actions

3a   To bring together the results of the recently published CBA report "Supporting Community Archaeology in the UK 2018 Survey", the forthcoming New Forest National Park report on community archaeology guidance and other recent sectoral reports to get a comprehensive oversight of the main areas of training requirements of the sector

3b   Feed into the Archaeological Training Forum with the results of this report and establish a link with this body through CIfA.

3c   Develop and feed into CIfA national body with regards to developing policies, best practice, standards and guidance on community archaeology.

3d   Work with other CIfA SIGs to identify cross sector training needs and provision.

3e   Liaise with the HLF regarding the training/guidance activities required by their funding grants to get a more structured approach to identifying and developing more sustainable training programmes.

3f   Identify the current provision of training for both "archaeological skills" and for "people skills" (eg volunteer management, understanding people) - within and outside the cultural heritage sector and set out a plan to promote learning (signposting resources, development of training, guidance etc...).

3g   The SIG will consider carefully what training it will seek to deliver, where, when and what format – and how this fits into a wider learning frameworks.

3.2   Promote the importance of acquiring "people skills" for working with volunteers and identify ways to develop this area of understanding for community archaeology

Actions

3h   Develop best practice/guidance (with sector partners) that covers the development of skills needed to work with volunteers on archaeological projects. This should cover volunteer management, understanding hidden disabilities, well-being etc….

3i   This guidance should be developed and promoted as a toolbox or briefings for commercial units who deploy staff on community projects.

3j   Work as advocates with other CIfA groups (eg Equalities group), and other sectoral groups, for example BAJR to promote best practice with working with volunteers

4   Engaging different Audiences

The survey has highlighted that outside the traditional and established audiences, there are a number of hard to reach audiences. These include BAME, time poor/ working adults between 21 and 45, young adults and schools. This is a recognised issue, not just in community archaeology but in the wider cultural heritage sector and there are a number of initiatives underway to address this.

Recommendations

4.1   To work with partners within the wider cultural heritage sector to learn how they are approaching the engagement of harder to reach audiences

Actions

4a   To speak with the CIfA Equality and Diversity Group to identify possible support networks and ways forward to engage with harder to reach audiences.

4b   To identify and highlight different approaches undertaken within the cultural heritage sector to engage with hard to reach audiences

5   Developing a Collaborative Space

The survey has shown that there is a need for some sort of collaborative online space to act as a portal for a searchable and updatable repository of resources, to signpost training and other opportunities, publish contact lists and to provide an open forum for questions and advice.

The results of the survey and subsequent discussions with the CBA have made it clear that we should not attempt to reinvent the wheel or develop an exclusive space for professional community archaeologists. We should instead promote and work together with sectoral partners to build a sustainable online collaborative space that will work across community archaeology. We should

begin by looking at what is currently available, for example the CBA's Introduction to [Standards and Guidance in Archaeological Practice](#) (ISGAP) before creating a new online space.

Recommendations

5.1   To work with sectoral partners to develop or reinvigorate an existing online collaborative space that will be fit for purpose across community archaeology.

Actions

5a   Bring together and analyse the results of the various sectoral surveys to specify user needs from across community archaeology for an online space

5b   Begin to scope out what this means and whether this can be undertaken on an existing resource by reviewing ISGAP and other online resources (if available).

5c   Promote this initiative to national, regional and local organisations including the HLF and national agencies.