

## **Minutes of Inaugural Meeting of Feckenham Manor Community Archaeology Project**

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014 at the Rose & Crown, High Street, Feckenham at 8.30 p.m.**

Present: Jen Clements (Chair)  
Judy Underwood (Secretary)  
Alan Jones (Treasurer)  
Judy Hooker  
Ian Bellion  
Gill Rowe  
Alan Smith  
Gilly Cooper  
Sue Barrett  
Fiona Hawker  
Jeremy Hawker

Apologies: Steve Fletcher  
Gary Crellin  
Peter Masters  
Elizabeth Atkins  
Adrian Bedford-Smith  
Pete and Marion Chute

Jen welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a brief resume of why the Community Archaeology Project was being formed:

- Feckenham manorial moated site, located under and around the playground and football pitch between Turton Gardens and Mill Lane has been identified by English Heritage as being "at risk"
- English Heritage working with local authority to initiate Community Archaeology Project to try and raise awareness about the plight of the monument and to raise funding to do this.

English Heritage believes the following could be achieved if the necessary funding is raised:

- Research and survey, including geophysical survey to get an accurate idea of below ground remains.
- Interpretation – installation of interpretation panels on site
- Revealing heritage values – aim to balance the local amenity and manage the woodland better to re-guide the moat walk away from the ramparts and improve stability of the site.

A copy of the LIDAR map of the site and a possible interpretation, kindly provided by Adam Mindykowski, was of great interest to those at the meeting.

### **Tidying up of the site and cutting back of undergrowth**

Redditch Council have walked the site and agreed to start some remedial works as part of their winter work schedule. It was thought that this used to be done on a regular basis, but had not been taking place over the recent past, leading to the general overgrown nature of the site.

English Heritage have stressed to the Council that there should be no ground disturbance and no trees or shrubs are to be pulled up. Basically, it will be a general tidying up to improve grass cover and prevent damage from future tree growth. The "moat walk" will be opened up more, enabling walkers to use this route, rather than the ramparts at the top of the ditch.

The Council will get in touch with us to let us know when works will be carried out so that a representative may meet with them at that time.

Concerns were raised by some at the meeting that mature trees and shrubs might be cut down or destroyed, changing the whole aspect of the site. This is not going to be the case. The aim is to restore the site to a more manageable level and ensure that it is regularly maintained.

A query was also raised regarding a large amount of rubbish behind the Football Club and whether this impacted on the archaeological site. English Heritage had not made any mention of this and it was felt it was probably an issue to be raised with the Redditch Council.

### **Funding**

Funding can be applied for by way of a Heritage Lottery Grant, which English Heritage will assist us with. There are two levels of funding – £3,000 to £10,000 and over £10,000. English Heritage have suggested that we go for the higher amount as this would enable us to fund the geophysical survey and interpretation, plus the interpretation boards. It was pointed out that any interpretation boards, etc. would have to fit in with Conservation Area criteria and it may therefore be worth contacting the Council's Conservation Officer at the outset of the project.

In order that the application for funding may be put forward, a formal constitution will need to be adopted and the necessary application forms submitted for approval. There are a number of residents in the village who have experience of putting together similar applications and their assistance would be sought at the appropriate time.

An information pack giving brief details of progress to date and interesting information on the site was provided to attendees of the meeting.

It was agreed that the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer should examine the requirements for submitting an application for funding over £10,000 to find out exactly what is involved. Once this has been established, a further meeting will be held to establish a constitution and working party to progress the application.

Jen thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.