

**Committee Meeting: 17 June 2020, 11 am**

Zoom meeting

**Minutes**

Present: Theodora Anastasiadou, Zoë Hazell, Katie Green, Deborah Fox

David Ingham

Also: Meg Keates (CIfA)

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| **1.** | **Apologies** | **Action** |
|  | Stephen Reed, Steve Baker, Hazel O’Neill, Helen Parslow |  |
| **2.** | **Committee matters** |  |
|  | **2.1 Chair’s report (TA)**  The chair welcomed everyone to this meeting, which followed the AAG’s AGM.  **2.2 Treasurer’s report (KG)**  The accounts had just been presented at the AGM, so weren’t repeated, and are documented in the minutes of that meeting.  **2.3 Secretary’s report (ZH)**   * Minutes from the previous AAG committee meeting are online. * End of TA’s term: this will finish in December 2020, so the call for nominations for the position will need to be made in November. It will be added to the meeting agenda for September meeting.   **2.4 Conference officer’s report (DI)**  The conference will be rescheduled to March 2021. The exact date will be decided based on the availability of the speakers.  **2.5 Effect and implications of Covid-19; sector, group, committee level (ALL)**  The committee discussed their current experiences in terms of the effect of the pandemic, and the future implications. These included effects on:   1. the archive and museum sector  * the level of furloughing, and its effect (together with building closures) on the ability of archives staff to be able to carry out their jobs, and to provide access to archives for requests * the backlog of work that is being created * the increased workload and pressures on staff when they return to work * threat of redundancies, and loss of experienced staff * implications for early careers/new generation workers  1. the university sector (re. Archaeology generally)  * reduced current and future student numbers * resulting financial shortfalls * the current stop on fieldwork * threat of redundancies, and loss of experienced staff   and the challenges that these will continue to cause over the coming years. Possibly counter-intuitively, lockdown has also presented some opportunity; where government staff have not been furloughed, this has meant that some backlog projects have been cleared.  It was also noted that:   * Historic England had a *Covid-19 Emergency Response Fund* (now closed), set up in response to its *Survey of COVID-19 Effects on the Heritage Sector* (<https://historicengland.org.uk/coronavirus/heritage-sector/survey/> for results). * CIfA have recently opened a *Covid-19: Archaeology sector recovery survey*, open as long as necessary, but with responses encouraged by 29 June. | ZH  DI |
| **3.** | **Representation to CIfA governance and in all CIfA activities** |  |
|  | **3.1 CIfA annual conference (Bath, 22-24 April 2020) ALL**  This was cancelled due to Covid-19, and will be rescheduled to 2021, with sessions remaining mostly the same. The committee will look out for any session openings that might arise.  **3.2 AAG breakout tearoom at CIfA’s virtual tea breaks on Zoom**  This was discussed at the AGM, where interest was shown in a special AAG tea break. Of the few dates suggested, preference for 10 July is indicated (as many potential attendees will be busy before then, preparing for re-openings on 4 July). MK will arrange to host it on Zoom. The committee will run this as a pilot and will be happy to host a second one on demand.  **3.3 CIfA Strategic Plan 2020–2030**  Comments on this are due by 25 July. Please email thoughts to TA who will compile them. | MK, ALL  TA, ALL |
| **4.** | **Promote awareness of archaeological archives; seminars, workshops** |  |
|  | **4.1 Selection Toolkit project: Progress report KG**  The project has now finished. There seems to be variable take-up (varying regionally), and so there is suggestion of the project team running a short on-line mini-workshop/Q&A session.  Please send KG any new and/or updated resources for the project webpages.  **4.2 AAG’s AGM day (18 March 2020) ALL**  This was cancelled due to Covid-19. The AGM was rescheduled to 17 June 2020 (preceding this committee meeting), and the conference day will be postponed until next year (see Item 2.4).  **4.3 Plan the short articles in *The Archaeologist***  Given the pressures on the committee at the moment, it has been decided to delay these and revisit at the September committee meeting. In the meantime, the committee will enquire whether there is going to be a special Covid-19 issue of *The Archaeologist* – if so, then it would seem best that the committee contribute a short comment on the implications of Covid-19 on the archives sector.  **4.4 Query from *EAC’s Archaeological Archives* working group**  Since the last committee meeting, C. Tsang had asked for case studies to help illustrate its selection guidance (section on options for de-selected materials). DF kindly supplied details for an example, and no further action is needed.  **4.5 Archives standards and guidance TA**  The updates on the Archives S&G, which the Committee worked on in February, were published on June 5th. | KG, ALL  TA, ALL |
| **5.** | **Focus on issues of standards, best practice, advocacy and access** |  |
|  | **5.1 DigDigital project**  KG provided a brief update; the project is now in its dissemination stage. There are currently no plans for in-person training, so work is in progress to get the documentation onto the webpage as a ‘toolkit’.  **5.2 SMART project (Society for Museum Archaeology Resources and Training Project) (**[**http://socmusarch.org.uk/training/smart-project**](http://socmusarch.org.uk/training/smart-project)**)**  DF summarised the project, and her involvement. The project has three main strands: training, mentoring, and SMA standards/guidance updates. The mentoring pilot aspect has proved successful, and it is hoped to be continued. Links to the documents and filmed training presentations are available through the weblink above.  **5.3 HEIF (High Efficiency Image File Format)**  This item was raised by HP. KG explained that these are files that have the file extension “.heif”. Because it is a package of multiple file types, which are compressed, it is not a suitable preservation format for digital archives. |  |
| **6.** | **Group aims 1 to 5** |  |
|  | **6.1 AAG’s 3-year plan 2020–2023**  This had originally been submitted to CIfA in Jan 2020, but it since needs some updating in view of the group events that have been postponed due to Covid-19. ZH will make the edits, and re-submit to CIfA.  **6.2 HE’s Local Authority Strategic Framework consultation**  Awaiting an update on whether a response was sent in.  **6.3 HE’s Curating the Palaeolithic**  Consultation closed on 15 May 2020; KG responded on behalf of the committee, primarily raising its lack of consideration of archiving.  **6.4 HE’s Advice Note on Commercial renewable energy development** Consultation closed on 28 May 2020; due to the current working challenges faced by the committee, no response was submitted.  **6.5 Historic England CDP themes ZH**  ZH had forwarded the committee the themes for the Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships (with HEIs). One of these themes covers heritage and digital data. Initial expressions of interest can be made to Historic England (ask ZH for details).  **6.6 Security copying**  ZH passed on to the committee that they should expect to receive a project proposal addressing this topic, in the near future. Given the committee’s previous discussions at on this subject (but limited capacity), it looks forward to seeing it.  **6.7 Discussion of Museum Association’s manifesto wrt archives**  SR had previously raised that the manifesto should be considered by the committee, as there appears to be little mention of archaeological archives. Although it had been agreed at the previous meeting that this requires further consideration, this task is outstanding.  **6.8 Arranging updated postcard**  Now that the competition has ended, the winning entry is to be used on the updated group postcard. ZH will work with MK to get this done. | ZH  SR  SR, ALL  ZH & MK |
| **7.** | **AOB** |  |
|  | **7.1 Upcoming meetings/events:**  No events were highlighted by the committee.  **7.2 Other**  The group’s surveys were discussed as followed:   * Group survey (due 2020–2021) – the subject of this has been decided as ‘*Resourcing of staff in archaeological archives*’, and was discussed in more detail at the AGM. Questions will first be drafted by TA, with subsequent input from the committee. * Subject survey (due 2021–2022) – initial suggestions of digital and/or environmental data were proposed, but this survey will be revisited later in the year. There is a possibility that it could follow on from the group’s annual conference day. | TA, ALL  ALL |
| **8.** | **Next of next meeting** |  |
|  | September 2020  A Doodle poll will be sent round to decide a date for the next meeting (likely Zoom); during the week commencing 14 September. | ZH |

Minutes: Z Hazell, with contributions from attendees

June 2020