

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR SCOTLAND

MINUTES OF MEETING 14 MARCH 2008

DUNS CASTLE, SCOTTISH BORDERS

Present: Liz Burns (Chair)
Peter Burman
Mark Hopton
Ian Johnson
Colin McLean
Colin Martin
Ross Noble
Richard Oram
Evelyn Silber
James Simpson
Andrew Wright
Olwyn Owen (Secretary)
Malcolm Bangor-Jones (Senior Administrator)

Welcome and apologies

1. The Chair welcomed Members to Duns Castle. Apologies were noted from Eila Macqueen.

Minutes of the meeting of 23 November 2007

2. The minutes were approved.

Matters arising

Rural issues

3. Council noted that the Scottish Forestry Strategy Implementation Plan includes a proposal that all Scheduled Monuments in forests should be proactively managed (management agreements currently exist only for those on land owned by Forest Enterprise).

4. Council discussed progress with the implementation of the SRDP (Scottish Rural Development Programme). It was noted that there were concerns about the availability of information and advice on the Historic Environment to farmers and land managers and the protection of undesignated Historic Environment assets. It was felt that the programme represented a potential diminution of support as compared with agri-environment schemes in the past, although the inclusion of funds for the maintenance of vernacular buildings was welcomed.

Scotland's Historic Environment Audit

5. Council noted the draft action plan for the Scotland's Historic Environment Audit.

Minutes of the special Council meeting of 5 February 2008, including the meeting with the Minister

6. The minutes of the meeting were approved. It was felt that the Minister had failed to appreciate the impact of the abolition of HEACS on Members and the wider Historic Environment sector. Historic Scotland's perceived role in the decision might be significant to the wider sector. The abolition of HEACS could have an impact on Council's ability to continue with its work programme, particularly with the process of gathering evidence. It was noted that the sector was already considering how independent advice might be provided to the Minister in the future.

The abolition of HEACS - Options Paper

7. Council considered the options paper and agreed to continue with its work programme. Council would aim to submit all outstanding reports to the Minister by the end of December 2008 and then continue in being until the end of May 2009. Council would seek to obtain reassurance that the Minister would respond to its reports before May 2009.

8. Council agreed to undertake a study tour of Caithness arranged mainly around its current work. The Council meeting would be held in Inverness on 17 June.

9. Council would hold a public meeting on 16 September in conjunction with its quarterly meeting the following day. The Annual Report for 2007-2008 would be produced and laid before Parliament prior to the public meeting. There would be no conference in September.

10. Council agreed to hold a final conference in April or May 2009 when its closing Annual Report would also be presented. Possible partners for the conference were considered.

11. Council agreed to concentrate on its core work programme and not to respond to consultations. Colin McLean would represent HEACS on HEASAG on the understanding that his representation of the HLF would take precedence. Meetings with other bodies should be considered on an ad hoc basis and on the assumption that they would be kept to a minimum.

12. Council agreed that the appointment of two Members should be extended to the end of May 2009.

13. Council agreed that the Minister and stakeholder organisations should be informed of what had been agreed.

Minister's responses to the four reports

Legislation Report

14. Council considered a draft reply to the Minister's response to the HEACS Legislation Report and the supplementary response provided by Historic Scotland. It was felt that the responses raised serious concerns and highlighted both the importance of independent advice and also the process whereby such advice was

mediated by the Minister's advisers. It was agreed that the response should be submitted to the Minister under a covering letter and copied to Historic Scotland.

Local Authorities Report

15. Council noted the Minister's response to the HEACS Local Authority Report.

Properties in Care Report

16. Council noted the Minister's response to the HEACS Properties in Care Report.

Materials and Skills Report

17. Council noted the Minister's response to the HEACS Materials and Skills Report.

Communications

18. Council agreed the recommendations of a paper (tabled) setting out a modified communications strategy, apart from the suggestion that all HEACS reports should require the Plain English kitemark.

19. Council discussed the possibility of employing a public relations consultant to assist with managing public relations through to 2009. It was agreed that a brief should be drafted for Council's consideration.

Current work

Infrastructure

20. Council considered the draft report of the Infrastructure Working Group. A revised draft would be submitted to the next Council meeting incorporating the findings of the SCVO research study into infrastructure bodies.

Economic Significance

21. Council noted progress made by the Economic Significance Working Group.

Ecclesiastical Heritage

22. Council noted that the work of the Ecclesiastical Heritage Working Group had been largely put on hold for several months but would now be resumed.

Young Adults

23. Council noted that the work of the Young Adults Working Group had been largely put on hold for several months but would now be resumed.

Proposals for additional research 2008/09

24. Chairs of Working Groups were invited to submit briefs for any research work which they wished to be commissioned in 2008/9. It was agreed that a study into volunteering in the Historic Environment sector would be of particular benefit.

Consultations

25. Council noted the consultation responses which had been submitted to the Public Petitions Committee of the Scottish Parliament on the Save the Gillies Hill petition; to the Scottish Government on Firm Foundations: the Future of Housing in Scotland; and to Historic Scotland on the Scottish Burgh Survey.

Chair's Group

26. Council noted that the next Chair's Group meeting would take place on April 29.

Budget paper

27. Council noted the budget paper.

A O B

Report on 'blue skies' session, Aberdeen

28. Council noted the report of the 'blue skies' session in Aberdeen.

Education and Lifelong Learning Committee – built heritage

29. Council noted that Members had been alerted to the Council's submission to the Committee and the Committee's proceedings.

Historic Scotland – note on taking evidence from HS officials

30. Council noted that Historic Scotland officials could not take part in meetings under Chatham House rules.

Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

31. Council noted the current status and proposed future of the Memorandum.

Construction History Society

32. Council noted that Mike Corfield and Raymond Young, two of the speakers at Council's conference in September, were producing a joint paper for publication by the Construction History Society.

Date of next meeting

33. The next meeting would take place on 17 June 2008 in Inverness.

HEACS
March 2008