

Council for British Archaeology

Minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting (149th Council Meeting)

The Annual General Meeting was held on Thursday 3 February at 11.30am via Zoom. The meeting was chaired by Mr Ken Smith, Chair of Trustees. The CBA Executive Director, Mr Neil Redfern and staff members were in attendance.

1. Confirmation of appointments to the Board of Trustees, Chair and Vice-Chair of Trustees

This AGM marks the standing down of 4 of the current CBA Trustees: Mrs Marjoleine Butler, Lady Sue Dormer, Ms Lis Dyson and Mr Tim Hedley-Jones. We would like to offer our thanks to them for all their hard work and commitment to the CBA during their time as Trustees.

The meeting was asked to ratify the re-election of Mrs Fiona Gale as a Trustee for a second term; and the election of Dr Kirsty McCarrison, Ms Sefryn Penrose, Mr Philip Pollard and Professor John Schofield as new Trustees of the CBA. As the number of candidates for election did not exceed the number of available places no ballot was required.

A vacancy exists for a new Hon Treasurer/trustee and trustees will consider filling the important role via co-option at the earliest possible opportunity.

Members RATIFIED the re-election of the above Trustees.

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 4th February 2020

The Minutes of the 148th Council Meeting held on Thursday 4th February 2020 were APPROVED.

There were no matters arising.

3. Strategic overview from the Chair of the Trustees, Mr Ken Smith

Mr Smith reported on the events of the last year, including political uncertainties and the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on the heritage sector, and the achievements of the CBA particularly the implementation of the Organisational Review and delivery of the new CRM and website.

The Chair also thanked the outgoing Trustees and the former Business Transformation Director, Helen Wilkinson for their contributions to the CBA.

Watch Mr Smith's report in full on the CBA YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/Bqy8D5xAlhA> or download the transcript here <https://www.archaeologyuk.org/resource/agm-2021-resources.html>.

4. Annual Trustees' Report and Financial Statements

Members were provided with access to the Annual Trustees' Report and Financial Statements in advance of the AGM.

At the end of 2020-2021 financial year the CBA accounts had achieved a healthy surplus which has enabled us to commit to a number of initiatives during the 2021-2022 financial year and to bolster the CBA's reserves

which was a concern Trustees had been seeking to address. The scale of the surplus also reflects funding that was committed to projects such as the new CRM and website and has been carried forward into the current financial year.

The Trustees' Annual Report for 2020-2021 was APPROVED.

The Annual Trustees' Report is available to read at <https://www.archaeologyuk.org/resource/agm-2021-resources.html>.

5. Revised membership and subscription rates 2021-22

CBA Trustees, having considered the financial position of the CBA and the burden of increasing costs, proposed a £2 increase in the standard membership of the CBA from £42 to £44. This increase follows a standstill in membership fees in 2021-2022.

For larger institutional memberships increase in subscription rates will be between £3 and £5.

The proposal to increase standard membership fees by £2 and larger institutional fees by £3-£5 was APPROVED.

6. Election of Prof. Marilyn Palmer MBE, FAS as Honorary Vice-President of the CBA

In the spring of 2021, the CBA was informed that, after a long and distinguished association with the CBA East Midlands and the CBA nationally, Professor Marilyn Palmer had decided to step back from her formal roles with the CBA.

Professor Marilyn Palmer FSA is Emeritus Professor of Industrial Archaeology at the University of Leicester and a former Vice-President and President of the CBA (Vice-Chair and Chair). She has had a life-long interest in industrial archaeology, teaching first in adult education from the 1970s and then as part of full-time university courses from the 1990s.

Considering this long service to the CBA, the Board of Trustees propose that Marilyn Palmer MBE, FSA is elected to the post of Honorary Vice-President of the CBA and the AGM is asked to support the Trustees nomination.

Members APPROVED the Trustees nomination of Professor Palmer MBE as an Hon Vice President of the CBA.

7. Executive Director's report on current and future activities

Mr Neil Redfern gave an update on CBA activity in 2021 which has been another year of extraordinary change for the CBA. We have been looking to develop a more outward looking presence, to reach out to members and to champion public participation in archaeology.

Mr Redfern expressed his thanks to Helen Wilkinson, who has recently left the role of Business Transformation Director, for her work over the last two years, in particular to ensure the security of the organisation during the Covid Pandemic. Cyllene Griffiths, has also left the organisation stepping down from her role as CBA Wales Director to become a Conservation Officer at Brecon Beacons National Park. Cy was instrumental in ensuring our work in Wales was in line with the needs of people in Wales and the Welsh Government.

Over the course of the year, we have trialled new activity including a hybrid Festival of Archaeology and the introduction of the Archaeological Achievement Awards (formerly the British Archaeology Awards). We have a new website to enable the CBA to share information and engage with our members in a better way. We have continued to deliver a strong programme of youth engagement activity and developing the Young Archaeologists' Club.

Over the year we were fortunate to benefit from a Kickstarter placement Bethany Leathley and a Shout Out Loud placement, Sam Hiorns. Sam worked with Neil to help him film his visits to various locations and archaeological projects around the UK across the Festival of Archaeology. We hope to continue to get out more to visit CBA groups and affiliate members so we can find out what they are doing and help celebrate what they are achieving.

There are 5 strands to the CBA's core activities:

National Amenity Society – The CBA has a formal role in the planning process, commenting on Listed Building application. We also manage the Casework Database on behalf of all of the national amenity societies. The database is publicly accessible at <https://casework.jcnas.org.uk> where you can view all of the responses submitted by the national amenity societies.

Publications – The CBA publishes *British Archaeology* magazine edited by Mike Pitts. Over the last year we have changed the content to increase opportunities to share more of our work. We also publish research reports and a range of practical handbooks. Alongside this we publish a huge amount of material on our social media channels and have several hundred hours of material to watch on our YouTube channel.

Work with members – We are continuing to develop what we offer to and how we engage with our members. We have a new website which includes a new events calendar and resources. We aim to continue to improve the membership offer over the coming year.

Events – We are continuing to develop the events we offer such as the Archaeological Achievement Awards, Festival of Archaeology, AGM and de Cardi lecture and Marsh Community Archaeology Awards. We are developing a strong online audience and in 2021 saw the digital reach of the Festival of Archaeology grow to over 70 million.

Youth engagement – This includes the Young Archaeologists' Club (YAC) which is coordinated by the CBA and run by over 500 volunteers with over 2000 young people actively engaging in YAC activities. We recently launched a new project called Letters to a Young Archaeologist, a series of letters from archaeologists writing to the fictional figure of the 'young archaeologist'.

Watch Neil's full report on the CBA YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/Y7dtrrCIZ2E>.

8. Appointment of auditors

Members were invited to approve the re-appointment of Armstrong Watson as auditors for the coming year.

The appointment of auditors Armstrong Watson for the coming year was APPROVED.

9. Any other business

There was no other business.

10. Dates of future meetings

The next Council for British Archaeology AGM will be held in early February 2023.

Staff and Trustees are keen to explore moving back to an in-person AGM and staff will be consulting the membership on their preference on holding the AGM on a weekend or weekday. It is the intention to keep the AGM date to early Feb 2023 and to facilitate on-line attendance.

Questions

During the AGM a number of questions were raised. These questions are provided below with answers provided by Neil Redfern, CBA Executive Director.

Membership and accounts

When were the membership rates last increased?

An increase in membership fees was last discussed at the 2019 AGM when an increase of 5% to be introduced in 2020-2021 was approved. Trustees felt it necessary to propose an increase this year due to the increase in inflation and production costs.

For societies up to 100 members the membership increase will be £2 from £43 to £45. Societies with 101-500 members will see a £3 increase in membership from £67 to £69. Societies with over 500 members will see an increase of £5 from £125 to £130. The changes to membership fees are set out in the Membership and subscription rates 2022-23 paper which can be accessed here <https://www.archaeologyuk.org/resource/agm-2021-resources.html>.

Is CBA Group membership to also increase?

CBA Groups manage their own membership fees and CBA has not made any recommendations to them regarding their membership rates.

The accounts and report just approved mention a surplus and a healthy situation. Why is the increase needed?

Due to deficits in accounts in previous years the CBA had used a significant proportion of its reserves. The general accounting recommendation is for reserves of 2% of the overall annual budget, as an absolute minimum, and it was important to use some of the surplus from 2020-2021 to improve the reserves in line with this.

The budget this year is based on the receipt of a significant legacy likely to be in excess of £50,000 but due to the delays with probate we are yet to receive this. As a result, this shortfall will need to be met and it is important that the reserves are in place to provide protection should the legacy not be received in 2021-2022 and as a hedge against any unpredicted significant financial impacts.

I recently came across a charitable organisation which had a small office and therefore paid General Rates; however, they were not aware of the charitable discount they could claim. Can you check that CBA are in

order (they were able to recover some prior years and their auditor had missed this eligible claim opportunity)?

The CBA's current rental agreement with York Conservation Trust includes all of our accommodation costs including rent and utilities so we do not currently pay Council Tax separately. York Conservation Trust do claim rate relief and that is factored into our rental agreement.

Universities and apprenticeships

In light of a lack of UK educated students in archaeology where does the CBA stand upon apprentice schemes?

The CBA is looking at how we can support and promote different routes into archaeology as university is not the only option available. Apprenticeships schemes do offer opportunities, but it is important to be mindful of how those schemes function to ensure they equip those who apply with the skills they need.

What influence does the CBA have over policies resulting in threatened closure of prestigious university departments?

The CBA has written to the Vice-Chancellors of all universities where departments were threatened. We were pleased to see such a positive outcome at Chester but the outcomes at Sheffield and Worcester were less positive. There are lots of issues involved which inform the decisions Vice-Chancellors make but the CBA does have a role to play in standing up for those departments. CBA provides the secretariat for University Archaeology UK (UAUK) and is actively involved in the conversation about university departments and is working with UAUK to help them develop a new website to improve exposure for departments and to help bolster recruitment for undergraduate courses. It is not a level playing field with some departments seeing good uptake in courses.

Behind the scenes we continue to help facilitate conversations with Government Ministers via UAUK, The Archaeology Forum and the All Party Parliamentary Archaeology Group (APPAG). In 2021 there was a threatened cut to a teaching grant for archaeology and the conversations that followed led to a direct change to the policy proposal. Archaeology funding was not cut and the subject was moved into the same bracket as other STEM subjects which is a really positive change.

With reference to closure of arch depts. There used to be faculties of continuing education offering mature students' opportunities. Would it not be appropriate to reopen these departments?

This is outside of the CBA's control and at present it does not look like universities funding models will enable this. While there is an element of stability with student numbers there has been a real loss of part-time archaeological courses. If the number of people entering archaeology through universities is reduced, how do we ensure there continue to be accessible career paths? Apprenticeships schemes are one alternative. For those who don't want a career in archaeology there is more we can do to highlight why archaeology is still a relevant subject to study.

I am a mature student (a senior citizen) and have just completed an MA at Newcastle. Do other universities not provide this option?

Other universities do provide this option and there does not seem to be the same challenges for Masters course as are currently seen with undergraduate courses as the way they are funded is slightly different. Undergraduate courses rely on core grants and students often rely on student loans.

This is where CBA having a large, active and vocal membership becomes really important. If every member was able to draw in a new member our advocacy on these issues could be twice as effective. There is information on the CBA website about how you can campaign and we are looking at additional ways we can help to activate the voice of the CBA.

Two of our newly elected Trustees are involved in these issues and will be able to provide help and advice as these conversations continue. Phil Pollard manages the apprenticeship scheme at Historic England and Professor John Schofield is a lecturer at the University of York.

We are trying to ensure CBA Trustees have a wide range of relevant skills and experience relevant to current issues in archaeology.

Advocacy

Uplands form 40% of the UK landmass. They are almost exclusively the preserve of community groups and small/medium size contractors. Access to what is a poorly recorded archaeological resource is threatened by ELMS, by re-wilding and by aggressive corporate carbon offset agroforestry. These are activities which have been underway for some years. The annual report does not mention these challenges at all. When is CBA National and its trustees going to develop and implement policy, guidance and advice for community groups so that they can monitor and influence those kinds of activities in their areas and ensure that upland archaeological resources are properly recorded and ensure that access to those resources is assured and maintained? When will the editorial team of British Archaeology get a move on and catch up with these developments and their implications?

Through our various advocacy roles we are trying to influence what might happen through environmental land management schemes and the whole agri-environment process. There is a role for community groups in supporting and undertaking work in the rural environment and this is a topic we are exploring. In Wales we are currently leading a project looking at how communities can adopt small features of local heritage interest and it is also a subject we are discussing with Historic England. How we marshal the volunteer community to engage with some of these projects moving forward is going to be really important.

There are already some projects actively engaging community volunteers in monitoring and reporting the condition of scheduled monuments such as the Hunter Archaeological Society across parts of South Yorkshire and the Peak District. There will doubtless be opportunities to build on these initiatives.

Does the CBA engage with DEFRA? We found out by chance, that all farmers getting payments under the environmental stewardship programme via DEFRA's Rural Payments Agency (RPA) have to get prior approval for any archaeological work on their farm. More farmers are likely to sign-up to this scheme. This is a very bureaucratic process which can take months for approval. There seems to be no standard process used by the RPA (they use Natural England, not Historic England, for advice). I believe many, especially the

amateur sector, are unaware of this requirement, and a streamlined approvals process by DEFRA would be appreciated.

The archaeological input is made to Natural England through the Local Authority heritage services, using their Historic Environment Records (HERs). Historic England comments on the inclusion of scheduled monuments in any agreement and Local Authorities comment on non-designated heritage assets. The information from the HERs is used to populate the Farm Environment plans which are then used to inform the farmer of what is known to be on their holding. These are entirely voluntary schemes and it is up to the farmer, on the advice of their agent, as to whether they include the archaeological prescriptions that are available in these agri-environment schemes.

Natural England do have archaeological advisors of their own and are aware of issues around archaeology. Sometimes the Rural Payment Agency is a good route to help ensure monuments included in schemes are managed appropriately. When looking from the outside it isn't always possible to see the historic environment or archaeological input that goes into these schemes. Concerns about the historic environment in such schemes have been raised through some of the advocacy partners we have such as the Heritage Alliance and Historic England who have been worried about the future direction of agri-environment schemes and their ability to include the beneficial management of archaeological sites.

A lot of farmers do see themselves as custodians of the land and are actively engaged in stewardship schemes.

Sometimes the challenge is that the standard management prescription is not to allow disturbance of archaeological sites in agri-environment schemes. The CBA does have contacts within Natural England; and can help facilitate conversations for groups who wish to undertake archaeological work on land within an agri-environment scheme. Non-ground disturbing activity should be possible such as landscape and building survey it is ground disturbance, of any form, that is the issue here.

The CBA AGM was followed by the de Cardi lecture given by Dr Neil Wilkin, Curator of Bronze Age Collections at the British Museum on 'Staging the World of Stonehenge' an insight into the creation of the British Museum's new exhibition. This is available to watch on the CBA YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/3oj5Q3nIPUg>.

To celebrate our activity over the last year we put together a short film – The CBA in 2021. You can watch this here <https://youtu.be/urkfnulhCw>.

During the event the 2022 Marsh Archaeology Awards were launched by CBA President, Raksha Dave. More information on the awards can be found at <https://www.archaeologyuk.org/get-involved/the-marsh-community-archaeology-awards.html>.

Bill Griffiths, Head of Programmes and Collections at Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums and Chair of the Hadrian's Wall 1900 Festival Group launched the 2022 CBA Festival of Archaeology. More information on the Festival can be found at <https://www.archaeologyuk.org/festival.html>.