



ALGAO-UK HER Committee

Held on 22 May 2013 at English Heritage West Midlands Regional Office,
8th Floor, The Axis, 10 Holliday Street, Birmingham B1 1TG

Present:

Mark Bennet (MBt)	Lincolnshire County Council (Minutes)
Alison Bennett (ABt)	Essex County Council
Suzy Blake (SBI)	Staffordshire County Council/FISH
Stuart Cakebread (SCa)	Greater London SMR – EH
Sally Croft (SCr)	Cambridgeshire County Council
Rob Edwards (RE)	Cheshire Shared Services
Paul Gilman (PG)	Essex County Council (Chair)
Fiona MacDonal (FMc)	Berkshire Archaeology and ALGAO England
Sarah MacLean (SMc)	English Heritage
Chris Martin (CM)	Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust
Graham Tait (GT)	Devon County Council
Ben Wallace (BW)	Warwickshire County Council
Chris Webster (CW)	Somerset County Council

1. Apologies

Alice Cattermole, Paul Cuming, Lucie Dingwall, Susan Hamilton RCHMS, Susan Lisk, Melissa Seddon.

Bruce Mann has stepped down as chair of SMR Forum Scotland; his replacement is Stephanie Leith who has been added to the circulation list.

2. ALGAO England Chair Introduction

FMc introduced herself as the chair of ALGAO England. There has been success in establishing working links with EH. There is a good relationship in the HER sphere. This committee will feed back to ALGAO management and it is hoped to make more use of this committee with, for example, input into documents that ALGAO produces.

3. Minutes of meeting of 13 February 2013

Item 3:- closer liaison with the Countryside Committee. SBI attended the HECAS meeting and there was an opportunity to feed back HER issues there as Environmental Stewardship is being revised.

The exchange of minutes with the Countryside Committee would be useful.

ACTION: PG to contact Ken Smith

4. Matters Arising

i. Impact of budget cuts on HERs

MBt – Lincolnshire: no change.

ABt – Essex: the final move to a Local Authority Trading Company in the next 18 months. The HER is mentioned in internal county council service level agreements. The HER is working up a service level agreement to fund the non-development control parts of the HER remit, such as public access and outreach. Where there are local societies' projects that create data that would go into the HER, staff may not have sufficient time to deal with these.

GT – Devon: no change

CW – Somerset: heading towards a charitable status company.

SCr – Cambridgeshire: £30,000 profit needed on the budget and so an enhanced charging policy will come into force on 1 July.

RE – Cheshire: no change. Chester Archaeology income target is £20,000 and aiming to be self-financing.

SBI – Staffordshire: there are new budget pressures for gaining income and they are looking at various services that can be put out to tender.

CM – Wales: most funding is from central government and so the budget is still stable. The future is uncertain. Powys Country Park is now involved in development control work and a memorandum of understanding is being negotiated.

SCa – London: no change.

BW – Warwickshire: a strategic commissioning review is continuing, a possible heritage company is under consideration. External consultants have been appointed to investigate this. A decision is unlikely before next year. They are preparing for 30% savings next year. In addition, internally, the organisation is looking at the way it works. The service level agreements are working well.

ii. OASIS

SCa – no word heard from OASIS. At the moment no meetings are arranged.

ACTION: PG to chase

FMc noted that Gail Falingham had had some success with HER related issues. We need to be a partner in this as it is a major part of our workload.

SCa – few HERs are using OASIS because they do not have the time.

GT – it is seen in Devon as a DC function and OASIS forms are signed off by the DC advisors. This does not work as well as it being an HER task. The most useful element is archiving the report with ADS. He asked whether EH check that projects have taken OASIS on board before approaching EH for funding.

ACTION: SMc to check

CM – in Wales there is little or no call for OASIS with the possible exception of the digital archive of grey literature.

iii. HER committee representation at other meetings

IFA – Information Management Group, BW and ABt are members. There is no representation on the Countryside Committee at the moment. The Maritime Committee is exchanging minutes within this committee. The committee expressed its thanks for this.

iv. Advice note on using HER data

It has been taken over by Stewart Bryant. PG thought that something on IFP² needed adding.

5. Role and membership of ALGAO-UK committee

GT thought the EH HDM HER minutes were useful and wondered whether this committee should merge with this meeting. He stressed the need for action points in the HER committee minutes. He felt that more timely minutes from this committee would be useful too, as would more detailed discussion on particular topics.

FMc noted that HDM meetings vary in scope from very high level discussions to discussions of small minutiae. Different groups of people needed to be involved and they needed to be relevant and targeted.

GT considered that there were repeated discussions of the same topics in different meetings. CW and SBl thought that more use of this committee by other ALGAO committees with vertical communication for a more joined up ALGAO would be useful.

SMc commented on the EH HDM meeting which is English specific while this committee is a UK committee. The EH representative here is at the invitation of ALGAO. SMc prepares for these meetings by emailing around EH prior to the meeting to elicit any issues that might be raised with the committee.

FMc suggested a standing item for what this committee would like to feed back to the HDM meeting and vice versa.

SMc noted that appropriate EH staff can be invited to this committee for specific agenda items rather than increasing the permanent membership of the committee.

FMc said that consultation on the HDM agenda could be used to make sure that HER issues raised at this committee are represented and considered at the HDM meeting. Perhaps someone from this committee might attend the ALGAO executive committee from time to time.

GT mentioned sharing the committee minutes more widely, to regional ALGAO groups for example. MBt said that there were representatives of each region on the committee and/or receiving the minutes who could be distributing the minutes at the regional meetings. It was agreed that PG would look again at the terms of reference for this committee.

ACTION: PG

GT asked if the minutes could go on the ALGAO website and let the HER forum know that they are there. This could not be done at the moment because there is currently no ALGAO Administrator. Comments would come back to the regional representatives if there are issues to be raised.

SMc voiced a plea to people to let the secretary know if they were going to attend a committee meeting. This was needed for health and safety reasons for the room booking. A note to this effect should be added to the email with the agenda when it is circulated.

ACTION: MBt

A generic email address for the committee was discussed but a decision made not to adopt one.

SMc suggested a standing five minute slot at the HER forum for the committee. There was a general discussion on the usefulness of this.

6. HER local engagement group

BW reported on the meeting last week. They are still trying to attract more people to the meetings. There is a southern focus at the moment. Terms of reference are in preparation and they are looking to share ideas on local engagement. A number of projects are on-going or starting soon, especially First World War projects. The next meeting is in October.

7. 2014 content and computing survey

SMc reported that the timetable for 2014 is with FMc. FMc said she would forward this to PG.

ACTION: FMc

They are seeking feedback on the questions and whether they are HER friendly. They are also consulting IHBC. A printable copy of the survey will be available in advance that can be used prior to going on the internet survey to help with some issues that have arisen with completing the form online.

8. Report from EH HDM/ALGAO HER Liaison Meeting

The minutes have gone out and there was a very useful discussion with several HER representatives present. There are action points on it and there will be discussions on how to move it forwards.

PG noted that it was interesting to see the strategic view of EH and HER links over the next five years.

There was a discussion of EH projects that are not feeding data back to HERs but to AMIE instead. They should do both.

9. FISH

SBI reported. In April there was a presentation by Ceri Binding, University of North Wales, on the Seneschal Project. A project to put controlled vocabularies on line, see www.heritagedata.org. It will allow local terms to be linked to national reference identifiers. The EH thesauri will be included. There are implications for HERs and the project would be willing to come along to speak at an HER forum meeting. The Terminology Working Group (Sarah Orriss is the representative for ALGAO) will come back to this committee if they need HER input. Different people will have responsibility for vocabulary lists to monitor them and keep them up to date. The lists are to go live on the FISH website. Included are HLC thesauri, Crime types, Home Front lists and disability terminology. The wiki IFP site has an increased number of page hits.

10. HBSMR user group meeting report.

The new convenors are RE and Moya Watson. The next meeting will be in late June or early July at Birmingham or Worcester.

11. BHUG meeting report

Given Nick Boldrini is on sabbatical there has not been much to report. There will be a quick business meeting after the next HER forum.

12. HER Forum

The next meeting is about First World War projects, to be held in Birmingham on 9 July.

13. Country updates, items not already covered.

Scotland: no report.

Wales: the Heritage Bill continues there will be a consultation period announced, probably in the next month or so. It is uncertain what it will contain but maybe most revisions will be on the listed building side. There may possibly be a duty on local authorities to have access to an HER.

Cadw and RCAHMW merger, a business case document has been prepared but a change of minister has delayed progress, perhaps for a year.

Work on the HER software continues and a 'phone app is about to be launched.

England: CW reported on a destroyed monument in Somerset in the latest *Conservation Bulletin*.

BW noted that HS2 phase 2 starting from Birmingham and going north was beginning. HERs will be consulted. The phase 1, London to Birmingham consultation is now available.

14. Any other business

Heritage Gateway (HG): GT spoke about the data providers' meeting in May. There was notification of some redesign and a plan to look at the audience for HG. The specification for

the redesign is not planned to go out to the HER community for consultation. Some concern was expressed and it was requested that this be taken back to EH.

CW said that this was in its early stages and at the moment was an internal EH document. Mandy Roberts was aware of HER concerns.

The question arose of who the HG was aimed at, historic environment professionals, the public or academic researchers. It is not easy to successfully target three very different and diverse groups when each has different requirements.

It was emphasised that the EH staff involved with HG did have the drive to move it forwards. They have enthusiasm and are honest with HERs which is creditable. The HER community would like to work with the HG.

Stewart Bryant is on the ALGAO-HG Advisory Board.

It was apparent that some HERs are not updating their data regularly on HG.

HER Benchmarks: the EH project is moving forwards and the next stage is to engage with the sector to develop the project. Dave Batchelor is leading on the project. There was a suggestion that benchmarks be included as an item for the next meeting and that Dave Batchelor be invited to attend.

ACTION SMC

Environmental Stewardship: BW reported that for the next two years there would be an interim period while discussions on the whole common agricultural policy (CAP) take place in Europe. [It is now known that there will be no CAP in 2014, so limited funding, and the next CAP will come into force on 1 January 2015.] Current applications to the end of the year are okay after which some renewals will continue. A new environment management scheme, similar to environmental stewardship will launch in 2015 and start in 2016. [This will be called NELMS, New Environmental Land Management Scheme.] Its exact form is uncertain because of continuing European discussions. Consideration is being given to an on-line system of SHINE data but there are still issues with this.

GT thought that there needed to be consultation with the HER community.

BW said that the on-line system will be optional at first but by 2016 the whole environmental management scheme will be digital.

There was a suggestion that Jez Bretherton or Vicky Hunns be invited to the committee to discuss some of the issues. Perhaps to be actioned after the next meeting.

Note for matters arising at next meeting.

INSPIRE: BW said that there is need for local authorities to be compliant. It is a topic for discussion at a future meeting.

SMC commented on the forthcoming plough zone archaeology e-mail discussion on the 3 June. It would consider how it is recorded and dealt with in HERs. The discussion would last about a week and be facilitated. There is a possibility of funded case studies from this discussion.

15. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 2 October. [Venue moved to the Birmingham Midland Institute.]