

## **GENERAL MEETING 6 JUNE 2024**

### **BUSINESS PLAN 2024-2025**

#### **1. Introduction**

This Business Plan sets out the actions FCA will take over the next year to further its objectives, with an assessment of the financial implications. In drawing up the Business Plan, FCA Trustees have complied with their duty to have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

The Business Plan for 2023 was agreed in Autumn 2022. Its principal work areas were governance issues and registration by the Charity Commission, supporting the 2023 excavation of the Cookham Abbey site and associated post-excavation recording and analysis, and the development of a programme for public engagement led by FCA's Community Engagement Manager. These plans have been successfully achieved, and this plan sets out what FCA will do in the next phase of its work. The work plan for 2024 is clear, and is already under way.

We understand that the University of Reading (UoR) and the Parochial Church Council of Holy Trinity Church which owns Paddock Field are about to agree formally to continue the dig for a further five years. The Field School for undergraduate teaching will be funded by UoR. The project needs substantial additional funding to realise its full potential. FCA envisages an ambitious 'Sacred Landscapes' project connecting Anglo-Saxon sites across the Middle Thames Region and beyond, and drawing together the archaeology, human and natural history of the area. This project is described below.

#### **2. Governance and Management 2024**

As a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation, FCA will submit to the Charity Commission its annual report and accounts for the period ended 31 December 2023, when these have been adopted by members. *Action – Officers. By – September 2024. Financial implications – nil.*

Recruit two additional Trustees. *Action – Officers. By – September 2024. Financial implications – nil.*

FCA will be able to reclaim from HMRC Gift Aid on donations from taxpayers over the past three years. *Action – Officers. By – September 2024. Financial implications - £6,000 income.*

We want to identify a Membership Secretary to look after the administration of membership and subscriptions. Cost minimal; will give greater confidence on income from membership fees and our ability to reclaim Gift Aid. *Action – Treasurer. By – May 2024. Financial implications – increased/assured income, amount to be assessed.*

Incidental expenses (annual running costs of website; public liability insurance, bank charges). *Action – Officers. By – continuing. Financial implications - £600.*

### **3. Support in 2024 for Cookham Abbey excavation and post-excavation work**

Payment to UoR undergraduates for social media publicity and overseeing visitor arrangements and donations. *Action – Officers. By – July/August 2024. Financial implications – cost £950, target donation income - £3,500, less donation to student welfare £670. Net income £1,880.*

Post-excavation analysis – conservation of metalwork, lab analysis of skeletons, preliminary analysis of pre-/post- Saxon metalwork. *Action – Officers. By - continuing. Financial implications in 2024: 2023 metalwork conservation £2,000; 2023 non-Saxon metalwork £500; 2023 skeletal analysis £3,500, radiocarbon dating of five 2023 skeletons £3090. Income promised – UoR £2,000; FCA donor £2,000 (skeletal), FCA donor £3090 (radiocarbon dating). Expenditure on analysis of finds from 2024 season will be committed in 2024, but may not be payable until completion of work in 2025.*

### **4. Public engagement 2024**

The programme of engagement events with local schools and community groups will be further developed. We will aim to position the Cookham Abbey project in the wider context of the Middle Thames region and its history/heritage. We will explore how this can link to other organisations which host or manage historic/heritage sites such as Taplow Court (SGI-UK), Cockmarsh Barrows and other locations around Cookham (National Trust), Montem Mound (Slough Museum), and organisations which promote and support other aspects of the area's artistic and environmental heritage, such as the Stanley Spencer Gallery and Wild Cookham.

A particular objective for FCA will be to engage with individuals and groups beyond the geographical and social locus of Cookham – for example in Slough, Maidenhead and Burnham. There is potential to engage with new audiences – in terms of age, cultural, national and religious backgrounds and affiliations – who may see themselves as different to the traditional audiences who are interested and engage with English history and heritage.

The volume of visitors which the dig staff and students can manage without unduly disrupting the project's research and teaching objectives is of necessity limited. In order to maximise opportunities for publicising the excavation and FCA's work therefore, the CEM and Officers will work with the UoR Press Team to coordinate and support a programme of media communications before, during and after the dig season. FCA will commission professional photography during excavation for the FCA website and publicity - £750.

FCA's Community Engagement Manager is central to the development of our work with schools and local groups. The existing contract for the post runs until September 2024 covering 40 days work. FCA has earmarked funds from existing resources for 30 days work (£6,000) in the period January-September 2024. Subject to identification of funding, and

agreement with the postholder, FCA wishes to extend the CEM post beyond September 2024.

The CEM is developing links with Salt Hill VR, a Slough-based company which develops and presents immersive and informative virtual reality/augmented reality experiences. A range of archaeological sites in Europe and beyond are developing this new approach to heritage presentation as an alternative to museums and site visits. Initial events with schools and the Young Archaeologists Club show that using VR/AR technology is an exciting way of informing, engaging and entertaining people who might not consider visiting an excavation during its brief summer period.

## **5. The 'Sacred Landscape' project – 2025 and beyond**

As mentioned above, FCA has started to develop a plan for a major five year programme to fund work on site, ongoing research and learning, and community engagement activities. We are working with Our Community Enterprise (OCE), a non-profit consultancy based in East Berkshire with significant experience of business planning and income generation. We envisage making an application this year to the National Heritage Lottery Fund for a significant grant, likely to be in the region of £500-800,000 over five years.

The lead bidder will be UoR, as FCA does not yet have the track record or the infrastructure required to manage a bid and project of this size.

### **Rationale for application and scale:**

- Cookham Abbey is an archaeological site of local and national significance
- Permission for the onsite dig is to be extended for five years
- The University of Reading has funded a six-month consultation programme which reports in April 2024 and should provide baseline community engagement evidence to support a Heritage Fund bid
- FCA has undertaken community engagement activities which will support a funding application
- There are other significant Anglo-Saxon sites across the Thames Valley area including at Cockmarsh, Taplow and Montem Mound. There is also an Anglo-Saxon site in Bisham which may be appropriate for inclusion in this project

**The National Lottery Heritage Fund priorities:** All Heritage Fund projects must meet the fund's four principles:

- Saving heritage – conserving and valuing heritage, for now and the future
- Protecting the environment – supporting nature recovery and environmental sustainability
- Inclusion, access and participation – supporting greater inclusion, diversity access and participation in heritage
- Organisational sustainability – strengthening heritage to be adaptive and financially resilient, contributing to communities and economies

The Fund supports projects that connect more people and communities to the UK's heritage. One strand that the Heritage Fund identifies is community archaeology – the active participation of volunteers in archaeological activities including investigating, photographing, surveying, excavation and finds processing. The Fund also supports projects that encourage people to connect with nature in their daily lives, and the protection of the historic environment – places that are connected to history.

**Application process:** we are preparing to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) form prior to making a full submission. EOI feedback is usually provided within 20 days and a decision on the full application within 12 weeks of submission.

**Outline proposal:** A five-year 'Sacred Landscapes' project to deliver a heritage engagement programme that may involve a joined-up approach and partnership working with Anglo-Saxon sites across the Thames Valley (Montem Mound, Taplow Court, Cookham Abbey, Cockmarsh and possibly Bisham).

The NLHF funds projects of this scale across two phases, the development phase and the delivery phase. We will need to create a plan that responds appropriately to this format. We envisage the content of the project and bid to be:

**Development phase – year 1**

- Community development:
  - activities to drive co-production of the 'Sacred Landscapes' programme
  - community engagement role, workshops and activities
  - community consultation to shape delivery
- Cultural development:
  - Cultural consultants to develop plans for appropriate cultural engagement
  - Diversity and inclusion planning and work to understand how to extend the reach of the project to marginalised groups
- Recruitment:
  - Research assistant (university based 0.6 fte)
  - Planning and development of cataloguing, storage, appropriate public access to finds
  - Back-filling university teaching roles for time dedicated to this project
- Organisational sustainability:
  - administration or other professional support for FCA and other partners
  - financial planning
  - delivery plan
- Education and training: Planning of training and placements including developing one or more apprenticeship schemes; development of a PhD placement
- Digital: Planning and experimenting with digital outputs including VR imagery, filming and content; agreeing the appropriate digital legacy platform and ToR; free public access to content
- Environmental sustainability: planning and policies in place, positive impact defined
- Partnerships:
  - Building partnerships with landowners

- Building partnerships with organisations and communities of interest across and beyond Cookham and the Thames Valley
- Environmental partnerships (Wilds, National Trust etc)
- Partnership and funding agreements developed and in place where necessary
- Monitoring and reporting: Develop monitoring tools, provide training for partners if necessary, agree shared learning approaches

**Delivery phase – years 2-5**

- Delivery, refinement and monitoring of all the plans created in the development phase above plus funding for:
- Ongoing delivery of new partnerships
- Increased public engagement, possible artist in residence
- Review, development and learning opportunities

**Project budget:** An outline budget showing key elements that will require detailed costings is shown below. This does not take account of the need for a development and delivery phase, which will be allocated during the bid writing process.

The indicative costs are:

<b>UoR and FCA indicative costs per year for discussion</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Cost pa</b>
UoR researcher	£ 35,000
UoR project lead/backfill	£ 15,000
FCA Community engagement lead	£ 25,000
FCA events producer	£ 15,000
Film and digital creation	£ 10,000
website, public access, digital legacy	£ 3,000
event and activity delivery costs	£ 10,000
Volunteer costs	£ 3,000
Evaluation, fees	£ 3,000
<b>one year project cost</b>	<b>£ 119,000</b>
<b>Five year project</b>	<b>£ 595,000</b>

Partners in a successful application would be expected to contribute 5% of the total grant, although this might be in non-cash equivalent eg staff/volunteer time). UoR’s funding of the Field School might be considered as match funding for the NHLF bid.

We believe that our project matches NHLF’s objectives for heritage, and our plans for the future programme can meet their principles and criteria for a successful bid, in partnership with the University of Reading and other partners including Holy Trinity Church.

The cost of preparing the bid cannot be included in the bid itself. The likely sequence is:

- May 2024 – preparation and submission of Expression of Interest (EOI) to NLHF. Estimated cost (OCE) up to 5 days @ £550 plus VAT - £3,300.
- June/July 2024 – initial response from NHLF. If positive:

- Summer 2024 – preparation and submission of full bid to NHLF Estimated cost (OCE) up to 9 days @£550 plus VAT - £5,940. Contingency - up to 2 days @ £550 plus VAT - £1,332.

This timetable might need to be extended if the NHLF response to the EOI asks for significant changes before a full proposal is submitted.

## **6. Assessment of risks**

The actions shown above in sections 3 (Governance and management 2024), 3 (Support in 2024 for excavation and post-excavation), and 4 (Public Engagement 2024) carry relatively little risk. Their anticipated costs are known and limited, and Trustees are confident that this expenditure can be met from existing resources, reasonable expectations of income from members and site visitors, and based on firm undertakings by donors to cover specific post-excavation costs.

The ‘Sacred Landscapes’ project is of a different magnitude. In order to prepare the NHLF bid Trustees have committed funding from existing resources. If the Expression of Interest to NHLF is accepted, we believe that we can generate additional financial support from members and other sponsors to help the cost of a full bid.

The costs of the project itself are substantial. Trustees would not commit funding to elements of the project without a clear understanding of how they would be funded. If the initial NHLF response is negative, or if the full submission is not successful, FCA will need to review and consider next steps. Our fallback will be to apply to other charitable and grant-making sources for substantial grants to cover the whole project or of individual elements. These elements might be for shorter periods than currently envisaged. Expenditure on preparing the NHLF bid would be mitigated because the proposal could be used to support grant applications to other sources.

As well as applying for a substantial funding for this programme, FCA will continue to encourage donations for smaller amounts to fund identifiable pieces of post-excavation research and public engagement, and (probably) to meet the cost of grant applications. This dual approach is essential. Our initial outline budget highlights the need to increase our income by £XXX in order to run a balanced budget during 2025. Second, we need to ensure adequate and timely income streams during the year until the outcome of big bids is known. Third, we need to ensure that local people – individuals and businesses – see themselves as stakeholders and are engaged in FCA’s work. We need to generate a sense of ownership of our work on researching and promoting the history and heritage of Cookham and the Middle Thames.

## **7. Conclusion**

The actions shown in the Business Plan will enable FCA to achieve its objectives for public benefit by sponsoring and supporting research into the archaeology and history of Cookham and its Middle Thames neighbourhood, and by developing and implementing an extensive

programme of public engagement in order to inform, educate and benefit existing and new audiences.

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**Appendix 1 – Financial Summary 2024**

	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>
<b>Governance/management:</b>		
Reclaim Gift Aid	£6,000	
Incidental expenses		(£600)
<b>Support for Cookham Abbey excavation:</b>		
Social media; visitors (net income)	£1,880	
2023 metalwork conservation		(£2,000)
2023 non-Saxon metalwork analysis		(£500)
2023 skeletal analysis		(£3,500)
2023 skeletal radiocarbon dating		(£3,090)
Donations/income for skeletal analysis and RC dating	£7,090	
<b>Public engagement:</b>		
Community Engagement Manager Jan-Sept 2024		(£6,000)
Professional photography		(£750)
UoR Impact Fund Grant	£3,000	
NHLF 'Sacred Landscape' bid – Expression of Interest		(£3,300)
NHLF 'Sacred Landscape' bid – Full application		(£5,940)
NHLF 'Sacred Landscape' bid – Contingency		(£1,332)
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>£17,970</b>	<b>(£31,512)</b>
<b>Net Total</b>		<b>(£13,542)</b>

*David Mudd*  
 Secretary  
 15 May 2024