



**Minutes of Branch Committee Meeting:  
Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015  
At The Fox & Crown, Appleton Gate, Newark**

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**Attendance:** Neil Robertson, Jane Roylance, Chris McKinney, Rob Walker, Fiona Newton, Roy Lewis, Liz Mayle, Rose Thompson, & Stephen Bradwell

**Apologies:** Liz Blood, Sara Crofts, Becky Waddington, Rosamund Worrall, Philip Grover & Simon Revill

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- 1. Minutes of Last Meeting:** Agreed as a true record.
- 2. Chairs Report:** Liz reported that Fiona had prepared the proposed membership questionnaire.
- 3. Branch Reps Report:** Roy reported that the highlights of the last IHBC Council meeting had been circulated in recent e-letter.

However he noted that the new 'Stepping Stones' membership had started, and also the new governance regime had been started, with two Council meetings a year for a trial period. It was hoped that these new meetings would broaden out discussion to include more general conservation matters and hopefully encourage more people to come forward and be involved with IHBC at a higher level.

The IHBC was also trying to persuade PINS to use appropriately qualified inspectors for listed building/conservation area appeals.

Roy also noted that the IHBC finances were healthy, with a boost from job advertisements, and an additional staff member had been appointed at the central office.

With the general election on the horizon, it was noted that the three main parties were not proposing to change the VAT rules, although UKIP had proposed that there should be no VAT on listed buildings.

Bookings were also about to open for the IHBC Annual School in Norwich (*Cultural Connections – Conserving the diversity of place*) with tours to Kings

Lynn and Great Yarmouth and walking tours along the River Wensum and into the city centre.

[*The Annual School bookings are now online, the link to the booking site: <http://ihbc.org.uk/norwich2015/index.html>*]

There were no new membership applications for the East Midlands.

- 4. Treasurers Report:** Rose reported that the Branch's finances were:  
Current Account: £1,162.39  
Reserve Account: £191.11

- 5. Membership Report:** Neil reported that there had not been any recent membership applications, but he was aware of one forthcoming full membership application.

Fiona also noted that the Branch was experiencing a relatively slow growth in membership in comparison to other Branches.

Rose suggested that the Branch could look at other opportunities, such as making links with the new Leicester Uni courses.

There was also some concern about planning officers being drafted in to undertake conservation duties without the necessary experience.

Roy also expressed concern about potential competition from the IFA following its recent chartered status.

- 6. County Representatives Report:**  
**Leicestershire** – Written report circulated at the meeting, Liz noted that at the Conservation Officer's Forum the County archaeologist had provided an introduction to the Extensive Urban Survey beginning this year in Leicestershire. The pilot was to begin 2015 in Northwest Leicestershire, moving out to other districts and Rutland, with a number of towns and smaller local centres being targeted.

It was reported that whilst lead theft had died down, a recent spate of incidences (e.g. Cotesbach, Preston) suggested a recent increase.

Coalville Conservation Area was designated.

Staff changes included Paul Grundy as replacement CO for Hinckley & Bosworth DC and Jenny Timothy had departed from Leicester City Council.

**Derbyshire** – Written report circulated at the meeting, Becky commented that the Derbyshire Conservation Officers December meeting had been cancelled, with the next meeting marked for the 4 March 2015.

She also pointed out that South Derbyshire District Council were advertising for a Conservation Officer.

**Lincolnshire:** LCOG meeting held in Woodhall Spa, to look at restoration proposals for the Peto Gardens and potential restoration of the spa baths.

Rob also mentioned that the Group had discussed the role of the Lincolnshire Historic Building Committee in determining planning applications by what was in effect a self-appointed group of lay conservation people.

Rob also noted that the DAC had reported that lead thefts were on the increase again; and that consultation on the Woodhall Spa A4D was to be linked to consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan.

**Nottinghamshire:** no report submitted.

**Northamptonshire:** no report submitted.

- 7. Communications:** Chris noted that he had received two responses to the Branch newsletter, and decisions had to be made about a second newsletter, which could be used to promote the Branch bursary award and any updates from County reps was also welcome.

It was also felt that a report from Neil regarding IHBC/Branch membership would be useful.

- 8. Membership Survey:** It was generally agreed that the draft survey covered the issues previously discussed at the Branch committee, although there was some discussion about defining the types of events Branch members would prefer to see (for example Qu.6 on the draft survey).

As Liz also noted, the Branch should avoid introducing practical sessions that might compete with other providers, such as at Lincoln Castle, although it was suggested that the Branch could team-up with other groups/providers.

Fiona also pointed out that the North West Branch was looking to hold a joint event in Buxton with the East Midlands Branch.

- 9. April Branch Meeting:** In the absence of any alternatives, Liz suggested a return visit to Magnus Buildings to see the completion of the works and Jane offered to contact the museum staff to see if any times were available. Chris suggested that the thermal improvement works to the listed buildings in Bolsover New Model Village could provide a useful venue for a future meeting, and Rose suggested that it could be linked to an energy efficiency presentation by Chris Wood.

A further possibility for the April meeting was the former Rolls Royce offices in Derby (Marble Halls), which was centrally placed, and could be combined with the Branch meeting in another venue.

For budgeting purposes, Rose asked inquired about the estimated attendance at these events and it was generally agreed to cater for about 25-30 people.

- 10. Any Other Business:** Roy noted that he had been asked by Barry Joyce to write an article on a legal challenge to a planning decision for affordable housing proposals in Bonsall Conservation Area, where the Council had conceded that they had not given enough weight to the statutory requirements relating to development in conservation areas. However as Roy pointed out this was a relatively delicate matter as the planning proposals had been for affordable housing which was clearly seen as a 'good thing' to have.

It was suggested that to avoid getting too embroiled in the politics of the matter that an article looking at the conservation policies/procedures would be appropriate to this issue. Rob also asked whether details of the Bonsall case could be provided so that it could be considered along with other legal challenges, such as Barnwell Manor Court of Appeal decision and the Forge Field High Court decision.

Chris also reported that Buzz Pics now do aerial photography, using drones for survey work of inaccessible areas, and that this could be a useful service for conservation officers.

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**Date of Next Meetings:**

**Next Branch meeting:** Thursday 16 April 2015 – IHBC Branch meeting at 1.45pm in former Rolls Royce Offices in Derby and afterwards Branch Committee Meeting and buffet at the Brunswick Inn, Derby.

Future Meetings: Tuesday 14 July 2015 - 7.00pm in Newark

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