

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Working Group for the Delivery of the
Recommendations in the *What's in Store?* Report
held in the
National Museum & Gallery Cardiff
Thursday 17th March 2005**

Present: Mike Houlihan, Chair (MH); Richard Brewer, NMGW (RJB); Vince Devine, Cadw (VD); Gareth Edwards, RCAHMW (GE); Mary Ellis, CyMAL (ME); Gavin H. Evans, Archaeological Archives Forum & Federation of Museums & Art Galleries of Wales (GHE); Jane Henderson, Cardiff University (JH); Charles Hill, Welsh Archaeological Trusts (CH); Hilary Malaws, RCAHMW (HM) and Elizabeth Walker, NMGW (EAW).

1. Welcome and introductions

Mike Houlihan welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Emma Plunkett-Dillon.

2. Appointment of a Secretary

Elizabeth Walker was appointed Secretary to the Working Group.

3. Membership of the Group

It was agreed that there should be a contracting archaeologist on the Working Group. **Action: EAW** will contact IFA (Wales) to invite them to nominate a representative to attend future meetings.

4. Remit of the Working Group

4.1 The background and role of the Historic Environment Group were explained by the Chairman.

4.2 The Working Group will report to the Historic Environment Group with minutes of all meetings being sent to the Chairman, Tom Cassidy.

4.3 A discussion arose regarding the Working Group's executive authority and ability to apply for funding to deliver the recommendations of the report.

Mary Ellis clarified that CyMAL is able to allocate money to various institutions to manage on behalf of the Working Group. **Action: MH** to clarify this position with the Chairman of HEG.

4.4 It was agreed that there needs to be a clear communication route back to HEG. It was hoped that the Working Group would be able progress the recommendations without having to seek permission for each stage of its work. **Action: MH** to discuss communication of progress to HEG with the Group's Chairman.

4.5 It was agreed that a Strategy and an Action Plan are required for delivering the recommendations of the *What's in Store?* report. These will be taken to the Chairman of HEG for discussion. **Action: MH & EAW** to draft.

5. Priorities and Strategy for the delivery of the recommendations

5.1 *Recommendation 2 – Create a database of Welsh Archaeological collections*

A feasibility study is required to ensure that development of a database will be sustainable. If the consultant's report is positive then a pilot study should be

undertaken. **Action: HM** will lead a team of Working Group members to draft a document outlining a strategy and costs for the delivery of this recommendation.

Mary Ellis agreed CyMAL will be willing to consider a bid for funding this element of the report. The work will have to be completed by the end of March 2006. **Action: MH** to write to CyMAL indicating the Working groups intention to make an application.

5.2 Recommendation 3 – Establish a national panel for archaeology

It was agreed that a fuller discussion of this recommendation will be scheduled for the next meeting. **Action: MH** to request that this is an agenda item for the next HEG meeting.

5.3 Recommendations 4, 5 and 7 – Encourage and develop a national collecting policy through the Museum Accreditation Scheme; draw up standards for the deposition of collections and supporting information and improve the management of them prior to permanent deposition

CyMAL holds all museum collecting policies so may be able to identify gaps, overlaps and omissions between them. **Action: ME** to see if this information can be collated for future use by the Working Group.

Standards for deposition are urgently needed and can be developed using a range of existing documentation. Encouraging organizations to adopt them was identified as a potential issue. **Action: EAW** will lead a team of Working Group members to draft an action plan for delivering this recommendation.

5.4 Recommendation 6 – Review the management of the information database

It was agreed that this will be discussed fully at the next meeting. It was recognised that the Strategic Framework for Records relating to the Historic Environment of Wales has a role in progressing this recommendation. **Action: GHE** will report back to the next meeting on the work being undertaken in England to develop a strategy for digital archives. **Action: RJB & HM** will meet to identify the issues that need to be addressed in advance of the next meeting.

5.5 Recommendation 8 – Training and awareness building

The Federation need to prioritise some training needs so that CyMAL can facilitate any necessary training. **Action: GHE** to develop a list with members of the Federation.

5.6 Recommendation 1 – Creation of shared archaeological resource centre(s)

It was agreed that this is an issue that requires addressing strategically at government level. A two stage approach was considered 1) to undertake a feasibility study to look at the concept, issues, space required and location to develop options for possible solutions; 2) A business case will then be required. **Action: MH** will discuss this with the Chairman of HEG to seek approval for a recommendation for WAG funding for this essential work.

6 Presentation to the IFA Conference

Elizabeth Walker reported that she and Hilary Malaws will be making a presentation on the *What's in Store?* report and its recommendations during the archaeological archives session of the IFA conference in Winchester March 22nd.

7 Any other business

It was noted that the full survey report has not been available since the closure of the Council of Museums in Wales. **Action: ME** to investigate the possibility of putting this on CyMAL's website.

Charles Hill noted that should IFA be unable to provide an archaeological contractor for the Working Group we should consider contacting SCAUM.

8 Date and venue of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held at **2pm** on **Wednesday 11th May 2005**. The availability of video conferencing facilities will be explored in the National Museum & Gallery, Cardiff and in the CyMAL offices, Aberystwyth.