

**Community Landscape Archaeology Survey Project (CLASP)**  
**Submission of Evidence**  
**to**  
**Culture, Media and Sport Committee Enquiry: -**  
**'Protecting, preserving and making accessible our**  
**nation's heritage'**

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Structure**

CLASP is a Registered Charity, number 1111667, that acts as an umbrella organisation for local history, archaeological and metal detecting associations in West Northamptonshire. The purpose of CLASP is to act as a proactive facilitator in bringing archaeology enthusiasts across the community together to investigate their local past. Professional archaeologists lead the activities and contribute specialist skills when necessary - but the community volunteers are encouraged and enabled to learn skills for themselves and to develop a level of competence in many aspects of archaeological investigation. CLASP also provides fieldwork opportunities, talks and lectures as part of its commitment to encouraging local communities to become stakeholders in their archaeological heritage. We would encourage members of your Committee to visit the following websites to appreciate the work undertaken by CLASP and some of its participating organisations: -

[www.claspweb.org.uk](http://www.claspweb.org.uk)

[www.whitehallvilla.co.uk](http://www.whitehallvilla.co.uk)

[www.mkheritage.co.uk/tdlhs/](http://www.mkheritage.co.uk/tdlhs/)

### **1.2 Funding**

Our funding is achieved from membership fees, private donations and grants from district and parish councils, Projects have also been funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and other charities through collaborative ventures with an academic from the University of Northampton. All grant funding has to be achieved by specific and detailed application. All administrative support is voluntary and undertaken by our own members.

### **1.3 Format of Submission**

CLASP welcomes the Enquiry being undertaken by the Culture, Media and Sport Committee as an opportunity to outline the possible role, and portray the significance of local communities and the voluntary sector in the future of archaeological research and protection of our archaeological heritage. Our response is structured, as far as possible, to be aligned to the areas that you intend to address in your enquiry in the order that they were listed in the initial press release. Any other points we raise are reflected in paragraph 8. This submission is prepared solely for the purposes of this Enquiry and has not been utilised elsewhere.

## **2. What the Department for Culture, Media and Sport should identify as priorities in the forthcoming Heritage White Paper**

### **2.1 Constraints on Professional Archaeology**

It must be recognised that the professional and commercial sector in Archaeology and Heritage Conservation lack the resources and legislative standing necessary fully to meet the challenges and demands of archaeological investigation and conservation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The limitations of current financial support and the structure of British archaeology mitigate against a proactive stance in delivering an investigatory approach that could result in a more holistic planning framework for the national resource.

Professional units, are developer driven and dependant on commercial outcomes which are not always necessarily beneficial for British archaeology, The unfocused remit of the universities also tends towards a less cohesive approach to tackling the issues and problems affecting this area of our national consciousness. Whilst our present structure is appropriate to protect archaeology threatened by development, there is no similar active organisation to support English Heritage in identifying and protecting archaeology threatened by changing land use, development or agriculture.

In a real sense we are the product of our past and an acceptance of that fact is to realise how important the past is to the future of our country. We have a responsibility to ensure an ongoing programme of investigation into the archaeological resource of our nation. In addition it is important that any future process which is

devised should be as inclusive as possible. The area of archaeology is already recognising the potential role and usefulness of community based work and its potential impact if properly harnessed.

## **2.2 Prioritisation**

CLASP welcomes the proposal from the Heritage Minister in 2004 to establish a "Register of Historic Sites and Buildings of England". We consider that the creation of a full database of the nation's heritage is of great importance as whilst there are both the National Monuments Register and local Sites and Monuments Registers these are by no means comprehensive. A wealth of information is held not only on these lists but also in various independent archaeological reports including many in journals of individual antiquarians and their societies. Much information will also be held in the records of local history societies and similar bodies, together with that held in the heads of local people. CLASP would hope that recognition of the Minister's proposal is made in the forthcoming White Paper and that the proposed Register is given some form of statutory support, including placing a requirement on local authorities to give recognition and support locally to the maintenance of such resources.

There should however be a significant role for Community based projects to assist in the creation and continued development of this Register. It would perhaps be appropriate for some 'snapshots' to be taken into the extent of the work required and to develop 'best practice' by enlisting some pilot projects involving community groups in various parts of the country. Hopefully this Register will enable policy priorities to be developed for investigation and conservation and these could then be reflected in work and grant applications for resources by community organisations. We would stress however that any priorities developed in this way must be flexible enough to permit independent research either by professionals, academic bodies or community based organisations.

## **2.3 Applications for Financial Support**

We will address the question of funding later in this submission but it is essential that the White Paper reflects the importance of funding for voluntary groups and endeavours to establish some

form of commonality in applications. This would therefore help to simplify the application process by allowing such things as referees' reports, organisational constitutions, and accounts to have a common standard. For example an application for Heritage Lottery Funding is, understandably, an onerous task and when made in parallel with an application to a Local Authority involves duplication of effort; with commonality these processes would be easier. Prioritisation as mentioned in paragraph 2.2 above would assist in formulating applications for grants.

### **3. The remit and effectiveness of DCMS, English Heritage and other relevant organisations in representing heritage interests inside and outside Government.**

In matters of day to day archaeology and conservation we consider English Heritage as the buffer between the practitioner, either professional or community based, and the DCMS. It does appear that apart from areas of overall policy and sites of national and international significance then the DCMS has a limited role in archaeological issues. It is our view that the DCMS should be both statutorily responsible for the proposed Register of Historic Sites and Buildings of England and guarantors of the national heritage in questions of development, and where appropriate normal land use is causing serious degradation.

### **4. The balance between heritage and development needs in planning policy.**

It is not practical to ignore the demands on land for housing and commercial development if the social and economic well being of the nation is to progress. It is however appropriate for land to be properly investigated for archaeological material prior to development. In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for community archaeology to be involved in this process. Where significant finds are located then, according to their status, the development should be tailored to protect and conserve these for future generations. These standards must be given statutory recognition and should be considered in the White Paper. Developers should be expected to meet the cost of either all or a significant part of these works. The creation of Development Corporations in certain parts of the country puts increased

pressure on the heritage and again their work must be properly monitored and investigated, archaeologically, where appropriate. See specific comments in paragraph 8.2.

## **5. Access to heritage and the position of heritage as a cultural asset in the community.**

### **5.1 Partnership Between the 'Official' and Community Sectors**

It is obvious that Statutory Bodies like English Heritage and the National Trust must bear the principal burden to ensure that our Nation's Heritage is both conserved and made available for easy and affordable access by the community. There is obviously a role for the community, both as individuals and organisations, to work in partnership with these bodies and other collaborators to help provide community access. There are however many sites that, for whatever reason, are not overseen or managed by these bodies. In many cases it is these to which community based organisations can really make the difference in their investigation and conservation. This also applies to providing post investigation access and educational opportunities to the wider community. In many instances sites are on private land that has commercial importance, influencing decisions by landowners whether they should grant access for the initial archaeological investigations and subsequent general access by the wider community. For these reasons the Countryside Stewardship Scheme recently invigorated by DEFRA is so important to allow access whilst also providing recompense for the landowner. These schemes must be supported if our Heritage is to survive for future generations.

### **5.3 Training**

For community involvement to be successful it is important that the volunteers involved, the majority of who do not have relevant prior qualifications, are not only given day to day professional supervision but also provided with opportunities for formalised and appropriate training. This may be directly provided by the organisation or obtained externally. Many volunteers fund their own training. It would therefore be of great assistance if external support could be given to training initiatives. Support should also be available in the form of subsidised input from external academic staff and in providing assisted places in appropriate external courses. There will in the future be a need to develop a more

flexible form of accreditation for training of community volunteers to allow them to take their experience elsewhere.

#### **5.4 Interface Between Professionals and Community Input.**

There is perhaps also a need for professional bodies to recognise the relevance of the community in archaeology in the United Kingdom and that if volunteers are properly supported they need not be seen as a threat to either professional standards or the jobs of paid archaeologists. We would submit, as previously discussed, that the work undertaken by Community groups would never be done if it were not for their input. In fact their work creates work for professionals in all areas from scientific testing to supervisory opportunities and future investigations when important sites are discovered.

#### **5.6 National Archaeology 'Days' and Local Heritage Open Days**

Annual schemes encouraging the opening of sites of interest that are normally closed to public access for the majority of the year are welcomed and should be encouraged. They provide opportunities for the local community not only to see these events but also assist with their organisation and in turn perhaps their conservation and interpretation over a longer period. They are effective ways of raising awareness and meeting the aspirations of people in their efforts to understand the past of their locality.

#### **5.7 Landowners and Tenants**

As previously discussed, the effects of archaeological activity can be intrusive and impinge on commercial, including farming, activities that are carried out on a day to day basis. There is a need to ensure that relevant bodies, e.g. the NFU, Country Landowners Association, are involved with community groups and that there is an ongoing two way flow of information where both aspirations from the community and perceived concerns from landowners and tenants can be explored and constructively resolved. Perhaps this could also be explored in the rural environment through the changing role of DEFRA.

## **6. Funding, with particular reference to the adequacy of the budget for English Heritage and for museums and galleries, the impact of the London 2012 Olympics on Lottery funding for heritage projects, and forthcoming decisions on the sharing of funds from Lottery sources between good causes**

### **6.1 English Heritage**

We note the current review of funding for English Heritage and whilst we do not feel appropriately qualified to discuss this in detail we would urge that future funding is adequate to support their activities. However a greater focus on community based involvement in archaeology and conservation would be helpful.

### **6.2 Heritage Lottery Fund**

Whilst we recognise the significance of the successful bid for London to host the 2012 Olympics and the call that will make on all available funding, not least the National Lottery, it is important that funds for other new initiatives, ongoing and allied projects are not totally denuded of resources. If this is allowed to happen organisations that rely upon Lottery funding as a major income source may well flounder through lack of resources. It will also redirect an unsustainable demand to other sources of funding. As the Olympics will attract tourism and visitors for events that utilise the Olympic facilities after 2012 it is important to ensure that the wider national heritage is protected and enhanced to attract these visitors to the hinterland beyond the immediate London area.

### **6.3 Sharing of Lottery Funds**

CLASP is aware of the ongoing consultation regarding the review of allocation of lottery funds as from 2009. It is perhaps not appropriate for us to speak 'either way' as to the percentage of funding given to other sectors but concentrate on that given to support Heritage. It is our view that whilst we would always like more, the current apportionment of 16.7% of the money allocated for good causes is not unreasonable although we would of course like to return to the original 20% figure. We justify our view of this figure because of the increasing importance of the Community in investigating and conserving our heritage. As mentioned elsewhere in this submission increasing pressures on local authority budgets are reducing the amounts available from those sources to support this work. See paragraph 8. If Heritage Lottery Fund

grants are reduced as well, then the threat to the conservation of our heritage will be such that instead of moving forward, work will either stagnate or be reduced. Our heritage will then be lost forever.

**7. What the roles and responsibilities should be for English Heritage, the Heritage Lottery Fund, local authorities, museums and galleries, charitable and other non-Governmental organisations in maintaining the nation's heritage;**

**and**

**Whether there is an adequate supply of professionals with conservation skills; the priority placed by planning authorities on conservation; and means of making conservation expertise more accessible to planning officers, councillors and the general public.**

### **7.1 Organisational Roles**

There is an important role for English Heritage, the National Lottery Fund and other non-governmental and charitable organisations in the areas regarding community involvement currently under discussion. There must be an important partnership and supporting role between English Heritage, the National Trust and the community sector. This also applies, where relevant to applicable charitable funds. If priorities for work can be established then the task of the Heritage Lottery Fund and other charities would be made much easier when allocating grants but also permitting proper local research and academic work. As discussed previously we see the need for a standardised approach on the format of applications from community bodies for prospective financial grants.

### **7.2 Position of Heritage Conservation and Archival Storage in Local Government**

CLASP has concern that the investigation, recording and subsequent conservation of archaeological sites is not a priority in some council areas. Please see additional reference to this in paragraph 8 below. We would urge that the Committee consider this in the context of the proposed Register of Historic Sites and Buildings of England. There is also a need for the Committee to consider the support given to local authorities to maintain databases and contribute towards the establishment and ongoing running costs for archives properly to store materials found during



investigations in the area they supervise. This probably needs to be done on a county basis.

Adequate facilities need to be made available for community and academic access to these archives. If these facilities, including existing databases of known 'finds' and sites, are not available then it is difficult, if not impossible for local authority planners adequately to protect our heritage when planning applications are received. Hopefully the proposed 'Register' will assist this latter role. The question arises "Is there a need to consider these issues on a Regional Basis?" If this were seen as the way forward then structures would have to be put in place to ensure local access to archives and databases was maintained. It is also important to look at the role the community can play in looking after and delivering such a system.

### **7.3 Museums**

In the local authority districts that cover the geographical area and neighbouring areas of interest to CLASP we have of late seen the closure and reduction in museum services in recent years. To provide proper community access there must be adequate museum facilities within a reasonable distance. To avoid duplication of effort these should perhaps be established as a county resource as opposed to a District Council issue. There needs to be defined support to councils to maintain museums together with statutory guidelines to ensure this is done. The view is often put forward that these are of little local priority; CLASP would dispute this.

### **7.4 Scientific Testing and Conservation of Materials**

External support to Community Archaeology is required with scientific and professional testing of material samples for dating and source identification. These tests are very expensive but important for diagnosis in modern archaeology. This equally applies to conservation of vulnerable materials found during excavation. It is of little use for materials to be found during investigations only to have them lost for the future owing to deterioration through lack of proper conservation. Again the most cost-effective way forward here, especially with conservation, could be assisted training and support for competent individuals within the community groups. Individuals in the community sector who are given support to train in these skills subsequently utilising them

commercially then there may have to be a structure for recompense to the subsidising body where this is external.

### **7.5 Site Conservation**

Proper conservation of a site post investigation is essential if our heritage is to be preserved for future generations. The Countryside Stewardship Schemes go some way to achieving this with grants to take land out of productive agriculture. This does not however provide the costs for physical conservation of a site especially if it is to be maintained 'open' for view by the community. On a non-commercial basis there is a need for individuals, probably from a community organisation, to be properly trained in initial conservation and ongoing management of historical sites where these are not under the auspices of organisations like English Heritage and the National Trust

### **7.6 Financial Support for Report Preparation and Writing**

At the conclusion and possibly at interim points during an investigation it is important that professional reports are prepared and written. It is pointless to carry out an investigation if there is no dissemination of the findings making the detail of the investigation available to others. Both for CLASP and its member organisations this does present a serious problem.

Our Archaeological Director, who is an academic at a local university, donates the majority of his time *pro bono* to the organisation. Whilst his employer maybe prepared to support research involvement, the responsibility to publish is an onerous one. It is imperative that we look at financial recompense for responsible employers to meet the costs involved in allowing staff to facilitate community work. Raising sufficient cash to meet this obligation is currently very challenging for our organisation. If the community is to perform a credible service to the investigation and conservation of the nation's heritage then there should be a process by which specialist in put can be obtained and financed.

## **9. Additional Comment**

Since the commencement of writing of this Submission this organisation has become increasingly concerned with two consultation exercises that are currently taking place here in Northamptonshire. Details are set out below. Taken together the

two issues expose a potentially damaging threat to local heritage, much of which is of significance well beyond this area. We will keep you appraised of the ongoing situation locally by way of supplementary submissions if requested. We would ask the Committee to consider the implications of these issues, especially as the situation may well be reflected elsewhere in the country.

### **9.1 Northamptonshire County Council Budget**

This Council has recently issued their budgetary proposals for 2005/6; these reflect massive cuts in the services provided by the Council, especially in what they describe as non-core areas. It would appear from the initial proposals that the department that provides archaeological support to the county, especially in areas of planning and development will be seriously affected. At the time of writing it would also appear that this would mean the Sites and Monuments Record is under serious threat. CLASP does intend responding to the consultation period for these proposals.

### **9.2 West Northamptonshire Development Corporation**

( [www.wndc.org.co.uk](http://www.wndc.org.co.uk) [see download prospectus])

This is a new body that has recently been established through the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to effect the creation of major areas of new housing and expansion in the western half of the county. The Prospectus for this Corporation is currently subject to a consultation period ending in early March. Again CLASP does intend making a response to this consultation. It would appear that similar Corporations are being created in other parts of the country. Having made an initial analysis of the Prospectus it does appear that no consideration is being formally given to the investigation and conservation of the heritage sites in the areas subject to development proposals being progressed by the Corporation. As their powers are considerable, to the extent that they will assume planning responsibilities from existing local authorities, this causes us considerable concern as to the priority to be given to conserving the nation's heritage in this area.

## **9. Conclusion**

Much needs to be done if the future of the nation's heritage is preserved for future generations. It is vital that the role of the Community Sector in assuring this future is not only identified but also supported by Government, NGO's, Local Authorities and the

professional archaeological sector. We would hope that this Enquiry also identifies these needs and reflects them in its final report. If we, as a nation are to not only to protect but also understand and interpret our archaeological past, then partnership with local communities is vital for an effective future. CLASP is prepared to expand on any part of this submission both in written and/or oral format, including the provision of specific examples.

Mr Dave Hayward & Mr Stephen Young  
Culture, Media and Sport Committee Enquiry Sub Committee  
On behalf of the CLASP Executive Committee

Personal Profiles: -

**David Hayward**

**Secretary of the CLASP Organising Committee**

Worked in local archaeology as a community volunteer for the past six years. Experience with working in various activities through CLASP and the Whitehall Villa and Landscape Project; has also assisted Northamptonshire Archaeology Society with three small excavations. Forty years combined experience as a regular soldier and police officer including nine years national experience with the Police Federation of England and Wales.

**Stephen Young**

**Archaeological Director of CLASP**

A professional archaeologist with broad experience in archaeology matters but sees the Romano-British era as a specialism. Has lectured in a local university in Industrial Archaeology and Architecture. In addition to being the Archaeological Director for CLASP he also holds the same position with the Whitehall Villa and Landscape project. He is the technical driving force behind these and other projects.