

FIFE FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY NETWORK (FFAN)

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday 27th June 2019

Present: Anne Campbell, Joe Fitzpatrick, Eric Franz, Roy Marsden, John Marshall, Lynn Marshall

Apologies: Veronica Laing, Bob Nicolson, Joy Nicolson

Minutes approved by John, seconded by Eric.

Matters arising

1. **FFAN Website:** at the moment the website is restricted to password only access. It was felt that the website is an ideal way to publicise the group and its activities, including to those not aware of its existence who might find it when browsing on Digital Fife, and that perhaps now is the time to make it publicly accessible. **Action:** Anne to contact Joy to ask for the website to be made accessible to all users.
2. **Archaeological Digs:**
 - **East Lomond:** Joe reported that the dig went much as planned despite some interruption in planned trench excavation due to the weather, and it proved very successful. There is ongoing organisation of post-ex analysis taking place which will feed into the timeline for initial excavation reports from Oliver O'Grady, these hopefully being completed within a 3-month deadline. Other post-excavation activities include a social for all volunteers hosted by the Stewardship, and an Archaeology Symposium in November with a focus on Fife in the Bronze and Iron Age.

There are discussions taking place with HES with a view to drawing up a partnership agreement that will allow an enhanced dataset to be made available for wider study, drawing on results from the HES survey work that took place on the scheduled site around the time of the dig, alongside excavation results the Centre for Stewardship receive from East Lomond 2019.

Positive discussions are also still ongoing with Edinburgh University about possible future collaboration with opportunities for student involvement in excavation activities.
 - **Pittarthur Farm:** the open weekend at Pittarthur farm is definitely scheduled for the last weekend in August (31st). The farm itself is rich in archaeological and historical features, and the suggestion for the initial archaeological event on the site from the owner Patrick Bowden-Smith is cleaning back, measuring and recording a feature that he has identified adjacent to Pittarthur Castle. It was agreed this would be a good opportunity for FFAN involvement, with perhaps a small group of 8-12 people. Patrick already has a number of volunteers for the weekend, but it's not clear whether this is for the archaeology only or the wider weekend event. Joe will continue to liaise with Patrick and clarify what the exact requirements will be, and report back to the group as soon as this information becomes available.

In addition, the farm intends in the autumn to plough around 100 acres of land that has been untouched for several years, and the suggestion from Patrick is that this would provide an opportunity for some productive field walking on the site. It was felt again this would be ideal for FFAN involvement, and Joe will pursue this further. The proposed field walking would be sometime in September.
- 3 **Open Meeting:** the response to the email gauging the interest in an open night was positive, but came mainly from those who have regularly engaged with walks so far. This wouldn't fulfil the intention of stimulating wider engagement within the group, but it was felt that inevitably, as with any new organisation, this takes time to establish, and some will always be happy for their

role just to be that of being kept up to date with group activities. It was also agreed that an open night later in the year after the holiday season was over would be more tempting for people to come along to, perhaps after the field walking event if that proves popular. A few new members have joined from this year's East Lomond volunteers, and it was suggested more may follow as people find out about us, for example from the FFAN website.

Site Visits

It was felt that using "*walks*" to describe our planned group expeditions did not best reflect the intended activity, and it was decided to adopt "site visit" as a more accurate description in future. It was also agreed that planning further site visits would be put on hold over the summer to allow for holiday plans, with activities at Pittarthie during August and September taking place instead. Possible future suggestions remain Walking Between the Lomonds, Brown and White Caterthuns, Monimail, and the Denny area including Roman remains. All would need further investigation and planning. Joe will also contact Edwina Proudfoot, the well-respected historian and archaeologist, to ask for suggestions for sites of interest to visit.

SCAPE erosion monitoring

Ellie from SCAPE is finalising a date for a proposed training session for FFAN members for monitoring coastal erosion. A number of sites have been identified locally through survey work as being at risk from erosion during winter storms, but there are no funds for ongoing monitoring to identify sites at risk that may need archaeological intervention. It is hoped that FFAN could contribute to this monitoring as an ongoing process. The session is provisionally planned for the 19th October at the Harbourmaster's House in Dysart. This would be an all-day event, with training in erosion monitoring in the morning, and a practical session in the afternoon. It's envisaged this would be for around 12 people. **Action:** Eric will contact Ellie in the next few weeks to see how arrangements are progressing.

Equipment

John suggested that it would be useful when going on site visits to have some equipment such as measuring tapes or ranging rods available, to help investigate features and possibly do some on-site recording. For example, on the recent visit to Drumcarrow Craig Broch and prehistoric hut circles, several interesting features such as a possible well, triangular stone feature and possible intra-mural chamber were identified, none of which seem documented. The committee has an existing £20 kitty, and members were happy to contribute to further funding for buying basic equipment if necessary. **Action:** John and Lynn will cost the price of buying of suitable equipment from sources such as Amazon, or past Horizons.

Inter-group liaison

John and Lynn had conversations during the East Lomond excavation with two of the volunteers from Perthshire, John and Corrie, who have recently set up a group similar to FFAN in their own area. They are interested in sharing ideas, knowledge and information with our group (NOT amalgamating), as we both seem to have similar interests, aims and objectives, and are keen to set up an opportunity to meet up for discussion. In the spirit of openness and collaboration, this was felt to be a positive step. **Action:** John to email and find out more about the group with a view to possible future liaison.

TAFAC

Fife is hosting the TAFAC conference this year, which will be at the Glenrothes Halls on Saturday 20th November. It's hoped that an East Lomond 2019 talk will be available for this.

Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is Thursday, August 22nd 2019 at the Lomond Hotel, Freuchie.
