

CIfA Voluntary & Community SIG

Committee meeting 9 August 2023 – online

Committee members present: Jessica Lowther (co-opted Chair), Clemency Cooper, Sarah-Jane Farr and Nina O’Hare (Secretary)

Apologies: Mike Nevell, James Brown (co-opted Treasurer), Penelope Foreman, Emily Johnston and Richard Bennett

1. Update on Community Archaeology toolkit

- Last news was that DigVentures planned to hand over the toolkit to CIfA in mid-July, for CIfA to upload and release at the end of August. The project Advisory Board have not had any update recently.
- Clem asked Cara Jones (CIfA) for an update – DigVentures has handed over the toolkit to CIfA, it’s with the copy editors now and due to be released at the EAA conference in Belfast at end of August.
- Discussion around the project’s lack of engagement recently with the Advisory Board and other stakeholders, as it sounds like the toolkit has been finalised yet none of the committee have yet seen it.

Action: Sarah-Jane to ask ALGAO if they have had a recent update.

Action: Jessica to email CIfA on behalf of the SIG asking about dissemination plans, when we can see the final version and whether it will have the SIG’s name attached to it.

- Project was the conception of the SIG and a response to needs we identified from the public benefit survey of Local Planning Authority archaeologists. When the final version of the toolkit is available it would be good to review how well this has meet the project brief (as agreed in summer 2022 for this pot of funding).

2. Committee

- After last meeting, committee were asked to submit votes to Meg Keates (central CIfA) either for or against Jessica Lowther to be co-opted as Chair and James Brown as Treasurer. We have not received confirmation about the co-option results. A reminder about this has been sent – no reply to date.
- A co-option offer and form have been received for an Ordinary Committee Member (OCM) post. As the current committee understands it, there are no committee vacancies. There is uncertainty around this though, as the co-option form was forwarded to the committee by Meg. Clarity around committee members has been sought and not yet received.
- CIfA guidelines were checked during the meeting and a couple of pertinent rules are that: we can have between 2 and 6 OCM; everyone on the committee must be a CIfA member; the elected committee can appoint advisory (and non-voting) members; advisors have to be a member of the SIG, but don’t have to be members of CIfA.

Action: Nina to email Meg Keates and Lianne Birley around how best to check queries and contact ClfA when needed, as emails over the last few months have remained unanswered. This is leading to confusion, uncertainty and costing the committee extra time.

3. SIG name and aim changes

- From the ClfA website, it would appear that the SIG's proposed name and aim changes have gone through. The committee has not been informed about this though and our webpage only partially updated.
- Wider membership need to be informed, once changes have been confirmed by ClfA.
Action: Nina to ask Meg and Lianne for confirmation.
- Discussion about SIG direction and focus – need to regroup and agree next plans. Use changes as an opportunity to re-connect with the wider membership. Suggestion of setting a few tea breaks across the year (not monthly, as that was too onerous) and advertise all dates at once, so some regular touchpoints.

4. Annual report (August 2022 – August 2023)

- Due by the 17th August. This year's report to include name and aim changes, committee changes, toolkit project (including SIG's role on the advisory board and providing feedback on documents). Now in position to look to the future.

Action: Nina to draft annual report and circulate around committee before sending to ClfA.

5. AOB

- Specialist skills matrix – query raised around who is validating accredited applications that use the community matrix? Who can people go to if they have queries about it? Committee also hasn't had an update on its use for a while.

Action: Sarah-Jane to ask ClfA for stats around members who have applied for accreditation via the community matrix, as well as whether the validation committee feel that they have adequate knowledge to support assessing applications.

Next committee meeting: 13 – 15 September, time to be decided via Doodle Poll