The Winter General Meeting (140th Council meeting) was held on 24 February 2014 in the rooms of the British Academy, London. Representatives of 18 institutions and 70 individual members were present. The meeting was chaired by Dr Jane Grenville OBE, Chair of Trustees. Apologies were noted. The CBA Director and staff members were in attendance.

1. Minutes of previous meeting
The Minutes of the 139th Council meeting, held on 28 October 2013, were APPROVED. There were no matters arising.

2. Chair of Trustee’s overview
Dr Grenville welcomed all to the meeting and noted that it had been some 25 years since she had left the employment of the Council for British Archaeology. The landscape of the heritage sector had changed enormously over that time. The network of local authority archaeological officers had been built up to be a vital mechanism of heritage protection, but this was now under severe threat from funding cuts. National agencies across the UK were presently undergoing considerable change. There had also been a severe loss of numbers of archaeology student numbers at universities – a degree that offered so much in terms of training for life. The CBA had always acted as the voice of the non-aligned public bodies. The loss of government funding through the withdrawal of British Academy funding in recent years had emphasised that independence and made its voice stronger. It was a voice that was needed now more than ever.

The loss of that British Academy funding was also a huge challenge to the ongoing work programme. People needed to ask what they could do for the CBA as well as what the CBA can do for them. The recruitment of members was a vital area of activity as a sustainable source of income for the future. In order to grow membership numbers the CBA needed to get its voice heard and understood. Archaeology was not about blocking change but understanding it.

The coming months and years would be difficult from a financial point of view but the work of the CBA had to continue for the better care and understanding of the historic environment.

3. Director’s report
The Director noted that the CBA was in its 70th year. Its voice was still needed more than ever as the champion of public archaeology. It continued to work towards the key strategic goals of Participation, Discovery, Advocacy and Sustainability.

Within all of those goals lay the work of the protection of the historic environment via listed building casework. One major current such case was ongoing at present – Deptford Dockyard and Sayes Court Gardens. A 4th set of development proposals had been submitted – still without any reference to the important naval heritage of the area. The CBA was being interviewed about the case by ITV on the day of the WGM.

The provision of skills and training for local communities was a key CBA role. A major HLF funded bursary scheme had been undertaken by the CBA to provide archaeological training to 51 people across the UK. These trainees then helped to train people in local societies and other groups in a cascading effect, so that the maximum impact was achieved from initial funding.

The Young Archaeologists’ Club continued to be an important part of the work of the CBA. It had been begun by Dr Kate Pretty CBE (in attendance) and the numbers of branches and volunteers had continued to grow in recent times.

Another growing activity was the annual Festival of Archaeology – with a record number of events held last year. This had been helped by the distribution of the events’ booklet in BBC History magazine.
A record number of archaeological books produced by the CBA had been published over the past year. These books would in future be marketed and distributed by Oxbow Books – an arrangement which also offered possibilities with regard to future e-books.

Membership continued to be vitally important for the CBA. It gave weight to the voice of the CBA as well as providing a form of sustainable finance. New members were needed to help add to that voice. A major appeal would be launched in the early summer aiming to push up membership and other income. The ongoing support of existing members was as ever very much appreciated.

The Director noted the ongoing impact of local authority cuts to archaeological services and the actions that the CBA was taking to highlight the issues raised including our four-year Local Heritage Engagement Network project funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. There was a significant danger that the cuts to local authority archaeology services would lead to far fewer archaeological investigations in advance of new development work.

With regard to the national heritage agencies there was a proposed merger of Historic Scotland and the Scottish Royal Commission, whilst in Wales a decision had been taken to keep the respective bodies separate. In England there was a consultation regarding the split of English Heritage into a properties arm (to retain the name English Heritage) and an advisory arm (to be called Historic England). The sector had not however so far seen a business plan regarding this split and the level of funding for Historic England was unknown. The CBA would continue to campaign for ever more effective heritage management structures across the UK.

4. First World War legacy recording project
The Head of Strategic Development outlined the impending launch of the new project website and online toolkit which formed an integral part of this high profile public participation vehicle, working in collaboration with partners across the UK with funding from English Heritage, Historic Scotland and Cadw. The launch would be attended by CBA President Dan Snow and would generate considerable press attention. An online and mobile app has been produced for the public to record sites relating to the First World War Home Front across the UK. This would feed directly into Historic Environment Records and appear on an online map as a public resource.

The project was an excellent example of the way in which the CBA generates public participation and good practice in archaeological research and recording.

5. Local Heritage Engagement Network
Members were updated on the instigation of this four-year project funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. Its purpose was to monitor the impact of local authority cuts on local archaeological services (which are needed as a vital part of the planning process). It also looked to support local societies and groups in facing these issues. The problem was especially acute in the North and Midlands of England. The CBA was accordingly campaigning to make such services statutorily binding on local authorities.

Local voices make the largest impact in campaign issues and the project aimed to empower local societies and groups to make their voices heard and increase their impact on decision-makers. If anyone was interested in getting involved with the campaign they should contact the project officer at the CBA’s offices.

6. Financial report and membership fee review
It was reported that the CBA continued to face a challenging future due to the loss of British Academy funding. The level of that funding had reduced from £344k per annum to a present £120k. The coming year 2014/15 would see the last of that grant in aid – set at £95k.

Whilst considerable re-structuring had taken place to accommodate much of the deficit this far, considerable resources were also being allocated to generating new and enhanced forms of income from a wide variety of sources. The forthcoming fundraising appeal would re-enforce the message that the CBA needed its members more than ever. A fundraising programme would target trusts, foundations and corporates as well as looking to grow membership and major giving. The CBA relied on a mosaic of funding from different sources, but underlying it all was membership. Income from supporters was a vital sustainable foundation for the CBA’s ongoing economy.
The Finance Director outlined a proposal to increase membership and subscription fees to account for inflation since the last increase (two years previously). Trustees had proposed an increase of £2 for individual membership and subscription to *British Archaeology* magazine. They had also proposed a re-structuring of organisational membership rates, simplifying from the previous 15 categories of membership to a new eight categories, with rates ranging from £37 to £111. The proposed new rates had been compared to other organisations and seemed to be competitive for attracting new members.

Further enhancements to the membership package were also being introduced – including discounts on archaeological publications and reduced entry to heritage sites. The altruistic reason for people to join the CBA and support British archaeology would also be emphasised in the forthcoming recruitment campaign.

Some members of Council considered that there should be no increase in membership fees and that the impact on CBA Groups of the re-structuring of fees conducted two years ago was still being felt. It was, however, noted that the financial challenge faced by the organisation in coming years, with the loss of British Academy funding, left little choice but to make a modest increase to reflect inflation.

Council adopted the proposed increases in membership fees from March 2014.

**8. Dates of future meetings**

The Annual General Meeting would be held in the late autumn and would include the annual De Cardi Lecture.

Members’ Weekends would take place in Suffolk (17-19 October 2014) and in Orkney (10-15 August 2015).

*Dr Grenville thanked members for attending and closed the Meeting.*