The Annual General Meeting (144th Council meeting) was held on 7 November 2016 in the rooms of the British Academy, London. The meeting was chaired by Dr Jane Grenville OBE, Chair of Trustees. The CBA Director, Business Manager and staff members were in attendance.

1. Minutes of previous meetings
The Minutes of the 143rd Council meeting, held on 9 November 2015, were APPROVED. There were no matters arising.

2. Chair of Trustees’ strategic overview
The Chair noted the result of Brexit referendum vote earlier in the year, which has potential long term consequences for the UK and reveals deep fissures in society which relate to identity and our place in Europe and the rest of the world – topics on which archaeology has a lot to contribute. The uncertainty caused by Brexit is already having an impact on higher education research funding and partnerships, and will in due course also impact on matters like environmental stewardship (linked with CAP) and wider protections linked with European directives (eg Environmental Impact Assessments). The uncertainty is also leading to more questions about the future of the UK – inevitably an issue for any organisation which operates across the four nations and we are already seeing widening differences in approaches and legislation relating to heritage between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The economic impacts of Brexit have yet to be clarified, but current major infrastructure spending plans in England could indicate a potential bonanza period for archaeology in advance of developments such as HS2 and the third runway at Heathrow. However, resources are already stretched and there are concerns that we do not have enough archaeologists to undertake the necessary work – particularly if we are not able to attract archaeologists from other countries to assist (after Brexit). As a consequence, there is an urgent need to look at upskilling a new generation of professional archaeologists, but we need to provide a sustainable and structured career path which offers continuity, increased certainty and appropriate remuneration to attract enough quality candidates.

There are many issues for the CBA to consider, with key partners such as the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, and our role to engage the widest possible audience with the current concerns, in order for them to act as advocates for archaeology, is fundamental to our future. Now, more than ever, the Chair suggested that we need an active membership to feed into these debates and she encouraged everyone to continue to speak up for archaeology and the CBA and support our activities.

3. Annual trustees’ report and financial statements
The Business Manager reported that the CBA’s finances had been managed to ensure a modest increase in funds in the last financial year, though income had reduced from £1,125k in 2014-15 to £768k for 2015-16 with the loss of the grant aid from the British Academy and the end of the HLF Skills for the Future programme. Financial reserves had increased slightly to £159k (2015: £153k).

The annual trustee report and financial statements for 2015-16 were APPROVED.

4. Director’s report on current and future activities
The Director reported on recent activities undertaken by the CBA which had focussed on advocacy, linked with increasing public engagement with archaeology.

The most significant issue in recent weeks had been AQA’s decision to drop A Level Archaeology. A campaign was running to get them to change their mind, or persuade another exam board to take on the qualification, as the A Level is a crucial step not just in
advance of possible degree study, but also as part of an alternative pathway into the profession linked with the apprenticeships which are being developed.

There is also continued advocacy linked with planning reform in England as there are continuing concerns about aspects of the Housing & Planning Act 2016 and the newly published Neighbourhood Planning Bill for the protection of the country’s archaeological heritage. This is also relevant to the ongoing work through the CBA’s Local Heritage Engagement Network to support the work of local Historic Environment Record Services. The LHEN Power of Archaeology campaign is encouraging local groups to brief their local MP and councillors to ensure that they appreciate the public support for these services and for archaeology more generally.

The Director reported on a number of recent successes, including the Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Bill which is nearing Royal Assent and will enable the UK to ratify the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols. This was long overdue. The Historic Environment Act had been passed in Wales and had included a provision to put the Historic Environment Records on a statutory basis. In England, the first Culture White Paper for fifty years had been published and had included heritage as an integral part of culture which was good to see.

In its advocacy work, the CBA continues to work closely in partnership with historic environment organisations such as the National Amenity Societies in relation to our listed building casework, members of the Archaeology Forum, and also with natural environment organisations through Wildlife & Countryside Link.

In encouraging public engagement the CBA continues to record Home Front sites relating to the First World War, and also helps to deliver the CITIZAN project to record sites in the coastal and inter-tidal zone. We are developing a new public engagement project to improve the condition and understanding of prehistoric barrows which is the single category of monument most at risk in England. In all these areas we are looking to involve young people, linked with the sustainability of the Young Archaeologists’ Club, and working with local groups across the UK to promote archaeology through events such as the CBA Festival of Archaeology which continues to grow.

The CBA is continuing to support the development of community archaeology and in particular is looking at ways in which we can involve more people in stewardship of the archaeological heritage across the UK. Research at the University of York through the Adopting Archaeology project is linking in with local models for stewardship, and skills development through local centres like the Wessex Academy for Field Archaeology. The CBA is currently looking at options to increase training and capacity building for the archaeology sector, including the possibility of a new light touch qualification relating to the acquisition of new archaeological skills.

The Director thanked everyone associated with the work of the CBA, particularly the secretariat staff and volunteers in the Group Network and YAC. He encouraged everyone to continue to speak out and campaign on behalf of the UK’s archaeological heritage.

5. CBA strategy 2016-19

The Director outlined the new three-year strategy proposed by trustees which would guide the CBA in its work with its organisational and individual members and other partners in:

- Enhancing the protection and stewardship of the UK’s archaeological heritage
- Increasing the range and diversity of public participation in archaeology
- Increasing public awareness and knowledge of the UK’s archaeological heritage

The next stage would be the production of an operational plan to show specific targets for the CBA, linked with resources. This would also show areas where the CBA expected to lead, and areas where we would work under the leadership of others.

The strategy was AGREED.
6. Stonehenge
The Chair reported on the process which had led to the CBA’s cardinal principles being presented to members for adoption as an updated position for the CBA to use as and when new proposals for the A303 in the World Heritage Site were published in 2017. Trustees had considered the revised principles on several occasions and had invited comment on an earlier draft from members. The final version as presented to the members for adoption had been amended and agreed by trustees in the light of comments received on the earlier draft. Two minor amendments were proposed to the document and it was then AGREED.

7. Appointment of trustees
The Director thanked Emma Plunkett-Dillon, Diana Maudslay Cross, David Stocker, Katy Whittaker and Jane Grenville who were standing down as trustees for their service and support. He reported that Jim Thomas had recently resigned as a trustee, and as Hon Treasurer.

The re-election of Mike Nevell was proposed. Two new trustees were also proposed for election: David Austin and Sue Rodgers.

As the number of candidates for election did not exceed the number of available places no ballot was required. The trustee appointments were CONFIRMED.

It was proposed that Marilyn Palmer would take over as Chair of the trustees, with David Austin as a new Vice-Chair and Edward Bace as Honorary Treasurer. The appointments were CONFIRMED.

The Director noted that there were several vacant positions for trustees and encouraged anyone interested to speak with him after the meeting.

8. Appointment of auditors
The appointment of Armstrong Watson as auditors for the coming year was CONFIRMED.

9. Dates of future meetings
28 February and 6 November 2017 in London.

Dr Grenville thanked members for attending and closed the Meeting.