

Mud Walls Group Meeting 2

12th April 2016

The newly-formed Whittlesey Mud Walls Action group held its first dedicated meeting on 12th April 2016 (the founding meeting having occurred earlier in the year).

The agenda was provided by Nicola Duncan-Finn and Katie McAndrew from Fenland District Council, based on previous discussion.

The four main approaches to mud wall conservation which the group will focus on are:

1. Survey and Recording

This includes interpretation of old surveying, including informational, photographic and drawn surveys, and carrying out a new comprehensive mud walls survey.

Previous surveys:

1981 - survey by David Hancock

1991 - survey update

2006 - QUBE Report

A new survey needs a standard format. The group decided that each new record created for a mud wall should contain as much of the following information as possible:

- Location/Address (eg: "boundary between 3 & 4 Claygate")

The OS reference can be found using Google Maps (Satellite Map)

- Ownership (if known)

- Age (if known)

- Description

To include a brief written description of type and condition (etc), photographs and a sketch showing dimensions.

Condition Report - decide on terms to be used, try not to include subjective words such as "good condition" without agreement/note about what that means.

Photographs - as many angles as possible, to avoid distortion etc, close up photographs for details

Survey Drawings - (Basic drawings)/Dimensions marked on sketch - Length/Height/Width/Coping Detail (measurements)

- Background Info: if there are any historical references/surveys etc

- Suggestions

In order to carry out surveying work, it was agreed that a letter should be sent to all houses which own (or look as if they might be the owner of) a mud wall.

This letter is to be drafted by Nicola Duncan-Finn/Katie McAndrew.

The letter should introduce the Mud Walls Group and offer owners the help and support of the group in the care and repair of their mud wall. It should explain that the group will be surveying the local walls (eg: regardless of the reader) and ask for help/co-operation in allowing access to their side of the wall for full recording.

2. Education and Knowledge

Raising awareness of and support for mud walls within the community.

It was decided that the group should aim for the following by the end of summer:

1) A Mud Walls display in Whittlesey Museum (in autumn)

This display should include

- Info about mud walls - why we care about them
- Photographs (old & new)
- Personal Stories

The whole group should be involved in collecting the information to be included in this display.

2) Facebook Group/Page

A Mud Walls Group Page has already been set up, but a Group is probably better, so this should be changed.

3) Outreach to Community Groups:

Scouts, Brownies, WI, Whittlesey Society, Town Council - Neighbourhood Plan, Photography Clun, Straw Bear Society, The Friendship Club, Discovering Whittlesey, U3A

4) Outreach to the general public by distributing a leaflet ("Your Walls") at public events.

Printing of the initial leaflet could be supported by Fenland district Council.

Jen Barback to produce a first draft of the leaflet for the next meeting.

It should be A5 Double-sided, in colour, with a friendly tone.

Side 1: Large Photo. Strapline about mud walls being unique

Side 2: History of mud walls, Why are they important (unique features, important to sense of place, "part of heritage"), mud walls group set up (to raise awareness, record and document, and to help and support owners with care and repair of their mud walls - don't say "preservation" as that might be intimidating), Facebook address/email

Upcoming Events (June 2016 onwards) where the leaflet could be given out:

- Queen's Birthday - Sunday 12th June
- Circuit of the Fens Cycle Race - TBC, end July
- Whittlesey Festival - Sunday 11th September

3. Maintenance - community and professional

Nicola Duncan-Finn/Katie McAndrew to produce a list of contractors who may be able to work with mud walls, to allow the group to respond to immediate inquiries about mud wall repair.

4. Statutory options for protection

Ongoing Structure of the Group

It was agreed that the "Mud Walls Group" should be committed to proactive, positive action.

- Minutes should be documented - Jen Barback to take minutes and email them around (others to produce the minutes if Jen is unavailable at a particular meeting)
- Updates on group activities and dates for meetings to be put on Facebook by Jen Barback (possibly not full minutes)
- Agenda - Nicola Duncan-Finn/Katie McAndrew to produce an agenda for each meeting