

## **Social and Community Services**

### **Cogges Manor Farm Museum**

**Cogges Project Bulletin 4    May 2008**

#### **NEWS!**

**3,4,5 May**

#### **Wool and Weaving Weekend**

- **Make your own rag rug sample**
- **Children's textile weaving trail**

**11 May 11am – 4pm**

#### **Open Day at the Museum Resources Centre, Standlake**

**See behind the scenes and view the reserve collections of agricultural machinery, social and industrial history and archaeology.**

#### **1) Cogges Community Enterprise group**

On 24<sup>th</sup> April a group of people met for the second time in Witney to consider the possibility of creating a Community Enterprise group to submit a proposal to operate Cogges. The group plans to meet again in May and is preparing to submit a proposal to the Cogges Project Board on 29 May.

#### **2) Cogges Project Board**

The Board has agreed the following Objectives:

##### **Project Objectives**

1. To secure a long-term sustainable future for Cogges Manor Farm Museum as a site of local and national significance
2. To meet the Council's financial plan
3. To continue to care for the ancient monument and listed buildings
4. To retain public access to the site and ensure that it is an attractive place to visit offering a high quality experience to visitors
5. To maintain the integrity and atmosphere of the site
6. To maintain the collections on site to professional standards
7. To retain a level of heritage interpretation
8. To ensure the site is used effectively as an educational resource
9. To comply with the Conservation Statement

### 3) Overall Heritage Interpretation and Education Objectives

#### Interpretation objectives

1. To explain the origins of Cogges within the prehistoric and historic settlement of the Windrush Valley
2. To tell the story of the long continuity of development of the settlement
3. To interpret the heritage assets of the locality, including those beyond the site itself (church, priory etc)
4. To allow the buildings and the archaeology to tell the story as far as possible: 'let the stones speak'
5. To relate the story of the development of the site to the history of Witney (Bishop's Palace, blanket industry)
6. To use the site as a window onto the history of farming (in Oxfordshire) and the environment of the Cotswolds
7. To adopt a variety of approaches in interpreting the site, appropriate to the diversity of potential users, their interests and needs
8. To create a degree of flexibility in the interpretation, allowing for future change in response to users' needs

#### Education objectives

1. To excite, stimulate, encourage and educate audiences of all ages, abilities and backgrounds
2. To maximise links to the National Curriculum for primary and secondary schools
3. To encourage exploration and to facilitate access to information
4. To recognise the potential of the site as a tool to explore issues of sustainability, food, farming, ecology, climate change
5. To encourage a sense of ownership and an understanding of custodianship of the heritage

#### Interpretation themes

1. Saxons and Normans: Wadard and the building of the Castle
2. The church and priory
3. The 13<sup>th</sup> century Manor House and medieval village
4. The development of the Manor House/ architectural history
5. Farming/land use at Cogges from medieval to modern (and in the Cotswolds)
6. How the Victorians lived and farmed
7. Where food comes from, processing and preserving food, healthy eating
8. Contemporary issues in the countryside – access, land use, GM crops, 'factory' farming, organic farming, hunting, food miles, fair trade

#### 4) Conservation Statement

The Cogges Project Board commissioned this Statement, on the advice of English Heritage, to help inform future decisions about the use of the site and buildings. John Rhodes, an external consultant, has been working on the document which runs to about 100 pages. Copies of the completed first draft will be available at Cogges and The Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock, for public reference from 1 May (please ask at the reception desk in each museum if you would like to see it). Please note that English Heritage is reviewing the Statement, so the final version will not be published until their comments have been received.

##### Executive summary:

- 1) The Conservation Statement was commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council in February 2008, to provide a framework of understanding and guidance and to assist its current review of operations and the assessment of future development proposals for the property.
- 2) To develop an understanding of the place, the Statement draws together existing information and summarises its historical development through time (*Section 2*). Eight chronological phases are set out for the site and its larger context, from early times to the present day, along with a key chronology (Appendix 3) and a summary of the associated archaeology and ecology of the site.
- 3) The Statement sets out criteria for assessing the significance of Cogges and its elements (*Section 3.1*), and proposes areas in which it has exceptional or other degrees of significance (Sections 3.2-3.3). These are supported by the property's inclusion in the area of the Scheduled Monument, and by the listed status of the Manor Farmhouse and farm buildings and of other buildings within the complex (variously Grades I, II\* and II).
- 4) Cogges is identified as a historic site of outstanding value and significance, deriving from the importance of particular features or aspects of the site, and from the factors which make up its overall heritage merit and contemporary value. These overall values (*Section 3.2*) are:
  - the archaeological significance of the medieval Cogges complex
  - architectural interest in the wide range of building types and materials represented
  - cultural value in the long continuity of development of the settlement
  - contemporary social value as a publicly owned place with easy public access.
- 5) After a summary of the existing policy framework (*Section 4.2*), factors are identified which affect the site's significance now or might do so in the future, and a sequence of ten Principles (*Section 4.3*) is proposed to

provide guidance in addressing the issues. The principles are intended to protect or enhance the significance of the place, or to help realise its potential for public access, appreciation and enjoyment. The principles reflect seven main areas of concern:

Overall purpose; Understanding; Protection of buildings & setting; Conservation & maintenance; Sustainable uses; Interpretation & communication; Management

- 6) As an Appendix to the Statement, the Gazetteer is a schedule of individual elements of the site, with assessments for each of its development, significance, the issues which affect it, and recommendations for its particular care and other treatment.

Further Appendices include Scheduled Monument and Listed Building information (Appendix 2), a key chronology (Appendix 3), a summary of the heritage impact assessment process (Appendix 4) and a Bibliography (Appendix 5).

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