

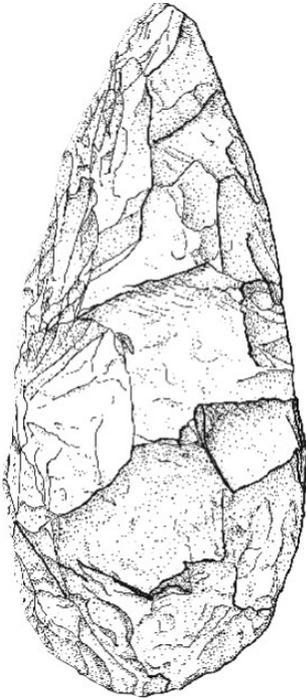
**Buried Under Bidford**

Final report

Version 2.0

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By Christina Evans



Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund  
English Heritage Project N° 5277

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## **2 List of Acronyms used within this report**

ALSF	Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund
EH	English Heritage
HER	Historic Environment Record
ROMP	Review of old mineral permissions
WCC	Warwickshire County Council

### **3 Acknowledgements**

The Project Team were Christina Evans, Emma Jones and Jonathan Parkhouse. All of these people worked enthusiastically and tirelessly on the project and contributed ideas, advice and suggestions to each element of the project.

There were also a number of people who deserve a special acknowledgement in this report. Without the input of all these people the project would not have been the success that it was. The author would like to thank all of these people and apologises if anyone is omitted from the list below.

Special mention needs to be made to Mrs Elisabeth Uggerløese (Bidford Parish Clerk) who welcomed the Project Team and supported the project wholeheartedly. Elisabeth's involvement helped the project run smoothly and made the Project Manager's job a little easier than it might have been without her.

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Finally, the Project Team would like to thank the Bidford community who embraced the project and supported all the organised events. Thank you for welcoming us into the community.

Other contributors include

Sandra Parker	-
Wendy Shaddick	-
Jenny Lamb	-
The Bidford Local History Group	-
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Neil Beamsley	WCC
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Think Graphic	-
History off the Page	-
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Staff and pupils at Bidford Primary School	-
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#### 4 Summary

This report is the final element of the Buried under Bidford project which was an English Heritage Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF) Objective 2/3 project.

This report has been created following the designing and implementation of an Historic Environment Record (HER) outreach programme which engaged with communities from Bidford on Avon and the surrounding villages. The outreach programme was comprised of

- A public consultation exercise/Public debating exercise
- Documentary research training sessions
- Systematic fieldwalking, metal detecting and finds processing events
- The creation of a community generated exhibition
- The creation of an archaeologically themed “comic”

Within this report, the reader will find

- A brief description of each element of the project
- The results of the evaluations and the conclusions which can be drawn from them
- An evaluation of the success of the project in terms of engagement
- Recommendations for future initiatives around Bidford on Avon and elsewhere

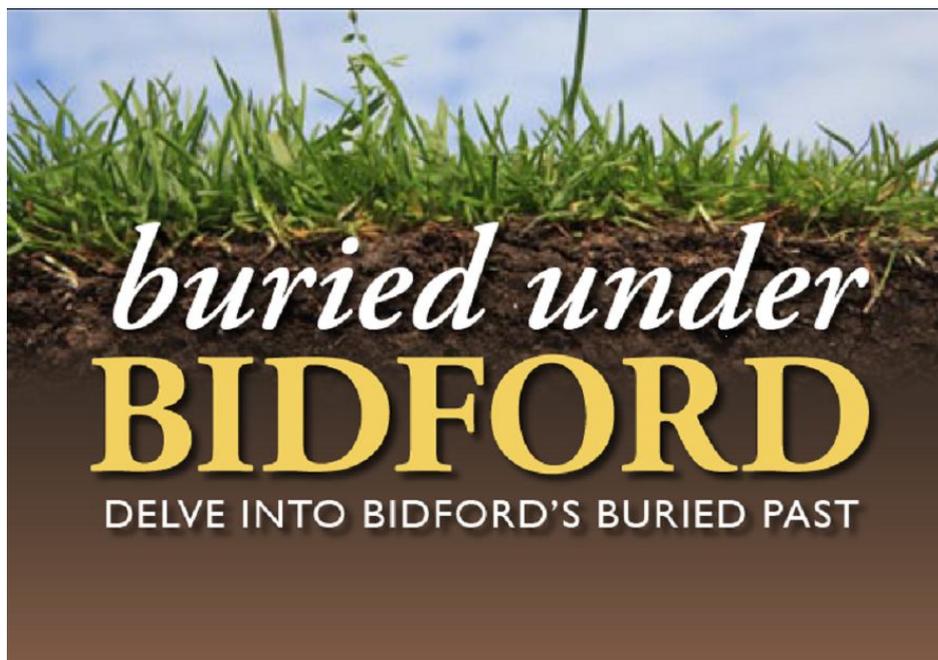


Figure 1. The Buried under Bidford design

## 5 Introduction

Buried under Bidford is a Warwickshire County Council project supported by the English Heritage Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF). This document is the project's final output and details the various elements that comprised the project. In addition this report assesses whether the project can be seen as a success and identifies lessons learnt along the way.

The project was undertaken between May 2007 and March 2008 and was based in Bidford on Avon, a small village in south Warwickshire. The community of this village are affected by sand and gravel extraction and have strong views about the minerals planning process. It was felt that Historic Environment Record (HER) staff were ideally suited to interact with the community and help facilitate a discussion about the mineral planning process. An HER outreach programme was created to support this interaction and help the local communities in the area.

The outreach programme was designed to engage people and inspire them. Each element was targeted at a specific audience with a particular emphasise on the effect of past and future aggregate extraction within this community.

Further information regarding the various project elements and the background of this ALSF project is contained in the Project Design which can be found in appendix one.



Figure 2. The project marketing banner.

## 6 Project Area

The parishes of Bidford on Avon and Salford Priors lie in the south west part of Warwickshire adjacent to the Worcestershire border. The area lies within the floodplains of the River Avon and Arrow. Along these rivers the geology is alluvium, whilst the other areas of Bidford on Avon and Salford are fluvial sands and gravels over mudstone. (See map below for location of Bidford on Avon in relation to aggregates areas).

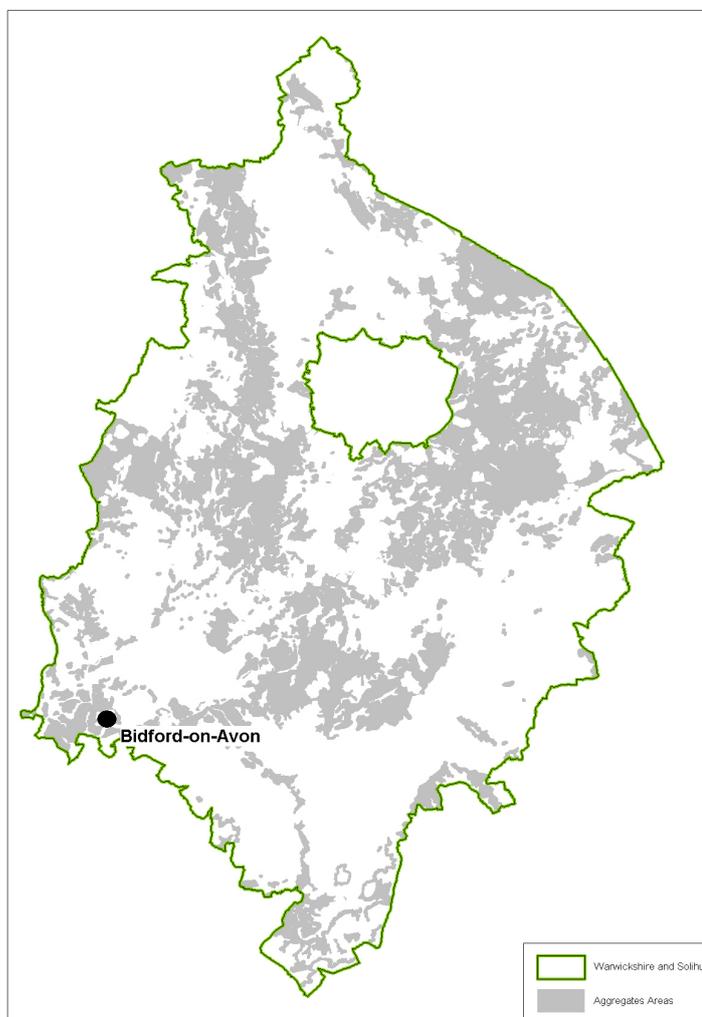


Figure 3. Location of aggregates in Warwickshire

Sand and gravel has been extracted from the area since 1990 (Marsh Farm Quarry). In 2005 an application was submitted to extend the quarry. This application met fierce public opposition and was hugely controversial. As a result of local opposition the Marsh Farm application was withdrawn. The area remains on the Minerals Local Plan and there is the potential that the quarry will be extended in the future.

When designing this project it was anticipated that the project would aid the Mineral Planning consultations in the future. The consultation would engender and inform the local community and facilitate a dialogue between mineral planners, the aggregates industry and the local community. In addition it was hoped that the project's outcomes would allow the HER to enhance its records and improve the quality of existing data.

In the project design stages it was decided that Bidford on Avon was an ideal location to organise a public consultation. The community has strong views on the minerals planning

process and could benefit greatly from an informed discussion. In addition, the HER does have gaps in its data for the area (for further information please consult the project design, WCC 2008).

## **7 Aims and Objectives of the project**

### **7.1 Aims**

To facilitate a greater depth of understanding amongst local groups and individuals within areas of known archaeological potential

To improve baseline data in the HER to facilitate the provision of informed strategic advice to the Minerals Framework

To promote constructive dialogue between the aggregates industry, minerals planners and interested local stakeholders. We aim to promote engagement through our ability to interpret the past

To identify ways of understanding the value and significance that people place on their surroundings and local heritage

### **7.2 Objectives**

Objective 1: To improve the representation of sites and finds from potential aggregates producing areas in the HER (EH objectives 1 and 4)\*

Objective 2: To reinforce links between the HER and local communities in areas of potential aggregate extraction (EH objective 1,2,3,4 and 5)\*

Objectives 3: To increase use by schools of the information held in the HER (EH objectives 1,2,3,4 and 5)\*

Objective 4: To encourage local groups and individuals to become aware of planning and sustainability issues relating to aggregates extraction and engage in active management of their local environment (EH objectives 1,2,3 and 4)\*

Objective 5: To encourage participation by quarry companies in community activities

\*For an explanation of the English Heritage objectives please see the project design

## 8 Audiences Targeted and Project Consultees

The target audience for the project was individuals, local groups and stakeholders in the south of the county – specifically those living in the parishes of Bidford on Avon and Salford Priors and their environs. More specific target groups were defined for each project element; these were also classified according to EH ALSF outreach guidelines and are cross-referenced in the table below:

<b>Project Element</b>	<b>WCC HER Target Audience</b>	<b>EH Target Audience</b>
Documentary research	Community groups, archaeological, historical, parish councils, youth groups Aggregates industry	The aggregates industry, the wider archaeological community including scientific, specialist, and amateur groups, Local communities in aggregate producing areas young people,
Systematic Fieldwalking and metal detecting	All audiences (local and non-local) Aggregates Industry Planners Archaeologists	The aggregates industry, the wider archaeological community including scientific, specialist, and amateur groups, local communities in aggregate producing areas, young people.
Creation of a final exhibition	Local audiences Aggregates industry Non-specialist HER users	The aggregates industry, the wider archaeological community including scientific, specialist, and amateur groups, local communities in aggregate producing areas young people.
Public consultation exercise	Local audiences Archaeologists Planners	The aggregates industry, the wider archaeological community including scientific, specialist, and amateur groups, Local communities in aggregate producing areas, young people.
Comic book	School students at Key Stage 2	Young people

## 9 Project Elements

### 9.1 Documentary research



Figure 4. Participants at the documentary research training sessions

Five documentary research training sessions were organised for this element of the project. These sessions were as follows

- How to begin researching your local history (talk and practical session by Susan Gray, Local Studies Librarian)
- A trip to the Warwickshire County Record Office (tour and talk by Robert Eyre, Senior Archivist)
- Researching your local history – the next step (talk and practical session by Jenny Lamb, local historian)
- Discovering the archaeological heritage of your area – an introduction to the Historic Environment Record (talk and practical session by Christina Evans, Buried under Bidford Project Manager).
- Questions and Answers – your chance to quiz the experts (Susan Gray, Jenny Lamb and Christina Evans).

The content of the sessions were developed by the Project Manager and Local Studies Librarian following discussions with members of the Bidford Local History Society. People were invited to put forward suggestions about what they thought should be included, when/where the sessions should be held and how long the sessions should last.

The training sessions gave participants the opportunity to become more familiar with a range of documentary sources and provided people with the skills needed to question them. Each training session was created to build on the skills learnt in the previous session and develop people's knowledge further.

By the end of the sessions people had a better understanding of what documentary sources were readily available to them, where to find them and how to use and question them. Participants also learnt about the HER, what resources it held and how to use the online version.

Staff at the HER realise the importance of documentary research and why it is essential for the continual improvement of the HER's knowledge about aggregate areas. These documentary research training sessions have given participants the confidence to begin or continue researching their local heritage. It is hoped that communities and individuals will soon feel confident to look at environs where past extraction has occurred and the development of Warwickshire's post medieval landscapes. The results of this research can then be used to compliment other skills people have learnt during this project, such as fieldwalking. All of the information gained from this research can be fed into the provision of baseline data and in turn enhance the understanding of curatorial responses and management of the HER.

### 9.1.1 Objectives

**Objective 1: To improve the representation of sites and finds from potential aggregates producing areas in the HER (EH objectives 1 and 4)**

- To improve the quality and coverage of baseline data for Warwickshire's post medieval and modern landscapes (currently under represented in the Warwickshire HER) via documentary research.
- To provide people, who have no experience of documentary research, with the skills needed to investigate their local history

### 9.1.2 Evaluation

This element of the project was well attended (on average twenty people attended each session). Rather pleasingly a range of ages attended (17 – 60+) and there was a mixture of men and women. Participants came from Bidford and the surrounding villages.

The documentary research training sessions were evaluated by participants completing brief evaluation feedback forms and through informal discussions between event staff and participants (see below for examples).

#### Examples of feedback

*Very informative and well presented*

*Very interesting. Not long enough*

*Very good. Particularly enjoyed the practical elements (working with the maps and records)*

*Very helpful. Not enough time*

*Friendly staff*

*Very interesting and stimulating*

*Excellent; a great tester into sources, records and means of access; left us wanting more.*

*The volunteer was excellent and transferred her enthusiasm to everyone always glad to see her.*

## Staff feedback

Staff involved in these training sessions felt that they were extremely successful and a pleasure to be involved in. The Record Office were pleased with the interest that younger people (17-19) showed in the sessions and that they had visited the Record Office for the first time. The participants were very enthusiastic and were clearly keen to learn more. The session focusing on the online HER and how to interpret HER maps was a particular favourite amongst participants and it was clear that the session time could have been doubled.

Everyone agreed that the final session, where participants had the opportunity to question the staff, did not work as well as the others. People clearly enjoyed being taught and undertaking practical exercises as part of the training session but did not thrive with the question and answer format.

### 9.1.3 Generic Learning Outcomes achieved

From the evaluation it can be demonstrated that the documentary research training sessions

- Increased people's knowledge and understanding of how to conduct documentary research and about the HER (*knowledge and understanding*).
- Taught people new skills to use documents more effectively (*skills*)
- Removed some people's fears of using old documents (*attitudes and values*)
- Provided people with information about where they can go for help and advice (*attitudes and values*)
- Inspired people to conduct their own documentary research (*attitudes and values*)
- Provided people with inspiration and enjoyment (*enjoyment, inspiration and creativity*)

### 9.1.4 Conclusions

These training sessions were successful and engaged a varied group of people. Many attending were members of the local history group who wanted to learn more about historical research and how to discover the archaeological heritage of Bidford. Initially when consulted, the local history group felt that an hour was long enough for a training session. Interestingly when evaluating these sessions the most common comment was that they were not long enough. This clearly occurred because the group were not completely clear about what the sessions were or how they would be taught. This is something that the HER can rectify in the future by better publicity and explanations. Interestingly, participants were not keen on creating an end product (which was to be an article for the Local Parish Newsletter) as part of the training sessions.

This type of community activity was a fantastic way of increasing people's knowledge of the HER and the varied information it holds. The HER will definitely look to do more of this type of training session in the future and take into account lessons learnt. Future sessions will last longer (perhaps becoming day schools or half day training sessions) and the questions and answers format will be dropped, as people did not engage with it.

### 9.1.5 Revised methodology

1. Initial contact with people running the training sessions (e.g. Local Studies Librarians, archivists). (Project Manager)
2. Organise timetabling, book suitable venues (Project Manager)

3. Investigate potential resources available (Project Manager, Local Studies Librarian etc)
4. Create draft teaching plan (Project Manager, Local Studies Librarian etc)
5. Discuss and edit teaching plan (Project Manager, Local Studies Librarian etc)
6. Publicise (Project Manager)
7. Prepare final teaching plan (Project Manager, Local Studies Librarian etc)
8. Conduct training sessions (Project Manager, Local Studies Librarian etc)
9. Report findings to local history group (Project Manager)

## 9.2 Systematic fieldwalking, metal detecting and finds processing training sessions

The fieldwalking, metal detecting and finds processing training sessions were designed with the intention of providing people with the opportunity to learn new skills useful in archaeological research. It was anticipated that these new skills would ignite people's interest in their historic environment. This could then feed into the English Heritage cycle of understanding, valuing, caring and enjoying. Once this cycle had been established the Warwickshire HER could hopefully use this enthusiasm to target aggregate extraction landscapes to further the archaeological record. The public's research could subsequently be fed into the HER and thereby improve future curatorial responses. In addition it is hoped that current anomalies in the HER will be targeted for investigation to see whether they are due to metal detectorists.



Figure 5. People attending the fieldwalking event

### 9.2.1 Fieldwalking survey

The fieldwalking survey was organised over two Saturdays in October. The first Saturday was supported by the Hinckley Fieldwalking Group. The second Saturday included a metal detecting survey.

As the number of participants were unknown when the event was being organised it was decided that the square method of fieldwalking was to be used. In advance of the event, a grid of 20m x 20m squares was staked out. During the first Saturday each square was walked by a group of people (c.6 people) for ten minutes before bagging finds and moving

on to the next square. As there were more rows to be walked during the second Saturday and less people per square (c. 4 people) people walked each square for fifteen minutes before moving on to the next square.

The majority of participants had never fieldwalked before so it was decided that during the event there would be 100% retrieval as there was the potential that participants may find it difficult to distinguish, in the field, actual artefacts from, for instance, modern debris or natural stone etc.

The event began with participants being welcomed to the site and told how the day was going to run and the health and safety issues of the site. The Project Manager explained to people what they would be doing and how to bag finds. Everyone was given a handout explaining the history of the site and what information was already contained within the HER.



Figure 6. Fieldwalking in Bidford

At the end of the day the event staff discussed the running of the day and it became apparent that people had quickly forgotten what they had been told at the beginning of the day regarding how to bag finds. It was agreed that another handout would be created for the following weekend which covered everything people were told in the morning introduction.

### 9.2.2 Metal detecting survey

On the second Saturday, metal detectorists joined the fieldwalkers. They followed the same grid that the fieldwalkers were using and began after the first row of squares had been walked. There was no time restriction placed on the metal detectorists, as was the case for the fieldwalkers. In hindsight this was an error that was made by event staff and a lesson for the Project Team. The detectorists did not cover much of the field during the day and it soon became apparent that the majority of the field would not be covered.

### 9.2.3 Finds processing

The Project Team decided that there would be a finds processing day held the week after the fieldwalking event in the centre of Bidford. The church meeting room was used because of its central location and excellent facilities. Tables were set up with washing up bowls of water and toothbrushes and people were invited to come along and wash the fieldwalking finds.

Staff from the HER and Warwickshire Field Services Group were on hand to advise and assist participants. Once all the finds were washed, event staff helped participants sort finds and identify non-archaeological/archaeological material.

### 9.2.4 Results of the fieldwalking

See the fieldwalking report (appendix 2)

### 9.2.5 Objectives

**Objective 1: To improve the representation of sites and finds from potential aggregates producing areas in the HER (EH objectives1 and 4)**

- To teach local groups in Warwickshire new skills (i.e. fieldwalking) which can be sustained beyond the life of the project.
- To equip local communities with the skills and capacity to understand their historic environment and engage with the HER
- To encourage people to use their new found skills (e.g. fieldwalking, metal detecting) in areas of potential aggregate extraction, such as those identified on the Minerals Local Plan and the Warwickshire assessment of the archaeological resource in Warwickshire (WCC 2007).
- To provide local groups with the tools to investigate the historic environment (via fieldwork and post excavation work) and consequently improve the baseline data held by the HER.
- To showcase and develop skills which are all designed to provide baseline data for the HER.

### 9.2.6 Generic Learning Outcomes achieved

From the evaluation it can be demonstrated that the fieldwork/finds processing training sessions

- Increased their knowledge and understanding about fieldwalking, metal detecting, finds processing and the HER (*knowledge and understanding*)
- Learnt the principles of fieldwalking and the importance of finds processing (skills)
- Met new people who could help them pursue their interests further (skills)
- Learnt where they could go for help and advice (*attitudes and values*)
- Were inspired by event staff and the other people they met during the event (*enjoyment, inspiration and creativity*)
- Left the event with the intention of either continuing their research further or starting research for the first time (*activity, behaviour and progression*)

### 9.2.7 Evaluation

The fieldwork element of the project was evaluated in three different ways. During the first fieldwalking event people were asked to complete a questionnaire before they left. This

proved a success way of getting information and people were happy to complete them. During the second fieldwalking event, people were asked to submit comments about the day either by email or by speaking to staff present. This method of evaluation did not work at all well. A small number of people were happy to stay back and talk to staff but those that did were not really representative of the wide range of people attending the event. The finds processing event was evaluated by a member of staff informally interviewing participants during the day. This method was also successful but quite time consuming.

### Examples of feedback

#### Fieldwalking and metal detecting

*Well organised, thoroughly enjoyable. An extremely good introduction to an event I have not done*

*Interesting to take part and see finds for real*

*Excellent day*

*Friendly staff, well organised, great fun. Like to do more.*

*Family friendly event*

*Great to see families participating*

*Super day lots of knowledgeable people*

*Good opportunity to find out about local history*

#### Finds processing

*Was really exciting to have an archaeologist look through the pottery I had washed and tell me what it was.*

*I enjoyed looking through the variety of interesting finds and having the archaeologist to me what I was looking at.*

*This was a really interesting, informative and friendly event.*

*I had not intended to stay at the event – was just curious what people had found during the fieldwalking event the previous week. However, it looked so much fun that I decided to stay,*

*It was fun washing the finds from the fieldwalking event. I particularly liked sorting through all the artefacts after they had been washed.*

*I enjoyed all of it*

*Was fantastic that we got the opportunity to discover the finds in the field the previous two weekends and then get to wash and sort them afterwards.*

*Information from the experts was fascinating*

*Great opportunity to learn something new*

*I really enjoyed learning to distinguish worthwhile finds, pottery and flints – and the company.*

*I enjoyed learning hands on. Very informative*

*I enjoyed being involved,*

*Really nice to talk to staff.*

## 9.2.8 Conclusion

### Fieldwalking

During the first fieldwalking event Hinckley Fieldwalking Group were invited to join event staff and help support the participants. Everyone benefited from their presence. Participants liked having a dedicated person walking with them and answering questions as they arose. Event staff had a lot of pressure taken off their shoulders by having extra people helping out. It would be financially impossible to increase the number of paid staff attending fieldwalking events that the HER organises in the future. Ideally Warwickshire needs a fieldwalking group who can be called on to help out at events such as these. It is hoped that the HER can continue working with the Hinckley Fieldwalking Group and maybe a dedicated group will be created in Warwickshire in the not too distant future.



Figure 7. People enjoying the fieldwalking event

From speaking to participants during the first weekend it was possible to make alterations to the handouts and write a couple of additional ones to help people. These will be used during future events. Interestingly, although a reference collection was created and displayed for participants to look at before they started fieldwalking or during their lunch break, only a few people did. A number of people mentioned when interviewed that they would have liked to know what they were looking for before they started. When staff pointed out that there was a reference collection on display the comment was that people were too excited during the day to look, 'they just wanted to get on the field'. For future

events staff should consider briefly explaining the collection to participants at the start of a fieldwalking event.



Figure 8. Children proving that there is more to fieldwalking than merely walking around

Due to the project only being ten months in duration, finding a field suitable for hosting a public fieldwalking event proved extremely difficult. The Project Team had wrongly assumed that as the project focused solely on Bidford it would be easier to find a field which a landowner would be happy for us to use. This was not the case and at one stage there was concern that this element of the project would have to be cancelled. Thankfully a member of the community, who had attended the documentary research training sessions, came to the rescue and introduced the Project Manager to a landowner willing to help. Luckily, one of the landowner's fields (which he was happy for us to walk on) contained an archaeological feature visible on an aerial photograph.

Finding a suitable field for a large number of people to walk on is always going to be a challenge for the HER staff. With this ALSF project and the one before (Extracting Warwickshire's Past ALSF project number 4653) we were luckily enough to find a suitable field but an element of luck was definitely involved. With this in mind, careful consideration needs to be used for any organised fieldwalking events.

Fieldwalking events are hugely beneficial to the HER and something that we wish to continue. Further research needs to be undertaken to identify how to find suitable fields which can be fieldwalked. Perhaps the HER should concentrate on one area in Warwickshire to fieldwalk and return to it each year? This may able us to build up successful relationships with a network of farmers and landowners. The other alternative is to try and gain funding for a project lasting longer than 10 months. This would remove some of the pressure that the Project Team felt due to time restrictions and give the Project Manager more of an opportunity to engage with the local landowners.

### Metal detecting

Organising a metal detecting survey which ran in conjunction with the fieldwalking survey was a completely new activity for the HER staff. The survey was a lot slower than the Project Team had expected and this caused a few difficulties (such as the metal detectorists not covering as much of the field as the fieldwalkers). This is something that

will need to be addressed in the future and may be answered by the HER trying to forge a successful working relationship with a reputable metal detecting club.

The project has been lucky in the fact that some metal detectorists have returned to the site since our organised event and undertaken further detecting which they have told us about. The HER now needs to consider how to engage further with metal detectorists to ensure that these open and honest discussions continue.

The inclusion of local metal detectorists within the project did cause some concern amongst certain archaeological professionals. Happily the project group can say that their involvement was beneficial to the project and hopefully the HER can work with them on future projects. Interestingly, a number of the metal detectorists that the Project Team spoke to were unaware of the HER's existence although all knew about the portable antiquities scheme. This is something that the HER will seek to address in the future in the hope that further dialogue can be made with this particular interest group.

### Finds processing

Everyone, including event staff, who attended the finds processing event clearly had a fantastic time. Originally it was planned that participants would wash the finds and lay them out to dry. During the event it became apparent that participants were going to complete washing the finds before the end of the day. It was quickly decided that staff would have to add an additional activity to the day. Staff decided that participants should sort through the finds, with support from the staff, and disregard any non archaeological material. From looking at the evaluation work it is apparent that most of the participants enjoyed the added on activity more than the pot washing. It is also plausible to say people gained more information and skills by being involved in the identification and sorting process.

This event saved the project time and a considerable amount of money. The event equalled one paid member of staff washing finds for 25-30 days. Any future fieldwalking event should strongly consider hosting an additional finds processing event after it. Ability was however mixed during the finds processing so some caution should be used if fieldwalking finds are prehistoric and delicate.

### Creation of the final report

The original intention was to get members of the community to help write the final report. It was not possible to find anyone who wished to be involved in this process and as a result the Project Team wrote the final report. A more established community/fieldwalking group would have indeed benefited from working with the Project Manager to produce the final report but for event participants it was one step too far. More experience of fieldwalking and research will probably result in people wanting to be a part of the report producing process but at this early stage the community saw the event as a fun way to learn (without wanting to write reports).

#### 9.2.9 Revised methodology

1. Talk to landowners and other local residents to identify people willing to allow us to use their fields (Project Manager)
2. Address issues relating to the ownership of finds, public liability, insurance etc. (Project Manager)
3. Refine fieldwork/finds processing methods and collate material for event handouts and information for participants (e.g. a reference collection, fieldwalking methodology leaflet, images and drawings) (Project Manager)

4. Agree dates and times for fieldwalking with landowner (Project Manager)
5. Visit sites and identify issues to be addressed (i.e. Health and Safety, field suitability, access). (Project Manager)
6. Order equipment required for fieldwork/finds processing (Project Manager)
7. Liaise with external advisors (Project Manager)
8. Design and implement training sessions as appropriate (Project Manager)
9. Assist with finds related training specifically post-excavation work (Finds liaison officer)
10. Provide advice to Project Manager regarding fieldwalking in Bidford area, post-excavation work (field officer)
11. Facilitate and attend fieldwork events (e.g. HER Manager, Project Manager, Field Technician, community)
12. Ensure that all fieldwork records are correctly archived. (Project Manager)
13. Assist with post excavation (community, Project Manager)
14. Advise Project Manager (Field Officer)
15. Create final report and publish appropriately (Project Manager)

### 9.3 The creation of an exhibition



Figure 9. Image from the exhibition

To complement the rest of the project and to attract people who were not interested in being involved in the various fieldwork activities it was decided to create an exhibition. Two formats were chosen, a traditional four A1 panel exhibition (see appendix 3) and an online version (which can be viewed at <http://timetrail.warwickshire.gov.uk/>). The intention was to use the exhibition to disseminate the project's results to a wider audience with an emphasis on the results of the fieldwalking event and documentary research training sessions.

As a result of the difficulty in finding a suitable field to fieldwalk this element of the project was also affected. Due to the delay, the results of the fieldwalking (specifically the specialist reports) were not going to be ready to use in the exhibition. It was decided that the best option would be to concentrate on the results of the documentary research training sessions.

The majority of people who attended the documentary research training sessions did not show any interest in being involved in the creation of the exhibition. A core group of individuals (four people) did volunteer to create the exhibition and chose to theme it on what Bidford looked like in 1861. Following on from the training sessions the group had begun to study the 1861 Census, trade directories and historic maps. From their personal research they had been able to create a picture of who lived in Bidford and how the village looked.



Figure 10. Documentary research in Bidford

Once the group had brought together their research a workshop was organised to help them understand how to create a successful exhibition. David de Haan from the Ironbridge Institute ran the workshop and focused on the importance of using a suitable writing style, appropriate images and the importance of identifying what audience is being targeted.

Following on from the workshop, the Project Manager worked with the group to refine the exhibition content and identify suitable images to use. During the process the group were taught about copyright issues and where to find additional information and images. Once all the information had been collected and the content of each panel agreed it was sent to the graphic designer. Drafts of the designed panel were then sent to the group for comments and edits.

### 9.3.1 Objectives

**Objectives 2: To reinforce links between the HER and local communities in areas of potential aggregate extraction (EH objective 1,2,3,4 and 5)**

- To engage a wide and varied audience by touring the exhibition around the county.
- To successfully disseminate knowledge about the history and archaeology of Bidford on Avon and other aggregate areas via a community designed exhibition.
- To encourage local groups and individuals to become aware of issues relating to aggregates extraction, and to engage in active management of their local environment.

### 9.3.2 Generic Learning Outcomes achieved

From the evaluation it can be demonstrated that those who helped create the exhibition and attended the exhibition workshop

- Increased their knowledge of the history of Bidford (*knowledge and understanding*)
- Demonstrated the ease with which information can be obtained from historical documents (*skills*)
- Inspired people with the history of Bidford (*enjoyment, inspiration and creativity*)
- Gained an interest in their historic environment and heritage (*attitudes and values*)
- Met people from the village with similar interests to themselves (*skills*)
- Used prior knowledge in new ways (*knowledge and understanding*)

### 9.3.3 Evaluation

When interviewed, all the people involved in the creation of the exhibition were very positive about the process. Participants found the workshop extremely informative and thought they used the information they learnt extensively whilst creating the content for the exhibition panels. They felt the workshop was presented well and really interesting.

The process of creating the exhibition felt a little rushed for a couple of people and the deadlines imposed made them a little stressed. Once all the information had been brought together the group did feel a sense of achievement.

### 9.3.4 Conclusions

This element of the project proved a little more difficult than the Project Team had expected it to be. The majority of the community were really pleased with the exhibition panels and learnt a lot from them, but very few showed an interest in being involved in their creation. Those that were involved really enjoyed the process and were able to use the skills that they had learnt during the documentary research training sessions. The whole process did however take a lot longer than the Project Team had expected and certain areas required quite a lot support from the Project Manager (e.g. copyright issues).

The exhibition workshop was very successful and benefited those creating the exhibition panels immensely. Major stumbling blocks (such as having too much text to include on the panel) were avoided and this made the graphic designer's involvement a lot smoother and easier. This is a course which HER staff will be recommending to other colleagues in WCC.

If this element of the project were repeated by the HER a number of changes would be desirable. In the future the HER would need to question whether the best option would be to create the exhibition panels themselves without community involvement. If community involvement is preferable then staff need to ask whether there is an established group who wants to be involved and whether a traditional exhibition is the most suitable product for the group in question.

The major lesson of this activity is the issue of timetabling. Some members of the group worked more slowly than others and looming deadlines did make the experience stressful for some. In the future the HER should consider extending the length of time available for people to create an exhibition or decrease the content required.

### 9.3.5 Revised methodology

1. Identify an established community group to work (Project Manager)
2. Identify suitable venues/times to hold exhibition workshop (Project Manager, community group)
3. Identify potential exhibitions themes (a focus) which the community group can choose from (Project Manager)
4. Help community group to collect information and images (Project Manager, community group)
5. Run exhibition design workshop (Project Manager or sub contractor)
6. Work with group to refine the exhibition content and create an exhibition draft with (Project Manager, community group)
7. Edit text (Project Manager)
8. Create brief for graphic designer to follow (Project Manager, community group)
9. Send text and images to graphic designer (Project Manager)
10. Create draft exhibition panels (graphic designer)
11. Comment on draft exhibitions (Project Manager, community group)
12. Edit draft exhibitions (graphic designer)
13. Identify appropriate venues for exhibitions to be displayed (Project Manager)
14. Put exhibition on WCC website (Project Manager)

#### 9.4 Archaeologically themed “comic”



Figure 11. An extract from the comic

Working with *inHeritage*, the HER used archaeological sites found during quarrying in the Bidford area to create a comic aimed at primary school children. The comic was written to complement the Key Stage Two National Curriculum and therefore aimed at 7-11 year olds.

Due to funding criteria the comic had to focus on key archaeological sites found during work at Marsh Farm Quarry and fit into the National Curriculum syllabus. This dictated that the comic's focus had to be the Romano-British period. The completed comic is twelve pages in length and comprises of two stories and six pages of activities, facts and jokes.

Four thousand copies were printed and are currently being distributed free via schools, libraries, WCC Heritage Education and other suitable outlets in Bidford and the surrounding villages.

During the initial stages of the comic we interviewed the Head Teacher at Bidford school regarding the content of the comic. This meeting highlighted the importance of not making the comic too 'jokey' and the need to include locations that the pupils would recognise (i.e. the Roman Road Ryknield Street which the pupils would know as Icknield Street). In addition it was agreed that the vocabulary used would be slightly richer than the example I had taken with me (*Romans on the Don 2007*) and would include activities that involved the children answering questions.

The original intention was to involve pupils from Bidford Primary School in the creation of the comic storyline. Unfortunately we were not able to do this because of a problem with timetabling. The external contractor (*inHeritage*) had a tight schedule which meant that pupil's involvement could only occur within a certain time. The other major problem was

that the school had taught the Romans the previous year which meant the Head Teacher was reluctant to involve the majority of pupils due to the risk of confusing them. Together, these issues meant that it was not possible to involve the pupils with the creation of the storyline.

The Project Team were however keen to work with the school and involve the younger members of the Bidford community. To achieve this it was agreed with the Head Teacher that we would organise a Roman Day at the school with the support of an external sub contractor *History off the Page* for year three pupils.

The Roman day began with the Project Manager giving the pupils an introduction to the comic and Roman Bidford. Following on from this, the pupils spent the morning taking the roles of Roman citizens, slaves and Celtic people and the afternoon becoming archaeologists and excavating. The day was fantastic fun and the pupils gained a greater understanding of the Romans and the roles of an archaeologist. All the pupils were given a copy of the comic at the end of the day.



Figure 12. Children learning about being Roman citizens

#### 9.4.1 Objectives

**Objective 3: To increase use by schools of the information held in the HER (EH objectives 1,2,3,4 and 5)**

- To increase the number of primary schools using the information held in the HER by including the HER within the comic
- To engage a wide and varied audience via a previously unused medium
- To successfully disseminate knowledge about the history and archaeology of aggregate areas.
- To increase the public profile of the HER in regards to the information held about aggregate areas

## 9.4.2 Evaluation



Figure 13. The final comic

Upon completion the comic was evaluated by informal discussions with children, parents and staff from WCC Heritage Education department. Unfortunately it was not possible to interview pupils from Bidford school about the comic due to timetabling restrictions. The children and parents that we did interview were all visiting the Warwickshire Museum as part of an organised activity.

Ten children (between the ages of 6 and 11) were spoken to. All were very positive about the comic and particularly liked the jokes, facts and stories. All the children commented that they liked the bright colours that were used and one child particularly liked 'all the different outfits' that he could see.

The parents of the children interviewed (six in total) were all really impressed with the comic. Three of them were home schooling their children and felt that the comic was an innovative way of teaching their children about the Romans. All the parents felt that it was fantastic that the resource focused on archaeology found within Warwickshire and identified places where objects illustrated in the comic could be viewed (e.g. Roman Alcester Museum). Perhaps most importantly for the HER, parents also were surprised to learn that records from the HER could be viewed online (<http://timetrail.warwickshire.gov.uk/>). All the parents interviewed said they would be visiting the website with their children.

Staff from Heritage Education were impressed with the contents of the comic and thought it would complement their existing teaching programmes. They highlighted in particular that activities such as *spot the difference* were an excellent way for the children to concentrate on a detailed scene whilst absorbing information. Staff also felt that it would be suitable to use with secondary school children with learning difficulties.

### 9.4.3 Generic Learning Outcomes

From the evaluation it can be demonstrated that people who have read the comic have

- Learnt about the HER and a selection of the information held within it (knowledge and attitudes)
- Gained an interest in their historic environment and heritage (attitudes and values)
- Learnt more about Roman Bidford (knowledge and attitudes)
- Enjoyed it (Enjoyment, inspiration and creativity)
- Wanted to learn more (action, behaviour, progression).

### 9.4.4 Conclusions

The comic has proved a huge success with school children and has engaged previously uninterested adults. This approach has been hugely beneficial for the HER in terms of gaining contacts in schools, disseminating information to school children and engaging new audiences.

A number of lessons have also been learnt by the Project Team with regard to the creation of the comic. The biggest problem with this element of the project was the clash of timetables (which is often a problem when working with schools). It was unfortunate that the school could not contribute more to the comic but their schedule and strict deadlines meant that we could not be as flexible as we needed to be. The fact that the school was not teaching the Key Stage pupils about the Romans in 2007 was also a significant problem which we only partially overcame.

The main lessons learnt from this element of the project is that if in future the HER decides to create another comic staff have to decide how much input they want from pupils. If it is decided that pupil's input is vital then timescales have to be extended and participating schools contacted a lot further in advance. Alternatively, another way of involving the pupils needs to be identified, such as designing the front cover or hosting interactive teaching days such as the Roman/archaeology day (see above for information).

### 9.4.5 Revised methodology

1. Initial meeting with sub contractor (Project Manager)
2. Identify suitable school to work with and arrange meeting with teacher (Project Manager)
3. Collect images and examples for reference purposes (Project Manager)
4. Conduct research to form the basis of the comic (Project Manager)
5. Speak to relevant experts (e.g. archaeologists) (Project Manager)
6. Meeting with education specialist in advance of school visit (Project Manager/ education specialist)
7. Prepare school sessions (Project Manager/ education specialist)
8. Engage with pupils to help contribute to the comic's content (Project Manager/ education specialist, pupils)
9. Sub contractor to develop comic, storyboarding and artwork (external contractor)
10. Comment on draft comic (content, drawings) (Project Manager, pupils)
11. Make edits (external contractor)
12. Colour in comic (external contractor)
13. Comment on colours (Project Manager)
14. Make edits (external contractor)
15. Print comic (external contractor)
16. Distribute comic and publicise (Project Manager)

## 9.5 An exhibition to accompany the comic



Figure 14. The museum exhibition

To accompany and complement the comic an associated exhibition was created in Warwickshire Museum. The exhibition was created in one of the temporary exhibition cases and was comprised of a mixture of cartoon images, archaeological objects featured in the comic and aerial photographs which were used to inform the storyline. Comics were made available for visitors to take away with them.

### 9.5.1 Evaluation

The exhibition was an additional activity not identified in the original project design but can be regarded as a positive addition to the project. Comments from museum visitors include

*It is an extremely eye-catching exhibition which makes you stop and look at it.*

*It is nice to have something to take away and look at later.*

*Really interesting to see the objects that are mentioned in the comic.*

*It is fun and colourful.*

*Lots of interesting information.*

*Seeing the aerial photograph that was used in the comic is great.*

### 9.5.2 Conclusion

The exhibition proved an excellent way of involving the Warwickshire Museum in the project. It was relatively easy to bring together as the majority of the images were from the comic. People also clearly liked being able to see the objects that were featured in the comic itself. This was an excellent way of attracting additional people to the comic and hopefully the online HER. If, in the future, the HER produces another comic the creation of an accompanying exhibition may be a successful way of involving school pupils and should be considered.

### 9.6 **Public consultation exercise/Public debating exercise**



Figure 15. The public consultation exercise

As mentioned above, the communities surrounding Marsh Farm Quarry are affected by sand and gravel extraction and have strong views about the minerals planning process. It was felt that HER staff were ideally suited to interact with the community and help facilitate a discussion about the mineral planning process. With this in mind a public consultation exercise was designed which would allow participants to question experts involved in the planning process.

Originally the public consultation event had been planned to take place in November following on from the various fieldwork events which had occurred in October and when people were still enthused about archaeology and the project. Unfortunately, unbeknown to the project team when the project had been designed, a review of old mineral permissions (ROMP) for Marsh Farm quarry was due in November<sup>1</sup>. Both the project team and English Heritage felt that the consultation event had to be moved so not to be confused with the ROMP or add to residents' confusion. This led to the event being held in March.

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<sup>1</sup> During the initial project planning stage WCC Mineral Planners had been consulted and failed to mention that the ROMP was due in November 2007.

In the planning stage it had been decided that there would be two separate consultation exercises. The first was to be aimed at school children from Bidford Primary School. Unfortunately this was not possible as the debate had to be held in March, instead of November, which did not fit with the school schedule/timetable. The project team did attempt to find another group of children to be involved in the event and did approach the local youth club. It was decided by the club organisers that this event was not suitable for them. Sadly, this element of the project had to be dropped. The second consultation, which did go ahead, was aimed at an older audience and made up of residents from Bidford and the surrounding villages.

The expert panel comprised Jonathan Parkhouse (WCC County Archaeologist), Neil Beamsley (WCC Ecologist), Richard Hammersley (from Planning Aid) and Christina Evans acting as chair and facilitator (Buried under Bidford Project Manager). Councillor Joy (Chairman of the Parish Council) and Councillor Langston were also present on behalf of the Parish Council and welcomed everyone to the event.



Figure 16. People looking at the accompanying displays

At the beginning of the consultation each member of the panel introduced themselves to the audience and gave a brief introduction to what their job involved and how it fitted within the planning process. Once all the introductions had been made questions were invited from the audience. The questions continued for an hour and a half and people were then invited to have refreshments and have informal conversations with the event staff.

It was originally felt that this element of the project was likely to be contentious and there was a high chance that some participants may be disruptive or challenging. This proved not to be the case, partly because of the small number of people that attended (twelve). The intention was that after the event the Project Manager would arrange drop-in sessions for the participants to attend. The drop-in sessions would have been an opportunity for residents to highlight any concerns that resulted following the event or to ask questions which have arisen since the consultation. The success of the event meant that this was unnecessary.

### 9.6.1 Objectives

**Objective 4: To encourage local groups and individuals to become aware of planning and sustainability issues relating to aggregates extraction and engage in active management of their local environment (EH objectives 1,2,3 and 4)**

- To engage a wide and varied audience regarding mineral planning issues by using a public consultation exercise
- To equip local communities with the skills and capacity to understand their historic environment and engage with the HER.
- To provide WCC staff with new skills in developing public consultation exercises in relation to minerals planning.

### 9.6.2 Evaluation

Sadly, the event was only attended by twelve people from the local community. It is highly likely that this was partly a result of conducting it in March as opposed to November when the momentum of the fieldwork was at its height. The other explanation which should be considered is that at the time of the event there was no threat of the quarry being extended into Bidford itself and therefore people were not concerned enough to attend.

After the consultation the Project Manager interviewed the participants to see what they thought of the event and how it could be improved. Interestingly, when interviewed, everyone was extremely positive about the consultation and specifically praised the expert panel format.

Although the Project Team were concerned that the poor turn out would have a negative effect on the event it seems this was actually one of the event's strengths. All the participants said they liked the fact that there were only a small number of people in the audience. When questioned further, it became apparent that participants felt less intimidated by the smaller number of people involved and therefore found it easier to ask the panel questions.

Rather pleasingly for the HER, several people commented that they were not aware that archaeologists were involved in the planning process and it was reassuring to learn that they were. This was an excellent result for the event as it clearly demonstrates that the project has educated people regarding the minerals planning process.

All participants thought the event was a great way to educate and inform the general public and a fantastic opportunity for people to get the chance to speak to those involved in the planning process. The majority of participants also highlighted that event staff were helpful and friendly. Two ladies interviewed felt that the staff were really approachable and as a result they felt less nervous about asking them questions

One question that participants were asked was how the event compared to other public consultations in the village (specifically those which were mineral planning related). Three people said they had found previous consultations confusing and they had not understood what they were being told. As part of the previous consultations participants were asked to complete a questionnaire which they did not understand. When asked how they dealt with this, the Project Manager was told that they got another villager to fill them in on their behalf. The Project Manager asked why they did not ask for support from the organisers of the consultation and was told that they did not feel they could approach event staff. When asked whether they felt the same during the Buried under Bidford public consultation they said this was not the case at all and had understood everything they had been told.

Furthermore, they felt that if they were confused they would have spoken to the event staff, who they believed were open and approachable with no ulterior motive.

When asked how the public consultation event could be improved in the future the majority of participants felt no changes should be made. When probed further, one lady suggested that it would have been nice to have some information send out in advance to give people the opportunity to think about any additional questions they would like to ask.

The age range of the participants involved was 40+. Participants felt that to get the most from the event people would have to have an interest in the topic. This is something that should be considered in the future when the HER assesses which audiences it is trying to attract regarding the consultation process. A positive result of this was that the participants thought the event was a great way of meeting people with similar interests and concerns. This was also apparent at the end of the event as the majority of people remained in the venue talking for over forty minutes.

The final question asked why people thought there were so few people attending the event. Most people felt that it should have been held after the fieldwalking event when people were still excited and enthused. The other reason was that the debate clashed with other events happening in the locality (Alcester Local History Group meeting and church meetings).

### 9.6.3 Generic Learning Outcomes achieved

From the evaluation it can be demonstrated that people who attended the public consultation

- Increased their knowledge and understanding of the planning process (*knowledge and understanding*).
- Learnt where they can go for help and advice (*attitudes and values*)
- Were inspired by event staff and the other people they met during the event (*enjoyment, inspiration and creativity*)
- Gained an interest in their historic environment and heritage (*attitudes and values*)
- Met people from the village with similar interests to themselves (*skills*)
- Wanted to learn more (*action, behaviour, progression*).
- Learnt about the HER and a selection of the information held within it (*knowledge and attitudes*)

### 9.6.4 Conclusion

Although the number of attendants to this event was disappointing it is still possible to say the public consultation was beneficial to the HER and Museum Field Services. By organising the event in Bidford, residents learnt that archaeologists and ecologists were involved in the planning process and also what information/records were held by the HER.

It is highly probable that the lack of interest shown in the debate was due to it being rescheduled from November (after the fieldwalking event) to March. Although the Project Team had no choice in rescheduling the event this clearly had a detrimental effect on the event.

Those that did attend clearly gained a lot from the experience. They all asked relevant questions which clearly identified that they understood what the expert panel were telling them and the majority of people asked several follow up questions.

Originally it was the intention of the project to create model for future public consultations in Warwickshire. Due to the fact that there were only a small number of participants it was not possible to do this. The expert panel format was clearly successful as participants felt comfortable asking questions and approaching event staff for any additional clarification. It also meant that people learnt about the various people who are involved in and contribute to the planning process.

In the future the HER would like to conduct other public consultation events to assess the success of the expert panel format. With this in mind, HER staff will be approaching the WCC Mineral Planners to see whether the HER can work with them on controversial planning applications/sites using the expert panel format.

#### 9.6.5 Revised methodology

1. Meeting with Mineral Planners to discuss existing history of quarrying in Bidford and public opinion. Identify potential problems and appropriate solutions (Project Manager)
2. Identify people who will make up the expert panel and suitable dates for the debates (Project Manager)
3. Agree format for event with the expert panel and project team. (Project Manager, experts and Project Team)
4. Identify suitable venue and create a risk assessment (Project Manager)
5. Publicise event and provide people with the opportunity to submit questions anonymously. (Project Manager)
6. Collect relevant information to give to experts (Project Manager)
7. Meet with expert panel to allow everyone to meet together and discuss the format of the event and address any areas of concern (Project Manager, experts)
8. Collect information to create a exhibition related to minerals planning, archaeology and ecology (which supports the debate) (Project Manager)
9. Create the (minerals) planning exhibition (Project Manager)
10. Create one handout for the expert panel and another for the audience. This will include a brief introduction and highlight the 'rules of engagement' (Project Manager)
11. Conduct debate with adult audience (Project Manager)
12. Organised drop-in sessions for debate participants to discuss any concerns or questions they have which have arisen from the debate and to allow us to gain the views of people who did not feel comfortable speaking in the public consultation exercise (Project Manager)

## **10 Discussion**

The Buried under Bidford project has been a positive experience for the HER and Warwickshire County Council as a whole. Previously interactions with the Bidford community had been difficult and strained for the Council (specifically the Minerals Planning team). By engaging with this community for a year in a variety of ways a number of barriers have been lowered and new relationships are beginning to be built.

People's knowledge of the HER and their understanding of what information it contains has definitely increased. The community now know where to find information about their heritage and how they can use it to learn more. Public opinion of the HER staff is high and the staff are seen as approachable and trustworthy. Information held by the HER for Bidford has increased and continues to do so with people continuing to inform us of their research and discoveries.

Numerous lessons have been learnt by focusing the project on a single community which will be used again during future projects. Day schools/training sessions are clearly ways that the HER can approach and interact with new and old audiences and this is something that should be continued. Creating the comic was also an excellent way of using information held by the HER in a novel fashion, via a previously unused media

The fieldwork events proved ideal in assisting the HER with the engagement and education of the general public. All the participants enjoyed the experience and in the process of attending learn a new set of skills. Whilst running the events, HER staff took the opportunity to explain to people about the information held by the HER, the importance of reporting and recording archaeological finds and how people can understand their historic environment. At the same time, the events provided staff with an opportunity to learn what community groups value in their historic environment and how the HER can better meet their needs. Clearly this type of event plays to the strengths of the HER staff and so should be continued in the future perhaps in the form of a variety of workshops.

Working with schools once again proved extremely difficult due to teaching schedules and timetabling. This was partly due to the project being less than a year in duration. In the future it is vital that the HER staff question whether they can successfully work with schools during a one year or shorter project. HER staff need to carefully consider whether they should continue to offer activities to schools (proactive) or wait for schools to approach them with an idea (reactive).

Working with new community groups is always a challenge but can be extremely rewarding, as this project showed. The HER has learnt that when working with a new group (whether that be new to the HER staff or a newly established community group) it cannot expect the group to want to be involved in designing the various elements of the project or help write the reports. This was definitely the case during this project. Participants were thrilled to be involved in activities but none really wished to dictate the content (the creation of the exhibition illustrates this point). Equally, people enjoyed fieldwalking, questioning historic sources and finds processing but showed no interest in writing up the results. The Project Team strongly believe that too much was asked of the Bidford community within a short space of time. If this had been a two year product, we are confident they would have taken more interest in the reporting of the work as they would have been able to work at a slower, more reassuring pace.

The major downside of a one year community project is that it has to end. The Project Team have really enjoyed engaging with the residents of Bidford and the surrounding villages and it is a shame that the project has finished. Rather pleasingly, project participants have already approached the HER to see whether they can continue fieldwalking in Bidford and how they can go about doing so. HER staff are currently assisting them to identify potential funding streams that they can apply to and will subsequently help them submit their bids. It is also anticipated that the Bidford community will continue to communicate with staff from the HER regarding future research they conduct.

In conclusion, the Buried under Bidford project has been hugely rewarding for all those involved, fun and most importantly created a relationship between the Bidford community and the HER which will hopefully continue to flourish.

## **11 References**

Warwickshire County Council, 2007. *Buried under Bidford Project Design* Unpublished

Warwickshire County Council, 2007a. *Extracting Warwickshire's Past: Neighbourhood Outreach Strategy*. Unpublished

## **12 Appendix One – Project Design**

**13 Appendix Two – the fieldwalking report**

## **14 Appendix Three – the exhibition panels**