



Community Archaeology Resource Review Focus Group Information Pack

As part of the Our Past, Our Future Landscape Partnership Scheme supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the New Forest National Park Authority has commissioned Oxford Archaeology to review the guidance that people refer to when undertaking self-guided archaeological work. These 'how to' guides might be about identifying, researching and recording archaeological sites and finds and may be in the form of textbooks, digital or printed media.

Volunteers and representatives from community groups who undertake their own archaeological investigations have been invited to attend focus group meetings in order to find out where they currently seek guidance when planning their archaeological investigations; to discuss what they find useful and not useful about existing resources; to help identify potential areas for improvement or new resource creation; and to provide context for unclear or conflicting responses from an online survey which will be circulated nationally.

This document sets out the methodology used by Oxford Archaeology to run focus groups for this research project and forms part of a pack of information and templates for running focus groups which also includes:

- **Pre-Meeting Questionnaire:** a series of questions to ask focus group participants in advance to capture information which might contextualise their answers during the meeting.
- **Participant Consent Form:** a form to issue to focus group participants to explain how their data will be collected and to get their permission to take part.
- **Discussion Guide:** an outline of the key issues and areas of questioning to facilitate the group discussion during the focus group.
- **Task Documentation Form:** a form to record the results of an online search task during the focus group.
- **Findings Summary:** a form for summarising the findings of the focus group.

This pack has been produced for other organisations interested to find out about the guidance materials used by their volunteers and community group contacts. This may be as part of a wider discussion about the guidance and support your organisation offers as part of a project evaluation or stakeholder meeting. If you are willing to share a summary of your findings and any anonymised notes or recordings for the purpose of this research project, please contact community@oxfordarch.co.uk We welcome any questions or feedback you might have about this study or about conducting a focus group.

Please contact community@oxfordarch.co.uk if you require any of the templates in an alternative format. You can download the appendices as separate editable files (.dox) from this folder on Oxford

Archaeology’s online file sharing space:

<https://files.oxfordarchaeology.com/nextcloud/index.php/s/tpaLL3qGyT3eqmB>

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Community Archaeology Resource Review

Focus Group Methodology

1. What is a focus group?

A focus group is a guided small group discussion. The idea is to generate personal opinions rather than statistics, as with larger more representative surveys. It is not intended to be a debate or training session but an opportunity to understand views and experiences on a particular topic.

2. Participant recruitment

Focus groups typically involve a small number of participants. We suggest inviting between six and ten people to take part so there are sufficient participants to encourage discussion but not so many that not everyone can't contribute.

Participants need to have some knowledge and understanding of the topics which will be covered so that they can participate in the discussion. Once you have decided on the topics and discussion questions, you will have a better idea of who is best qualified to participate in your focus group.

It should not matter if participants already know one another but it may help if one of the moderators also knows them and understands the underlying dynamic of the group.

Participants should be discouraged from discussing the topic with other participants before the meeting as it may influence their personal responses.

When approaching participants, explain the purpose of the research, the recording methods and the structure of the meeting so that they know what to expect and can make an informed decision about whether to take part.

3. Organisation

Book a quiet and private venue in advance, and check that it will be accessible for your participants.

If following the provided discussion guide, we suggest allocating two hours for the focus group and aim for the main discussion to take 90 minutes. We also set our participants an online search task which required Wi-Fi access.

If using audio or video recording equipment, practise setting it up in advance and bring spare batteries, chargers and digital storage.

4. Pre-Meeting Questionnaire

We suggest issuing a survey to focus group participants in advance in order to capture information which might contextualise answers given during the focus group such as demographic profile; prior skills, knowledge and experience of archaeology; and their learning and accessibility preferences.

A copy of the pre-meeting questionnaire used in this study is provided. Responses were collected using LimeSurvey¹, an open source survey tool.

¹ <https://www.limesurvey.org/> (accessed 15/08/18)

5. The Role of the Moderator

The moderator guides and focuses the group discussion. Their role is to elicit opinions but not to judge them. As the moderator holds a position of authority and perceived influence, they must remain neutral and avoid leading questions.

A second assistant moderator can help take notes, manage recording equipment and observe body language.

Here are some pointers on moderating the focus group discussion:

- Summarise what you think you have heard, and ask if the group agrees
- Phrase the same question in a different way
- Ask if anyone else has any comments on the question
- Ask follow-up questions such as:
 - “Can you talk about that more?”
 - “Can you give an example?”
 - “What do other people think?”

6. Recording

Audio recording equipment can be used to capture everything that is said, including hesitations. Video footage can help to identify which individual is speaking and will capture body language.

Alternatively, you may think it sufficient to take notes during the discussion, in which case, it will help to have more than one person’s perspective and to try to capture as much information as possible.

Remind participants to speak one at a time for the audio/video recorder and note taker.

7. Consent Form

It is important to capture your participants’ signed consent to utilise their opinions as necessary for your research. A consent form should help your participants to understand what they have been invited to participate in, how the information is going to be used and how their personal data will be protected.

We printed off two copies of the consent form for participants to sign at the start of the focus group with one for them to keep and another to be collected in by the researchers.

8. Environment

You want to create a non-threatening and inclusive environment so that your participants feel they can talk openly and honestly. It will help to have everyone facing one another to anticipate who wants to speak to help aid audio or video recording. Name badges can be a useful aid for people who do not know one another.

The moderator should ask participants to respect one another’s opinions and not to repeat them outside the focus group, and encourage them to share their views without judgement.

9. Discussion Guide

The discussion guide is used to pre-prepare the direction of your questioning and ensure you test the hypotheses and capture the opinions you want. You should start with general open-ended

questions that encourage people to elaborate. Then you can introduce more specific questions to better understand their points of view.

Questions should be:

- Short and to the point
- Focused on one aspect
- Unambiguously worded
- Open-ended.

There are three types of question:

- Engagement questions: introduce participants to a topic of discussion
e.g. "Tell me about your experience of..."
- Exploration questions: delve further into the discussion topic
e.g. "What are your favourite and least favourite aspects of...?"
- Exit questions: check to see if anything was missed in the discussion.
e.g. "Is there anything else you would like to say?"

It is still important to act spontaneously if the discussion enters unintended but productive directions.

10. Analysing your Findings

If you have recorded your meeting, make a transcript. If not, make a written summary from your notes. It will help for more than one person to review the results independently and then come together to compare your interpretations and conclusions. You are looking for patterns, common themes and new questions arising from your discussions. It will be important to consider the potential biases of your participants.

You may be able to devise and use a coding system to 'score' the data and count the number of times a particular theme is expressed.

Remember to ask your participants for feedback on the process as this may help to inform the next focus group you run.

Appendix A – Pre-Meeting Questionnaire

Community Archaeology Resource Review Focus Group Pre-Meeting Questionnaire

*mandatory questions

1. Personal Information

First name *

Please write your answer

Last name *

Please write your answer

Email address *

Please write your answer

Community group affiliation(s)

Please write your answer

Are you able to bring your own Internet-enabled device to the focus group? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

Wi-Fi will be available at the venue. Focus group participants are asked to bring their own laptop/tablet/smartphone for doing Internet searches if they can. There will be spare laptops available to borrow by anyone unable to bring their own device.

Focus group location/date *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- *INSERT FOCUS GROUP LOCATIONS/DATES***

2. Archaeological Experience

How long have you been actively involved in archaeology?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Less than 1 year
- 1 - 2 years
- 3 - 5 years
- 6-10 years
- More than 10 years

Why are you involved in community archaeology?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- I want to pursue a career in archaeology
- I have a general interest in archaeology
- I want to develop my archaeological skills
- I want to acquire more archaeological knowledge
- I find it fun
- I find it sociable
- Other:

What archaeological activities have you been involved in during the past two years?

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Excavation
- Geophysical survey
- Desk based assessment
- Report writing
- Field walking
- Landscape survey
- Geographical Information Systems (GIS)
- Finds identification
- Project archiving
- Building recording
- Other:

Why have you not carried out certain archaeological activities during the past two years?

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Not relevant to my research questions
- Not relevant to my study area
- Have not received training
- Have not got access to equipment
- Have not got access to guidance materials
- Other:

What archaeological activities have you received training in?

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Excavation
- Geophysical survey
- Desk based assessment
- Report writing
- Field walking
- Landscape survey
- Geographical Information Systems (GIS)
- Finds identification
- Project archiving
- Building recording
- Other:

Rate your confidence in carrying out these archaeological activities?

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Excavation	Geophysical survey	Desk-based assessment	Report writing	Field walking	Landscape survey	GIS	Finds identification	Project archiving	Building recording
Very unconfident	<input type="checkbox"/>									
Unconfident	<input type="checkbox"/>									
Neither confident nor confident	<input type="checkbox"/>									
Confident	<input type="checkbox"/>									
Very confident	<input type="checkbox"/>									

Who are you in regular contact with regarding your archaeological activities?

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Local authority archaeologists (including National Parks)
- Commercial/charitable archaeological contractors
- Museum curators
- Other local historical/archaeological societies

3. Learning Preferences

Rank which techniques you prefer to use when learning new information.

All your answers must be different.

Please number each box in order of preference from 1 to 4

- I prefer using pictures, images and spatial understanding.
- I prefer using sound and music.
- I prefer using words, both in speech and writing.
- I prefer using my body, hands and sense of touch.

Imagine that you are learning how to use a new piece of survey equipment. Rank the ways in which you think you would learn this skill the best?

All your answers must be different.

Please number each box in order of preference from 1 to 4

- Looking at pictures of someone using the equipment.
- Listening to someone explain how to use the equipment.
- Reading about how to use the equipment from a manual.
- Watching someone else use the equipment and trying it yourself.

What styles of learning apply best to you?

Please choose **all** that apply:

- I have to see information in order to remember it.
- I prefer to listen to information being explained rather than read it written down.
- I like to refer to handouts during presentations of new information.
- I like to practice doing something in order to learn it.
- Visualising information in my mind helps me to remember it better.
- Reading out loud helps me to remember information better.
- I take a lot of notes when during presentations or reading material.
- I find it difficult to sit still for long periods of time.

3. Demographic Information

Postcode *

Please write your answer

Age? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Under 16
- 16 - 25
- 26 - 49
- 50 - 64
- 65 - 79
- 80 and over
- Prefer not to say

Gender *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Female
- Male
- Intersex
- Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself to have a disability under the Equality Act 2010? *

Please choose **all** that apply:

- No
- Hearing impairment
- Mental ill health
- Visual impairment
- Mobility
- Manual dexterity
- Progressive conditions
- Learning conditions (where a person learns in a different way i.e. someone who has dyslexia)

IF 'YES' PLEASE CONTINUE TO THE NEXT QUESTION

- Facial disfigurement
- Speech impediment
- Prefer not to say

In the Act, a person has a disability if:

- they have a physical or mental impairment
 - the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities
- For the purposes of the Act, these words have the following meanings
- 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial
 - 'long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions)
 - 'normal day-to-day activities' include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping

Only answer this question if you have answered 'YES' to having a learning condition in the question above.

What learning conditions do you have?

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Dyscalculia
- Dysgraphia
- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Auditory processing disorder
- Visual motor deficit
- Language processing disorder
- Autistic spectrum disorder
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Profound and multiple learning activity
- Prefer not to say
- Other:

If you regularly use the Internet, do you usually:

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Access it from home?
- Access it from a location outside the home?

What device(s) do you usually use to access the Internet?

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Desktop computer
- Laptop computer
- Tablet computer
- Smart phone
- Smart television
- Other:

What is the furthest level of education you have completed?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- None
- Secondary education (GCSE/O-Levels or similar)
- Post-secondary education (A-Levels/up to NVQ3 or similar)
- Vocational qualification (Certificate/Diploma/BTEC/NVQ4 and above or similar)
- Undergraduate degree (BA/BSc or similar)
- Postgraduate degree (MA/MSc or similar)
- Doctorate (PhD)
- Prefer not to say

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. We look forward to seeing you at our focus group meeting soon.

Appendix B – Participant Consent Form

Community Archaeology Resource Review Focus Group Consent Form

Thank you for attending this focus group organised by ***INSERT ORGANISATION NAME***. The focus group will last about ***LENGTH***. The aims of the project will be explained to you and you will have an opportunity to ask questions about the research. **We will be taking notes and photographs as well as video and audio recording the session.**

As part of the Our Past, Our Future Landscape Partnership Scheme supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the New Forest National Park Authority has commissioned Oxford Archaeology to review the guidance that people refer to when undertaking self-guided archaeological work. These 'how to' guides might be about identifying, researching and recording archaeological sites and finds and may be in the form of textbooks, digital or printed media.

The purpose of the group is to try and understand how volunteers and community group members access and use 'how to' guidance resource materials. The information learned in the focus groups will be used to devise recommendations for future resource creation.

All the data collected is confidential and the results will be fully anonymised. We are committed to being transparent about how we collect and use data and to meet our data protection obligations. An anonymised summary of the themes and issues raised during the discussion will be shared with Oxford Archaeology and the New Forest National Park Authority to inform their research.

There are no right or wrong answers to the focus group questions. We want to hear many different viewpoints and would like to hear from everyone. We hope you can be honest even when your responses may not be in agreement with the rest of the group. In respect for each other, we ask that only one individual speak at a time in the group and that responses made by all participants be kept confidential.

1. I agree to take part in the research project.
2. I confirm that I have read and understood the participant information supplied above and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.
4. I understand that all the information I provide will be treated in confidence.
5. I understand that I also have the right to change my mind about participating in the study for a short period after the study has concluded (within one week).
6. I agree to **notes being taken/video and audio recording** about what I am saying as part of the research project.
7. I agree to respect other focus group participants and their views.
8. I agree to be contacted by the researcher following the focus group as follow up on my comments.
9. I agree to photographs being taken and shared online and in print for publicity purposes (names will not be included).
10. I have read and understood the project's privacy notice.

Name of participant:

Signature of participant:

Name of Researcher:

Signature of researcher:

Date:

Appendix C – Discussion Guide

Community Archaeology Resource Review Focus Group Discussion Guide

Introduction

(c. 15 minutes)

- Venue housekeeping.
- Introduce the people who are moderating.
- Introduce the project aims and methods:
 - Why the focus group is being held
 - The format and length of the focus group
 - The methods for recording the discussion
 - The role of the moderator
 - How to provide feedback on the focus group process.
- Ask participants to sign consent forms.
- Turn on any recording equipment being used.
- Ask participants to introduce themselves.

1. What guidance resources do you currently use?

(c. 30 minutes)

- What guidance resources have you used in the past year and under what circumstances?
- How did you discover or access these resources?
- What format were they in?
- How did you use these resources?
- How often did you refer to them?
- Did you cross-check with other resources?
- How do you save the resources for future use?
- What did you particularly like about these resources?
- What did you particularly dislike about these resources?
- Are there any other resources you have used in the past five years?

2. Online resource searching task

(c. 30 minutes)

- Introduce the online resource searching task:
 - Connect devices to Wi-Fi.
 - State the topic to search for guidance (e.g. geophysical survey, test pit excavation, field walking).
 - Explain the role of the 'searcher' undertaking the task and the 'observer' taking notes.

- Hand out and explain the task documentation form.
- State the time limit (e.g. 5 minutes).

Reflecting on the search process:

- Where did you search?
 - Search engines
 - Specific websites
 - Social media platforms.
- What search terms were used?
 - Did you use any of the autocomplete suggestions?
- How did you decide on which results to look at?
 - What put you off some results?
 - What attracted you to other results?
- How long did you look at them?
- Did you look at the domain name?
- Did you look at who produced the information?
 - Had you heard of them before?

Looking at the selected guidance, what do you think about:

- The presentation of the information?
- The length and detail of the guidance?
- How the information has been pitched?
- The topics covered?
- The language used?
- The appearance?
- Who produced it?
- Is it current?
- Does it follow best practice?
- How you would improve this guidance?

3. What would they like to see from future guidance resources?

(c. 30 minutes)

- What do you generally prefer?
 - Digital or non-digital?
 - For fieldwork and for desk-based research?
 - More detailed or more simple guidance?
- What do you think can be done to make resources more accessible?
 - Where will you go to find them?
 - Who do you think should be creating resources?
 - Who do you think should be signposting to you about where to find them?
- Would you use any of the following for guidance materials:
 - Social media platforms
 - Video sharing websites

- Digital applications or 'apps'
 - Online courses.
- Are there any particular aspects of archaeology you feel you need guidance in?
 - Desk based research
 - Archaeological fieldwork techniques
 - Artefact identification
 - Recording and reporting
 - Protection and preservation
 - Outreach
 - Policies and permits
 - Other skills e.g. volunteer management; grant applications; health and safety; social media use; website creation.

Appendix D – Task Documentation Form

Community Archaeology Resource Review Focus Group Task Documentation Form

Location:

Date:

Name of SEARCHER: (Person undertaking the task)

Name of OBSERVER: (Person documenting the task)

PLEASE CLEARLY TICK (✓) THE BOX(ES) INDICATING YOUR ANSWER(S)

Type of device used:

- Desktop computer
- Laptop
- Tablet
- Smart phone
- Other (specify):

Is the device:

- Personal?
- Borrowed?

Internet browser used:

- Windows Internet Explorer
- MacOS Safari
- Mozilla Firefox
- Google Chrome
- Other (specify):

Search engine – if used for searching:

- Google
- Bing
- Yahoo
- Ask
- Other (specify):

Social media – if used for searching (please tick clearly):

- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Other (specify):

First selected result

What is the URL (web address)?

How did this rank in the search results?

How long was spent looking at the result?

Second selected result

What is the URL (web address)?

How did this rank in the search results?

How long was spent looking at the result?

Third selected result

What is the URL (web address)?

How did this rank in the search results?

How long was spent looking at the result?

How many results were selected in total?

Final guidance material selected:

Reasons for selection:

.....

Appendix E – Findings Summary

Community Archaeology Resource Review Focus Group Findings Summary

This document is for summarising and analysing the findings of your focus group discussion.

General Themes

Bullet point notes about the main points raised by the participants.

-

Issues Raised

Bullet point notes about the particular concerns of and problems encountered by participants.

-

Ideas Suggested

Bullet point notes about the ideas and suggestions participants had.

-

Questions to Pursue

Bullet point notes about other areas brought up in discussion which might be of further interest.

-

If you are happy to share the findings of your focus group discussion with Oxford Archaeology and the New Forest National Park Authority

Please email this document to: community@oxfordarch.co.uk