

Assignment 1: HPAR7006 Archaeological Project Reporting

Dissemination Strategy: Archaeological Investigations at Wittenham Clumps, Oxfordshire – The Gateway Project

INTRODUCTION TO THE STRATEGY

This dissemination strategy provides a clear plan for sharing the results of the archaeological investigations undertaken as part of the Earth Trust's Gateway project. By identifying four key target audiences (**G1-G4**), it seeks to ensure that the information disseminated is targeted specifically to the people and communities who will benefit the most from it. Within each target audience, tailored dissemination goals (G1.1-G4.3) have been constructed to reinforce the requirement that this strategy produces methods of dissemination with a particular focus on catering for the needs of each audience. Whilst there will undoubtedly be other parties who will also benefit indirectly from these dissemination methods, they are not considered key targets within the scope of this strategy.

Having identified the four key target audiences, the strategy then proposes six methods of dissemination (**M1-M6**) as mechanisms to deliver the project's results. Each method is then broken down further into smaller sub-methods (M1.1-M6.3) that detail exactly how it is proposed that the dissemination goals (G1.1-G4.3) will be met. Following each methodology, a short discussion is made of how it relates to the dissemination goals of the target audiences and identifies the linkages between them. Table 1 provides further detail on the linkages between the methods and goals of dissemination. The strategy concludes with an overall summary of recommendations for the dissemination of archaeological results from the Gateway project.

Summary of the Gateway Project

The Earth Trust is an environmental charity in Oxfordshire responsible for maintaining and preserving the natural green spaces under its stewardship. The organisation also seeks to highlight issues of climate change and environmental challenges to the local community who make use of these natural spaces. As part of a plan to expand their capacity to deliver these

goals, the Gateway infrastructure expansion project has been developed to provide better access to the site along with new and improved buildings and facilities.

The land earmarked for development lies just below the Wittenham Clumps, two landmark Iron-Age hillforts in Oxfordshire with known Roman archaeology in the vicinity. As such, any groundworks were subject to an archaeological excavation as a condition imposed by the local planning authority. More detail about the background to the project and the archaeology is available in Appendix 1. DigVentures was commissioned to carry out the archaeological investigations in late 2019. The site yielded results of regional and national significance, with continuous settlement from the late Bronze-Age to the late Roman period. Jackson (2021) details the results of this work and is available in Appendix 2. The project has now progressed to the analysis phase and as part of this, a dissemination strategy is required to ensure the results are shared to their maximum potential with the most appropriate audiences. The remainder of this document outlines that strategy.

KEY TARGET AUDIENCES AND DISSEMINATION GOALS

G1. The Earth Trust and its Community

The Earth Trust has a vested interest in the archaeological results of this project for numerous reasons. Simply on a corporate level, the approval of the organisation's infrastructure expansion plan is dependent upon the expedient dissemination of the full project results to the local council planning authority in order for construction to proceed. However, the potential utilisation of the disseminated archaeological results from this project far exceed simply satisfying the legal requirements of local government planning.

The Earth Trust has established a strong base of community support and engagement over the last 40 years (Earth Trust, 2022a) with a particular focus on educating children and young people about environmental issues. The charity regularly hosts numerous events such as school trip days and outdoor environmentally-focused activities and festivals. These communities are at the heart of its mission and engaging them is at the core of the charity's values (Earth Trust, 2022b).

The archaeological resource at Wittenham Clumps forms part of the natural spaces entrusted to the care of the charity and its community. Therefore, sharing its importance with local people and helping them to better understand why and how to preserve it is of primary concern to the organisation and the people who care for and use those spaces. Consequently, the Earth Trust and its community form a key target audience for the dissemination of this project's archaeological results.

The dissemination goals for this target audience are:

- G1.1 Disseminate the required project outputs to local government to allow the construction phase of the Gateway project to proceed.
- G1.2 Create opportunities for people to engage with, explore, participate in and learn about the archaeology and history of the Wittenham Clumps as well as the wider Earth Trust environmental mission.
- G1.3 Develop resources and activities specifically for children and young adults, focused on sharing the archaeology of the Wittenham Clumps, for use by the Earth Trust team as part of their education programme.

G2. The DigVentures Community and Wider Public

DigVentures was commissioned by the Earth Trust in no small part because of the company's community-focused approach to archaeology. Community participation and engagement was a significant requirement of the project's delivery, as evidenced through the extensive programme of public events and engagement opportunities, available in Appendix 3, planned for and carried out at the time.

These opportunities extended beyond the Earth Trust's community and the local borders of Oxfordshire to include the wider DigVentures community. Between November 2019 and February 2021 during the delivery of the Gateway project, 2,194 people participated in virtual, online and in-person events arranged and advertised through DigVentures' own bespoke media platforms (Jackson, 2021, pp. 60). Additionally, 75% of participants got involved because of an interest in experiencing archaeology and a desire to learn more about the site (Jackson, 2021, pp. 62). Continuing to engage this largely virtual community, spread

across the country and around the world, is a necessity to ensure this sizeable base audience is not lost. Creating further opportunities to learn more about the archaeology of the Wittenham Clumps through online, digital and virtual capabilities will also allow interested members of the public as yet not engaged with the archaeology of the Wittenham Clumps to get involved.

Therefore, the DigVentures community and the wider public must form a key target audience for the dissemination and publication of archaeological results from the Gateway project.

The dissemination goals for this target audience are:

G2.1 Re-engage the audience already developed during the delivery of the Gateway project with its final results.

G2.2 Create opportunities to build this audience further by reaching new people who are yet to encounter the archaeology of the Wittenham Clumps.

G2.3 Engage a growing global virtual audience, limited by distance from the site, with online and digital opportunities to learn about the archaeology of the Gateway project.

G3. The Academic Community

Areas of academic archaeological research in Oxfordshire and the Thames region where more work is needed are identified in the Solent-Thames research framework (Hey and Hind, 2014). Section 3 of the archaeological WSI for the Gateway project, available in Appendix 1 (Noon *et al.*, 2019), identifies eleven specific areas of interest from the research agenda which the archaeological investigations had the potential to address. These interest areas formed the core basis of the Gateway project's archaeological aims and objectives. They encompass the Neolithic through to the Roman period and include the investigation of sites with occupation spanning the late Iron-Age and Roman periods, where continuity of local cultural traditions is not well understood.

In section 14 of Jackson (2021), a discussion of the archaeological results presents the potential for new information of significance relating to the knowledge gaps identified in Hey and Hind (2014). The site is found to have been in continuous use from the late Bronze-Age

to the late Roman period, encompassing elements of the transition between the late Iron-Age and Roman periods. The character and types of this activity as well as the layout of the settlements are also discussed along with the landscape setting.

Additionally, a synthesis of these results with those of previous investigations, such as with Allen *et al.* (2010), would also be of great benefit in addressing questions from the research agenda for the site, landscape and region as a whole.

Furthermore, the dissemination of the community engagement and public impact results will also be of interest to the academic community, as highlighted in Wilkins (2019) framework for evaluating the social impact of public participation in archaeology. It is important to note that not just the purely archaeological results of the project should be deemed worthy of dissemination.

It is clear from the potential gain in new information to areas of academic research where gaps in knowledge exist that the academic community should form a key target audience for the dissemination and publication of results from the Gateway project.

The dissemination goals for this target audience are:

G3.1 Publish the archaeological results of the project using new and innovative as well as traditional methods that will be accessible to a range of academic audiences.

G3.2 Disseminate the community engagement and public impact results of the project.

G4. The Professional Community

With new substantial infrastructure and residential construction projects in South Oxfordshire such as the Clifton Hampden bypass, the widening of the A4130 (Oxfordshire County Council, 2022) and 1,000 new homes being constructed in Abingdon (Lyons, 2019), local development-funded professional archaeology in the commercial sector is likely to be kept busy over the coming years. This will undoubtedly create a professional interest in the results of previous and current archaeological investigations conducted in the locality, including at key sites of regional significance such as Wittenham Clumps.

When assessing the likely archaeological impact of any new development projects in compliance with planning regulations, heritage professionals will be seeking easily accessible, well-documented and relevant archaeological results from previous project archives. Should a proposed development necessitate new archaeological fieldwork in some capacity, a WSI or project design document will require information such as an archaeological and historical background to the site, a brief synthesis of previous work and recommendations for future work to help inform the new archaeological aims and objectives. Additionally, fieldwork planning may require access to the digital archive of previous investigations to retrieve information such as GIS shapefiles relating to previous excavations, for example.

Properly archived, appropriately published and strategically disseminated results from the Gateway project have the potential to inform the levels of archaeological mitigation required by the local planning authority for any such new developments, along with aiding project planning and fieldwork initiation. Therefore, the professional archaeological community should be considered a key target audience for the dissemination of results from the Gateway project.

The dissemination goals for this target audience are:

- G4.1 Collate and submit a fully comprehensive project archive, both physical and digital, to the relevant receiving institutions.
- G4.2 Ensure the project archive is accessible and usable by professional practitioners.
- G4.3 Create opportunities to make professional practitioners aware of the results of the Gateway project and how to access them.

METHODS OF DISSEMINATION AND PUBLICATION

M1. On-Site Information and Interpretation Panels, Boards and Posters

Members of the public and the Earth Trust's volunteer community regularly care for and make recreational use of the natural open spaces around the Wittenham Clumps. Siting information and interpretation panels along the public footpath and at pertinent points of interest relating to the archaeological discoveries would allow for fixed points of succinct but impactful

dissemination to exist. Some examples of and guidance for creating interpretation panels can be seen in Appendix 4 (Connolly, 2004).

Some ideas for content could include:

- M1.1 A larger, centralised introductory poster or board upon access to the site providing general information relating to the archaeology, the Earth Trust and where to find out more.
- M1.2 An information and interpretation panel at the site of the Roman Villa, cemeteries and Iron-Age roundhouses.
- M1.3 A panel placing the discoveries within the context of the wider ancient natural and historic landscape.
- M1.4 An information board placing the archaeological resource in the context of environmental care, awareness and preservation within the natural green spaces looked after as part of the Earth Trust's mission.

As local people and those visiting from further afield, perhaps for the first time, visit the natural spaces at the Earth Trust, some or all of the resources listed above would assist in increasing awareness of the archaeology at the Wittenham Clumps, fitting with dissemination goals G1.2 and G2.2.

M2. Educational Resources for children and young adults

As part of the Earth Trust's Gateway project, a new 'Skills and Learning building' has been constructed to house school trips and activity groups for children and young adults. It is proposed that as part of these events, educational packs and resources should be developed for use as a fun and interactive learning experience. An example of such an activity pack from another project delivered by DigVentures is available in Appendix 5 (DigVentures, 2022).

Educational Resource packs for children and young adults could also include:

- M2.1 Interactive story-building activity, re-imagining a day in the life of an Iron-Age or Romano-British person at Wittenham Clumps through, for example; replica finds handling and identification activities.

M2.2 Crafts-based reconstruction activity of the structures found on site, such as a Roman Villa or Iron-Age roundhouse.

M2.3 A short video recreating life at Wittenham Clumps in ancient times, narrated by fictional characters inspired from the structural, artefactual and environmental evidence discovered during the excavations.

M2.4 For older children or young adults, an overview of a day in the life of an archaeologist using footage obtained during fieldwork alongside a summary of the processes and techniques used to understand the site during the post-excavation phase; including the results of techniques such as aDNA results, isotope analysis, C14 dating etc.

This will allow the ancient story of the Wittenham Clumps to be shared with the next generation of people who may grow to preserve them, aligning directly with the dissemination goals of G1.2 and G1.3. The above methods may also indirectly contribute to goals G2.1 and G2.2 as young people from the DigVentures community living in the locality, as well as local children yet to engage with the Earth Trust, get the opportunity to learn about the archaeology of the Wittenham Clumps.

M3. On-Site Visitor Centre Mini-Exhibits and Displays

Within the new Earth Trust visitor centre re-development, space for the display of small-scale exhibits and artefacts recovered from the excavations at Wittenham Clumps will allow for a direct public access point to the archaeological story of the site. Ensuring that at least some of the artefacts discovered stay in a fixed location on display very close to where they were found would provide a sense of local community connection to the history of the site.

Suggestions for exhibits and artefacts to display include:

M3.1 A complete Roman Samian bowl, key, cleaver, brooches, spatula probe and coins in the context of life at the Roman Villa

M3.2 Two complete Roman Bone Combs and a number of intricate shroud pins, in the context of death and the afterlife at the Roman cemetery

M3.3 A number of near-complete Iron-Age vessels, loom-weights and an intact metalworking Tuyere in the context of food, textile and tool production as part of life in and around the Iron-Age roundhouse settlement.

Exhibits that provide information and context to the site, the artefacts and the wider historic landscape as well as the Earth Trust's environmental preservation mission would contribute significantly to delivering dissemination goals G1.2, G2.1 and G2.2. Providing a direct access point for existing and new audiences to the physical artefacts used by the ancient people at the Wittenham Clumps would create a personal interactive experience.

M4. Dedicated Project Website

The development of a dedicated project-specific website hosting multiple innovative educational, interactive and participative resources will allow for the dissemination of the archaeological results of the Gateway project to multiple key target audiences. An online hub centred on the project is an easy open-access way of providing information and materials that cater to the individual requirements of those engaging with the archaeology of the Wittenham Clumps. An example of such a website, albeit on a larger scale, is the Garnock Connections partnership (<https://bit.ly/3CekrCa>). Some useful online resources (including project background, dig timeline and dig records) already exist from the Gateway project's delivery phase and could be incorporated into such a website (<https://bit.ly/3vszDI5>).

The website itself could also include:

M4.1 Summary and information pages supported by visual aids and illustrations telling the story of the archaeology at the site, the landscape and the context of the Earth Trust Gateway project

M4.2 A virtual museum including 3D models of artefacts and significant features from the site.

M4.3 A small-scale interactive MOOC-style learning experience specific to the archaeology of the site and its setting.

M4.4 Embedded partial-GIS functionality enabling the user to explore pertinent aspects of the site.

M4.5 A hosting space for the bank of video resources created during delivery of the fieldwork and other videos developed as part of this dissemination strategy.

M4.6 Summaries of project related news, events and ways to get involved alongside links to access further information and resources relating to the archaeological results of the site, such as the bank of technical reports and published articles including the public impact results.

Specific linkages between the target audience goals and methods of dissemination are available in Table 1. The long-term maintenance and cost of such a resource is an aspect that will require continual review. An initial effort should be made to deposit all resources available on the website as part of the digital archaeological project archive to ensure their longevity of accessibility and sustainability. However, the overarching benefit of this method is how applicable it is to multiple target audiences. It fulfils the dissemination goals of G1.2 and G1.3, all the goals for target audiences **G2** and **G3** as well as goal G4.3. No other resource proposed in this strategy has the individual potential to deliver so many of the dissemination goals for multiple target audiences.

M5. Academic Publication

Releasing the results of the archaeological investigations from the Gateway project in the form of a peer-reviewed journal article, synthesised with previous work (such as Allen *et al.*, 2010), would be a key mechanism for disseminating them to the academic community. A paper in a local journal such as Oxoniensia would place the results in the context of other current and previous academic research in the region, or a release in Internet Archaeology would open the results to a more diverse, online academic audience.

Submission of such a paper could also be supported by the added academic benefit of including an evaluation of the public impact results from the participant survey data gathered as part of this project. Merging the results of public impact alongside the results of developer-funded archaeological project is an area of current research as evidenced by Wilkins *et al.* (2021).

The dissemination methods for this target audience include:

M5.1 Academic journal article released in an appropriate journal such as Oxoniensia or Internet Archaeology.

M5.2 Talks, lectures and newsletter releases at local historical societies such as the Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society, the Didcot and District Archaeological and Historical Society and the Abingdon Area Archaeology and History Society.

M5.3 Local press and online social media releases summarising the results of the site in an accessible and non-technical manner

M5.4 Academic poster and presentation for display and discussion at a conference, such as the ClfA conference.

All of the methods above have the potential to deliver the dissemination goals of target audience **G3**, the academic target audience. Methods M5.2 and M5.3 could also deliver dissemination goals G1.2, G2.1, G2.2 as well as G4.3 by providing opportunities for local people and professionals to attend in-person talks and events, whilst people further afield may be able to find out more via online social media releases.

M6. Project Archiving

A stable, usable and accessible project archive will be the key mechanism for ensuring the data and information gathered as part of the project remains available in the long-term for all potential audiences, now and into the future. Archiving the project outputs is a requirement of the local government planning condition in order for any construction to proceed, making it of vested interest to the Earth Trust and satisfying G1.1. However, the benefits of archiving apply to multiple potential audiences.

The archiving process itself will involve:

M6.1 Submission and upload of the project outputs such as the WSI (Appendix 1), assessment and analysis reports (Appendix 2) to the ADS, Oxfordshire County Archaeology Service, OASIS and the HER.

M6.2 Compilation and submission of the written, drawn and digital site data and records (<https://bit.ly/3ldZWJY>) following the latest ClfA (2019) guidance to the ADS.

M6.3 Deposition of the physical archive and finds to Oxfordshire Museums for long term storage, care and possibly display.

Online open access to the digital information detailed above will be invaluable to archaeological practitioners looking to make informed decisions about future archaeological work necessitated by pre-development planning requirements, satisfying goals G4.1 and G4.2. It will also be of benefit to the academic audience when conducting research related to the archaeological results of this project, or indeed planning further archaeological fieldwork in a research capacity, helping to deliver goal G3.1. Digital records such as GIS shapefiles of trench locations will be of particular use to the Earth Trust as they seek to proceed with the construction of new buildings and infrastructure on site, also satisfying goal G1.1. The open access of this information to anyone online will also allow the wider public to pursue their own further personal research should they so desire, contributing to delivering goal G2.3.

SUMMARY OF OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

This strategy has proposed an actionable plan to disseminate archaeological results from the Gateway project to the most appropriate audiences using methods that will be of the greatest benefit to them. A number of the methods proposed complement each other, whilst some overlap with the dissemination goals they deliver. Others apply to multiple target audiences and those which apply to less tend to be aimed at a more specialist target audience or dissemination goal. This creates the flexibility to be selective with the methods chosen for implementation, reflecting constraints such as financial cost and timescale that may exist. As a bare minimum, it is recommended that the methods chosen for implementation fulfil at least one of each of the dissemination goals (G1.1-G4.3), so that each key target audience is fully catered for.

By referring to Table 1, it is recommended that the absolute minimum required methods of dissemination to achieve the overall aims of this strategy are **M2**, **M5** and **M6**. These methods represent the critical activities necessary to deliver this dissemination strategy. However, with

the option of additional time and resources, delivering a combination of other methods such as **M1** and **M3**, or **M4**, along with **M5** and **M6** would deliver a more fully rounded dissemination of the results. This would offer multiple access routes for multiple target audiences to learn about the archaeology of the Wittenham Clumps, furthering the likelihood of reaching more people and increasing the impact of this dissemination strategy.

Bibliography

Allen, T., Cramp, K., Lamdin-Whymark, H. and Webley, L. 2010, '*Castle Hill and its Landscape; Archaeological Investigations at the Wittenhams, Oxfordshire*,' Oxford Archaeology Monograph No. 9, Available at: <https://bit.ly/3WsfoGt> (Accessed: 30/12/22)

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), 2019, '*Dig Digital: A Guide to Managing Digital Data Generated from Archaeological Investigations*,' Available at: <https://bit.ly/3q3z8lw> (Accessed: 12/12/22)

Connolly, D. 2004, '*Short Guide to Interpretation Panels and Leaflets in Archaeology: BAJR Guide 21*,' Available at: <https://bit.ly/3GrtdPY> (Accessed: 30/12/22)

DigVentures, 2022, '*Chance Heritage Activity Booklet for Kids*,' DigVentures internal resource. Unpublished.

Earth Trust, 2022a, '*About Us*,' Available at: <https://bit.ly/3W8c7LY> (Accessed: 24/11/22)

Earth Trust, 2022b, '*Our Values*,' Available at: <https://bit.ly/3Fwv44a> (Accessed: 29/11/22)

Hey, G. and Hind, J. 2014, '*Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment: Resource Assessments and Research Agendas*,' Oxford Wessex Monograph No. 6, Available at: <https://bit.ly/3BCo98m> (Accessed: 05/12/22)

Jackson, N. 2021, '*Earth Trust Visitor Centre: Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample (SMS) Excavations, Planning Phases 2 and 3, Little Wittenham, Oxfordshire, Volume 1: Archaeological Assessment Report*,' DigVentures report. Unpublished.

Lyons, E. 2019, '*1,000 new homes planned for Abingdon – what's being built where?*' *Oxford Mail* (5th March), Available at: <https://bit.ly/3BCqv7f> (Accessed: 03/12/22)

Noon, S., Casswell, C., Hogue, J. 2019, '*Earth Trust Visitor Centre: Planning Phases 2&3: Archaeological Strip Map and Strip, Map and Sample (SMS) Excavations, Little Wittenham, Oxfordshire, Written Scheme of Investigation*,' DigVentures report. Unpublished.

Oxfordshire County Council, 2022, '*Didcot and surrounding area infrastructure improvements*,' Available at: <https://bit.ly/3j5fDbO> (Accessed: 03/12/22)

Wilkins, B. 2019, '*A Theory of Change and Evaluative Framework for Measuring the Social Impact for Public Participation in Archaeology*,' *European Journal of Post Classical Archaeologies*, 9 (4), pp. 77-100

Wilkins, B., Casswell, C., Eno, M., Hannis, J., Pina-Dacier, M., Tatton, H. and Ungemach, J. 2021, '*Social Impact Archaeology: Pontefract Castle and the Gatehouse Project*,' *Internet Archaeology*, 57 (18), Available at: <https://bit.ly/3I9XKPR> (Accessed: 22/11/22)

Tables

LINKAGES		G1			G2			G3		G4		
		G1.1	G1.2	G1.3	G2.1	G2.2	G2.3	G3.1	G3.2	G4.1	G4.2	G4.3
M1	M1.1		X			X						
	M1.2		X			X						
	M1.3		X			X						
	M1.4		X			X						
M2	M2.1		X	X	X	X						
	M2.2		X	X	X	X						
	M2.3		X	X	X	X						
	M2.4		X	X	X	X						
M3	M3.1		X		X	X						
	M3.2		X		X	X						
	M3.3		X		X	X						
M4	M4.1		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
	M4.2		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
	M4.3		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
	M4.4		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
	M4.5		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
	M4.6		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
M5	M5.1							X	X			
	M5.2		X		X	X		X	X			X
	M5.3		X		X	X		X	X			X
	M5.4							X	X			
M6	M6.1	X					X	X		X	X	
	M6.2	X					X	X		X	X	
	M6.3	X					X	X		X	X	

Table 1: Linkages between methods of dissemination and dissemination goals

The appendices to this assignment were submitted to the supporting documentation link.