DigVentures

Excavating Elmswell: Seasons in Time

2026 Updated Project Design for a Community Excavation

Ben Swain

Excavating Elmswell: Seasons in Time

Community-based archaeological excavation at Elmswell Farm, Elmswell, Driffield, East Riding of Yorkshire

Updated Project Design for a Community Excavation

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Purpose of document

This document has been prepared as an Updated Project Design for continuing community-based research excavations at Elmswell Farms, Driffield. The purpose of this document is to provide an outline of planned fieldwork for 2026, outlining the aims and objectives of the work, and methodology to be employed.

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The project is managed for DigVentures by Ben Swain, with Lisa Westcott Wilkins in the role of Project Executive.

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Executive summary

This document has been compiled in support of further archaeological investigation at Elmswell Farms, to be undertaken by DigVentures. Nine previous seasons of archaeological excavation have investigated the shrunken medieval village of Little Driffield (2017) and Romano-British elements of Elmswell Farms (2018-2025). This Updated Project Design supports a tenth season of fieldwork focusing on a Romano-British settlement and possible religious activity associated with the water source at Elmswell Beck.

A geophysical survey in a pasture field called [redacted] showed high potential for surviving archaeological remains at this location. Archaeological excavation in August 2024 and 2025 at [redacted] and the adjacent [redacted] confirmed the presence of below-ground deposits relating to a Romano-British ladder-style settlement and votive deposits indicative of religious activity dating from between the late 2nd to the late 4th centuries AD. Excavations planned for August 2026 will expand upon previous fieldwork, targeting a number of geophysical anomalies to refine the chronology and function of the settlement trackway and associated enclosures, whilst pursuing other potential locations for a rural shrine.

The approach to this work, comprising of a programme of targeted trenching and palaeoenvironmental sampling, is evidenced through the following MoRPHE compliant document, outlining key archaeological research questions, roles, procedures, stages and outputs. The overarching aim of this fieldwork is to provide baseline information to contribute to the future management and research of the site, creating multiple educational and participatory learning experiences for community participants. This will be achieved through a community-based archaeological research project designed to understand:

- the nature, extent, date and survival of Romano-British remains associated with settlement and religious activity at or near the water source at Elmswell Beck;
- the relationship of these remains to other nearby sites in the local landscape, including those investigated by DigVentures in 2018-2023.

This Project Design provides an outline of the methodology and planned interventions to complete:

Targeted excavation All trenches have been located to expand upon the 2025 fieldwork results, targeting geophysical anomalies indicative of Romano-British archaeological remains. Trench 19 will target internal features to one of the settlement enclosures. Trench 20 will target the full layout of a building partially exposed in the 2025 season. Trench 22 will target a complex sequence of geophysical anomalies internal to another of the settlement's enclosures. Trench 23 will target the eastern ditch of the main trackway. Contingency Trench 24 will target another potential location for a rural shrine, near to where votive deposits were recovered in 2024.

Public engagement The project is supported by a comprehensive learning, engagement and activity plan. A digital recording system will be used to enable volunteers to record excavation data in the field, with a dedicated project website, underpinned by a digital and audience building strategy, aiming to increase the engagement and participation numbers outlined in the project brief.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Excavating Elmswell

1.1.1 The 'Excavating Elmswell' project is a multi-staged research project, encompassing an excavation and assessment stage followed by final analysis and publication. Field evaluation is scheduled to take place between the 1st and 20th August 2026 and forms the tenth Execution Stage of this project. Results from the evaluation will be fully assessed and reported on, informing how the project will progress with an Updated Project Design (see Section 8, Review Point 22). The overarching aim of this work is to characterise the scale, depth and density of the extant archaeological remains pertaining to the history of the estate, from prehistory through to the modern day. Dating evidence will be obtained and a digital archive of the excavation produced. The principal driver for this research project is to provide baseline information to inform the future management of the Site (see Section 5, Business Case).

1.1.2 This document provides a Project Design for delivery of a community-based archaeological investigation at Elmswell Farms, Driffield (hereafter 'the site', Figure 1, [redacted]It defines how DigVentures intends to deliver a project which provides benefits to landowners, John and Henrietta Fenton, the local and global community, and all other stakeholders (including Historic England and Natural England).

1.1.3 The project is being managed according to Historic England's MoRPHE project model (Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment). This document defines that process, and is divided into two parts: '*Part 1: Description of the Project*' provides the project context, including a brief summary of proposed methodology, key sources and activities required to support the delivery of the proposal outcomes. '*Part 2: Resources and Programming*' identifies responsibilities of individual project staff members and outlines completion dates for specific tasks.

Part 1: Description of the project

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Research context

2.1.1 For the purpose of this document, the archaeological and historical background focuses on Elmswell Farm and land immediately surrounding the site. The farm is located across the eastern edge of the Yorkshire Wolds dip-slope as it opens out into the plain of Holderness; part of a rich and nationally important historic landscape containing finds and features dating from the Mesolithic to WWII. The approximately 500-hectare modern farm estate encompasses predominantly arable agricultural land surrounding Elmswell Beck; an ecologically important natural chalk stream protected as a SSSI that forms one of the headwaters of the River Hull. The Beck also represents one of the few natural water sources historically available to occupants of the Yorkshire Wolds landscape at its eastern edge.

2.1.2 The farm lies just a few miles to the east of the nationally important excavations at Garton and Wetwang slacks; the locations of an Iron Age open settlement, square-barrow cemetery and early Romano-British enclosed settlement excavated between the 1960's and 1980's by Tony Brewster and John Dent. The excavations revealed invaluable insights into the burial practices of the Parisi tribe, who settled in the Wolds landscape in the Iron Age, as well as changing land-use from open to enclosed settlement towards the end of the Iron Age (Yorkshire Wolds Research Strategy, 2024). Excavations revealed that by the middle of the Iron Age a ditched trackway had been created along the valley floor running approximately east to west. It is possible this trackway links to the water source at Elmswell Beck.

2.1.3 Significant amongst the known archaeological remains at Elmswell farm are a number of Bronze Age Barrows, a 1st century Romano-British Mansio, a 2nd-3rd century ladder settlement, a 3rd century Villa, a 4th century domestic settlement and possible rural shrine, an extensive shrunken Medieval village and the 17th century Elmswell Old Hall. The town of Driffield itself has an interesting association with Anglo-Saxon royalty; once part of the Kingdom of Deira, there is evidence that a royal palace once stood in its centre. Despite the site's archaeological potential, there have been few modern investigations into its archaeology, resulting in a strong need to understand the heritage resource in light of substantial attritional threats.

3 RESULTS OF PREVIOUS WORK

3.1 Earlier excavation

3.1.1 Elmswell has been the subject of widespread antiquarian intervention; in the 19th century, John Mortimer investigated the Neolithic barrows to the south of Elmswell and revealed multiple prehistoric burials, along with evidence of their reuse well into Anglo-Saxon period. Although it is difficult to decipher settlement patterns of the Romano-British period, there were a range of Roman finds as a result of earlier interventions at the site by Corder and others in 1935-1938. The most significant artefact recovered during these excavations was a bronze panel 'of Celtic Ornament' dated to the second half of the 1st century AD (Corder, 1940, pp. 58-60). Excavations by C.N. and G.E. Grantham between 1950-1952 in [redacted] of [redacted] recovered a number of fragmented and worn carved stone artefacts, including altar fragments and figure reliefs indicative of Romano-British religious activity at this location, possibly a shrine to a local water-deity (Dent, 1988).

3.1.2 More recently, metal detecting and fieldwalking recovered a hoard of late 1st century AD silver Denarii, samian ware, and early medieval pottery in [redacted] Such finds accord well with remote aerial photographic evidence, including extensive cropmarks indicative of a Romano-British 'ladder settlement' coupled with a large Iron Age/Roman field system. A late Iron Age to early Anglo-Saxon settlement has also been identified, including the remains of a potential 4th century villa.

3.1.3 Excavations

3.1.4 In 1975 excavations at Moot Hill in Driffield revealed a Norman castle containing the possible remains of a rare 8th century palace (SM1015612), approximately 1.5 miles

northeast of the site. Excavations conducted in advance of the construction of Kellythorpe Industrial Estate, 300m southwest of the site, revealed numerous archaeological remains; including prehistoric flints, Roman and medieval ditches and enclosures, and modern remains related to the WWII RAF Driffield. More recently, metal detecting and field walking surveys on Elmswell Farm have revealed extensive Mesolithic flint scatters and further assemblages of over 100 fragments of high status Roman pottery, over 100 Roman coins including 27 denarii; the latest dating to AD390-5.

3.2 Previous fieldwork: 2017-2025

3.2.1 In 2017 fieldwork focussed on Little Driffield (Casswell, 2018); a settlement believed to be the burial place of Alchfrid, King of Northumbria, who died in AD704/5 at a now lost royal palace. The location of the burial site and royal palace are not known although Anglo Saxon finds, such as part of a stone cross now incorporated into the fabric of St. Mary's Church, suggest that Little Driffield was a place of importance at that time. The first season of fieldwork focused on the shrunken medieval village of Little Driffield. Remote sensing surveys and targeted trenches enabled the characterisation of the remains, indicating that the landscape east of Church Lane was settled extensively between the late 11th and mid 14th century. The recovery of a Roman coin and a sherd of 9th to 11th century pottery suggest that earlier activity took place on or near to the site. Later pottery was found in smaller quantities, indicating that the main phase of settlement activity at the site had finished by the mid 14th century when the settlement was abandoned.

3.2.2 Fieldwork in 2018 focused on land in 'Cowgrass' field, south of Elmswell Beck (Casswell, 2019), to; recover the full extent of the treasure hoard found by metal detectorists in 2016/17, determine the nature, date and survival of archaeology at the site of Roman settlement; establish the relationship of these remains to nearby sites and how the settlement played a role in the wider environs. Recommendations made following the assessment of the archaeological material recovered during 2017, included the broadening of investigations to explore features predating the medieval village. Metal detecting surveys carried out to the north of the Roman settlement on the estate have identified dense concentrations of finds, including an ongoing treasure case. Fieldwork entailed the excavation of three trenches positioned over these areas to enable the full recovery of the hoard, to characterise its depositional context, and to establish whether this area of the estate is worthy of protection and designation on the HER.

3.2.3 In 2019, fieldwork focused on the Roman elements of the farm on land northeast of Elmswell Farm farmyard, east of Elmswell at Spellowgate, representing the third phase of the multi-staged landscape investigation (Casswell, 2020). The investigations involved a programme of targeted interventions, including metal detecting and field walking surveys. Four trenches were opened to the northeast of Elmswell Farm farmyard to investigate concentrations of Roman finds recorded as part of the 2018 fieldwalking and metal detecting survey. Archaeological features were found in all trenches with Roman finds dating to the 2nd to 4th century AD. Roman ceramic and stone building materials – including tesserae, roof tiles, flue tiles and bricks – were found in all areas along with settlement abandonment debris and robber-pits. It was

concluded that the site had been settled in the latter part of the 2nd century AD with the construction of a villa that included a large stone building with tiled roof, a hypocaust and mosaic.

3.2.4 In 2020, one trench was opened directly south of Elmswell Farm farmyard to investigate potential structural Roman settlement remains, extending Trench 4 from the 2018 field season (Casswell *et al.*, 2021). Archaeological features were found throughout the trench, with Roman finds dating to the 1st-2nd century AD. Pottery recovered suggests domestic occupation and a site of some significance in the Roman period established soon after the conquest. The wide-ranging taxa identified in the animal bone assemblage suggests waste from beef, pork, lamb/mutton and marine mollusc production and/or consumption. A prehistoric, probably Neolithic, alluvial deposit was found in part of the trench that indicated earlier activity on the south side of the paleochannel adjacent to the site.

3.2.5 In 2021, one trench was opened directly south of Elmswell Farm farmyard to investigate potential structural Roman settlement remains (Jackson *et al.*, 2022), extending Trench 4 from the 2018 and 2020 field season to the north and west (25.00m x 20.00m) and a smaller re-excavation to the east through the alluvium (10.00m x 2.00m). Archaeological features were found throughout the trench, with Roman finds dating to the 1st to 2nd century AD. The features consisted of rubbish pits, post holes, ditches and a series of walls which had either been completely robbed out and rubble left in the cut or only had the foundations remaining. The pottery and animal bone assemblages were much the same as previous seasons. Finds of note included a near mint denarius of Domitian and two interlocked Roman brooches recovered from a rubbish pit. During the 2020 season a prehistoric, probably Neolithic, alluvial deposit was found in part of the trench that indicated earlier activity on the south side of the paleochannel adjacent to the site, in 2021 a small evaluation was opened to investigate the nature of this deposit further. A further evaluation trench, Trench 11 measuring 10.00m x 2.00m, was opened to the west of Trench 4. This trench revealed a probable ditch and two small pits, which were left unexcavated.

3.2.6 In 2022, Trench 4 was opened having been extended to the North with the aim of ascertaining the limits of the settlement (Jackson *et al.*, 2023). Archaeological features were recorded throughout the trench likely associated with the buildings to the south revealed in previous seasons. The features consisted of at least five ditches all appearing to be broadly contemporary. Additionally, a large pit at least 1.40m in depth was excavated in the eastern half of the trench, likely representing a storage pit later reused as a rubbish pit. A ditch aligned NE-SW was observed across the entirety of the trench and it is likely this feature represents the boundary of the settlement as all identified features were located to its south. Pottery recovered suggests domestic occupation and a site of some significance in the Roman period established soon after the conquest. The broad variety identified in the animal bone assemblage suggests waste from beef, pork, lamb/mutton and marine mollusc production and/or consumption. Finds of note include a finger ring, a large copper coin and a copper disc brooch or stud likely dating to the 2nd century AD.

3.2.7 Trench 11 was opened expanding upon an evaluation trench first investigated in 2021. Seven pits were recorded in the eastern half of the trench and a cluster of nine in the

western half containing almost no finds, suggesting they may represent storage pits. A large N-S aligned probable enclosure ditch to the settlement was visible in the centre of the trench. A second, shallower ditch containing almost no finds was observed near the western baulk of the trench which may have represented a different phase of boundary to the settlement.

3.2.8 In 2023 (Swain, 2024), excavations in Trench 12 located a segment of a 2nd century enclosure ditch located north of the main trackway running through the centre of a Romano-British ladder settlement in Freshlands field. The only other feature excavated in this trench was a suspected Iron Age or Romano-British crouch burial.

3.2.9 Trench 13 revealed a timber-built structure internal to one of the enclosures south of the main trackway. Excavation of the post holes revealed two phases of a timber-built structure measuring at least 10.00m in length and 5.00m in width, dating from the mid 1st to mid 2nd century. Three rubbish pits likely used for domestic waste were excavated in the eastern half of Trench 13. The pottery recovered was mostly of a mid to late 2nd century date. Two large and very deep pits of similar character were located either side of the timber building in Trench 13. Pottery recovered from these pits was mostly of a mid to late 2nd century date. The substantial size and depth of these pits indicate they were likely used for storing water.

3.2.10 In 2024, three trenches were excavated in the south west corner of [redacted] field. Trench 14 was located over a platform where metal detecting and fieldwalking had revealed a dense concentration of Romano-British artefacts. The trench was dominated by mid-4th century AD Romano-British activity and a sizeable assemblage of coinage dating to this period was recovered.

3.2.11 The earliest features encountered were two shallow linear gullies aligned NE-SW probably for drainage. These were truncated by a very large E-W enclosure/boundary ditch. This ditch was partially truncated by the room of a building. This rectangular structure measured approximately 5m by 4m, with the walls visible extending beyond the southern limit of excavation. What was left of the stone wall foundations had been heavily plough truncated. Features internal to the building consisted of a shallow circular pit containing large flat chalk stones in the NE corner of the room, and a shallow pit with a thin silty fill containing animal bone, pottery and finds of a domestic nature. Due to heavy plough truncation, it is not known if these features are contemporary with the building.

3.2.12 A high density of copper alloy coins were recovered from this part of the trench; of 4th century origin. Ten coins were recovered from a single small pit and five from another adjacent. Three coins were found stuck together and directly overlain by a piece of animal bone that had stained green with the copper in the same pit. These were interpreted as potentially representing a small votive offering deposit of coins and meat set within a small, shallow intentionally dug pit. Two other pieces of green copper stained bone were recovered as surface finds in Trench 14, indicative of other possible similar votive offerings in the vicinity. Two groupings of coins and a spoon were reported to the PAS as possible treasure but have since been discounted and returned to the material archive.

3.2.13 An area of possible copper metalworking was encountered in the central part of Trench 14. Three pits containing heavily burnt ashy and charcoal rich fills with very frequent quantities of metalworking slags, debris and burnt clay were excavated. The base of these pits consisted of a solid, clean orange clay that may have been intentionally laid. The pits then appeared to be filled with debris from the metalworking process, tentatively interpreted on site to be related to copper smelting. Immediately to the south of these pits was a ring gully and some small post holes interpreted as possibly relating to a shelter or wind break structure for the metalworking process. These features were also filled with a very similar burnt ashy material.

3.2.14 To the north of the metalworking area was a small and shallow pit containing an intact inverted beaker SF247 interpreted as possibly representing another votive offering deposit. Just to the west of this was a neonatal burial. The grave cut was very shallow and had been partially truncated by historic ploughing from above. The bones of the individual were poorly preserved, being extremely fragile and fragmented.

3.2.15 In the eastern part of Trench 14, a sequence of N-S aligned ditches were partially excavated. This part of the trench had been subject to substantial animal burrowing which had truncated the edges of some of these ditches. However, despite this, it is clear that a very substantial boundary or enclosure ditch existed at this location.

3.2.16 Trenches 15 and 16 were excavated to the east of the platform where Trench 14 was located, in an effort to understand the extent and density of archaeological features beyond the platform. The only feature observed was a small pit in Trench 16 from which a crossbow brooch was recovered.

3.2.17 Trench 17 was a small 2x2m intervention located in the adjacent [redacted] over what was anticipated to be one of the Grantham's old trenches from the 1950s. This was indeed confirmed to be the case and artefacts recovered, including a piece of inscribed stone and two bone hair pins, were found in the old trench backfill.

3.2.18 In January 2025 and February 2026, a magnetometry survey (Normandale 2025; Forthcoming) was carried out over 1.2 acres of land at [redacted] to provide further context to the results from previous archaeological excavation at this location, and to be used as a basis for targeting trenches during the proposed August 2025 and 2026 fieldwork stages. The results of this survey showed a high potential for remains of probable archaeological origin. These consisted of linear and rounded positive and negative anomalies indicative of ditches, pits and other potential archaeological material (Figure 1). The results indicated the continuation of a trackway observed from cropmark survey to the [redacted] of [redacted] with rectangular enclosures to its western side.

3.2.19 In 2025, four trenches were excavated in [redacted] All were located targeting anomalies of probable archaeological origin interpreted from the magnetometer survey conducted in January 2025, with the aim of characterising the extent, preservation, chronology and function of any surviving below ground archaeological remains. Trench 18 was located targeting two possible enclosure ditches as well as two possible pits. Trench 19 targeted a number of positive magnetic anomalies near

to where excavation in the 1950's and in 2024 had produced evidence of possible Romano-British religious artefacts. Trench 20 was located to characterise an anomaly interpreted as a small square enclosure with a central pit feature and Trench 21 was located targeting possible enclosure ditches and internal features at the [redacted] part of [redacted]

3.2.20 In Trench 18, the two ditches and pits anticipated from the geophysical survey were located, in addition to a number of other archaeological features. The two ditches were both of different character and profile, likely representing different phases of enclosure dating from the 2nd to 3rd century based on the artefacts recovered. A pit filled with broken chunks of fired clay and ash, possibly the remnants of a collapsed oven or kiln, was excavated at the eastern end of the trench. Another, much larger domestic refuse pit in the northwestern corner of the trench could not be bottomed due to its depth. Several gulleys were also excavated, one of which appeared to drain into the large pit in the northwestern corner and contained the base of a ceramic cheese press.

3.2.21 In Trench 19, several ditches and small pits were excavated, capped with a thin layer of ash and burnt debris that likely accounted for the magnetic responses in this location from the geophysical survey results. There were at least three different ditches on various alignments indicative of multiple phases of enclosure. Two post holes were also excavated in the western part of the trench but no dateable artefacts were recovered from them. A segment of a possible wall foundation or remnant of a floor surface was also excavated.

3.2.22 In Trench 20, two clear phases of occupation were encountered during excavation. The earliest phase consisted of a series of 2nd to 3rd century ditches and gullies likely associated with drainage at the southern end of the trench. Above this were walls, surfaces and a potential oven that likely dated to the very late 4th century or possibly early 5th century AD. Quern stones and millstone fragments recovered near to features associated with this later phase in Trench 20 suggest possible grain processing. The oven may also be indicative of baking, providing a function for the structure as a small bakery.

3.2.23 In Trench 21, a series of ditches were excavated of varying size and character. All of the features were capped by, and in some instances filled by, a thick layer of ash and heavily burnt debris that accounted for the highly magnetic results on the geophysical survey in this location. It is likely that the features in the centre of the trench represent a series of enclosure and drainage ditch of different phases dating to the 2nd to 3rd centuries AD. In the northern part of the trench, a feature was excavated that was filled with intense burning and ash deposits, likely intentionally backfilled after a severe burning event in the local vicinity. This feature could not be fully excavated due to its depth.

3.3 Fieldwork proposals 2026

3.3.1 In 2026, the primary focus of fieldwork will be to build on the previous two excavation seasons by refining our understanding of the phasing and economic function of the

Romano-British enclosure settlement identified at [redacted] whilst also continuing to investigate the possible religious significance of the water source at Elmswell Beck.

3.3.2 Four trenches are proposed in [redacted] expanding upon the 2025 excavations and targeting geophysical anomalies indicative of rectangular enclosure and trackway ditches to provide a settlement chronology, as well as associated internal features that may provide evidence of function. The 2025 excavations produced indications of two distinct phases of settlement; a 2nd to 3rd century settlement that was later burnt down and the land reorganised, probably in the 4th century. Archaeological features and artefacts recovered were indicative of cereal grain and food processing as well as possible metalworking and other light industry. However, questions remain surrounding the extent and chronology of the settlement's reorganisation, as well as the function of some of the structures revealed in 2025 and a number of the enclosures not yet investigated.

3.3.3 A fifth contingency trench is located on the pasture side of the adjacent [redacted] near to the location of the 2024 excavations where votive deposits and a building were encountered. Excavations in 2025 at [redacted] did not recover any evidence of religious votive deposits indicative of a rural shrine, implied from the results of the small scale 1950's dig by C.N. and G.E. Grantham (Dent, 1988). However, the limited scale of the 2025 excavations, combined with no firm indication as to the exact location of the 1950's trenches where religious deposits were found, does not discount the possibility that a rural shrine could exist at or near [redacted]. For this reason, evaluation trenches are planned both in [redacted] and in the pasture side of [redacted] field to provide the best chance of locating more votive deposits.

3.3.4 It is proposed that a minimum of four evaluation-style trenches are opened in [redacted] with a potential fifth trench in the pasture side of [redacted] (Figure 1).

- Trench 19 (15.00m x 4.00m) has been positioned to expand on a trench opened in 2025 where an area of positive magnetic geophysical results, suggestive of a possible kiln or hearth, could not be identified during fieldwork. By expanding the excavation area to the north, this trench aims to increase the likelihood of encountering the geophysical anomaly and identifying its potential to inform our understanding of the internal function of one of the settlement's central enclosures.
- Trench 20 (8.00m x 4.00m and 6.00m x 4.00m) has been positioned to expand on a trench opened in 2025, where a probable oven was excavated internal to the walls of a late 4th century building. Only part of the heavily truncated wall outline of this structure was exposed within the boundary of the 2025 trench. By expanding the excavation area, this trench aims to provide the best opportunity to understand the full layout of the building, its chronology and relationship to the oven as well as any other features associated with the function of this enclosure.
- Trench 22 (25.00m x 4.00m) has been located targeting anomalies interpreted from the geophysical survey as likely relating to a series of archaeological features internal to one of the enclosures at the southwest of [redacted] This trench will aim to better understand these anomalies within the context of this enclosure by characterising their purpose and chronology.

- Trench 23 (15.00m x 2.00m) has been located targeting a north-south aligned linear positive magnetic anomaly interpreted as relating to the eastern ditch of the central trackway running through the settlement. The aim of this trench is to confirm the character and date of this feature, aiding our interpretation of the layout and chronology of the settlement.
- Trench 24 (25.00m x 4.00m, Contingency) has been located in the pasture side of [redacted] targeting an area adjacent to the 2024 excavations where votive deposits and the walls of a building were encountered. Geophysical survey results were inconclusive, but the excavation results from 2024 suggest the possibility of the building continuing at this location. The aim of this trench is to confirm or deny the continuation of the building and to identify the presence or absence of any additional votive deposits that could be associated with the nearby water source at Elmswell Beck.

3.3.5 If the initial results from opening Trenches 20 and 22 show a high potential for archaeological remains relating to the geophysical anomalies and archaeological features they are targeting, expanding these trenches may be necessary to fully contextualise their character and address the project aims. For this reason, Trenches 20 and 22 may be partially expanded within the boundary of the marked expansion area (Figure 1) to meet these aims.

3.3.6 Fieldwork will be delivered as a participatory research project, involving members of the community from the local area and further afield who will be trained in archaeological skills. The project will be widely disseminated both during the investigations and throughout post excavation work, and all details about the site can be found on the project website: https://digventures.com/projects/elmswell-farm/

4 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 Project model

4.1.1 The overarching aim of the project is to define and characterise the physical extent of the site through a programme of intrusive excavation, obtaining baseline data that will facilitate its future management. This project model is framed as overarching aims and key questions/objectives that provide a framework for the methods, stages, products and tasks set out in Part 2 of this Updated Project Design below.

4.2 Aim 1 – To define and establish the precise physical extent and condition of archaeological remains on the Site with a programme of trenching

4.2.1 This aim will entail archaeological excavation of the site consisting of a number of evaluation-style trenches. This will support the wider interpretation of the site, its environs and the local landscape by addressing these specific questions:

- Q1. Can we contextualise the results of the non-invasive geophysical, metal-detecting and fieldwalking surveys, as well as invasive excavations carried out in the 1950s and during 2024 - 2025 at [redacted] and [redacted]
- Q2. Can we determine chronological phasing between these features and provide an interpretation of the nature and condition of any surviving remains?

- Q3. Can the location, layout and extent of sub-surface archaeological features, including remains associated with the trackway and enclosure settlement at [redacted] as well as the potential Romano-British shrine for a sacred spring, be established by excavation?
- Q4. What are the typical and atypical features internal to the enclosures of the settlement at [redacted] and the potential Romano-British Shrine, including the character, function and date of any associated structures and features that influenced the activities that took place here?

4.3 Aim 2 – Understand the palaeoenvironmental conditions at the site

4.3.1 This aim will be achieved with an assessment of the samples recovered during investigations carried out as part of Aim 1, using appropriate palaeoenvironmental and archaeological techniques to establish preservation and significance and address the following questions:

- Q5: What is the current state of the archaeological and palaeoenvironmental material across the site?
- Q6: How well do deposits and artefacts survive, and how deeply are they buried? Can a comparison be made between the preservation of archaeological deposits in the pasture fields at Elmswell and the ploughed agricultural land?
- Q7: Can the palaeoenvironmental data recovered from sampling in the trenches inform us about farming regimes, specialised food processing, industrial or religious activities that may have taken place at the site?
- Q8: Can we increase our understanding of the relationships to the local environment during the multi-period occupation of the Site?

4.4 Aim 3 – Characterise the results of the programme of trenching, refining the chronology and placing the site in its wider landscape context

4.4.1 In the light of the evidence base collated for Aims 1 and 2, this aim will address the following questions:

- Q9. Can we inform the local landscape setting and its character, including how any evidence recovered for the trackway and enclosure settlement as well as the potential Romano-British Shrine and associated features influenced its development and design?
- Q10. Can the chronology and phasing of the Site be linked to that of previous excavations at Elmswell Farms, building a picture of how and when the character of the local landscape changed over time?

4.5 Aim 4 - Making recommendations, analysis and publication

4.5.1 This aim will require all data from Aims 1-3 to be collated and assessed in light of any further information recovered from a desk-based assessment of previous archival material. An Updated Project Design will then be produced with management recommendations to research, conserve or enhance the heritage significance of the Site.

- Q11: What can an integrated synthesis of the results of this work with previous remote sensing tell us about the site and its setting?
- Q12: Considering the evidence recovered from this and previous work, can we articulate a link between the multi-phased use of the Site and its different areas?
- Q13: Formulate recommendations for further archaeological and palaeoenvironmental analysis at Elmswell Farms based on Aims 1-3 and implement a programme to publish and disseminate the results or continue fieldwork into additional seasons.

4.6 Aim 5 – Creating opportunities for people and communities

4.6.1 This aim is integral to the success of the project and sits with equal importance alongside our research aims. The excavation will involve participation from volunteers, who will be trained and mentored in the techniques of archaeological excavation. Our site team will deliver an in-person programme at a ratio of 1:8 throughout the dig, with online social media updates to engage and inform the public about the archaeological discoveries. In summary, the project will offer a range of opportunities for community members and visitors to the area to get involved and learn more about the archaeology of Elmswell Farms.

5 BUSINESS CASE

5.1 Historic England Research Agenda

5.1.1 The project has been designed in accordance with priorities articulated in the Historic England Research Strategy (2017) and Historic England Corporate Plan (2023-26). The Research Strategy defines nine broad themes that describe Historic England's research interests to ensure that any proposed work is aligned with HE's mission. The Project drivers can therefore be articulated within the fundamental theme to #understand (rural landscapes; archaeology of the deeper past in addition to other research outcomes that will address other Historic England and sector priorities, delivering significant value-added benefit. As a consequence of the innovative digital and multi-partner collaborative approach, there is a significant 'value added' dimension to this project, encompassing research themes including #adapt (land management, societal change); #conserve (buildings and landscapes, collections and archives; preserving archaeological remains); #inform (information systems and services); #skill (developing the workforce; working more effectively); #inspire (audience research, research media); #innovate (materials; human environment; dating and chronology; measuring and sensing).

5.2 Research frameworks

5.2.1 The key research agendas relating to Elmswell Farms are the Yorkshire Wolds Research Strategy (2024), the 'Yorkshire Archaeological Research Framework: Research Agenda' (Roskams and Wyman 2005) and the 'South Yorkshire Historic Environment Research Framework' (South Yorkshire Archaeology Service, 2021). These documents summarise research priorities by period as the basis for further consultation with the wider specialist team.

6 INTERFACES

This project will interface with a series of other projects, stakeholders, and initiatives, summarised in the table below:

Interfaces	Description
Academic Advisory Board	An academic advisory group of subject area experts will be formed to ensure that the project remains pertinent to relevant research questions and agendas, interfacing with other teams working in similar landscapes in the UK.
Core Project Team	The core project team and specialist staff have consulted widely during the project planning and will continue to build on this as the project develops, forging strong links with local, national and international professionals and institutions actively engaged in a broad range of multi-period sites.
Heritage at Risk	The heritage of Elmswell Farms is at risk from attritional farming threats, including deep plough horizons and the removal of artefacts by illicit metal detecting. Core and specialist staff will work closely with the PAS, HE, Natural England and the landowners to establish management related aims and objectives with recommendations applicable to similar landscapes at risk.
Local Stakeholders	The project will showcase the archaeology from Elmswell, and offer skills-based learning opportunities focused on teaching digital heritage skills to engage as broad a group as possible in the local heritage. Hull is currently third in local authority districts with the largest proportions of deprived neighbourhoods in England, and Driffield also falls in the bottom 30% according to Indices of Deprivation. A survey undertaken by DigVentures has identified that key issues preventing people engaging with their local heritage are based on access and financial concerns. The project will offer free enjoyable learning opportunities, both online and across multiple accessible locations, to help address the strong social and educational needs of the surrounding communities.

Table 1: Project interfaces

7 COMMUNICATIONS

7.1 Project team and management responsibilities

7.1.1 The Project will be funded through crowdfunding. Project Assurance will be allocated to the Project Executive (Lisa Westcott Wilkins, DigVentures) who will monitor compliance against the deliverables detailed in this document. The project team have all worked closely together before (Caerfai 2021-2023, Lindisfarne 2016-present and Sudeley Castle 2019-present, Wittenham Clumps 2018-present). Ben Swain will undertake overall Project Management and will also oversee the day-to-day archaeological activities on site and during post-ex. There will be at least four core DigVentures archaeological staff on site throughout the fieldwork, and all will be retained throughout the post-excavation phase of the project (see Appendix 2). All core staff are employed in line with CIfA guidelines, and are practicing field archaeologists of good standing at PCIfA level or above. Experts will be drawn from various university departments and laboratories with a considerable range of experience in the undertaking and delivery of similar research projects. This includes Frederick Foulds (lithics); Karen Barker (conservation); Gerry McDonnell (metalworking and industrial waste); Archaeological Services Durham University (palaeoenvironmental); Ruth Shaffrey (worked stone); Richard Henry and Elizabeth Foulds (small finds and metalwork); Malin Holst (human remains); Ian Rowlandson (Roman pottery), David Griffiths (CBM) and Hannah Russ (animal bone and shell).

7.2 Project management and communications

7.2.1 DigVentures' projects are undertaken under the direction of the Projects Director (Brendon Wilkins) who is responsible for the successful completion of all aspects of the project. All work is monitored and checked whilst in progress on a regular basis, and the Projects Manager checks all reports and other documents before being issued. A series of guideline documents or manuals form the basis for all work.

7.2.2 The DigVentures senior management team are full members of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (MCIfA). DigVentures is a CIfA Registered Organisation (No. 102), and fully endorses the CIfA Code of Conduct and supporting Standards and Guidance documents. All DigVentures staff are employed in line with the Institute's Codes and will usually be members of the Institute.

7.2.3 The Project Manager will be responsible for ensuring that the project runs to schedule, keeping track of key resources and progress. The Project Team will have a project meeting at each milestone to ensure that all major tasks are briefed/debriefed as necessary. Provision will be made for the project in 'Basecamp', which is a web-based project communication package used by DigVentures, enabling project participants to generate and record notes, tasks, milestones and other project-related communication.

7.3 Outreach and engagement

7.3.1 **Public participation.** As a crowdfunded and crowdsourced archaeological project, every aspect of the project is cognisant of a wider outreach agenda. Public participants will take part on site (through participation in the dig, Finds Room, and co-creation of

an open-access archaeological record), and online (through interactive online events, live updates on the Dig Timeline, social media content including, and access to digital archaeological record).

7.3.2 **Schools and education.** As in previous years, the project in 2026 will continue to create additional opportunities for local families with children who attend local schools to try archaeology together as a free summer holiday activity. The project will include multiple 'DigCamp' and 'DigClub' sessions for local families, and promotion will be achieved in partnership with local newspapers and local schools. The project will also generate material that can be used to enrich the wider, ongoing educational programme for local schools at Elmswell Farms to do with farming, land use, environment, and caring for the local landscape, by providing examples of these practices through time, as well as enriching the teaching of Roman history with local examples.

7.3.3 **Evaluation.** Impact is measured with DigVentures standard audience evaluation of all project participants (field and digital) to establish baseline data and assist with future management strategies and promotion.

7.4 Dissemination and reporting

7.4.1 Rapid dissemination of the results to stakeholders, as well as their involvement throughout, will be vital throughout the delivery of this project. This will take place through multiple channels, addressing a multitude of established and new audiences. Dissemination outlined below will all be undertaken during 2026, and will include, but not be limited to:

- Dedicated website with daily news updates on a blog and all major social media channels (Facebook and Instagram) amplified through third-party coverage by the networked blogging community: https://digventures.com/projects/elmswell-farm/
- A dedicated interactive digital archive of excavation data.
- Wide circulation of Assessment and Final Report, Updated Project Design and links to the OASIS record: Oasis ID: digventu1-287349
- Site publication in an appropriate local/national journal commensurate with the final results.
- Deposition of the Assessment Report with the East Riding of Yorkshire County Records Office HER.

7.5 Project archive

7.5.1 The project archive will be prepared in accordance with the East Riding of Yorkshire Council Museum Service (ERYMS) *Guidelines on Archaeological Archives* (2015), and CIfA *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (2014). All reports produced by the project will be openly and freely disseminated through County Council Historic Environment Record, Archaeological Data Service, OASIS portal and the project microsite.

8 PROJECT REVIEW

The project will be continually reviewed by the Project Executive and Project Manager, with a formal review undertaken at the end of each Stage as follows:

Stage	Description	Review Point	Completion Date
Initiation	Consideration of Project Proposal	RV1 – Assemble Project Team and liaise with stakeholders	Completed – January 2017
Stage 1	Project Start-up, finalising Project Design and definition of scope	RV2 – Sign-off on MoRPHE Project Design, and liaison with stakeholders and landowners	Completed - June 2017
Stage 2	Archaeological Fieldwork – First Season	RV3 – assemble site archive and distribute pertinent data to specialists	Completed - August 2017
Stage 3	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	RV4 – critically review findings, making recommendations for further work	Completed - February 2018
Stage 4	Archaeological Fieldwork – Second Season	RV5 – assemble site archive and distribute pertinent data to specialists	Completed - August 2018
Stage 5	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	RV6 – critically review findings, making recommendations for further work	Completed - May 2019
Stage 6	Archaeological Fieldwork – Third Season	RV7 - assemble site archive and distribute pertinent data to specialists	Completed - August 2019
Stage 7	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	RV8 – critically review findings, making recommendations for further work	Completed – March 2020
Stage 8	Archaeological Fieldwork – Fourth Season	RV9 - assemble site archive and distribute pertinent data to specialists	Completed – August 2020
Stage 9	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	RV10 – critically review findings, making recommendations for further work	Completed – March 2021
Stage 10	Archaeological Fieldwork – Fifth Season	RV11 - assemble site archive and distribute pertinent data to specialists	Completed - August 2021
Stage 11	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	RV12 – critically review findings, making recommendations for further work	Completed – March 2022
Stage 12	Archaeological Fieldwork – Sixth Season	RV13 - assemble site archive and distribute pertinent data to specialists	Completed - August 2022
Stage 13	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	RV14 – critically review findings, making recommendations for further work	Completed – April 2023
Stage 14	Archaeological Fieldwork – Seventh Season	RV15 – assemble site archive and distribute pertinent data to specialists	Completed – August 2023
Stage 15	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	RV16 - critically review findings, making recommendations for further work	Completed – May 2024
Stage 16	Archaeological Fieldwork – Eighth Season	RV17 – assemble site archive and distribute pertinent data to specialists	Completed – August 2024
Stage 17	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	RV18 - critically review findings, making recommendations for further work	Completed April 2025
Stage 18	Archaeological Fieldwork – Ninth Season	RV19 – assemble site archive and distribute pertinent data to specialists	Completed – August 2025

Stage	Description	Review Point	Completion Date
Stage 19	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	RV20 - critically review findings, making recommendations for further work	Completed – April 2026
Stage 20	Archaeological Fieldwork – Tenth Season	RV21 – assemble site archive and distribute pertinent data to specialists	Proposed – August 2026
Stage 21	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	RV22 - critically review findings, making recommendations for further work	Proposed – April 2027
Stage 22	Analysis & reporting	RV23 – final report sign-off, and prepare archive for accession	TBC
Closure			

Table 2: Project review stages

9 HEALTH AND SAFETY

9.1.1 DigVentures will undertake the works in accordance with Health and Safety requirements and a Health and Safety Plan. This document will take account of any design information pertaining to above and below ground hazards. DigVentures will ensure that all work is carried out in accordance with its company Health and Safety Policy, to standards defined in *The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974*, and *The Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999*, and in accordance with the SCAUM (Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers) health and safety manual *Health and Safety in Field Archaeology* (1997).

Part Two: Resources and Programming

10 PROJECT TEAM STRUCTURE

10.1 Team and responsibilities

10.1.1 DigVentures' Project Team is outlined below in Table 4. CVs for the DigVentures and wider project specialist team are available on request.

Name	Initials	Role	Key Responsibility
Lisa Westcott Wilkins	LWW	Co-CEO (Project Executive)	Overall project responsibility, budget responsibility and project assurance
Brendon Wilkins	BW	Co-CEO (DigVentures' projects director)	Overall responsibility for the direction of DigVentures' projects
Stephanie Duensing	SD	Director of Operations	Overall management of DigVentures' programme and resourcing.
Ben Swain	BS	Project Manager	Overall management of the project, planning and design, fieldwork strategy and delivery, volunteer management/training programme, logistics, post excavation management, specialist and project stakeholder liaison and management.
Nat Jackson	NJ	Senior Project Officer	On-site fieldwork, fieldwork strategy advice and volunteer management/training
Harriet Tatton	HT	Community Archaeologist	On-site field-work, responsible for Dig Camps and Dig Clubs
Darcey Spenner	DS	Community Archaeologist	On-site fieldwork, volunteer management/training
Jasmine Tomys	JT	Post Excavation Officer	Oversight of on-site finds room management, post excavation processing of finds and database/archives management
Anna van Nostrand	AvN	Community Archaeologist	On site fieldwork, volunteer management and training

Table 3: Team and responsibilities

10.1.2 In addition to the core team, it is expected that throughout the project between 15 and 24 participants will be present on-site engaging with excavation and finds processing activities. DigVentures will host a series of family-friendly DigCamp sessions, where families with children who attend local schools will be able to join the dig and help to unearth part of the site.

11 METHODOLOGY

11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 The methods reflect the Project Stages set out in Section 9 above. Detailed method statements relating the specific techniques or approaches detailed below to their constituent research questions can be found in Appendix 1 at the end of this document.

11.2 Stage 20 – Archaeological fieldwork – Tenth season

11.2.1 Stage 20 (scheduled for 1st to 20th of August 2026) will comprise the tenth fieldwork season required to meet Aim 1 and will consist of targeted trenching. It will aim to answer the following research questions:

- Q1. Can we contextualise the results of the non-invasive geophysical, metal-detecting and fieldwalking surveys, as well as invasive excavations carried out in the 1950s and during 2024 - 2025 at [redacted] and [redacted]
- Q2. Can we determine chronological phasing between these features and provide an interpretation of the nature and condition of any surviving remains?
- Q3. Can the location, layout and extent of sub-surface archaeological features, including remains associated with the trackway and enclosure settlement at [redacted] as well as the potential Romano-British shrine for a sacred spring, be established by excavation?
- Q4. What are the typical and atypical features internal to the enclosures of the settlement at [redacted] and the potential Romano-British Shrine, including the character, function and date of any associated structures and features that influenced the activities that took place here?

11.2.2 Trench 19 (15.00m x 4.00m) has been positioned to expand on a trench opened in 2025 where an area of positive magnetic geophysical results, suggestive of a possible kiln or hearth, could not be identified during fieldwork. By expanding the excavation area to the north, this trench aims to increase the likelihood of encountering the geophysical anomaly and identifying its potential to inform our understanding of the internal function of one of the settlement's central enclosures.

11.2.3 Trench 20 (8.00m x 4.00m and 6.00m x 4.00m) has been positioned to expand on a trench opened in 2025, where a probable oven was excavated internal to the walls of a late 4th century building. Only part of the heavily truncated wall outline of this structure was exposed within the boundary of the 2025 trench. By expanding the excavation area, this trench aims to provide the best opportunity to understand the full layout of the building, its chronology and relationship to the oven as well as any other features associated with the function of this enclosure.

11.2.4 Trench 22 (25.00m x 4.00m) has been located targeting anomalies interpreted from the geophysical survey as likely relating to a series of archaeological features internal to one of the enclosures at the [redacted] of [redacted] This trench will aim to better understand these anomalies within the context of this enclosure by characterising their purpose and chronology.

11.2.5 Trench 23 (15.00m x 2.00m) has been located targeting a north-south aligned linear positive magnetic anomaly interpreted as relating to the eastern ditch of the central trackway running through the settlement. The aim of this trench is to confirm the character and date of this feature, aiding our interpretation of the layout and chronology of the settlement.

11.2.6 Trench 24 (25.00m x 4.00m, Contingency) has been located in the pasture side of [redacted] targeting an area adjacent to the 2024 excavations where votive deposits and the walls of a building were encountered. Geophysical survey results were inconclusive, but the excavation results from 2024 suggest the possibility of the building continuing at this location. The aim of this trench is to confirm or deny the continuation of the building and to identify the presence or absence of any additional votive deposits that could be associated with the nearby water source at Elmswell Beck.

11.2.7 If the initial results from opening Trenches 20 and 22 show a high potential for archaeological remains relating to the geophysical anomalies and archaeological features they are targeting, expanding these trenches may be necessary to fully contextualise their character and address the project aims. For this reason, Trenches 20 and 22 may be partially expanded within the boundary of the marked expansion area (Figure 1) to meet these aims.

11.2.8 Access to the site will be made through the active farmyard at Elmswell Farm (from the A166, Sykes Lane) no earlier than 08:45 each morning, and egress no later than 17:30 from the same point. All traffic will be closely managed to avoid conflict with agricultural machinery.

11.3 Stage 21 – Assessment report & updated project design

11.3.1 This Stage will address Aims 2-3, culminating in Review Point 20, and focusing on answering the following research questions:

- Q5: What is the current state of the archaeological and palaeoenvironmental material across the site?
- Q6: How well do deposits and artefacts survive, and how deeply are they buried? Can a comparison be made between the preservation of archaeological deposits in the pasture fields at Elmswell and the ploughed agricultural land?
- Q7: Can the palaeoenvironmental data recovered from sampling in the trenches inform us about farming regimes, specialised food processing, industrial or religious activities that may have taken place at the site?
- Q8: Can we increase our understanding of the relationships to the local environment during the multi-period occupation of the Site?
- Q9. Can we inform the local landscape setting and its character, including how any evidence recovered for the trackway and enclosure settlement as well as the potential Romano-British Shrine and associated features influenced its development and design?
- Q10. Can the chronology and phasing of the Site be linked to that of previous excavations at Elmswell Farms, building a picture of how and when the character of the local landscape changed over time?

11.4 Stage 22 – Further work, analysis and publication

11.4.1 Addressing Aim 4, this is the main reporting and recommendation Stage of the project, culminating in Review Point 21 and focusing on the following research questions.

- Q11: What can an integrated synthesis of the results of this work with previous remote sensing tell us about the site and its setting?
- Q12: Considering the evidence recovered from this and previous work, can we articulate a link between the multi-phased use of the Site and its different areas?
- Q13: Formulate recommendations for further archaeological and palaeoenvironmental analysis at Elmswell Farms based on Aims 1-3 and implement a programme to publish and disseminate the results or continue fieldwork into additional seasons.

11.5 Methodological linkages

11.5.1 It is anticipated that the 2026 work will be undertaken in four stages (see Table 2). These are expanded in the table below showing linkages with the project aims and questions that will be met at each stage, the products that will be produced and the tasks undertaken.

Stage	Description	Project Aims/ Questions	Products	Task & ID Number
Stage 19	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	Aim 1-4 Q1-13	1. Assessment of previous results 2. Permissions (planning application & stewardship derogations) 3. Finalised UPD & Risk Log 4. Educational Plan & Information Pack 5. Digital Communication Plan 6. Risk Assessment	1. Consult with wider project team and stakeholders to define milestones and delivery timetable. 2.Core Archaeology Team Meeting. 3. Design project database. 4. RV20 – Sign off on MoRPHE
Stage 20	Archaeological Fieldwork – tenth Season	Aim 1 Q1-4	7. Field Archive 8. Survey Archive 9. 3D Survey Archive	5. Site Preparation 6. Fieldwork (excavation) 7. RV21 – assemble site archive & distribute to specialists

Stage 21	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	Aim 2 Q5-8 Aim 3 Q9-10	10. Stratigraphic & Assessment Report	8. Specialist finds and palaeoenvironmental assessments 9. Integrated assessment report 10.RV22 – recommendations for further work
Stage 22	Analysis and Publication	Aim 4 Q11-13	11. Final report 12. Publication 13. Completed and accessioned archive	11. Specialist analysis 12. Finalise report and publication 13. Prepare data and archive for deposition 14. RV23 – final sign-off. 15. Closure

Table 4: Project stages, products and tasks

12 OWNERSHIP

12.1.1 The Copyright on all reports submitted will reside with DigVentures, although a third party in-perpetuity licence will automatically be given for reproduction of all products, subject to agreement with DigVentures. The original copyright holder will retain copyright in pre-existing data.

13 RISK LOG

Risk number	1	2	3	4
Description	Inclement weather - prolonged periods of rain	Exceptional weather (drying exposed archaeology)	Absence of core team member	Absence of specialist team member
Probability	Medium	Medium-low	Low	Low
Impact	Delay programme of work	Slow progress	Delay programme of work	Delay programme of work
Countermeasures	Provision of site hut, and planned indoor archiving tasks with flexible programme	Provision of water bowser + spray	Reallocate responsibilities or appointment of alternative	Reallocate responsibilities or appointment of alternative
Estimated time/cost	3 Days	None	Minimal if done by adjustment	Minimal if done by adjustment
Owner	BW/BS	BW/BS	BW/SD/BS	BW/SD/BS
Risk number	5	6		
Description	Equipment theft/breakages	Serious site injury		
Probability	Medium	Medium		
Impact	Delay programme of work	Delay programme of work		
Countermeasures	Removal of finds material and digital equipment from site	Detailed H&S Risk Assessment + daily safety briefing		
Estimated time/cost	3 days	3 days		
Owner	BW/BS	BW/BS		

Table 5: Risk Log

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[redacted]

Figure 1. Site location

Appendices

APPENDIX 1 METHOD STATEMENTS

The methods for the proposed project will involve a combination of archaeological excavation, sampling, palaeoenvironmental sampling and assessment. The methods are linked directly to the project aims and objectives (see Table 5) and detailed below.

Key Questions and Objectives	Archaeological Excavation	Sampling	Environmental Assessment	Finds Assessment	Synthesis and Data integration
Q.1	✔				
Q.2	✔			✔	
Q.3	✔				
Q.4	✔			✔	
Q.5	✔	✔	✔	✔	
Q.6	✔	✔	✔		
Q.7		✔	✔	✔	
Q.8		✔	✔	✔	
Q.9			✔		
Q.10			✔	✔	
Q.11					✔
Q.12					✔
Q.13					✔

Table 6: Linking methods with objectives

Topographic survey and GIS modelling

Any topographical survey work will be carried out using an Emlid GPS survey system, utilising an RS3 Rover unit. The Emlid Flow software application directly integrates with the site's QField project, a GIS operating system, allowing for real time surveying direct into the project's GIS database. The RS3 allows for surveying without the use of a site specific fixed base station. This is achieved by connecting to the NTRIP corrections network of fixed base stations broadcasting at various locations throughout the UK by means of mobile phone communication. The method is highly efficient and accurate (+/- 2cm) when good signal is available. All survey and excavation data will be stored within a GIS environment, which will remain the principle conduit for all spatial data throughout the project.

Archaeological excavation

Four trenches will be excavated in the pasture field called [redacted] at Elmswell Farms, with one contingency trench in the pasture side of [redacted] These trenches are positioned over the location of anomalies identified from a geophysical survey and expanding upon the 2025 excavations (Figure 1):

Trench	Dimensions	Target	Description
19	15m x 4m	Geophysical anomalies internal to an enclosure, possibly associated with oven/kiln	15m x 4m trench, aligned E-W, located central to [redacted] Targeting potential Romano-British archaeological remains associated with archaeological feature internal to one of the settlement enclosures.
20	8m x 4m and 6m x 4m (option for expansion)	Probable 4th century building and oven internal to one of the settlement enclosures	L-shaped trench located in [redacted] targeting the full layout of a building discovered in 2025 and associated internal features.
22	25m x 4m (option for expansion)	Geophysical anomalies indicative of features internal to one of the settlement enclosures at the [redacted]	A 25m x 4m trench targeting features internal to one of the settlement enclosures to understand their character, function and chronology.

Trench	Dimensions	Target	Description
23	15m x 2m	Eastern Trackway ditch in [redacted]	Trench aligned E-W in central [redacted] to investigate a N-S aligned linear geophysical anomaly likely representing the eastern trackway ditch to understand its character and chronology.
24 (contingency)	25m x 4m	Continuation of a building discovered in 2024 excavations, potential location for further votive deposits.	25m x 4m evaluation style trench located in the pasture side of [redacted] to investigate the possible continuation of a Roman building excavated in 2024, alongside the location and recovery of further potential votive deposits.

Table 7: Trench target, location and description

Interventions

All trenches will be cleaned by hand, surveyed and photographed prior to any further excavation. A representative section, not less than 1m in width, of the entire deposit sequence encountered will be recorded. If complex stratigraphy and/ or significant remains (e.g. structural remains, artefact scatters, remains clearly of a funerary nature etc.) are encountered, these may only be excavated to the minimum requirement in order to satisfy the project objective, to avoid compromising the integrity of remains that may be either (a) preserved in situ, or (b) excavated in detail during any next phase of research excavation. Interventions will focus on feature intersections in order to establish relative chronologies, and 'clean' sections to maximise retrieval of stratigraphically secure dating evidence and environmental samples.

Full written, drawn and photographic records will be made of each trench and test pit, even where no archaeological remains are identified. A plan at an appropriate scale (1:50 or 1:100) will be prepared, showing the areas investigated and their relation to more permanent topographical features, and the location of contexts observed and recorded in the course of the investigation. Plans, sections and elevations of archaeological features and deposits will be drawn as necessary at an appropriate scale (normally 1:20, or 1:10 for complex features). Drawings will be made in pencil (6H) on permanent drafting film and archived in a suitable depository.

Each trench or test pit, will be recorded using the 'Diggit' digital archaeological recording platform. Digital photography will be used for all photography of significant features, finds, deposits and general site working. The photographic record will illustrate both the detail and the general context of the principal features and finds excavated, and the Site as a whole.

Backfilling and reinstatement

Where turf is removed it will be stacked away from the trench edge, maintaining their integrity by ensuring that the turves are placed in a correct position (turf side up) and are watered frequently and monitored daily. Topsoil and subsoil will be removed and retained separately for reinstatement. Trenches will be backfilled immediately following excavation with subsoil followed by topsoil. The site will be visibly similar in appearance to its condition pre-excavation; there shall be no visible mounds of excavated soil around the site and turf shall be replaced and watered in.

Palaeoenvironmental sampling

All deposits with good palaeoenvironmental potential will be sampled; bulk samples will be taken from the section as appropriate, under advice from the project specialist. Context specific samples will be taken by the most appropriate means (kubiena tins, contiguous columns, incremental block, bulk etc.) for multi-disciplinary analysis. All aspects of the collection, selection, processing, assessment and reporting on the environmental archaeology component of the evaluation will be undertaken in accordance with the principles set out in '*Environmental Archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation'* (Historic England 2011) and with reference to the Association for Environmental Archaeology's 'Working *Paper No. 2, Environmental Archaeology and Archaeological Evaluations'* (1995).

Bulk sampling strategy

Bulk samples will usually be 20 litres in size, depending on the likely density of macrofossils. Ten litre samples will only be used for the recovery of plant macrofossils from waterlogged contexts. Samples will be stored in ten litre plastic bags or buckets with lids and handles. A waterproof label will be fixed to the bucket and will record site code, context number and sample number and number of buckets in comprising the sample. A duplicate label will be retained inside the bucket. Samples will be protected from temperatures below 5° and above 25° Celsius and will be prevented from either wetting or drying out.

- Bulk samples selected for processing will be wet-sieved/floated and washed (by the excavation team at a suitable area close to the temporary headquarters) over a mesh size of 250 microns for the recovery of palaeobotanical and other organic remains, and re-floated to maximise recovery;
- Non-organic residues shall be washed through a nest of sieves of 10mm, 5mm, 2mm, 1mm and 250 micron mesh to maximise finds recovery;
- Both organic and non-organic residues shall be dried under controlled conditions;
- The dried inorganic fractions will be sorted for small finds or any non-buoyant palaeoenvironmental remains, and scanned with a magnet to pick up ferrous debris such as hammer scale;
- The dried organic fractions will be sorted under a light microscope to identify the range of species or other material on a presence/absence basis, the degree of preservation of the bio-archaeological material and the rough proportions of different categories of material present;
- In the event that waterlogged deposits are identified and sampled, further processing will be undertaken as appropriate and agreed, including paraffin flotation to recover insect remains. Any such remains will be scanned to identify and assess their potential;

- Selection of other types of sample for processing and the methods to be used for processing and assessment will be undertaken on the advice of the relevant specialist and will be agreed with the Consultant before implementation.

Contexts that are well stratified and potentially datable are all of value, so a systematic approach to selecting samples for processing and assessment will be taken. These will be divided into three categories:

- Category A (always sampled): contexts where the composition of the sediments is likely to inform us of the use of a particular structure or feature or if the deposits are waterlogged. These will include: *in situ* occupation deposits and fills/layers associated with particular activities; hearths; destruction deposits; basal pit/slot trench fills; waterlogged deposits, cesspits or latrines.
- Category B (always sampled, though discretion can be exercised by the trench supervisor): deposits identified as containing material that could yield information regarding their origin or the process that produced them. These will include: dumps, middens, upper pit fills with evidence for charred material, shell, bone and industrial waste.
- Category C: deposits containing material which is not necessarily related to the function of the feature to which they are related, but which can characterise deposits from different areas of the site. These will include: secondary and tertiary fills, postholes, levelling deposits, spreads etc.

Category A deposits should always be sampled, Category B deposits always sampled however, the supervisor's discretion may allow for a strategy such as 'scatter sampling' enabling exploration of variation within a deposit and Category C deposits sampled on a random basis (such as 1 in 5). These samples can help to characterise the background noise of a site, so as to highlight spatial or temporal trends and provide material that can be directly compared with those from Category A and B. All samples will be taken in large white 10 litre tubs, with labels placed inside with the deposit and attached to the bucket. All samples will be processed off site in a dedicated floatation and wet sieving area.

Zooarchaeology

If large deposits of bone or marine shell are encountered advice of the project Zooarchaeologist will be sought as regards further sampling. If large deposits of bone or marine shell are encountered the project Zooarchaeologist advice will be sought as regards further sampling. If articulated groups of bones are encountered (as found in previous excavations. they will be surveyed, recorded in situ, (including digital photography and planning), and then excavated to retain the group's integrity. Bones from each articulated limb will be bagged separately. If inhumations or cremation burials are encountered and excavated the surrounding soil will be sampled to retrieve any loose teeth or bone fragments.

All hand collected animal bones and bones from processed samples will be assessed, following Historic England's Environmental Archaeology guidelines (2011). If warranted by the size of the recovered assemblage, it will be assessed using two different quantification methods to determine the most suitable for full analysis, taking into account methods used in comparative assemblages. The assessment will not distinguish between certain taxonomic groups; full speciation will be carried out as part of the analysis, using a vertebrate comparative collection.

In addition to quantification of domestic species and occurrence of wild species, the assessment will consider the number of articulated bone groups, and the prevalence of aging, sexing and osteometric data available for full analysis, following standard published conventions. The assessment report will comment on the potential of the assemblage, particularly in the context of the excavation's research questions and current understanding of comparative assemblages. It will also provide recommendations for any necessary future analysis.

Human osteoarchaeology

In the event of the discovery of human remains (inhumations, cremations and disarticulated fragments) they will be left *in situ*, covered and protected, until Natural England have been informed. If a decision is taken to remove them, they will be fully recorded and excavated in compliance with the relevant Ministry of Justice Licence. A copy of the Ministry of Justice licence will be supplied to Natural England for logging onto the agri-environment agreement documents. The excavation of human remains will be carried out in accordance with the procedures detailed in the document *Excavation and post-excavation treatment of cremated and inhumed human remains* (McKinley and Roberts 1993, CIfA Technical Paper 13). Significant assemblages of human remains will be subject to an assessment of DNA preservation to establish potential familial relationships.

Inhumations will be scanned with a metal detector prior to excavation, and the position of possible metallic grave goods will be noted. Wherever possible, each burial will be excavated within a single working day, particularly with regard to visible grave goods. To minimise unauthorised disturbance of human remains, partially exposed remains will be covered overnight, though in such a way as to not draw undue attention, using loose excavated spoil.

Excavation of inhumations will be undertaken using a trowel, plasterer's leaf, plastic spoon and paintbrush as appropriate depending on the condition of the bones. When lifted the bones will be bagged by skeletal area (skull, axial, upper and lower limbs) with separate bags for the left and right side. A standard series of samples will be taken from each inhumation burial to ensure full recovery of any remaining osseous tissues or small artefacts. Once human remains are removed from inhumation graves, any soil residue remaining at the base of the grave will be retrieved for bulk processing.

Inhumations and cremations will be drawn at a scale of 1:10 and photographed prior to lifting. They will be recorded on Skeleton Record Sheets that form an integral part of the site *pro forma* recording system. The recording will include condition, completeness, articulation, orientation and posture.

Fragile objects found within graves will be lifted with appropriate care and handling to minimise breakage. This may include subsequent controlled excavation under laboratory conditions. A trained conservator will be employed on the site if necessary. All cremation burials and cremation-related contexts will be excavated and sampled in quadrants to ascertain the distribution of any archaeological components within the fills, with division into spit also if appropriate. Cremation-related features other than burials may be subject to more detailed sub-divisions, the appropriate strategy being developed by a specialist as the size and nature of the remains becomes clear.

Undisturbed and slightly disturbed, but largely intact, urn cremation burials will be lifted *en masse* for excavation under laboratory conditions. The urns will be wrapped in crepe bandages and securely boxed for transportation. Where a vessel has been crushed, thereby disrupting any original internal deposition of the cremated remains, it will be lifted *en masse* after separate recovery of displaced sherds. All cremation-related contexts will be subject to whole-earth recovery from the point at which any cremated bone or other pyre debris is observed. If deposits of placed human bone are encountered in features, these may be excavated in spits if appropriate. The soils from these features will be bulk sampled.

Finds

All finds will be treated in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologist's *Universal Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2023), excepting where statements made below supersede them. All artefacts will be retained from excavated contexts, except features or deposits undoubtedly of modern date. In these circumstances, sufficient artefacts will only be retained to elucidate the date and function of the feature or deposit.

All artefacts from the excavation will, as a minimum, be washed, marked, counted, weighed and identified. Any stratified ironwork will be X-rayed and stored in a stable condition along with other fragile and delicate material. The X-raying of objects and other conservation needs will be undertaken by appropriately qualified conservation specialists. Suitable material, primarily the pottery and non-ferrous metalwork, will be scanned to assess the date range of the assemblage.

Conservation

If Artefacts will be recovered as a matter of routine during the excavation. When retrieved from the ground finds will be kept in a finds tray or appropriate bags in accordance with *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson and Neal 1998). Where necessary, a conservator may be required to recover fragile finds from the ground depending upon circumstances.

After the completion of the fieldwork stage, a conservation assessment will be undertaken which will include the X-radiography of all the ironwork (after initial screening to separate obviously modern debris), and a selection of the non-ferrous finds (including all coins). A sample of slag may also be X-rayed to assist with identification and interpretation. Wet-packed materials, including glass, bone and leather will be stabilised and consolidated to ensure their long-term preservation. All finds will be stored in optimum conditions in accordance with *First Aid for Finds* and *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-Term Storage* (Walker, 1990). The conservation assessment report will include statements on condition, stability and potential for further investigation (with conservation costs) for all material groups. The conservation report will be included in the updated project design prepared for the analysis stage of the project.

Scientific dating

Radiocarbon dating will be appropriate for clarifying and linking aspects of archaeological and environmental chronologies, and a strategy for this will be agreed following discussion with the relevant specialists following assessment.

Synthesis and data integration

Radiocarbon results from the project will be integrated and synthesised with future investigations, and other relevant work within the region and further afield. This will include a literature review of other pertinent sites.