

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 13 SEPTEMBER 2013

**Statement from: Councillor Nick Worth, Executive Councillor for
Libraries, Heritage, Culture, Registration and Coroners
Service**

Libraries Consultation

The consultation which commenced on 2 July has generated a considerable amount of discussion, debate and feedback. The eight consultation meetings held in July across Lincolnshire, facilitated by Sheffield Hallam University working with Shared Intelligence, were generally well attended. I am grateful to everyone who took the time to participate in these events, complete online or hard copy surveys and to everyone who has written to officers and councillors about the proposals. I do encourage people to have their say by filling in the online questionnaire at www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/librariesconsultation, calling the Customer Service Centre on 01522 782010 or picking up a hard copy in their local library. At the time of writing this statement 2,589 Adult consultation forms and 279 Children's have been received plus 350 emails/letters. The consultation runs until 30 September.

Summer Reading Challenge

Having secured a grant of £71,100 from Arts Council England to work with Dance4, the regional dance agency, the University of Lincoln, local people and delivery partners Me and The Machine were commissioned to create a spectacular piece of dance and digital artwork developed in libraries across the county to be performed at the Frequency Festival in October 2013. This has become the *House of Mystery Roadshow* which is linked to, and inspired by the Summer Reading Challenge theme for 2013 of *Creepy House*. As a result of the promotional activity for this project enrolments in the challenge are significantly up on previous years.

Renaissance at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life

A £535k scheme to reduce energy consumption and improve the visitor experience at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life has been completed with the installation of solar panels on the roof of the Agricultural Gallery, and the opening of the new outdoor play area in the courtyard of the museum. The latter has proved to be extremely popular with families during the summer holidays.

Most of this scheme has been paid for by the Arts Council England's Renaissance programme, and a further £223k has been secured from the same programme for the *Bringing the Barracks to Life* project to introduce augmented reality technology to the galleries and to develop an interactive electronic guide to the museum, similar to those recently introduced at Gainsborough Old Hall and The Collection. Military history will be the key theme for this work since the museum is located in the 1857 Militia Barracks and it is the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War in 2014.

Lincoln Castle

At Lincoln Castle the last major contract, for the interpretation fit-out in the prison complex, has been let within budget. The archaeological team have just completed

the dig in the Eastern Courtyard, prior to the construction of the Magna Carta vault; Roman town houses, a medieval stable and numerous artefacts have been found.

Coroners

National legislative changes were implemented within Lincolnshire for the Coroners Service on 25 July 2013. These changes involve some amendments to terminology and processes. Coroners jurisdictions are now areas, HM Coroner is now known as a Senior Coroner and Assistant and Deputy Assistant Coroners are Assistant Coroners. Coroner 'investigations' should ideally be completed within six months with greater powers to process inquests within these timescales. These changes will hopefully improve the transparency and timeliness of the service provided by coroners nationally.

Registration Service

An internal audit review found the Registration Service to be providing a 'comprehensive and high quality service.'

'Our health check review identified that there are very effective arrangements in place within the Registrars' Service to ensure that a comprehensive and high quality registration and celebratory service is offered.

There are appropriate and effective systems in place which ensure legislation and Good Practice guidance relating to registrations and ceremonies are complied with. All staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in respect of systems and processes with detailed guidance and training available.'

An annual customer satisfaction survey was completed during the month of August.

The registration office in Skegness moved from Ida Road to new premises at the Business Park and the first wedding ceremony has taken place in the Heath Road ceremony room.

Nationally, legislation will be changing to allow for equal marriage for same sex couples. This is anticipated to be implemented in Spring 2014.