

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 11 MAY 2018**

**Statement from: Councillor C N Worth**  
**Executive Councillor for Culture and Emergency Services**

### **CULTURE**

#### **Libraries Overview**

Libraries have continued to engage with their local communities and provide events and activities such as story/rhyme times, family craft activities, IT taster sessions and author visits that are tailored to local needs and interests. There were 4,933 events across the fifteen core libraries in 2017/8, attended by over 68,000 adults and children, which is an increase on 2016/7 of 58% in terms of events and 38% in attendance.

Hours of community use in core libraries through community led activities such as exhibitions and meetings also increased by 87% year on year. A continued focus on improving library stock saw issues increase by 14% in 2017/8 compared to 2016/7, with use of the online catalogue and information resources increasing by 15%.

The annual customer survey in summer 2017 saw 100% of customers rating their overall satisfaction with the library service as *good* or *very good*, with staff helpfulness and knowledge rated at 99% and choice of books at 97% satisfaction.

2017/8 also saw Lincolnshire libraries successfully complete their £231,000 Arts Council England funded ForgingLincs Project. Stand-alone IT hardware has been installed at four 'Library Labs' across the county offering software relating to coding, graphics, digital photography, digital embroidery and film making. Travelling labs containing similar hard and software have also been created, allowing provision to be extended and deployed flexibly across the rest of the core library network.

Workshops tailored to participants' needs were run between November 2017 and March 2018 and extensive outreach work with the target audience (unemployed 16 to 25 year olds) ensured that the facilities provided met the needs and demands of this often hard-to-reach group. The project expanded its audience towards completion with intergenerational sessions, creating a firm foundation for the future promotion and use of facilities.

#### **Improvements to Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)**

The procurement exercise to update and improve the RFID system for issuing and managing library stock has been completed with a view to implementation in the current financial year.

## **Lincoln Castle Annual Pass Launch**

We are delighted to be able to offer our visitors the opportunity to purchase year round access to the castle with the launch of our annual pass. The pass gives access to the three main parts of the attraction (the Medieval Wall Walk, Victorian Prison and Magna Carta) and includes event days. Over 200 people have already purchased an annual pass since its launch in April 2018.

## **Lincoln Castle Awards**

Lincoln Castle picked up two awards at the county's inaugural Tourism Excellence awards ceremony held at the Doubletree by Hilton in March. The two categories won by the Castle were Best Visitor Attraction and Overall Winner. The event was well attended by a number of businesses and visitor attractions across the tourism industry.

Judges of the awards said: *"The Castle goes to great lengths to attract visitors from all over the world, each year they have managed to bring something new to the city for people to come see."*

## **Lincolnshire Archives**

Lincolnshire Archives has secured significant grant funding. Two grants worth a combined total of £262,500 have secured the future of one of Lincolnshire Archives' most popular collections.

Thanks to a grant of £242,500 from the National Heritage Memorial Fund and one of £20,000 from the Friends of the National Libraries, the County Council has been able to purchase the Monson papers, which are currently housed at Lincolnshire Archives.

The Monson papers are of immense local importance, with some documents being of national, and even international, significance. The core collection dates from 1221 to 1947 and comprises the estate and archive of the Monson family, the Barons Monson of Burton by Lincoln, together with family and personal papers and antiquarian collections.

Highlights from the Monson papers include:

- Correspondence of the diplomat Sir Edmund John Monson, first baronet (1834-1909), who held positions in Europe, Washington (at the start of the Civil War) and South America, including as ambassador to Vienna and then to Paris
- Correspondence of Hon. Charles Monson, deputy-paymaster general, concerning the American expedition, Pelham's correspondence with George Colebrook, deputy-paymaster for the West Indies expedition, correspondence to Pelham about affairs in Virginia and Jamaica, and more, 1739-1744
- The journal kept by Captain George Elers of his tour to the Continent in 1816 and France in 1825
- The memoirs of the mathematician John Speidell (*fl.* 1600-1634), known for his early work on the calculation of logarithms

- A 34 leaf early 14<sup>th</sup> century fragment of the Constitution of Pope Clement V, once the property of Bardney Abbey, which is the finest illuminated manuscript, held at Lincolnshire Archives.

### **Heritage Skills Funding Secured**

Lincolnshire County Council's Historic Environment Skills project has been awarded a grant of £585,600 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Over the next four years the project will offer training to those who wish to gain traditional and specialist skills, but may not currently have relevant experience or qualifications.

Delivered through a partnership between Lincolnshire County Council's Heritage Skills Centre, Heritage Trust Lincolnshire and Lincoln Cathedral, it will provide 21 bursaries over four years across the East Midlands with a focus in Lincolnshire. The bursaries will cover a range of skills that relate to the historic environment and the heritage sector, which includes traditional building skills, archaeology, managing a building conservation project and community engagement.

The project began in April this year with the first trainees being in place by September 2018. The project is being led by the LCC Heritage Service.

### **Battles and Dynasties**

The Battles and Dynasties exhibition followed on from "Lincolnshire's Great Exhibition" in 2015 marking the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta. Battles and Dynasties had a wide narrative, stretching from the Norman Conquest to the present day but its particular focus was the Battle of Lincoln, fought in and around the city eight hundred years ago on 20 May 1217.

The exhibition was dispersed over two sites – The Collection held all the artefacts, paintings and documents, whilst The Magna Carta Vault at Lincoln Castle displayed the star artefact – the Domesday Book. It is noteworthy that Lincoln Castle is the first venue outside London that the Domesday Book has ever been on public display.

## **FIRE AND RESCUE**

### **General**

Over the past year, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue have attended just over 13,000 operational incidents, which represents a slight increase on the previous year. Notable incidents since December 2017 include a fatal house fire in Mablethorpe, a serious road traffic collision in Baston in which three people were killed, support to the two severe snow weather incidents in the county and attendance by our Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team at the Hinckley Road explosion in Leicester, in which five people died. The USAR team were there to provide specialist technical knowledge and equipment in support of this tragic incident.

The contract for the replacement of 33 new fire engines over the next three years has now been signed. Delivery of the first new fire engine is expected in the second quarter of 2019 and will ensure the Service's frontline fleet remains fit for purpose into the next decade.

## **Blue Light Collaboration**

With the contract signed in January, work continues apace at the South Park site developing the new shared Blue Light campus. Demolition of the old Fire and Rescue headquarters and the Lincoln South fire station is now complete with plans to occupy the new build in July 2019 still on target. Although, for technical reasons, there will be a delay in moving fire control to the Nettleham headquarters site, it is anticipated this will be completed by late summer.

At the forefront of the wider estates project is the new shared fire and ambulance station and County Council office accommodation at Sleaford. This is scheduled for occupation this month. In terms of broader collaboration initiatives, police and fire held their first joint Wellbeing conference in April aimed at supporting staff across both organisations. The event was well attended, demonstrating a real commitment to enhancing the '*health, happiness and resilience*' of the workforce.

## **Fire Peer Challenge**

Fire and Rescue have now received their final report from the Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge process conducted in September 2017. The process was designed to provide external challenge across a number of key aspects of service provision, with a focus on the changes implemented over the last few years as a result of budget pressures, the effectiveness of our collaborative working with other emergency services, and elements of workforce reform.

Key findings from the Peer Challenge show that there is pride and a positive culture across Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue (LFR); changes have been well managed with good staff and partner engagement, ensuring that LFR remains fit for purpose; and there is a clear commitment to blue light collaboration, which is well resourced and governed.

The report was submitted to the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee in December 2017, with an update around the associated action plan scheduled to go back to the committee in June.

## **Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)**

As part of the National Fire Reform programme, an independent inspectorate for Fire and Rescue authorities (HMICFRS) has been established, with the inspection programme and framework 2018/19 now having been approved by the Home Secretary. The inspection framework will cover the effectiveness and efficiency of each Service and how it looks after its people. A number of pilot inspections have recently taken place and these are being used to inform the detailed format of the inspection process. Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue are already engaging with the inspection teams and providing performance data to support the process. The Service is due to be inspected over the period 23-27 July 2018, as part of the first tranche of inspections.

## **Staffing**

Throughout March the Service ran a retained-to-wholetime firefighter conversion course which resulted in ten new wholetime firefighters joining Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue. This has enabled a number of temporary positions to be filled at Louth, Boston, Sleaford and Grantham. Fifteen on-call retained firefighter recruits also passed out from their training course at Waddington on 22 April 2018, having completed their initial 31-day phase one training.

A new Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Les Britzman, has also been appointed within the Service. Les joined Lincolnshire on 30 April from Norfolk Fire and Rescue. He will oversee the response and corporate support portfolio within the Service.

## **EMERGENCY PLANNING**

The Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Service have had a very busy year with the service involved in the multi-agency response to over 35 incidents and a further five business continuity related events. February and March saw the “Beasts from the East” affect large parts of the UK, with Lincolnshire being particularly badly affected. The Service co-ordinated the response from the County Emergency Centre (CEC) on both occasions. These incidents are currently being debriefed to ensure that lessons learnt are carried forward into future operations and plans.

Following the visit to the Grenfell Tower site back in June last year, the Service produced a report which looked at possible implications for Lincolnshire County Council and concluded with nine recommendations which have all been agreed by Corporate Management Board and Informal Executive Group. The report has been presented to the Greater Lincolnshire Leaders and Chief Executives Group where it was agreed that a new training package would be designed and delivered to all local authority elected members in the county through the SLA agreement. This is scheduled to take place late summer 2018.

The Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (LRF) Command and Control review report went out for consultation at the end of April. Once agreed by the LRF, the Service will begin work on the design and delivery of updated procedural training for all LRF strategic and tactical commanders, to ensure that a common approach is taken when responding to all future incidents requiring a multi-agency response. This training will commence in the autumn. The County Emergency Centre remains the preferred choice of location for the co-ordination of LRF command and command support functions, and work is currently underway to identify and update IT and communications requirements when the Service moves into the old Fire and Rescue Control accommodation later this year.

The Community Resilience project continues to go from strength to strength with a further 68 community groups signed up to the five stage programme over the last twelve months. A bid was submitted to NESTA and the Department for Digital, Culture Media and Sports for just under £90k for a two year project, aimed at improving and increasing resilience in the county. There were originally 460 project proposals from across England and Wales and our project was one of four to be

selected for final consideration. Although ultimately unsuccessful, valuable experience has been gained regarding future bid submissions. The Service has however been successful in gaining £30k from Anglian Northern Region Flood and Coastal Committee local levy which will be used to provide equipment to community groups as part of this ongoing project.

## **REGISTRATION AND CORONER'S SERVICES**

### **Coroner's Service**

The Council were delighted to appoint Paul Smith as Area Coroner in December 2017. Paul has been an Assistant Coroner in Lincolnshire since 2008 so the transition into his new role has been very smooth. His local knowledge and significant experience will be a great asset to the Coroner's Service. As we plan ahead to the retirement in October 2018 of Stuart Fisher, the Senior Coroner, initial engagement with the Chief Coroner's Office has been made. They will support the recruitment of a new Senior Coroner, although it remains a local authority appointment.

The Coroner's Service has continued to play an active role in supporting emergency planning work for winter planning and in the event of a mass fatalities incident. Two examples are the sharing of knowledge with funeral directors on recent fentanyl and carbonoid deaths and secondly the support on the removal of the deceased in specialist circumstances with colleagues from Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue.

The relationship with all partner organisations is valued and respected, especially recognising the sustained period of high volumes of death referrals that have been experienced.

### **Registration Service**

The Registration Service has also seen a higher number of deaths registered over the winter months, this is in line with national colleagues. Staff flexibility to meet these demands is recognised and throughout this period they have remained committed and professional. This was clearly demonstrated during the recent bad weather and snow disruption, when death registrations were facilitated and three wedding ceremonies were covered in both the local and national press, which shows the positive impact of ensuring ceremonies are attended and conducted whatever the weather conditions.

In January the Registration Service launched two new services for those in the early stages of their application for nationality:

1. Nationality Document Return Service to support the Nationality Checking Service as more citizens apply online; and a
2. Joint Citizenship and Passport Application Service.

A new website, appointment diary system and electronic payment mechanism is still being developed. We hope that this will be available in 2018 and that it will facilitate customer choice, especially with regard to payment of fees.

## **Medical Examiners**

The proposals in relation to death certification reform and the introduction of medical examiners were discussed in the House of Lords on 18 October 2017, with a stated implementation date of April 2019. Whilst this has been delayed nationally, there are additional considerations which will link into hospital programmes for learning from deaths. We eagerly await further communications from central Government departments to inform the implementation plan.

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