

<b>Name of project/group</b>
Lincolnshire Heritage At Risk
<b>Type of project</b>
Social action\Community empowerment
<b>Location</b>
Lincolnshire, East Midlands
<b>What was involved</b>
<p>The Lincolnshire Heritage at Risk (HAR) Project was set up to assess over 8,000 heritage assets in the county. The project was conceived by English Heritage, and the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire took the lead in putting the project into action.</p> <p>The project is developing a county wide strategy to improve management of heritage at risk and encourage further investment in Lincolnshire's historic environment. It aims to involve local communities, recruit and train a network of volunteer heritage stewards and provide them with support, feedback and development opportunities. This is to record historic buildings and sites, raise awareness of Lincolnshire's heritage and provide information on its condition. Other objectives are to build capacity and work in partnership with local authorities and others, and to develop a HAR management strategy.</p> <p>The Trust has partnered with many organisations on the project. Partners include the Heritage Lottery Fund, a number of local councils (Lincolnshire County and City Councils, Boston Borough Council; East Lindsey, North Kesteven, South Holland, South Kesteven and West Lindsey District Councils), Lincolnshire's Community Volunteers and Wolds Countryside Services, and the Diocese of Lincoln. The partners meet quarterly.</p>

<b>Achievements</b>
<p>The historic environment has benefited from detailed surveys of historic assets across the county and a far greater knowledge of what is currently at risk. To date 5,400 surveys have been carried out by 270 volunteers. In addition, the profile of Lincolnshire's heritage has been raised among many local authorities.</p> <p>The volunteer heritage stewards learn numerous skills; the initial training (open and free for all with no obligation to volunteer) sessions teach skills in surveying historic buildings in various towns around the county, including practical sessions. 'Help notes' are also available online for specific asset types, e.g. parks and gardens (See: <a href="http://www.lincshar.org/survey-help">http://www.lincshar.org/survey-help</a>). The heritage stewards carry out condition surveys of heritage assets in their local area, and log</p>

results onto the Lincolnshire HAR database.

There are also specialised training events e.g. for conservation area training. Free CPD events have been offered for volunteers on such topics as IT, places of worship and 'deserted medieval towns'. A 'buddy' scheme has been run since February 2011, with experienced heritage stewards offering help and advice to new stewards on their first few surveys.

In addition, free lectures are offered for the public (open for all) on topics such as archaeology and architecture (Details of events are available at: <http://www.lincshar.org/events-training>).

Volunteer experiences are being actively evaluated; in April 2011, a (voluntary) volunteer Feedback Co-ordinator was recruited to work with the heritage stewards to help develop training methods and improve the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire's level of support. The intention was to provide an independent outlet for volunteers' feedback and discuss ideas on improving the experience of heritage stewards. Surveys have also been evaluated throughout the project.

In terms of sharing the experience, various talks have been held at local Archaeological Trusts and other organisations. The HAR team visited Lincolnshire University for Student Volunteering Week in February 2011, to 'showcase the work' of the Heritage Stewards and promote the volunteering opportunity. There has also been extensive publicity in the local press about the project.



## Future plans

The current phase of the project still has two years to run, and the Trust is discussing ways volunteers can maintain involvement with Lincolnshire's historic environment after the project. The current phase is intended as a pilot to test the feasibility of such schemes on a national scale. After evaluating which aspects have worked successfully and which less so, it is hoped that the scheme can be rolled out nationwide.



**Project contact**

<http://www.lincshar.org/>

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