

Boston Market Place, Lincolnshire, 1950s

Boston Borough Council, working in partnership with Heritage Lincolnshire, has received initial support for a Townscape Heritage bid from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for Boston's town centre, it was announced today. Development funding of £73,000 has also been awarded to help Boston Borough Council and Heritage Lincolnshire progress their plans to apply for a full grant at a later date totalling £1,069,000.

The project aims to make a further investment to the eastern side of the Market Place in Boston, continuing the regeneration of the area through the conservation and enhancement of its historic architecture and street layout. It will enable essential repairs to historic buildings in parts of Market Place, Dolphin Lane and Pump Square including work that enhances those properties, such as the reinstatement of traditional shop fronts. Alongside the capital works, a programme to involve local people in learning about and celebrating the rich history of the town will also be delivered. There will be free training and workshops, giving people the opportunity to learn new skills in traditional building construction and archaeological building recording and research. Events and activities for families such as medieval fetes and markets will also be able to be delivered.

Boston's Market Place is medieval in origin, and the eastern boundary and historic lanes were laid out by the 12th century. At this time Boston was a major centre of trade and commerce and therefore extremely wealthy and many of the historic buildings retain medieval fabric dating from their original construction. Following the drainage of The Fens in the 18th century, the town again enjoyed a prosperous period of growth, and the buildings we see today are important

examples of the architecture of the 18th and 19th centuries. This project will help us to learn more about this history and to conserve it for future residents and visitors to the town.

Cllr Peter Bedford, Leader of Boston Borough Council, said: “It is encouraging to hear that what Boston has to offer is considered good enough by the Heritage Lottery Fund to attract funding. This has the potential to be a very exciting project helping maintain and restore the most attractive aspects of some of our most historic town centre properties.”

Cllr Derek Richmond, the council’s town centre portfolio holder, said: "I was part of the small team to show the HLF officers around the town centre and I know they were certainly impressed by the quality of what we have here and absolutely saw the further potential. This can only be good in further enhancing the vitality and viability of Boston"

Liz Bates, of Heritage Lincolnshire said: “We’re delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given us this support. Boston has such a rich history and the buildings in the town centre tell a fascinating story about people living and working in the area over the past 800 years. We are very much looking forward to working with all of the project partners in making this investment into the town’s future.”

Ben Greener, HLF's Regeneration Advisor, said: “Regeneration involves transforming places. Heritage is often central to this process, whether in the form of restoring a much-loved landmark or refurbishing boarded-up buildings. We believe that historic townscapes such as Boston's are the beating heart of local places. Past Heritage Lottery Fund research shows that even small changes, such as improving shop fronts or restoring a building’s historic features, can make a real difference.”

£50,000 Heritage Lottery grant for street signs

Boston’s exceptional historic and heritage offer has also proved a magic ingredient in convincing the Heritage Lottery Fund to make £50,000 available for new direction and information signage. Supported by match funding from Boston Borough Council and Lincolnshire County Council, the scheme will improve existing signage to guide people around the town and to tell stories about its fascinating history for the benefit of visitors and residents alike.

The project will maximise the use of existing fingerposts, deliver new signs in the town and establish a cohesive look and feel to the new signage, which will help to illustrate the town’s special character. New maps, incorporating character and retail/business zones will also be installed. The project is aimed specifically at encouraging people to engage with the cultural and historic offer of Boston as well as its allied retail and visitor economy and to create a cohesive and intuitive signage solution which gives confidence to visitors and users in understanding and exploring the area. The project will not redesign but maximise the impact of the existing street furniture, which is mostly traditional in nature, ensuring it is sympathetic to and complimentary of the historic town centre.

The council will be working with Heritage Lincolnshire (a local heritage charity) and the Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce to run consultation events and campaigns to involve all interested parties in the project. The aim is to devise a comprehensive interpretation scheme for the town, which can be developed and added to over time. To facilitate this, the project will include the development of a signage brand and toolkit which can be used to engage other partners and inform signage in the future. This will ensure that the scheme will continue to have the impact of visibility, confidence, consistency and coherency.
All signage developed in the future will have the same consistency including beyond the bounds of the town to, for example, Havenside Country Park and the Pilgrim Fathers Memorial site where the brand could start to tell allied tales of the natural environment alongside its historic stories.

Cllr Yvonne Gunter, Portfolio Holder for Leisure Services, Parks and Open Spaces, said: “Boston has a big story to tell and we want to do all we can do to better tell that story. Some aspects of the Boston story signpost themselves, Boston Stump for instance, but there is lots more to learn about the town’s history and heritage. This will be used to improve signage to better inform and direct resident and visitors – whether they are here to shop or here for the history and heritage. And the work will set the benchmark for future signage, ensuring a consistent approach which will give extra confidence to those who may not know the area very well or are unfamiliar with its history.”

Cllr Colin Davie, Lincolnshire County Council’s Executive Member for Economic Development, said: “I am delighted that the county council is a partner in this project which is being led by Boston Borough Council. Boston has a lot to offer to visitors, with beautiful architecture and a history to match. Better signage will help visitors to appreciate all that the town has to offer.”

Notes to editors

An HLF Townscape Heritage (TH) first-round pass means that money has been set aside by HLF. The applicants can then progress to the second round and send a detailed second-round submission to secure the full award. This early level of strong financial commitment means that THs can build strong partnerships with the assurance that funding for their scheme is in place provided their final proposals fully meet the programme criteria.

THs encourage partnerships of local organisations to carry out repairs and other works to a number of historic buildings, structures or spaces. Grants are available from £100,000 up to £2m. The next application deadline is 1 September 2015 with decisions being made in January 2016.

To date, HLF has invested £243m regenerating towns that have suffered serious social and economic decline.

About Heritage Lincolnshire
Heritage Lincolnshire is a charity, established in 1991 and based in Heckington, near Sleaford. Our activities ensure that the special character and significance of Lincolnshire’s heritage is understood, valued, conserved and celebrated for the benefit of local people, visitors and future generations.

The trust’s key objectives are to:

- Provide high quality learning and volunteering activities which attract a diverse audience and raise awareness of Lincolnshire’s heritage
- Increase participation in heritage activities through community engagement
- Develop and deliver conservation projects that secure investment for Lincolnshire and contribute to economic regeneration
- Undertake archaeological fieldwork and research that advances our understanding of Lincolnshire’s historic environment

The trust is supported by county and district councils, national heritage bodies, through commercial activities and sponsorship. They welcome donations [including gift aid] and legacies.

Further information

For more information please contact Katie Owen, HLF press office, on 020 7591 6036 or 07973 613 820.

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Wisbech High Street Project, Cambridgeshire, East of England

£19.3m Lottery investment to help regenerate 13 towns and cities