

Fiona (centre) at 'glorious' York Minster

After more than a dozen years at the helm of HLF Yorkshire and the Humber, Fiona Spiers has a rich mix of projects and places to look back on as she leaves the organisation.

“But it’s not just individual projects that come to mind but how a combination can have a real impact on a particular area,” she says.

Richmond

Her comment is underlined by the example of Richmond in North Yorkshire: whose town council recently celebrated how HLF support for a whole raft of projects has helped transform the town’s heritage.

Key projects included the grant that created a new learning centre at the Georgian Theatre Royal, Britain’s oldest working theatre to survive in its original form; and the redevelopment of the Green Howards Regimental Museum to enhance the presentation of the area’s proud military history. Richmond Station also received funding for an ambitious community-led regeneration project.

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“The significance of these investments to the area cannot be underestimated,” says Fiona.

Barnsley

Barnsley has also experienced a similar transformative effect that with investment in new gallery spaces; conservation and storage improvements at the town's Cooper Gallery; the new museum and archive created at the Experience Barnsley project in the old town hall; and the restoration work carried out at Wentworth Castle and its gardens.

York Minster Revealed

Asked to select a single project that she recalls with affection Fiona plumps for York Minster Revealed and in particular the restoration of the Great East Window. "It is fantastic now, absolutely glorious," she says.

Yorkshire and Humber Biodiversity Forum

An achievement that gives her particular pride is the establishment of the Yorkshire and Humber Biodiversity Forum that brings together representatives of principal environmental, wildlife and national park bodies to discuss natural heritage issues. This, she says, has many benefits and leads to stronger projects coming forward.

Leeds Bicentenary Transformation Project

Among the very many grant awards there is one that holds a particular resonance for Fiona. This was the Leeds Bicentenary Transformation Project run by Leeds West Indian Centre Charitable Trust to commemorate two centuries since the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade.

Her academic background was focused on slavery research and now, having left HLF, she will be devoting more of her time to charitable work with anti-trafficking organisations.



Front view of The Station. Richmondshire Building Preservation Trust

Richmond Station Regeneration Project





York Minster

York Minster Revealed