



## Connected Coast Chair's Update: December 2023

November saw our exhibition events take place at Haven Holiday Park in Skegness and at Mablethorpe Library.

The events gave people the opportunity to drop in and find out more about the multi-million pound investment and exciting projects that are bringing transformational improvements to Skegness and Mablethorpe. At both events, project leads and board members were on hand to speak to people about the work that is taking place, and the plans for the coming year. I was also pleased to give a presentation on the progress to date.

Before both events opened to the public, we welcomed students from Skegness TEC to the Skegness event, and from Springwell Alternative Academy Mablethorpe and Louth Academy to the Mablethorpe event. The students joined us to find out more about the projects and share their thoughts. It was great to hear the young people's ideas and feedback.



*Matt Warman, MP for Boston and Skegness officially opened the Skegness exhibition event*





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*The Skegness Exhibition Event, which took place on Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> November at Haven Holiday Park in Skegness*





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*The Mablethorpe Exhibition Event took place on Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> November at Mablethorpe Library*



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At both events, we shared our annual reports for Skegness and Mablethorpe for 2023 which detail what we've achieved over the last year, and what is still to come. You can read these here: [Document Library - Connected Coast](#)



We also unveiled films we have made about the progress and plans in Skegness and Mablethorpe, as told via interviews with Victoria Atkins MP, Matt Warman MP, and Cllr Leyland, Leader of East Lindsey District Council, along with a number of councillors, and project leads, and myself. You can watch all our films on our new YouTube channel here: <http://www.youtube.com/@ConnectedCoast-or5bo>

Thank you to everyone who joined us at our exhibition events, and thanks too to all the project leads and board members who took part in the events. We would welcome your feedback on the events, and any ideas for future such events – please do get in touch with the team: [Connected.Coast@e-lindsey.gov.uk](mailto:Connected.Coast@e-lindsey.gov.uk)

#### Skegness Railway Station



Work has now begun on phase 1 of the transformational redevelopment at Skegness Railway Station.

Phase 1 works will bring the unused building at the front of the station back into use after many years. The building will be transformed into new customer areas and new retail units. Further phases of works will continue throughout 2024.



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The works will be carried out by the principal contractor Taziker Ltd and managed by EMR. Throughout the duration of the works, the station will be open as normal to any customers wishing to travel to / from Skegness railway station.

£3.3 million is being invested at Skegness railway station, funded by the Towns Fund through Connected Coast, Network Rail and East Midlands Railway (EMR).

The phase one works that are now starting are the first step towards achieving the ambitions for the railway station which will ultimately see more footfall and use in the years to come.

#### **Skegness Town Centre Transformation**

Work has also begun on the Town Centre Transformation in Skegness.

This winter, the first projects will be delivered on Lumley Road. Heritage Lincolnshire has been working with local businesses and architects to gain planning permission for seven reinstated shopfronts; four have their permissions and are now moving onsite.

At Tower Gardens, work to restore the historic pleasure garden to its former glory through a scheme of hard landscaping and planting is set to start on site in the coming weeks. The plans for the park will also see work to improve accessibility.

The Town Centre Transformation works are set to significantly enhance Skegness, restoring building shopfronts, rejuvenating Tower Gardens, creating better public realm and street scenes, and ultimately, revitalising the town.



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*The plans for Tower Gardens*

### **National Trust Sandilands**

In December, East Lindsey District Council granted planning permission to National Trust Sandilands' plans to create a wetland nature reserve and multi-purpose visitor hub at Sandilands, with work set to begin in 2024.

The planning approval is a major step forward in creating a haven for nature on the Lincolnshire Coast. The carbon-neutral visitor welcome building at the northern tip of the reserve will be designed to complement the nature reserve and surrounding area. This building will include a café and a community space. There will also be nearby changing place facilities suitable for children and adults with accessibility needs

The plans also include forming wetland wildlife habitats with open water, islands, reedbeds and ponds, complete with walkways and boardwalks.

There will be swathes of grasslands and plenty of sand-dunes to encourage local wildlife and migratory birds to settle, rest and populate. Work on the project is expected to be completed by the end of 2025.

Find out more about Sandilands here: [Sandilands | Lincolnshire | National Trust](#)



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*An artist impression of the new welcome hub at Sandilands, © Jonathan Hendry Architects*

In the meantime, Sandilands is a great place to visit this winter, with wellness walks on offer for people who would like to explore the area. You can find out more about what's happening at Sandilands here: [Christmas at Sandilands Nature Reserve | National Trust](#). Visitors to the site can also visit Sandidunes, a temporary outdoor café which operates throughout the year.



*Sandidunes, the temporary outdoor café at National Trust Sandilands – image © National Trust*



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#### Levelling Up - Alford Windmill tour

The trustees of Alford Windmill recently took part in a familiarisation visit as part of the work to restore the Grade I listed windmill as a prominent landmark and visitor attraction.

During the visit, the trustees spent time at Denver Windmill a successfully restored mill in Downham Market, Norfolk, speaking to the owner and operator of the mill and visiting its associated businesses, bar, and holiday lets. The tour moved onto Tim Whiting's Suffolk Millwrights workshop. Tim is one of the last remaining traditional millwrights in the UK and he and his small team specialise in the restoration, repair, and maintenance of the country's remaining windmills.

Alford Windmill is benefiting from £1.1M in Levelling Up funding which will see the mill restored and reopened as a major attraction, including a new visitor experience, café, and shop.

The windmill is one of three projects to benefit from major capital investment from East Lindsey District Council's Lincolnshire Wolds Culture and Heritage programme. The programme includes ambitious regeneration schemes at Alford Windmill, Alford Manor House, and Spilsby Sessions House. The three historic sites are set to benefit from a total of £8 million in Levelling Up funding from the Government.

You can find out more about the programme and the three projects at [Levelling Up - East Lindsey District Council \(e-lindsey.gov.uk\)](https://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk)



#### UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Local businesses and skills providers in the South and East Lincolnshire sub-region can now apply for grants that will support the growth of jobs and higher pay in our area. The





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available grants, through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), will have an emphasis on two themes - digital and employment skills, and local business skills needs.

The minimum grant award for theme one is £25,000, with no maximum level and the minimum grant for theme two is £20,000 with a maximum of £150,000.

More information can be found here: <https://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/article/25031/People-Skills-UK-Shared-Prosperity-Fund>

The announcement of the new grants comes after further UK Shared Prosperity and Rural Prosperity Funds (UKSPF/REPF) were awarded in East Lindsey. This includes:

- **Magna Vitae - International Cultural Exchange Programme** - To develop and deliver an International Cultural Exchange Programme in partnership with the International People's College (IPC), Denmark and the British Embassy in Copenhagen.



- **National Trust Sandilands - Sandilands Connects** - The Sandilands Connects project complements the Towns Fund investment and will specifically focus on expanding the space available to the public and accessibility on the Sandilands site. It will be free at the point of access to all residents of East Lindsey (no requirement for a National Trust membership).

### **New Board Member**

We've been pleased to welcome a new member to the Connected Coast board. Paul McCooley is a Director at Duncan & Toplis and has led the Skegness office since 2013. Having graduated from University College Dublin, Paul undertook his professional training in Dublin qualifying as a Chartered Accountant in February 2000 before working in his home town of Monaghan until he moved to Lincolnshire in 2007. Paul has become involved in many local groups including becoming a director of two local charities, treasurer and now Chair of Skegness Area Business Chamber.





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### New Culture Board

The South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership has held the first meeting of a new, culture board which will help to create a more vibrant and dynamic arts, cultural and heritage offer for residents and visitors.

One of the key roles of the board will be to lead on the Partnership's ambitious three-year National Portfolio Organisation programme, a £2million Arts Council England funded programme to support art, culture, heritage and creativity across the whole of the Partnership area. All board members also have the responsibility to champion the Boston and East Lindsey Cultural Framework, as well as supporting its future development and expansion into South Holland, which is now under commission.







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### Long Term Plan for Towns



It was recently announced by the Government that Skegness will receive a further £20M in funding through the Long Term Plan for Towns. This investment together with the Town Deal projects, will create new opportunities for Skegness and strengthen and improve what we have to offer for local people and visitors.

To help to shape the long term plan for Skegness – which will be submitted to the government to access the funding – the public is invited to share their ideas around three themes:

- Safety and security
- High Streets, heritage, and regeneration:
- Transport and connectivity.

Please do share your thoughts with us here: [Long Term Plan for Towns - Connected Coast](#)

### Quebec Road, Mablethorpe

Mablethorpe is set to see Quebec Road improved in the New Year. The works, which are separate to our Towns Fund work and are being delivered by Lincolnshire County Council, will be carried out on Quebec Road between Golf Road and North End and will begin on Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> January with a scheduled end date of Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> February subject to suitable weather or unforeseen circumstances. There will be a 24-hour road closure in place throughout the works programme with a diversion route via North End, Kent Avenue, Theddlethorpe Road, Alford Road, Golf Road and vice versa.

Find out more here: [Footpath rebuild for Mablethorpe – Lincolnshire County Council](#)

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### A year of progress



Over the last twelve months, we have seen good progress across all of our projects. In Mablethorpe, the Campus for Future Living and the Station Leisure and Learning Centre got under way and these developments are taking shape rapidly. We also got on site at the Colonnade, and in Skegness, improvements have started at the railway station.

The year also saw more investment announced for our

area, with £8M Levelling Up awarded to East Lindsey, and £5M Cultural Development Funding for Skegness. More recently, the town was also confirmed as a recipient of a further £20M through the Long Term Plan for Towns.

We can look forward to even more progress in 2024 when work will begin on the new Skegness Learning Campus – an economic game changer for the area. We will also see the start of improvements at the Embassy Theatre, and Skegness Pier. It is set to be another exciting year for our connected coast, bringing many benefits for people who live and visit here.

Thank you for all your interest and support in 2023. I wish you a very merry Christmas, and a happy 2024.

\*Would you like to find out more about any of the projects in this update? Please do get in touch with us: [Connected.Coast@e-lindsey.gov.uk](mailto:Connected.Coast@e-lindsey.gov.uk)



Chris Baron  
Chair, Connected Coast Town Deal Board





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