CONNECTED COAST
BUILDING TO EMPOWER COMMUNITIES

Connected Coast Board
Minutes of Meeting Held on 29 May 2026 at 10:30am
Venue: Online via Microsoft Teams

Attendance:

Present:
Chris Baron (Chair) – Former Director of Butlins
Claire Draper (Vice Chair) – Finance Director at Fantasy Island
Richard Tice – MP for Boston and Skegness
Cllr Steve Kirk – Portfolio Holder for Coastal Economy at ELDC
Cllr Adrian Findley – Skegness Town Council
Cllr Rueben Robinson – Mablethorpe County Councillor
Ron Zaunbrecher – Lincolnshire Coast General Manager for National Trust
Paul McCooey – Director of Duncan and Toplis
Jacqui Bunce – NHS Integrated Care Board
James Brindle – Executive Director of Magna Vitae
Deborah Higton – Environment Agency
Alice Ullathorne – Senior Project Officer of Heritage Lincolnshire
Julie Corden – Director of Regional Engagement at University of Lincoln
Emma Tatlow – CEO of Active Lincolnshire
Tim Allen – Development Advice Team Leader for Historic England
Tracey Stringfellow – CEO of Heritage Lincolnshire
Adrian Benjamin - Chair of the Sutton on Sea Residents Association

Observers and officer support:
Georgia Thompson Lincolnshire Coast 2100+,
Bonnie Mitchell, Saskia Zablockyj, Jon Burgess – East Lindsey District Council (ELDC)

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1 Welcome & Apologies for Absence

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. The Board noted the attendance of Bonnie Mitchell, Programme Manager for Mablethorpe and Skegness Pride in Place, and Saskia Zablockyj, Programme Coordinator.

2 Declarations of Interest

No new declarations of interest were made.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and were agreed as an accurate record, subject to one amendment in the declarations of interest section. The Board noted that a declaration had been incorrectly attributed and should have referred to Freddie rather than Chris Baron representing Lindum.

4 Matters Arising

The Board reviewed outstanding matters arising. It was confirmed that draft designs and indicative costs for project signage had now been provided by MG and that implementation would be progressed with the preferred supplier and relevant projects. The Board was also advised that a new preferred bidder had been identified for the former Millennium College site in Skegness and that leasehold negotiations were underway. It was noted that a change of use application would be required to convert the site from educational use to serviced office accommodation. Members highlighted the potential value of including incubator-style space for new businesses and requested that this possibility be explored with the operator.

ELDC officers advised they had followed with the Council's Section 151 Officer on the treatment of any interest being accrued on held programme funds. It was confirmed that this was not available to support wider programme investment or delivery. Interest foregone or accrued on external grant payments is managed in the round by the local authority. Individual schemes are not charged for payments made in advance of the Central Government funding being received, or increased where the funding contribution is received in advance to cover accrued interest.

5 Communications

The Board noted the communications report circulated in advance of the meeting. Members raised concerns regarding the timeliness and consistency of communications, particularly where the Board became aware of significant project developments through external media rather than internal channels.

Specific concerns were raised regarding communications around the MobiHub and Seaview Colonnade. The Board also noted the lack of communications activity to date in relation to the street scene operatives funded by the Skegness Neighbourhood Board under Pride in Place funds.

It was agreed that Jon Burgess would work with the communications team to improve advance notification of project-related communications and ensure the Board was kept better informed.

6 Towns Deal Updates

a) Programme Update

The Board received an update on programme finances and outputs. It was noted that up to £100,000 had previously been reallocated from the Multi-User Trail project to the Tech Campus project, subject to reconciliation of final claims and confirmation of the final uplift required.

Members also noted that government reporting requirements had changed and that programme performance was now being reported against a revised set of national indicators rather than the original full business case outputs. While acknowledging this requirement, the Board requested that local monitoring should continue to include performance against the original outputs and outcomes committed to within the business cases.

The Board further discussed the importance of post-project evaluation and learning.

b) Project Updates

Rail Interchange: The Board discussed ongoing concerns regarding rail services to Skegness. The Board agreed that representations should be made directly to East Midlands Railway (EMR) and supported a formal letter seeking urgent engagement.
The Board also received an update on the station forecourt and taxi arrangements. It was reported that EMR currently intended to retain the area for pick-up and drop-off only once the construction compound was removed, with waiting taxis expected to use a rank across the road. Members expressed concern regarding accessibility, passenger convenience and the possible use of parts of the forecourt for staff parking. Jon Burgess agreed to continue discussions with EMR and provide a further update.

Update provided post meeting: The EMR station staff parking is at the end of the canopy, this is more than adequate for existing staff requirements, there is no further extension proposed for EMR station staff parking. The inclusion of parking to the front of the station would be for the staff or customers of the new station facilities, the start-up offices, community café, and/or retail units.

Members queried why several risk items for the interchange remained marked red despite project progress. It was confirmed that these appeared to be legacy ratings linked to earlier contractual issues and that the ratings would be reviewed and updated in the next report.

Police Training College: The Board discussed concerns regarding the level of use being made of the Police Training College in comparison with the expectations attached to the original funding award. Members queried the impact and benefits the project was delivering and whether it was meeting the obligations of its contract. It was agreed that the relevant contract terms should be reviewed and that further enquiries should be made, initially in a constructive manner, regarding the future intentions for the site.

National Trust Sandilands: The Board discussed references in project documents to flooding. Deborah Higton explained that developers continued to be required to provide an appropriate standard of flood protection consistent with the existing level of defence, with additional requirements depending on the duration and nature of the development.

It was reported that recruitment had progressed well, with ranger, countryside management and site management roles now in place, and that the next step would be completion of the welcome team. Members were advised that the on-site café concession had been signed with Dow and Barlow. An official opening was planned for 24 September 2026, with invitations to follow. Members noted that there remained a significant amount of unclaimed grant against the project and requested a further financial update at a future meeting.

Skegness College and Tec Campus: The Board noted the positive reported outcomes but requested that future reporting should include year-on-year comparison data.

Skegness Foreshore (inc Culture House): The Board welcomed confirmation that Arts Council England funding for the Culture House was now progressing, subject to conditions relating to design development and monitoring. It was reported that revised programme and budget work was underway and that the intention remained to deliver an amphitheatre and infrastructure for pop-up events and kiosks.

James Brindle reported positively on recent user engagement workshops. The Board also reiterated the expectation that the agreed Changing Places toilet provision would remain part of the scheme.

In relation to the former Festival Pavilion site, the Board noted that Chipperfields had formally withdrawn their interest. The site had therefore been remarketed through an expression of interest process, with a view to identifying a new preferred bidder. It was also confirmed that £600,000 had previously been allocated to support pedestrianisation of the Scarborough Esplanade area, leaving a smaller residual balance yet to be committed.

Members also noted that the Council was considering further work to make other foreshore plots more investment ready.

Seaview Colonnade: James Brindle advised that staffing arrangements were nearing completion and that a dedicated events programmer and communications support were now in place. It was noted that the venue had experienced strong use during a recent busy weekend and that the organisation was now focused on longer-term programme development. The Board also discussed the limitations of the current kitchen provision and noted that any enhancement would need to be considered within existing constraints. The Board recorded its appreciation to Kristina Willoughby for her work on maintaining an events programme at the Colonnade.

Mobi Hub

The proposed operator relocation is on track for completion over the next two months, with an opening event for the new facility provisionally scheduled for the 31st July. It was confirmed that Michelle Gant and Matthew Hogan are in contact to discuss communications in relation to include an update on the Council's plans for the current town centre site. A feasibility study is due to complete by September to cover options analysis on the site.

7 Pride in Place Programme Update

a) Skegness

It was reported that the Skegness Neighbourhood Board would meet again the following week to agree the decision-making process for considering submitted business cases. Members discussed the importance of visible communications and branding, particularly in relation to the newly funded street cleansing / ranger activity.

It was confirmed that updated government branding guidance had now been issued and that this would be used to improve consistency of messaging and visibility. Members stressed the need for clearer and more frequent public communication.

The Board also questioned the programme name "Pride in Place". Members noted the potential for public misunderstanding of the name. It was confirmed, however, that the funding stream name and government branding requirements would need to be followed formally.

b) Mablethorpe

Members were advised that a three-week public call for a Chair would open the following week, with formal government confirmation of the appointment required by 17 July 2026. It was noted that the appointed Chair could not be an elected official and would require endorsement through the relevant parliamentary process.

The Board received an update on the Mablethorpe Pride in Place programme. It was reported that discussions with government had resulted in verbal agreement to amend the programme boundary so that it more closely aligned with the recognised local geography and administrative boundary.

The Board also noted that external support had been commissioned to assist with preparation of the local plan, which would need to be completed by the end of November

2026. A community event was planned for the following week at the Campus for Future Living, with sessions for elected members and the wider community.

8 Other Programmes and Project Funds Updates

a) Levelling Up Fund Round 2

No points were raised about this funding at the meeting.

b) Cultural Development Fund

No further points were raised about this funding at the meeting.

c) East Lindsey Investment Fund

Members requested that future reports should include greater detail on projects supported through the East Lindsey Investment Fund and related programmes.

d) NPO Arts Council Funding

No points were raised about this funding at the meeting.

e) UK Town of Culture 2028

In relation to the UK Town of Culture process, members noted that no update had yet been received on the timing of the expected shortlist announcement.

Emma Tatlow updated the Board on a forthcoming Sport England submission, which was due to be submitted on 1 June 2026. The proposed programme would involve approximately £1.3million funding to March 2028 across Skegness, Mablethorpe (including Sutton-on-Sea), Alford and Wainfleet, alongside district-wide learning. Emma Tatlow agreed to share summary documents, including a plan-on-a-page and theory of change, to support discussion at upcoming Pride in Place meetings.

The Board also noted an update regarding the developing county-wide windmill strategy, with further information expected through Lincolnshire County Council scrutiny arrangements.

9 Actions and Follow-Up

1. Jon Burgess to improve internal notification of key communications so that the Board was informed in advance of significant announcements or issues.
2. Jon Burgess to provide local monitoring information against original project outputs in addition to the revised government output framework.
3. Jon Burgess to progress implementation of project signage with MG.
4. Jon Burgess to review the relevant contract with Lincolnshire Police.
5. The Chair to issue a formal letter to East Midlands Railway and seek a meeting regarding rail capacity and service concerns.
6. Jon Burgess to continue discussions with EMR regarding forecourt arrangements, taxi access and possible staff parking at Skegness station.
7. Jon Burgess to provide further information on East Lindsey Investment Fund allocations and wider related funding streams, including tourism and events funding.
8. Emma Tatlow to circulate summary information on the Sport England programme and make enquiries regarding the Football Foundation funding issue raised in relation to Sutton-on-Sea.
9. Jon Burgess to explore holding the next Board meeting in person at Sandilands, subject to arrangements with the National Trust.

10 Any Other Business

Georgia Thompson advised the Board that the Coastal Investment Plan for Lincs Coast 2100+ had now been published and that a new website was available for members wishing to review the material and engage further on the long-term coastal challenges and opportunities facing the area.

11 Date and Location of Next Meeting

The Board noted that the next meeting would, if possible, be arranged as an in-person meeting at Sandilands, subject to confirmation.

12 Meeting Close

The Chair thanked attendees for contributions and closed the meeting at 12:02pm.