



Connected Coast Board
Minutes of Meeting Held on 3 March 2026 at 2pm
Venue - Skegness College, Wainfleet Road, Skegness & via Teams

Attendance:-

Present: Chris Baron (Chair); Jon Burgess, Michelle Gant, Cllr Steve Kirk, Cllr Adrian Findley, Susan Lowe, Joanne Davison, Clive Hillcoat, Alice Eyre, Ann Hardy, Tom Mukherjee-Neale, Ron Zaunbrecher, Chris Lilley, Paul McCooey, Freddie Chambers, Jacqui Bunce, Maria Cotton, Claire Draper and James Brindle.

1 Welcome & Apologies for Absence

CB welcomed everyone to the Meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Robert Parker, Claire Foster, Tracy Stringfellow, Emma Tatlow and Cllr Carl Tebbutt.

2 Declarations of Interest

The Chair restated his standing declaration relating to Ready for Linden, confirming there were no changes since the last meeting. Claire Draper declared an interest in Magna Vitae and it was noted that James Brindle held a related organisational connection. The Board acknowledged these declarations, with no concerns raised regarding participation in any agenda items.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 10 December 2025

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and approved as a true record.

4 Matters Arising

The Board received an update on the ongoing commercial negotiations for the former Skegness College building. The property team continued dialogue with the prospective operator, with no issues of concern identified at this stage. A further update would be provided at the next meeting.

Draft designs and indicative costs for project signage and permanent plaques had been prepared. These would be implemented across completed Towns Fund projects to provide consistent visibility and branding.

The February interim Board newsletter was issued as part of the enhanced communications approach. Members were invited to provide suggestions for content in future editions.

Progress continued on recruitment for the Skegness Neighbourhood Board Project Manager, with interviews expected to take place later in March.

5 Communications

The communications update covered activity from November 2025 to February 2026. The opening of the new Skegness College campus generated extensive media interest across local and regional outlets, supported by strong attendance at the launch event.

The Board noted the positive reception to the December Chair's Update and the newly introduced monthly e-newsletter for Board members. Early feedback suggested that the regular updates improved visibility of programme milestones.

Digital engagement continued to rise, with strong social media performance, particularly around Pride in Place content. Website analytics showed increased traffic to project pages, especially those for Seaview Colonnade and Sandilands.

Connected Coast hosted a stand at the East Lincs Expo and supported the Skegness College launch event, with good attendance and constructive engagement with local residents, stakeholders and businesses.

6 Town Deal Update

(a) Programme Update

Seven of the thirteen Towns Fund projects across Skegness and Mablethorpe had reached practical completion. The remaining schemes continued to progress well, with the Skegness Foreshore project forecast to complete by March 2027 within the extended delivery window.

Government changes to monitoring requirements were noted. From April 2026, the Towns Fund and Levelling Up Fund Round 2 would report under the Local Regeneration Fund, requiring programme-level reporting against a revised indicator set.

The Board reconfirmed its support for reallocating up to £100k from the Multi-User Trail underspend to the Skegness College S278 works, acknowledging that this did not alter the approved outputs.

(b) Project Updates

Skegness TEC Campus - The new Skegness TEC campus represented a major milestone for post-16 education in the area. The official opening on 23 January was well attended and widely covered in the media. Early indications showed a 50% increase in student enrolments compared to the previous academic year, attributed to improved facilities, expanded curriculum options and enhanced employer engagement. The project was progressing through its final claims stage, including the confirmed virement from the Multi-User Trail underspend.

Skegness Interchange - Work on the Skegness Interchange had resumed momentum following conclusion of the Phase 2 procurement process. Construction was expected to restart by the end of March. A full-and-final settlement with the previous contractor resolved outstanding liabilities and improved financial certainty. Additional DfT funding was secured, the Fire Strategy was approved and remedial works on the Red Star building were completed to enable continued safe use during construction.

Town Centre Transformation - Skegness - The transformation programme continued to deliver tangible improvements in Skegness town centre. The Board noted the cumulative achievements, including nearly 4,000 sqm of commercial floorspace improved, substantial match funding secured and multiple vacant buildings brought back into use. The creation or safeguarding of almost 70 local jobs highlighted the positive economic impact of the scheme.

Skegness Foreshore - Although progress on the Esplanade cultural elements remained paused pending Arts Council match-funding decisions, wider commercial interest in the Foreshore continued. Negotiations were ongoing with prospective operators for other plots and officers continued to engage with partners to maintain momentum.

Campus for Future Living, Mablethorpe - The Campus continued to evolve as a community-focused health and innovation hub. A range of activities were already taking place across wellbeing, health, education and community research. LPFT's planned delivery of mental health services would significantly enhance local provision. The Campus was developing strong partnerships with universities, local colleges and health organisations to bring forward pilot work and support local workforce development.

Leisure & Learning Hub, Mablethorpe - Membership levels remained strong at over 1,400 active users, significantly exceeding initial projections. The future transition of operations to Parkwood Leisure in 2027 was seen as an opportunity to maintain service quality. Retention initiatives already in place included flexible membership options, targeted outreach and removal of joining fees to support inclusion.

Town Centre Transformation - Mablethorpe - Delivery of Town Centre Transformation works continued with all funding allocated and final public realm elements being implemented. Progress included the improvement of 1,784 sqm of commercial floorspace, strong business participation and the revitalisation of previously underused retail units.

Sandilands - National Trust - The Sandilands project had made significant progress, with contractors resolving previous drainage challenges. Work continued on the café building, including roof installation and preparation for PV systems. The Rangers' Base was nearing handover and installation of EV charging infrastructure was ready. The wetland habitat continued to establish positively.

Seaview Colonnade - Footfall and engagement remained strong at Seaview Colonnade. The site had received external recognition and was delivering a robust programme of events. Although earlier commercial negotiations had concluded, new discussions with a prospective operator were underway. In the interim, the Council would continue to manage activities and programming.

MobiHub - Mablethorpe - Legal completion for the MobiHub project had been achieved. The Board noted that community expectations were high and often ahead of formal delivery milestones. Officers would circulate an updated timeline covering site clearance, seasonal constraints and anticipated future phases once confirmed.

7 Sub Group Updates (Pride in Place)

(a) Mablethorpe

Officers updated the Board on Government requirements for MP endorsement relating to Pride in Place Board membership and boundary. Work was underway to prepare boundary options by July to allow submission of the final programme plan by November. Members expressed concern that the current boundary excluded parts of the LN12 area, which could restrict local representation. Engagement activity was progressing strongly, including brand development, website creation and preparation of toolkits. Members highlighted the need to ensure that printed communications were used to reach residents with limited digital access.

(b) Skegness

The Board considered the updated Pride in Place guidance, which placed greater emphasis on community-led decision-making, participatory budgeting, enhanced safety measures and ensuring that at least 51% of Board members live or work within the geographic boundary. The importance of demographic representation was reaffirmed. To support delivery, the Board approved creation of Programme Manager and Programme Coordinator roles, shared equally with Mablethorpe.

Twenty-eight Expressions of Interest had been received and assessed. Projects scoring 21 or above would progress through a proportionality-based business case process. A support session for applicants was scheduled for 25 February. The rollout of Street Scene operatives was discussed, with members emphasising the need for clear branding, strong public communications and a monthly work plan addressing priority hotspots.

8 Young People Engagement Report

The Board reviewed the comprehensive youth engagement paper. Population data indicated that young people form a significant proportion of local residents, with 18% of Skegness (3,836 individuals) and 39% of Mablethorpe (1,095 individuals) aged 0-17. Engagement during 2025 involved over 300 young people through activities at Skegness Grammar School, with more than 100 additional participants involved in 2024 via commissioned YMCA outreach and school-based work. Further feedback was gathered at public events such as East Coast Pride.

The Engaging People Co provided analysis of successful youth engagement methods, highlighting the effectiveness of working through trusted local organisations - youth groups, schools, sports clubs, charities and arts groups. Interactive activities such as creative workshops, sports sessions and informal gatherings consistently generated high participation. Peer-to-peer engagement delivered by trained and paid student researchers was shown to be highly effective in gathering candid insight.

The Board noted wider work underway, including the Skegness Aspiration Project, which focused on early years development, pathways into skilled employment, enrichment opportunities and health inequalities. In Mablethorpe, a Youth Leaders Forum had been established to progress priorities identified through the CHILL project. Engagement led by the Lincolnshire Community & Voluntary Partnership also reached over 650 local residents, including substantial numbers of young people.

The new TEC campus, with a 50% uplift in enrolment, created significant opportunities for further youth engagement. The Board agreed that future Pride in Place delivery should prioritise engagement with young people and ensure funding was available to support this.

9 Other Programme & Project Funds

Progress continued on Spilsby Sessions House, with planning consent for internal ceiling works reducing project risks. An additional £28,500 in Heritage at Risk funding had been secured. Handover remained expected in Spring 2027, although a funding shortfall for internal fit-out work remained under review.

Alford Manor House continued to progress positively with expected handover in Autumn 2026. Additional grants had been secured to support heritage restoration and cultural programming.

The East Lindsey Investment Fund programmes were fully allocated, delivering support across grassroots community projects, Pride in Place grant schemes, social isolation interventions and conservation area appraisals. Digital engagement and wellbeing initiatives continued to demonstrate strong impact.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Programme had entered a transitional year, with an extension granted by Government for reporting purposes. Achievements included £6.8m in match funding secured, 71 community facilities supported, 106 businesses assisted, 205 jobs created and 263 residents supported into qualifications or employment.

Arts Council NPO funding for the Storytellers programme had been extended and an application had been submitted for 2027/28. Work continued on preparation of a Town of Culture 2028 Expression of Interest for Skegness.

10 Combined County & Local Government Review

The Board noted the ongoing public consultation on the Combined County and Local Government Review. Board Chairs may invite representatives from the Mayoral Office to attend meetings as observers to support alignment with regional delivery priorities.

11 Any Other Business

CB raised a request for the accountable body to confirm the treatment of interest being accrued by the Council on programme funds paid by Government. JB/MC agreed to raise this with the Council's S151 Officer for clarification.

The National Trust shared the tender pack for the Sandilands café operator, which would be circulated with the minutes. Members noted continuing challenges with hybrid meeting audio quality and agreed to explore alternative layouts and improved microphone arrangements.

The Board also discussed ongoing work to prepare the Town of Culture 2028 Expression of Interest.

Recorded thanks went to Sandra Watson for her service to Connected Coast. Sandra had now left ELDC.

12 Date of Next Meeting

Friday 29 May 2026 at 10:30am. Further dates and future meeting frequency would be confirmed.