

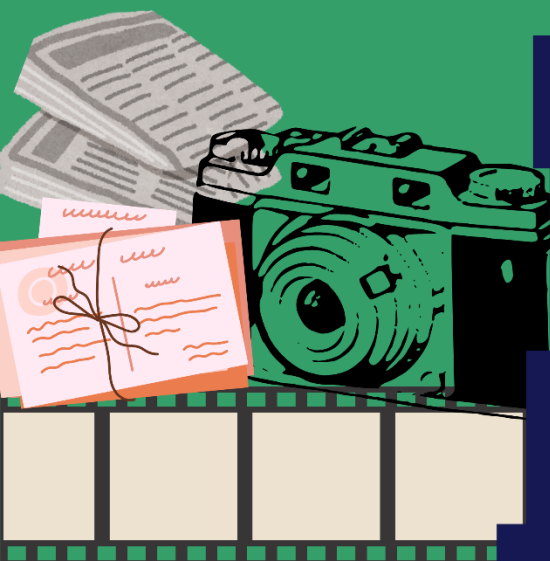


# #DYNAMIC COLLECTIONS:

Documenting Northern Lincolnshire's  
Local History

Mid-Point  
Evaluation Report

January 2025



**IPC**  
IRVING  
PATRICK  
CONSULTING

**Irving Patrick Consulting LTD**

13 Beaumont Fee, Lincoln, LN1 1UH

T: 01522 452254

E: [Info@IrvingPatrick.co.uk](mailto:Info@IrvingPatrick.co.uk)

Irving Patrick Consulting Ltd is a company registered in England and Wales (Company No. 12935774)  
18 Northgate, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 7BJ.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Dynamic Collections is an National Lottery Heritage Fund initiative which was active between February 2022 and April 2023. The aim of the programme is to support organisations working on engagement, re-interpretation and improving the management of their collections.

National Lottery Heritage Fund define a dynamic collection as one that:

- is used by, and meaningful to, a wider range of people.
- enables different perspectives to be heard and a variety of stories to be told.
- is actively managed and reviewed.<sup>1</sup>

In June 2023 it was announced that North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire Museums had been awarded almost £250,000 through the Dynamic Collections programme, to facilitate the research and digitisation of 90,000 items in the local history collections.

North Lincolnshire Museums (NLMs) is operated by North Lincolnshire Council and operates two Accredited Museums: North Lincolnshire Museum and Normanby Hall Country Park. The purpose of NLMs is to Collect and Display, Entertain and Enjoy, Inspire and Inform.

North East Lincolnshire Museums (NELMs) is operated by North East Lincolnshire Council and the accredited Museum is the Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre. The purpose of NELMs is to collect, document, conserve, interpret and exhibit material evidence which relates to the cultural, social, economic and environmental history of the area.

Both NLMs and NELMs are partners in the Humber Museums Partnership, a consortium Arts Council England funded National Portfolio Organisation. They have collections representing the rich history of Northern Lincolnshire from its geographical origins to the modern day.

The project aims to actively engage volunteers, including The Museum Makers (a group for adults with additional needs), in the process of documenting and interpreting items of local importance including photographic and ephemera collections.

As well as providing new volunteering opportunities, the project will establish a new heritage focused group for adults with additional needs at the Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre, with residents researching and interpreting the local history collections.

Further public engagement will result from the collections being made accessible via the North Lincolnshire Museum and Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre websites.

The project will see two Project Officers recruit Project Volunteers from priority audiences to research, document and interpret the collections, opening up access to those collections for local communities and beyond.

The project is led by North Lincolnshire Museums, with North East Lincolnshire Museums jointly responsible for the management and delivery of the project.

The project is now at its mid-point and is due to be complete in December 2025.

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<sup>1</sup> NATIONAL LOTTERY HERITAGE FUND : Dynamic Collections [internet]. Available online: [Dynamic Collections | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)

## 1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This mid-term report was prepared using data collected up to the end of December 2024. The project is due to complete in December 2025, when a final summative report will be produced.

The project evaluation was undertaken by Irving Patrick Consulting Ltd using data collected by North Lincolnshire Museums and North East Lincolnshire Museums.

The evaluation measures the extent to which the project has met its intended outcomes for **heritage, people** and **communities**, and the methods of working that contributed or affected that success. This report is based on an analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, comprising:

- Data collected by North Lincolnshire Museums and North East Lincolnshire Museums to provide a baseline for evaluation
- Feedback from the Project Volunteers
- Feedback from the Project Officers
- Project documentation, including publicity materials and reports
- Observation Sessions.

The Evaluation Framework, issued in April 2024, sets out in more detail the project context, intended project outcomes, and methodology for the evaluation.

This summary report should be read in conjunction with the regular progress reports submitted by the client team to National Lottery Heritage Fund.

## 1.2 WHERE WE ARE NOW

The project has made significant strides towards achieving the Approved Purposes. A summary of progress from Permission to Start to December 2024 is included below:

### 2023-24 Q2

#### *Recruitment*

- Two full-time Project Officers appointed (one at each partner museum).

#### *Collections Management*

- North Lincolnshire Museum (NLM) purchased the bulk upload tool for CollectionsIndex+ CMS.

#### *Exhibitions & Heritage Interpretation*

- Planning initiated for the migration of the NLM Image Archive.

### 2023-24 Q3

#### *Recruitment*

- Project Officers Jenny Kirton (NLM) and Alistair Eachus (NELM) take up posts (December 2023)

#### *Volunteer Recruitment*

- Planning for Museum Makers sessions at NLM.

- Recruitment strategy developed for volunteers, including a volunteer open day (January 2024).
- Planning to establish Heritage Heroes, a new group for adults with additional needs at Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre (GFHC).

#### *Collections Management*

- Local history collections cataloguing begins (69 object records enhanced).
- Initial planning for exhibitions and gallery updates.

### 2023-24 Q4

#### *Volunteer Recruitment*

- Volunteer Open Days held (January 24-25, 2024) at GFHC and NLM.
- Heritage Heroes group launched (March 27, 2024) with 12 attendees.
- 8 Museum Makers volunteers began weekly sessions at NLM.

#### *Training & Community Engagement*

- Training for volunteers included collections care, object handling, and cataloguing.
- Museum Makers sessions focused on the 1970s, linking to the Flixborough Nypro Disaster exhibition.

#### *Collections Management*

- NLM: 44 object records edited; 1,322 images linked to object records.
- NLM & NELMS: Ephemera rationalisation work initiated at both museums.

#### *Exhibitions & Heritage Interpretation*

- Research commenced for two co-curated exhibitions (NLM & NELM).
- Feedback collected from Heritage Heroes to guide gallery accessibility updates.

### 2024-25 Q1

#### *Engagement Activities*

- Heritage Heroes: 12 weekly sessions held; attendees designed their group logo. Sessions included exhibition contributions & artwork creation.
- Museum Makers: Weekly sessions continue. Explored oral histories, local folklore, and historical research. Attendees created a display of their artwork in the Community Gallery.
- Volunteers received database training on CollectionsIndex+, manual handling & object photography.

#### *Collections Management*

- Volunteers collated data for 926 object records from ephemera collections.
- 16 images linked to object records on CollectionsIndex+.

#### *Exhibitions & Heritage Interpretation*

- Heritage Heroes contributed to multiple exhibitions, including the Hometown Heroes (July 2024) at GFHC.
- Oral history collecting project planned for LGBTQIA+ representation.

## 2024-25 Q2

### *Engagement Activities*

- Museum Makers & Heritage Heroes sessions continue.
- Peter Foster (Volunteer) delivered a talk on objects he researched (17 July 2024).
- Wild Woodcraft Fire-Lighting Workshop held (11 September 2024).
- Heritage Heroes helped evaluate new sensory backpacks at GFHC.

### *Exhibitions & Heritage Interpretation*

- Research and panel design for upcoming exhibitions.
- Volunteers developed new gallery trails (including a sensory trail).

### *Collections Management*

- 172 new database records created.
- Digitisation survey completed for TownsWeb Archiving.
- Rationalisation process identified objects for disposal.

## 2024-25 Q3

### *Engagement Activities*

- Museum Makers & Heritage Heroes Sessions Continue
- Museum Makers created Plough Jag-inspired costumes for the Mo Ogg exhibition.
- Anglo-Saxon object replicas made using clay for the Hidden Valley exhibition.
- Volunteer Research & Storytelling Initiatives: Haunted Locations in North Lincolnshire selected as an upcoming research topic.
- GFHC Blog contributions encouraged from volunteers.

### *Collections Management*

- CollectionsOnline portal scheduled for launch (January 2025).
- 296 new object records compiled.
- Volunteers received IMPIX training for data imports.

### *Mid-Point Project Evaluation*

- Observation & Review Sessions held (13 November 2024).
- Feedback collected to improve future volunteer engagement.

# DYNAMIC COLLECTIONS

SUCCESSES TO DECEMBER 2024



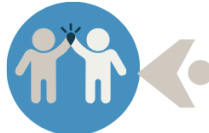
## ★ VOLUNTEERS ★ RECRUITED

**57**

Target: 12

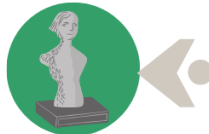
**2,292**  
PROJECT VOLUNTEER  
HOURS

Target: 2,880



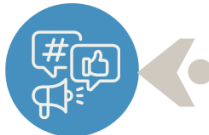
## NEW STAFF POSTS

**Two** Project Officers  
appointed December  
2023



## COLLECTIONS

**887** objects digitised  
**1,208** records added  
**500** objects repackaged



## ENGAGEMENT

**25** Social Media Posts  
**8** Website Blog Posts  
**3** Discover Articles

## HERITAGE HEROES @ NELMS



**39** Sessions  
**360** Attendees  
**153** people age <25 years  
**207** people age 25> years

**MUSEUM  
MAKERS**  
**275 HOURS**  
Target: 640

## PROJECT PLACEMENTS

**40** Sessions  
**58** Attendees  
**41** people age <25 years  
**17** people age 25> years



## MUSEUM MAKERS @ NLMS



**39** Sessions  
**392** Attendees  
**36** people age <25 years  
**356** people age 25> years



**VALUE OF VOLUNTEER HOURS: £42,905**





### 1.3 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Lessons learned and recommendations are made in Section 6 of this report. The key recommendations are:

#### Tailoring Engagement for People with Additional Needs

Lesson Learned: Participants prefer creative and hands-on activities over traditional museum tasks like documentation and cataloguing.

Recommendation: Focus on interactive storytelling, sensory-based curation, and collaborative object interpretation. Involve disability specialists in designing engagement activities to enhance participation.

#### Streamlining Volunteer Onboarding

Lesson Learned: Remote volunteers faced delays and challenges with IT issues and onboarding processes.

Recommendation: Implement pre-recorded training videos, step-by-step guides for software use, and ensure early access to necessary equipment and IT support for volunteers to improve productivity and satisfaction.

#### Sustaining Efforts to Attract Diverse Volunteers

Lesson Learned: Successfully attracted volunteers from diverse backgrounds but faces challenges in retaining young volunteers.

Recommendation: Establish formal partnerships with educational institutions for structured work placements. Use social media and offer flexible volunteering opportunities to increase youth participation.

#### Improving Long-term Sustainability for Museums

Lesson Learned: Enhanced museum resilience through improved collections management and volunteer training.

Recommendation: Seek external funding, form partnerships with academic institutions, and establish a core group of long-term volunteers for knowledge transfer and project continuity.

#### Increasing Visibility of Project Impact

Lesson Learned: Project benefits are not fully showcased to the wider community.

Recommendation: Create case studies, conduct volunteer interviews, and use social media to highlight personal stories and project achievements, thereby raising awareness of community-led heritage work.



## 2. WHERE WE ARE NOW

A key deliverable of the project is to make the collections of Northern Lincolnshire more widely accessible to more diverse audiences, in particular young people, and adults with additional needs and learning difficulties.

### 2.1 BASELINE: AUDIENCE PROFILE 2018-2023

To evaluate the project's success in meeting this aim, this interim report lays out a baseline of engagement at both museums using data from Audience Finder, comprising four years' worth of Audience Report (2018/19 to 2022/23) based on data supplied by North Lincolnshire Museum, along with an Area Profile for North Lincolnshire.<sup>2</sup> These data, and those from other sources, have been collated and are summarised below.

#### Total Visits & Estimated Visitors

Year	Total Visits	Estimated Visitors
2018-2019	32,721	25,014
2019-2020	27,304	19,528
2020-2021	N/A	5,391
2022-2023	20,678	15,293

#### Audience Spectrum Segments

The audience is categorised into segments based on visitor engagement levels.

Segment	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2022-2023	Ave. %
Trips & Treats	30.00%	29.80%	24.20%	29.80%	28.45
Frontline Families	17.10%	18.80%	9.10%	22.80%	16.95
Dormitory Dependables	13.40%	14.90%	12.10%	10.50%	12.725
Up Our Street	12.30%	13.10%	12.20%	12.30%	12.475
Home & Heritage	11.10%	10.20%	15.20%	7.00%	10.875
Commuterland Culturebuffs	4.30%	4.40%	3.00%	7.00%	4.675
Kaleidoscope Creativity	4.30%	4.20%	3.00%	3.50%	3.75
Experience Seekers	2.80%	0.50%	9.10%	0.00%	3.1
Supported Communities	4.30%	4.20%	0.00%	3.50%	3
Metroculturals	0.50%	0.00%	6.10%	3.50%	2.525

The **Trips & Treats** category consistently represents the largest proportion of visitors across all years, followed by **Frontline Families**, **Dormitory Dependables**, **Up Our Street** and **Home and Heritage**. These groups are defined by The Audience Agency as:

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<sup>2</sup> The Audience Agency [internet]. Available at: <https://theaudienceagency.org/en>

### *Trips & Treats*

This group consists of mainstream arts and popular culture enthusiasts, often families influenced by children, family, and friends. They are comfortably off, living in suburban areas, and their cultural activities are shaped by their children's interests. They prefer mainstream arts like musicals and familiar dramas, as well as visits to museums and heritage sites. Leisure planning is often done online, and decisions are influenced by recommendations from friends and family.

### *Frontline Families*

Formerly known as "Facebook Families," this segment comprises younger, cash-strapped families living in suburban and semi-urban areas with high unemployment rates. Arts and culture play a minimal role in their lives, and they are the least likely to consider themselves "arty." However, they do engage in family-oriented leisure activities, particularly mainstream events like cinema, live music, and pantomime, and participate in community-based entertainment. They often reside in council-rented housing and spend most of their free time enjoying at-home entertainment. While they don't consider culture very important, they are family-motivated, and the right offer can appeal to them, especially if it's free. They are located in and around urban areas, predominantly in the North and Midland regions. Public transport can be a hindrance, despite being quite close to many arts offers. This group uses social media and smartphones daily but may not have access to a home computer, relying on school and library machines for homework. They look for prominent and visible advertising through mainstream channels or trusted endorsements from peer groups through word of mouth or social networks.

The least represented are **Kaleidoscope Creativity, Experience Seekers, Supported Communities** and **Metroculturals**.

### *Experience Seekers*

Highly active, younger, and socially minded individuals, often career-oriented graduates, who frequently engage with a diverse range of arts and cultural activities. They reside near city centers, providing them with easy access to various cultural venues. Their interests span mainstream, contemporary, and culturally diverse offerings, and attending events is central to their social lives. They seek new experiences and are willing to invest time and resources in cultural activities. Digitally savvy, they often share their experiences through social media and rely on online platforms for information and planning.

### *Supported Communities*

Typically residing in outer city and suburban areas with limited access to arts and culture, this group faces economic and social challenges. Engagement in cultural activities is low, often due to financial constraints and limited opportunities. Bringing cultural opportunities to their local areas is crucial for fostering engagement among these communities.

### *Metroculturals*

Prosperous, liberal urbanites who choose city living for its broad cultural opportunities. They are highly educated, work in demanding yet rewarding professions, and have diverse cultural interests, often engaging in innovative and contemporary cultural activities. This group is characterised by frequent cultural participation and a willingness to invest time and resources in cultural experiences.

## Gender Distribution

Year	Male (%)	Female (%)
2018-2019	40.5%	59.5%
2019-2020	37.4%	62.6%
2020-2021	34.8%	65.2%
2022-2023	26.2%	73.8%

Female visitors have consistently outnumbered male visitors; this gap widened considerably in 2022-2023.

### Age Distribution

Age Group	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2022-2023	Ave %
16 - 24	2.2%	2.6%	12.2%	10.9%	6.975
25 - 34	26.7%	24.6%	4.1%	15.6%	17.75
35 - 44	19.8%	21.1%	28.6%	15.6%	21.275
45 - 54	11.5%	10.5%	14.4%	12.5%	12.225
55 - 64	24.6%	22.2%	24.5%	20.3%	22.9
65+	15.2%	19.0%	10.2%	25.0%	17.35

The 65+ age group saw significant growth in 2022-2023; The 16-24 age group also increased slightly, indicating improved youth engagement.

### Ethnic Background

Ethnicity	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2022-2023
White	96.0%	95.2%	93.0%	95.3%
Mixed Background	1.3%	0.9%	2.1%	1.6%
Asian/Asian British	1.5%	3.1%	0.0%	1.6%
Black/Black British	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	0.7%	0.4%	4.3%	1.6%

Visitors are predominantly White (95%+), with minimal ethnic diversity.

This reflects data collected in the 2021 Census, where 94.3% of residents in North Lincolnshire identified their ethnic group within the "White" category, a slight decrease from 96.0% in 2011. The remaining 5.7% of the population identified with other ethnic groups, reflecting a gradual increase in diversity over the decade.<sup>3</sup>

### Disability (Health Conditions)

Year	Respondents with Disabilities
2018-2019	4.4%
2019-2020	7.3%
2020-2021	11.1%
2022-2023	18.6%
Ave.	10.35%

<sup>3</sup> Office for National Statistics, *How Life has Changed in North Lincolnshire: Census 2021* [internet]. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E06000013>

There has been a notable increase in visitors identifying as disabled or having long-term health conditions. This may indicate improved accessibility efforts as well as greater openness in survey responses.

According to the 2021 Census data, 20.1% of residents in North Lincolnshire reported having a disability. This is slightly higher than the average for England, which stands at 17.7%. Therefore, the number of visitors with disabilities is slightly below that of the general population.

### Audience Distribution (Top Postcode Areas)

Year	Most Frequent Postcodes
2018-2019	DN17 1, DN16 3, DN16 1
2019-2020	DN16 3, DN15 8, DN17 1
2020-2021	DN16 3, DN15 6, DN17 1
2022-2023	DN16 3, DN15 8, DN17 2

The DN16 and DN17 areas have consistently contributed the most visitors over the years.

#### *DN16 Postcode District*

This district contains approximately 13,632 households with a population of about 31,759, according to the 2011 census. It includes Bottesford, Holme, Queensway Industrial Estate, Raventhorpe, Scunthorpe, and Twigmoor.<sup>4</sup>

#### *DN17 Postcode District*

This district contains approximately 15,662 households with a population of about 37,207, based on the 2011 census. The district includes areas such as Althorpe, Amcotts, Bottesford Moor, Bottesford, Crowle, Derrythorpe, Ealand, East Butterwick, Eastoft, Garthorpe, Gunness, Keadby, Luddington, Messingham, North Ewster, Scunthorpe, Susworth, West Butterwick, and Yaddletorpe.

Both postcodes cover a mix of urban and rural areas, including parts of Scunthorpe and surrounding villages.

### Insights

- Overall attendance declined due to COVID-19 but showed recovery in 2022-2023.
- Higher female engagement
- Increasing visits from older age groups
- Ethnic diversity remains limited
- More visitors report living with a disability
- Residents of Scunthorpe and nearby villages consistently generate the most visitors for North Lincolnshire Museum.

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<sup>4</sup> Postcodes by Administrative Area [internet]. Available at <https://www.doogal.co.uk/>

## 2.2 TARGETED ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The success of the engagement strategy will be evaluated by comparing the baseline data above with that collected throughout the lifecycle of the project.

The following summarises how the Project Team approached advertising, recruitment, partnerships working and engagement to attract those aged under-25 and those with disabilities and additional needs.

### Advertising and Recruitment

A combination of digital and in-person marketing approaches were used to recruit volunteers and participants.

#### *General Volunteer Recruitment*

- Co-ordinated with North and North East Lincolnshire Council's Communications and Customer Relations departments to issue press releases, local news articles, radio interviews, and social media campaigns.
- Engaged local community groups such as Men in Sheds, Action Station and NHS community mental health contacts.
- Distributed promotional materials in the form of flyers across Local libraries, Community centres, Cafés (e.g., Café Indie in Scunthorpe), and Council-run facilities.
- Held Volunteer Open Days at North Lincolnshire Museum (25 January 2024) to allow prospective volunteers to engage with the collection, and Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre (24 January 2024), allowing attendees to interact with current volunteers and staff.

#### *Targeted Recruitment of Young Volunteers*

- Developed a marketing plan aimed at young people, specifically looking to recruit 12 young volunteers (6x NLMs and 6x NELMs).
- Used social media advertising targeted at younger demographics.
- Collaborated with local schools and colleges to encourage placements and work experience opportunities.
- Provided flexible, remote volunteering options, enabling young people to engage in digital cataloguing work.

#### *Targeted Recruitment of People with Disabilities and Additional Needs*

- Established Museum Makers at North Lincolnshire Museum and Heritage Heroes at Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre as dedicated groups for adults with additional needs.
- Partnered with local disability support organisations (e.g., Linkage Choices) to recruit their service users.
- Used word-of-mouth within disability support networks to expand engagement.
- Created accessible promotional materials such as leaflets with easy-to-read designs.

- Provided onsite support and structured activities, including museum tours, craft sessions, and interactive engagement opportunities.

## Partnerships & Collaborations

To strengthen recruitment and widen participation, the Project Team worked with key partner organisations.

### *Local Authority Partnerships*

- North Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire Council assisted with communications, HR recruitment, and council-wide engagement.

### *Community & Disability Support Organisations*

- Linkage Choices (Disability Support) helped recruitment for the Heritage Heroes, providing a structured environment for adults with additional needs.
- CarePlus NHS (Employment Support for Disabled Job Seekers) assisted in recruiting adults with employment difficulties.

### *Education & Training Partners*

- Local Colleges and Schools supported placements for young volunteers.
- Creative Spark (Training Provider) delivered interpretation training for volunteers, helping them understand how to curate exhibitions.
- The Authentic Spark (Museum Consultancy) provided training on collections interpretation and exhibition writing.

### *Heritage & Museums Sector Partners*

- SystemSimulation provided training on CollectionsIndex+ software for cataloguing.
- Museum Development North delivered carbon literacy training to improve sustainability efforts.

## 2.3 ENGAGEMENT WITH TARGET AUDIENCES

The project devised a tailored strategy to engage these two key demographics.

### Under-25s

- Digital Skills Training for archive software (CollectionsIndex+ and MODES) was offered to young volunteers interested in digital archiving.
- Creative roles encouraged young volunteers to participate in exhibition planning, developing gallery trails and digital content.
- Remote volunteering allowed students and young professionals to work remotely on data cataloguing.
- Social media and Blogging gave volunteers opportunities to write blogs for the museum website, showcasing their research.

## People with Disabilities & Additional Needs

- Museum Makers (NLM) are weekly sessions specifically tailored for adults with learning disabilities, focusing on heritage research and curation.
- Heritage Heroes (NELM) is designed for adults with additional needs, emphasising engagement with museum collections and interactive exhibitions.
- Sensory-Friendly Initiatives, such as sensory backpacks and gallery trails with tactile experiences, have been created to improve accessibility.
- Flexible session formats, utilising a range of session styles based on feedback, incorporate craft-based learning, storytelling, and object handling rather than traditional museum documentation.



## 2.4 PROJECT DATA

Basic demographic data is being collected from volunteers and participants, as part of the project recruitment and activity tracking process.

### Gender Distribution

To be included in the final report.

### Age Distribution

Volunteers and participants were recorded as falling into one of two age ranges: Adults under 25 years old, and over 25 years old. There is not a perfect alignment between the parameters for each dataset, but they are close enough to show general trends.

#### North Lincolnshire Museums

General Population aged 15 to 24 <sup>5</sup>	Museum Visitors aged 16 to 24 <sup>6</sup>	Project Volunteers aged < 25	Project Placement aged < 25	Museum Makers aged < 25	Other Activities aged < 25
13.52%	6.97%	27.81%	70.69%	9.18%	7.77%

<sup>5</sup> Based on predicted population data for 2025 that 17,879 people are aged between 15 and 24, and 103,900 over the age of 25. Children under the age of 15 number 28,391. North Lincolnshire Public Health Intelligence, *North Lincolnshire Population Profile*, p. 8 [internet]. Available at: [https://www.northlincs.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/NL\\_Population\\_profile\\_final\\_v1-aa.pdf](https://www.northlincs.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/NL_Population_profile_final_v1-aa.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Based The Audience Agency data for North Lincolnshire Museum 2018 to 2023



*North East Lincolnshire Museums*

<b>General Population aged 15 to 24<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>Museum Visitors aged 16 to 24<sup>8</sup></b>	<b>Project Volunteers aged &lt; 25</b>	<b>Heritage Heroes aged &lt; 25</b>	<b>Other Activities aged &lt; 25</b>
10.4%	6.97%	4.03%	42.5%	6.06%

**Ethnic Background**

To be included in the final report.

**Disability (Health Conditions)***North Lincolnshire Museums*

<b>General Population aged 15 to 24<sup>9</sup></b>	<b>Museum Visitors aged 16 to 24<sup>10</sup></b>	<b>Museum Makers % of all project volunteers</b>
8.2%	10.35%	48.69%

*North East Lincolnshire Museums*

<b>General Population aged 15 to 24<sup>11</sup></b>	<b>Museum Visitors aged 16 to 24<sup>12</sup></b>	<b>Heritage Heroes % of all project volunteers</b>
20%	10.35%	58.44%

**Audience Distribution (Top Postcode Areas)**

To be included in the final report.

This preliminary analysis suggests that the project has been successful in attracting people aged between 14/15 and 24/25 years old to participate in the project, and a large number of people with disabilities and additional needs.

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<sup>7</sup> Census Data, *North East Lincolnshire: Age by Grouped Years* [internet]. Available at: <https://censusdata.uk/e06000012-north-east-lincolnshire/ts007a-age-by-grouped-years>

<sup>8</sup> Based The Audience Agency data for North Lincolnshire Museum 2018 to 2023

<sup>9</sup> Office for National Statistics, *How Life has Changed in North Lincolnshire: Census 2021* [internet]. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E06000013>

<sup>10</sup> Based The Audience Agency data for North Lincolnshire Museum 2018 to 2023

<sup>11</sup> Office for National Statistics, *Census Data for 2021* [internet]. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/>

<sup>12</sup> Based The Audience Agency data for North Lincolnshire Museum 2018 to 2023

## 4. THE DIFFERENCE THE PROJECT IS MAKING TO HERITAGE

### 4.1 THE DIFFERENCE THE PROJECT INTENDS TO MAKE

The project aims to revitalise volunteering at North and North East Lincolnshire Museums, rebuilding the post-Covid volunteer base. It will diversify perspectives in collections documentation and interpretation and produce new digital resources released under CC BY 4.0 licenses, encouraging broader use and raising the collections' online profile. The project will update collections, improve rights management, and establish CC BY 4.0 as the default standard for online assets. Digital labels and gallery trails created with adults with learning disabilities will foster their sense of ownership of the museums and local heritage.

### 4.2 THE DIFFERENCE THE PROJECT IS MAKING

#### Identifying and Documenting Heritage

One of the key goals of the project is to enhance heritage collections by documenting, digitising, and cataloguing local history objects. This ensures historically significant materials are preserved, accessible, and tell co-curated stories which are relevant to local audiences.

The project aims to add over 30,000 records (15,000 per museum) to the collections databases. To date 1,208 have been successfully uploaded. Volunteers have been trained and are identifying, researching, and documenting objects and are working alongside the Project Officers to add new information to object records, including:

- Dimensions, condition notes, provenance, and historical significance.
- Photographs linked to object records (1,322 images already linked).
- Oral history recordings, adding community voices to collections.

NLM's Image Archive has been successfully migrated into the CollectionsIndex+ system, improving searchability and accessibility. The member of staff responsible for this has since moved to a new post and Project Officer Jenny Kirton has now taken on this work with a Project Volunteer. A tailored training session on CollectionsIndex+ import tool IMPIX has taken place.

At NELMs the initial sort of the ephemera collection is complete. This has included re-boxing items that were previously stored in grocery boxes in conservation grade museum storage boxes. Items that were in plastic pockets have been repackaged in Secol envelopes. By actively improving the physical condition of local history collections, the project is ensuring their long-term preservation.

At NLM, objects have been highlighted by volunteers and Jenny Kirton for disposal consideration. Volunteer sessions have been adjusted to prioritise rationalising the collection. Streamlining of the local history collections at both museums has removed irrelevant and duplicate items. Reorganisation of the ephemera collection has made it more accessible for research.

TownWeb Archiving is being engaged to digitise fragile ephemera at NLMs and NELMs. Paper-based records are being scanned and stored securely. Photographs are being linked to object records, reducing handling and physical wear.

## Improving Public Access to Heritage Data

The CollectionsOnline portal is being developed to make the museum collections publicly accessible online. Visitors will soon be able to browse digitised records of North Lincolnshire Museum's collection.

## Environmental Impact Awareness

Project staff have undergone Carbon Literacy Training, delivered by Museum Development North, to ensure sustainability is a priority in museum work. Project teams are recycling materials where possible, as carried out at NELMs during re-boxing of the ephemera collections. Online project meetings are taking place via Microsoft Team to reduce the carbon footprint from travel.

## Revealing Unknown Histories

Volunteers have uncovered previously undocumented stories, including:

- The Deyne School of Music – A forgotten musical institution.
- Diaries of Marjorie Rust – Providing insights into early 20th-century life.
- The Cycle Song Community Opera – Engaging local history through performance archives.
- Local folklore and traditions (e.g., the legend of the Black Dog).

## 5. THE DIFFERENCE THE PROJECT IS MAKING TO PEOPLE

### 5.1 THE DIFFERENCE THE PROJECT INTENDS TO MAKE

Project Volunteers will gain skills in research, presentation, museum documentation, interpretation, and digital tools through training and activities. Benefits include social connections, improved well-being, confidence, enjoyment, and community contribution. Recruiting from priority audiences will diversify volunteers at North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire Museums. Staff will enhance project management, co-production, and community partnership skills.

### 5.2 THE DIFFERENCE THE PROJECT IS MAKING

The project has gone beyond recording and documentation of collections by actively engaging people with heritage through co-created exhibitions, gallery trails, and educational materials.

The volunteering programmes at North Lincolnshire Museum and North East Lincolnshire Museums have been reinvigorated, far exceeding the recruitment target, with 57 volunteers on boarded to date. At NLMs, volunteers include student work placements, and adults with additional needs from the Museum Makers group. Delivery of the Museum Makers and Heritage Heroes activities has resulted in the participants learning about, and engaging with, the heritage of Northern Lincolnshire. Individuals are developing their knowledge and understanding of heritage because they are being given opportunities to experience heritage in ways that meet their needs and interests.

#### Project Volunteers

At NLMs, Project Volunteers are drawing on their own experiences and connections to enhance knowledge of the collections.

Volunteers have been exploring and researching collections, with one at NLMs giving a presentation, including a discussion on the objects he had enjoyed researching and his use of the British Newspaper Archive database.

The project is having a positive benefit to the well-being of the Project Volunteers, some of whom shared their experiences during National Volunteer Week on the North Lincolnshire Museum social media feeds:

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*"Volunteering at the museum has improved my mental health, enabled me to be part of a group and make new friends."*

*"I'm enjoying working with the rest of the volunteer team and the opportunity to meet new people."*

*"One of the fun things about volunteering is finding interesting objects we would otherwise never see, and looking up what interests us."*

*"I enjoy the work and finding something new to learn about."*

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## Museum Makers (NLMS)

The individual interests of the Museum Maker volunteers are being explored to add to the gallery. During an observation session on 13 November 2024, five of the group were exploring their interest in farming and working on a farm trail, creating storyboards which will be turned into films and added to the gallery. Future sessions will allow attendees to select farming objects to be included in the exhibition, with sessions to practice filming and being interviewed.

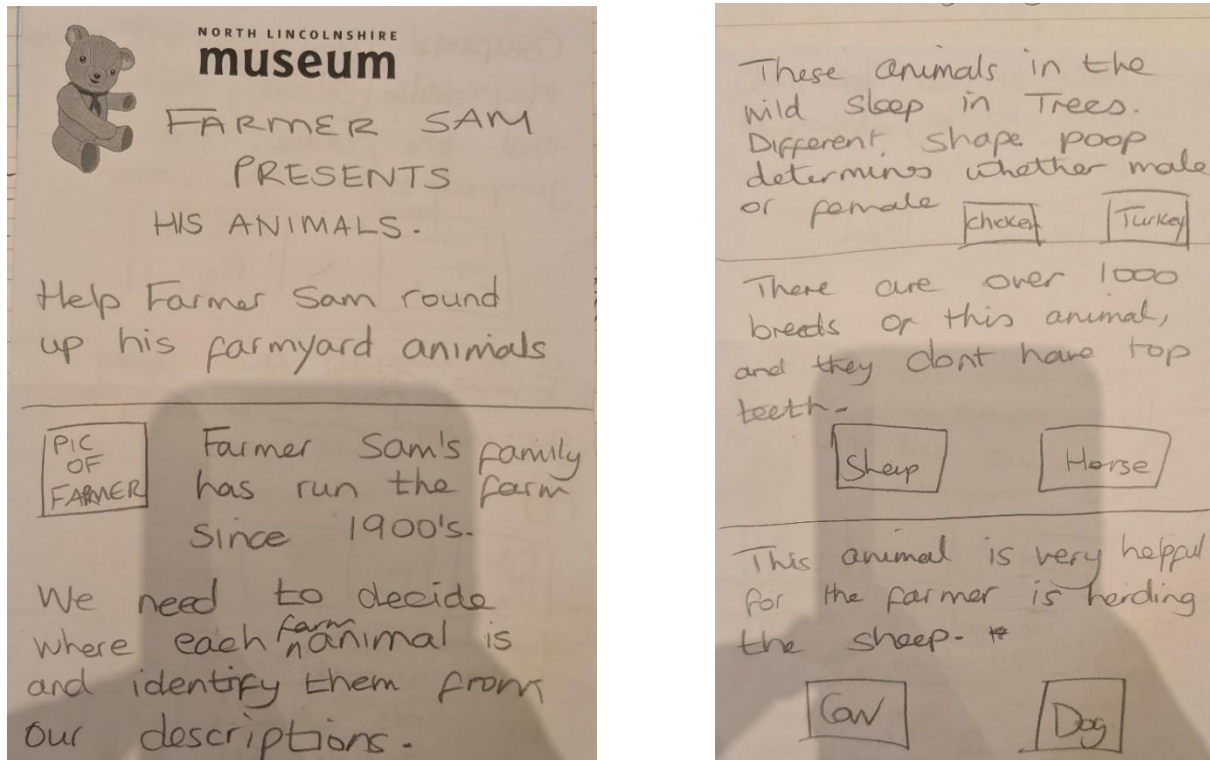


Figure 1, Example of Farm Trail Storyboards created by the Museum Makers

Figure 2, Peter delivering his presentation to the Museum Makers



At the same observation session, one of the group, Peter Foster, was very keen to talk about how much he loves history and how important the group is. He was very eager to share his passion for the area and the history, and, as Remembrance Day had just passed, asked if he could take the group outside the museum to look at and talk about the war memorial and also to walk around the grounds of St. Lawrence's Church. Being a Museum Makers Volunteer has given Peter the opportunity to develop his research and presentation skills, and confidence, in a supportive and safe environment. On 17 July 2024, Peter delivered a presentation to the Museum Makers group which he had been preparing during the volunteer sessions. He spoke about his



interests and his connection to North Lincolnshire, and beyond. He also spoke about some of the objects he had been exploring from the Collections. His presentation had some interactive elements, such as sing-alongs and opportunities for questions.<sup>13</sup>

 **North Lincolnshire Museum** is at **North Lincolnshire Museum**.  
19 November 2024 · Scunthorpe · 🌐

As a thank you for helping to make possible our Dynamic Collections Project, 'Documenting Northern Lincolnshire's History', we have four new postcards for National Lottery players to choose from. You can find these in the Museum reception.

Please present your National Lottery ticket at the front desk to claim your free postcard.

Photographs were selected from the North Lincolnshire Museum Image Archive by the Museum Makers. Our Museum Makers programme is aimed at adults with additional needs and is a group for those who want to get closer to history.

'Documenting Northern Lincolnshire's History' is a partnership project with North East Lincolnshire Museums, made possible with the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Project volunteers are working with collections staff to help spotlight and preserve stories of the region's fascinating past, contained across the collections.

[#ThanksToYou](#) [#NationalLottery30](#) [#Museum](#) [#Project](#) [#Exhibition](#) [The National Lottery](#)



Figure 3, Free postcards for National Lottery players.

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<sup>13</sup> (4) Facebook

## Project Volunteers (NLMs)

At the same observation session, Project Volunteer, Oliver Blanchard, was using a laptop to input information from the archive relating to The Hospital Players, Scunthorpe's oldest amateur dramatics society, onto the system. He said he likes learning about the different topics and is learning indexing (digital) skills. He is also gaining experience using Excel. He is really enjoying being part of this important work for the museum.

Project Volunteer, Tyler, had been researching types of record players in an attempt to identify the exact model in the museum which had been labelled incorrectly. She was enjoying the research challenge. Tyler also talked about researching one of the dresses in the 50s/60s collection and creating the interpretation. She said "I have autism and anxiety and being here really helps me. I look after people here".

Other comments collected from the volunteers demonstrates how beneficial the experience is in terms of well-being, mental health, learning new skills, enjoyment and being part of a team.



Figure 4, Comments from the Volunteers at North Lincolnshire Museum

## Heritage Heroes (NELMs)

Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre has delivered thirty-six activity sessions for the Heritage Heroes group led by a member of museum staff. Sessions to date have included:

- Girl Pat and her skipper, George 'Dod' Osbourne, who commandeered his vessel for an Atlantic adventure that captivated the world.
- Talk and demonstration from former trawler skipper and merchant navy captain, Bob Formby.



- How games have changed over the years. Tournament held playing some of the games that were popular in the past.
- Testing GFHCs new SEND backpacks.
- Learning about archaeology and looking at artifacts from local digs, and how to find and record artifacts.
- Making sketchbooks with a local artist.

During an observation session on 12 November 2024, the Heritage Heroes, all from Linkage Choices, went on a refresher tour of the GFHC before starting the art craft activity. One of the group remarked, “I love coming here and learning” and another said, “my favourite bit of the museum is where the deck hands are chilling out in their den, getting cosy and enjoying a cup of tea”. Although a number of the group found verbal communication more challenging, the support staff from Linkage Choices were very keen to say how beneficial the sessions were and how much they all enjoyed it:

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*“They absolutely love it here. They love the crafts and looking round the centre”. “*

*“It’s a fantastic place to learn about our history. I remember my grandparents house looking like this. It’s great to show them how things used to look”.*

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The craft activity, using different art mediums to create pictures of parts of the centre, was very popular and all ten members of the group worked hard on their creations.



*Figure 5, Heritage Heroes craft activity.*

Thirteen feedback forms have been received to date from participants, completed in June, August and September 2024. The majority rated the sessions as 'Very Good'. When asked if they would attend further sessions, all thirteen responded that they would.

	Poor	Good	Very Good
Overall organisation and control of the day		1	12
Friendliness and professionalism of staff		1	12
Ability of guides to entertain and engage individuals		1	12
Knowledge of staff and their ability to convey this to the group		1	12
Quality of activities and their ability to inform and entertain		1	12
How highly do you rate GFHC in general?			13



Figure 6, Heritage Heroes Feedback from participants

Response to the sessions has been overwhelmingly positive, as evidenced by comments from the feedback forms.

It should be noted that some forms are completed by personal assistants on behalf of the participant.

The more recent Heritage Heroes sessions have only attracted the Linkage Group, a registered charity supporting people with learning disabilities and autism. The charity's vision is "that people with learning

disabilities and autism have opportunities and choice and are supported to achieve their aspirations”<sup>14</sup>.

New leaflets are currently being designed to promote these sessions more widely and attract new ‘Heroes’. It is hoped that new members will show an interest in contributing to collections work, as the existing group has shown little interest in this so far. Project Officer, Alistair Eachus, is working on activity ideas and engagement and is hopeful that new members with an interest in collections management can be attracted.

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<sup>14</sup> Linkage website <https://www.linkage.org.uk/about-us/>

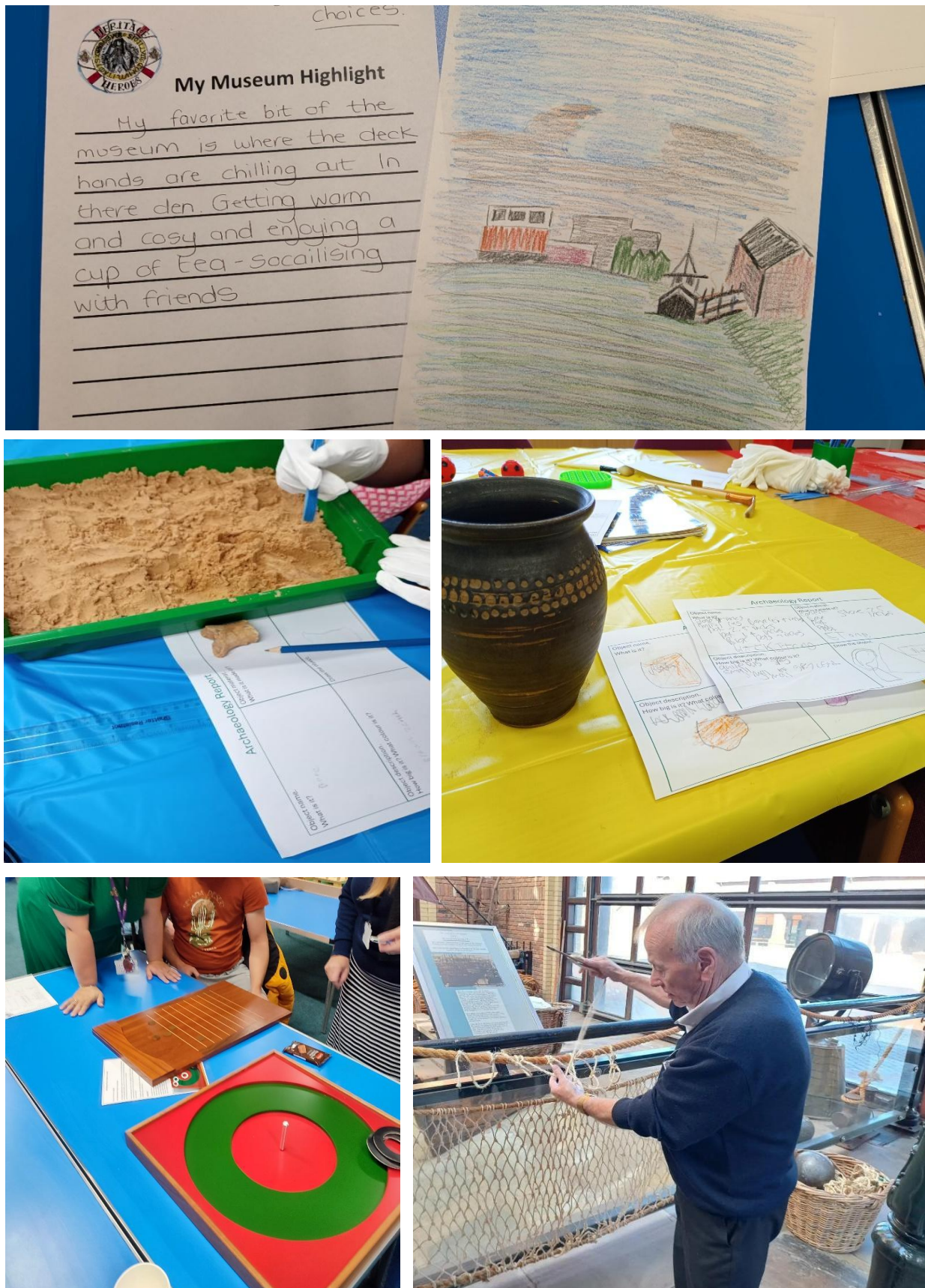


Figure 5, Heritage Heroes activities held at Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre (Photo credit: GFHC)



## 5. THE DIFFERENCE THE PROJECT IS MAKING TO THE COMMUNITY

### 5.1 THE DIFFERENCE THE PROJECT INTENDS TO MAKE

Enhancing community ownership and public access to museum collections will foster a stronger sense of place and community role. In North East Lincolnshire, the project will establish a regular museum and heritage-themed group for adults with learning disabilities at Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre. This group will continue collaborating on future museum projects beyond the project's duration. Building on the success of the Museum Makers group at North Lincolnshire Museum, the initiative will further integrate the group into the museum's decision-making process.

### 5.2 THE DIFFERENCE THE PROJECT IS MAKING

The large number of Project Volunteers recruited at both North Lincolnshire Museum and Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre shows that people have an interest in community and their role within it.

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*"[The Heritage Heroes] feel part of the museum and have a bond and friendships with staff. There's a different activity every week and you never know who will come or how many. It's important for them to feel connected with something."*

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*David Ornsby, Operations Manager at the Fishing Heritage Centre*

The project is not only preserving heritage but also making it more accessible to a wider audience through co-created exhibitions and resources.

NLMs Project Volunteers have selected three key themes to include in the project exhibition:

**The Dynamic Collections project**, with community members coming together and 'Documenting' - in various ways - a shared history.

**Creatives who have shaped understanding of the region's past**, also considering the stakes of historical loss: William Fowler's etchings of Roman Mosaics, Mabel Peacock's recording of folktales, Karl Wood's sketches of North Lincolnshire windmills.

**Highlighting a regional history shaped by a strong tradition of community-level organising** – Scunthorpe Memorial Hospital Annual Carnival, Scunthorpe Pride, Cycle Song (a 2012 community opera involving 1200 participants).

Volunteers are researching topics, drafting panels, and listing objects. Michael, a Museum Maker Volunteer, has been inspired by a session exploring newspapers and local histories to research his own personal history. He was injured in an accident which left him with disabilities and this story was reported locally in the papers. Michael is going to work with Jenny Kirton to research his personal story, which will then be integrated into the Museum's local history galleries and on the website.

At NELMs, exhibition planning has started. Volunteers are researching hidden regional stories inspired by handled objects, including the Girl Pat affair, the 1953 floods, Zeppelin raids, and migration. Objects are being identified for display.

NLMs Placement Volunteer Archie Wood assisted Community Curator Kat Spence with preparations for a new Changing Case display on Salim C. Wilson. Archie's research will be published as a *Discover* article for Black History Month and included in an information booklet by the display.

The Museum Makers are creating two gallery trails, including a farming-themed trail linked to relevant object records on CollectionsIndex+. They explore the agriculture-related collections, selected roles on an imagined farm, and include sketches of their ideas, which will inform the trails' designs. They will soon be working with an illustrator on the designs for the trails.

At NELMs, Heritage Heroes are planning a sensory trail and discussing updates to permanent exhibitions. This draws on their direct experience of interacting with museums and displays, helping to overcome the barriers that might prevent people with disabilities and additional needs from being immersed in the experience.

The volunteers' involvement in research and curation of materials and displays means they have developed skills in collections management, object handling, photography, and exhibition development (helped by training from The Authentic Spark & Creative Spark).

The result will be new heritage learning resources, comprising gallery trails, guides featuring the volunteers' artwork and online articles/blogs showcasing newly discovered stories.

The team is expanding opportunities for heritage storytelling by making use of online platforms, including Museum blogs, YouTube videos (Curator's Choice series) and Volunteer-led articles and social media content.

The project outputs will be strengthened through the incorporation of community perspectives, such as the Oral history recordings which are being collected to add local voices to museum exhibits. Personal stories and reflections (e.g., from volunteers) are shaping the way history is presented and interpreted, allowing a wider range of people to have a voice.

Engagement of underrepresented groups is another important strand being developed through the project, with the LGBTQ+ Collecting Project working with Scunthorpe Pride and community members to collect Queer histories, and collaboration with North Lincolnshire Sanctuary Group exploring the stories of asylum seekers and refugees in the region.

The result will be long-term interaction, particularly through the volunteers who have learnt new skills and wish to contribute to future work at the museums.

Overall, the Dynamic Collections project is fostering a community of engaged residents who care about, and understand, their local heritage.

## 6. LESSONS LEARNED

### 6.1 WHAT HAS WORKED WELL?

#### Volunteer Recruitment Model

The strategy for volunteer recruitment has been particularly effective as evidenced by a strong attendance at volunteer open days and the number of volunteers recruited to date (57) greatly exceeding the target of 12 people. A combination of well-planned and regular press releases, social media, and community outreach through local organisations provides an excellent model for other projects wishing to target specific audiences.

#### Engagement with Adults with Disabilities and Additional Needs

Those attending Heritage Heroes and Museum Makers enjoy their experience and give positive feedback; there is enthusiastic participation in craft sessions, storytelling, and exhibition planning. The collaboration with Linkage Choices and CarePlus NHS ensures a supportive environment for people with disabilities and additional needs.

#### Digital Engagement

Volunteers have received training and are successfully digitising the museum collections. The development of remote volunteering opportunities had increased accessibility.

#### Heritage Research & Exhibitions

Volunteers have uncovered hidden histories (e.g., Deyne School of Music) and created gallery trails and interactive exhibits.

### 6.2 WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

#### Low Engagement with Collections Work Among Heritage Heroes

Many attendees are more interested in creative and hands-on activities rather than cataloguing and collections management. The team is now shifting the focus of sessions to "record augmentation", where participants provide personal interpretations of objects.

To meet the target for 150 new or enhanced records, the Project Officer is proactively taking steps to promote the sessions more widely and develop public engagement with the project.

#### Inconsistent Attendance in Disability-Focused Sessions

Some participants had intermittent attendance, making continuity and project momentum difficult. Plans are underway to expand recruitment and attract additional participants.

#### IT & Database Issues

Council issued laptops had problems with the MODES software, delaying work for remote volunteers. Excel spreadsheets are now being used to record data before migration to MODES.



## Delays in Volunteer Onboarding

Changes in North East Lincolnshire Council's volunteer recruitment processes caused delays in training and induction.

### 6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Dynamic Collections project has made significant strides in documenting, preserving, and sharing local heritage while actively engaging diverse community groups. This report outlines the key lessons learned from the project to date and provides recommendations on how to build upon its successes in the future.

#### Tailoring engagement for people with additional needs

**Lesson Learned:** One of the key challenges has been engaging Heritage Heroes participants in collections work. While they have shown enthusiasm for creative and hands-on activities, they have demonstrated less interest in traditional museum documentation and cataloguing leading to adapted engagement methods to suit their interests and capabilities.

**Recommendation:** Future engagement may need to be based around interactive storytelling, sensory-based curation, and participatory object interpretation. Expanding partnerships with other disability specialists and organisations to co-design engagement activities, prior to their roll out, could also improve participation and retention.

#### Streamlining volunteer onboarding

**Lesson Learned:** Remote volunteers, particularly those working on digitisation and database tasks, faced delays due to IT issues, slow onboarding processes, and challenges with the MODES database. These issues affected productivity and may have impacted volunteer satisfaction.

**Recommendation:** A streamlined volunteer induction process could include pre-recorded training videos and step-by-step guides for using collections software, helping to get new recruits up to speed quickly. Additionally, ensuring early access to necessary equipment and IT support will help mitigate delays and improve engagement.

#### Sustaining efforts to attract diverse volunteers

**Lesson Learned:** The project has successfully attracted volunteers from different backgrounds, including young people and individuals with additional needs. However, sustaining a consistent number of young volunteers and ensuring long-term engagement remains a challenge.

**Recommendation:** To enhance youth engagement, the project should develop more formal partnerships with schools, colleges, and universities to create structured work placements or heritage internship programs. Additionally, social media campaigns targeting younger demographics, combined with flexible, short-term volunteering opportunities, could help increase youth participation.

#### Improving long-term sustainability for the museums

**Lesson Learned:** The project has significantly boosted museum resilience through improvements in collections management, digitisation, and volunteer training. However, sustaining these improvements beyond the funded period will require ongoing support and investment.

**Recommendation:** The team should explore external funding opportunities, such as grants for digital heritage, partnerships with academic institutions, and activity based projects in partnership with local organisations. Additionally, establishing a core group of long-term volunteers, trained as mentors for new recruits, could ensure knowledge transfer and project continuity.

#### Increasing the visibility of the project's impact

**Lesson Learned:** While the project has delivered tangible benefits to volunteers and the wider community, more could be done to showcase success stories and engage a wider audience.

**Recommendation:** The creation of case studies, volunteer interviews, and social media content which highlight personal stories and project achievements would help raise awareness of the impact of community-led heritage work to both participants and the museums.

## 6.4 CONCLUSION

The Dynamic Collections Project has successfully engaged diverse community groups, improved collections documentation, and enhanced public access to heritage. By refining engagement strategies, strengthening digital accessibility, and securing long-term sustainability, the project can build on its successes and ensure a lasting legacy for North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire museums.

Future initiatives should focus on expanding partnerships, developing sustainable funding models, and leveraging digital tools to enhance community engagement. With these improvements, the project will continue to enrich local heritage and foster a greater appreciation for historical collections among a wider audience.