



# B O S T O N

## B O R O U G H C O U N C I L

REPORT TO:	ENVIRONMENT & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE
DATE:	3 MARCH 2020
SUBJECT:	THE PILGRIMS 2020 & ALLIED OPPORTUNITIES (UPDATE)
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	TOURISM, ARTS, CULTURE & HERITAGE
REPORT AUTHOR:	HEAD OF SPACE AND PLACE
EXEMPT REPORT?	NO

### SUMMARY

This report is an update on the Local level activity in regards the 2020 Pilgrims anniversary initiatives and also includes updates on National and Regional activities.

An initial report was presented to the Environment & Performance Committee at its 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018 meeting where members debated and commented on the prospective programme. In conclusion, the Chairman agreed that it was a programme which needed to be supported and promoted as much as possible and that the committee would welcome follow up reporting on the various projects to monitor outcomes of the funding applications.

This report was presented to Cabinet on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018 detailing project and programme ambitions alongside a request to support specific elements of funding to enable the projects to be progressed. The report and requests for funding were approved at that meeting and it was recognised that the suggested programme fulfilled the Corporate Objectives of:

1. Prosperity – Attracting people and businesses to the area by raising the profile of Boston supporting the promotion of inward investment and developing our tourism, heritage and cultural opportunities.
2. People – supporting our role in meeting wider health & wellbeing needs of our community by continuing to work closely with our partners, &
3. Place – supporting Boston as a place which offers a quality way of life for residents.

An update on plans and projects for the 2020 anniversary was presented to the Environment and Performance at its 5<sup>th</sup> March 2019 meeting where progress was noted and the activities supported.

This was followed by an update report to the Environment and Performance Committee at its 5<sup>th</sup> September 2019 meeting where again both progress and planned activities were noted and supported.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the Environment & Performance Committee notes the progress of the various projects as detailed within the report.

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

The aim of the projects detailed within the report is to directly enhance and build on the placemaking and placebranding of Boston.

The management and presentation of the town's identity and improvement of its public realm enhances its character and helps communicate its strengths, which will reinforce the placebranding of Boston and help shape the regeneration of the town. The projects are intended to help increase the discovery and engagement with the historic offer and wider retail & business environment and compliment other initiatives improving Boston as a visitor destination such as the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) funded Townscape Heritage project and the Historic England Shop front scheme.

The projects, activities and events will enable Boston to demonstrate its key part in this story and benefit from developing and sharing its wider offer through its promotion on a national and international level.

## **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

None

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 This report is an update on the Local level activity as regards the 2020 Pilgrim anniversary and the Mayflower 400 National level activity of the Mayflower 400 group, led by Plymouth City Council. Additionally a consortium of local authorities from Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire working towards developing and promoting the 'Pilgrims Roots', which represents the areas where the Separatists, later to be known as the Pilgrims originated from and who travelled to Boston to escape religious persecution.

1.2 A report was presented on proposed activity to the Environment and Performance Committee in regards the proposed activities and requests for funding on 10<sup>th</sup> of January 2018. A further was presented to Cabinet on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018 detailing project and programme ambitions alongside a request to support specific elements of funding to enable the projects to be progressed. The report and requests for funding were approved at that meeting and a summary of monies committed to support at this time are appended to this report (Appendix 1). An update report showing progress in these schemes was provided to the Environment and Performance Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2019 and subsequently a further update report was provided to the Environment and Performance Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

1.3 Nationally, in May 2016, Plymouth secured a £500K grant from Visit England to promote the national Mayflower Pilgrims story overseas, and during 2018 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport agreed a similar amount to continue this activity into 2019.

- Boston has directly benefitted from many national and international coach group travel operators being brought to Boston many of which have built itineraries that include Boston for 2020.
- Travel journalists and bloggers have also been brought to Boston as part of the initiative and produced positive copy recognising the strong historic offer as a destination.
- Boston is being promoted as a destination to world travel fairs by the Mayflower project which has developed a visitor offer 'prospectus', which promotes those destinations involved in the story, and Boston features well in the both narrative and visually throughout.
- Boston is featured in physical literature, online blogs and in short promotional films promoting the 2020 offer of the Pilgrim destinations. These include travel articles in the American 'Christian Post' and coverage in the influential travel blog 'London Unattached'. Boston has been included in travel itineraries of a number of national and international group travel operators including Kuoni travel and Reformation Tours. A promotional film of the local 'Pilgrim Roots' region, including Retford, Scrooby and Gainsborough, features Boston and helps share our offer as a heritage destination.
- As a result of interest the Guildhall has developed more bookable tour products.
- Boston Guildhall, as the main Pilgrim site and attraction in Boston, received a grant from this project of £5K to investigate development of online bookable products such as group visits and talks as well enabling delivery of a promotional video of Boston and the Guildhall for use on site and online.

- Boston now features prominently on a nationally and internationally available App for both Apple and Android devices where users can find out about those select towns and sites associated with the Pilgrim Story. A half day walking and driving tour of Boston specifically featuring historic sites has been developed and shows off the town in images and information worked up and supplied by us for the project.  
<https://www.mayflower400uk.org/app>

*The Mayflower Self-Guided Tours app turns mobile devices into a personal GPS tour guide of the UK towns, cities and villages connected to the Mayflower. You can follow in the footsteps of the Pilgrims and explore all the stops on the Mayflower trail at your own pace, learning about the history of the Mayflower and the journey through England and Holland.*

*The Boston Heritage Trail is a half-day walking and driving trail and points of interest are the Ingram Memorial, Pescod Hall, Pump Square, Custom House Quay, the Guildhall and Fydell House, the Town Bridge, Church Street, St Botolph's Church and the Pilgrim Fathers Memorial.*

*Highlights of the app include:*

*Learning the stories behind the places the Pilgrims were from and where they travelled to;*

*Discovering iconic places on the Mayflower trail - including the Pilgrim Fathers Memorial at Fishtoft;*

*Detailed maps of the walking tours and routes through the Mayflower destinations;*

*Alerts when you approach historical point of interests, landmarks, museums, and attractions;*

*Information about Pilgrim leaders, the Separatists and Mayflower crew;*

*Pictures of landmarks and attractions on the walking routes.*

*Mayflower Walking Tours has been released to help mark the Mayflower 400 anniversary year next year and is a must-have for anyone going on a Mayflower tour holiday in the UK or Holland in 2020.*

Whilst offering visit support, liaison and post visit enquiry and information services to the groups and individuals delivering these initiatives, amounting to £2K of 'benefit in kind' contributions, all of these works have been paid for on behalf of the main project and required no financial resourcing.

- 1.4 Nationally, Plymouth led the development of a bid to secure Arts Council England (ACE) funding to support artistic development of an 'Illuminate' event in their region that also incorporates resource and capacity to develop a national 'moment' at other Pilgrim destinations. This bid has been successful and though details are currently not known it is thought that it will bring additional resource to help reinforce our own 'Illuminate' event in 2020 that the council and partners have been successfully delivering alongside our Christmas events launches in November of each year.

It is anticipated that the outcome will include resource to deliver a complimentary event alongside our own planned and resourced activity at no additional cost.

## **2. Boston – Projects designed to incorporate the Pilgrim 2020 anniversary**

### **2.1 HLF ‘Experience Boston: Travel, Trade and Influence’**

A bid was submitted to build on the foundation of the HLF funded Explore and Discover project that delivered new mapping, pedestrian wayfinding improvements, trails and town guides, interpretation monoliths and importantly provided the design toolkit that now brands much of Boston.

The project was proposed to be delivered in two stages. The first prioritising activities and development of Pilgrim specific resources and interpretation ready for early 2020. The second was a continuing phase of engagement that develops our wider American, maritime histories and helps interpret and commemorate these connections for both our local and visiting audiences.

Unfortunately the bid was unsuccessful, feedback was that the project was a good quality one, that the partnership working was strong and that the application was good and that it was simply the weight of applications into the fund which meant that some very hard decisions had to be made.

Due to the timescales involved officers propose to deliver a reduced scheme focussing only on the interpretation of the Pilgrim story. This will be focussed at the Guildhall and Pilgrim related sites such as the memorial site and Customs House Quay

Boston Borough Council made a commitment of £10K match funding to support the project and through negotiation with Lincolnshire County Council an additional £10K of match funding was secured, on the basis that the monies were only available should the bid be successful.

Officers have spoken to LCC and secured a reduced contribution of £5K and it has been agreed through the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and the support of our Portfolio Holder for Tourism, Arts, Culture and Heritage to utilise the £10K of Boston Borough Council (BBC) match funding to directly deliver these works.

The council, as a separate project from the above, will also be applying for in the region of £5K to Arts Council England to support development of interpretation within the Guildhall to support our exhibitions, this is as they are the governing body for museums and as an accredited museum we are eligible to apply for funding.

It is also of note that through discussion with the Environment Agency (E.A.) officers have managed to advocate that they incorporate the same street furniture and our design toolkit to provide interpretation in the area adjacent to

the new barrier site. This will add to our existing and proposed schemes, in the absence of the HLF funding, and help make interpretation through the town and surrounds more seamless.

## 2.2 Development of 'Illuminate'

Each year the council and its partners have continued to work with the ACE funded Transported arts programme to progressively commission more ambitious and engaging arts activity in the Illuminate event. Illuminate is a light themed event that all destinations in the Pilgrim story can electively participate in and this event is built into our annual planning of our Christmas launch event. The lantern parades, delivered in partnership with artists and schools, have become a key part of each year's events and other elements such as contemporary choral works and aerial dance have brought added vitality.

The council is currently planning the Illuminate artistic content with Transported and have submitted a bid to ACE to enable some larger scale commissioning to create a greater spectacle with more impact in 2020.

Monies to support the current development and delivery of Illuminate have been made available from the Controlling Migration fund and £10K match funding for the 2020 Illuminate event has been agreed by Boston Borough Council (BBC) that supports the bid for £100K to ACE.

## 2.3 Pilgrim and American connections: Exhibitions and Events

The council will use events to help reinforce the Pilgrim associations in 2020.

The existing events programme is well developed and dynamic and like many destination partners the council will promote events during 2020 in the Mayflower 400 programme of activities. We are trying to maximise opportunity for making these American links and will work with the existing events programme and celebrate these links wherever possible.

The council will commemorate the Pilgrim story in events by developing our wider American connections, incorporating contemporary American culture among the main themes and introduce the Pilgrims where appropriate to provide a more engaging experience.

The Guildhall will have a specific events programme in place that looks to keep Pilgrim and Boston's American associations at the forefront during 2020. Officers are finalising dates around existing activities, bookings and commitments on site as well as exploring working with partner sites to offer a more dynamic experience. Dates for Guildhall events for 2020 include 10-12 April, 28-31 August and 9-13 September (dates are expressed as ranges though some may be single day events).

- 1) April 11 – Boston Guildhall Pilgrim Family Day 10:30am – 3:30pm, last admission 3pm. Free event with a £5 per person fee to attend the Neil

Wright Talk at 1pm Face painting, crafts, 11am and 2pm Promenade performance, 1pm Neil Wright Pilgrim and American Talk. Access to Fydell House gardens and a pop up café on site here. Tours of the new exhibition available at points during the day.

- 2) August 29th – Boston Guildhall Pilgrims, America and Joseph Banks. 10:30am – 3:30pm, last admission 3pm Free event. Face painting, crafts, 11am and 2:30pm promenade performance, Banks exhibition and Pilgrim and American Connections to view. Tours of both exhibitions available throughout the day. Investigating an afternoon talk from Adrian Gray – awaiting confirmation on availability. If this is confirmed there will be a £5 per
- 3) September 12th and 13th – Central Park, Americano Day Free two day event Details to be firmed up but will include exhibitors, stands, music, displays and face painting and crafts with café/refreshments all in the theme of Americano.
- 4) November 21st – Thanks Giving Dinner Evening event with a meal and talk More details to be released in due course.
- 5) November 26th – Illuminate Event organised with Transported Art and BBC

The Guildhall also completely re developed its internal exhibitions to incorporate either American themed content from its collections or content from the time of the Pilgrims and Cotton Congregation. The Guildhall museum had an event on site in late September 2019 that opened the fascinating Guildhall American Exhibition and marked the opening of the main commemorative period of Pilgrim activity.

September also benefited from an independently arranged conference that specifically explored Boston's historic American connections and which took place at Blackfriars Theatre with refreshments being taken at Boston Guildhall during the event. The event was very well attended and the Guildhall worked excellently as a unique 'breakout' space from the conference with its unique American connections being highlighted.

A specific Americana event incorporating the Pilgrims is planned for September 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> 2020 it is intended to commemorate the Pilgrim anniversary and the John Cotton story but with plans for it to focus towards a wealth of American influence to encourage wider inclusivity for the event and reinforce the links between Boston Lincolnshire, Boston Massachusetts and America.

Guildhall exhibition development and programme of events has and will continue to be delivered in house within existing budgets, and supported by agreed administrative costs and project expenses. The event in September 2020 will be funded by an agreed contribution by BBC of £5K with potential additional monies being sought to support.

A programme of Pilgrim specific events is appended (Appendix 2)

### 2.3.1 Guildhall Exhibition and Boston's relationship with the Pilgrims

During development of the exhibition in 2019 new information and research was pieced together which changed how we can look at the Pilgrim story in Boston and how the town's connections had a profound influence on the foundation of the United States of America.

Boston has traditionally been associated with the Pilgrims but has been thought of as the port and market town where, in 1607, a group of separatists with no connections to the town and area dramatically tried to escape only to be betrayed and arrested.

We now present a different story and tell a complex and compelling tale of intrigue and influence which enhances Boston's importance from the wider beginnings of the Pilgrims through to the foundation and administration of Boston Massachusetts in 1630.

This is a great year in 2020 to be able to present this newly changed understanding of the story. It is continuing to be explored and interpretation of it will continue to develop and hopefully lead to further knowledge to be able to share. This presents a great dynamic to seize upon during the forthcoming year and our bid to the Arts Council England (ACE) for exhibition development, which is intended to enhance displays, may now have a different focus and may increase in scope. Officers are currently discussing how best to proceed with ACE.

### 2.4 Structures on the Edge: ACE sculpture project, Havenside, near the Pilgrim memorial

A successful bid to ACE has enabled us to progress a project to develop a sculpture project looking to install a large scale contemporary installation was initiated during 2018. This is to be funded by Lincolnshire County Council and BBC match and support from ACE, with Lincolnshire County Council being the lead applicant and manager of delivery, the project being part of the Structures on the Edge commissions along the Lincolnshire Coast.

Artists' briefs were developed and issued during spring and responses from national and internationally known artists were shortlisted and then interviews took place. Through this a favoured 'in principle' design, which would evolve and be developed, was chosen which reflected not just the Pilgrims in isolation but navigation, travel and much wider themes. This design was shared and endorsed by the Chief Executive Officer and Portfolio Holder as well as with Fishtoft Parish Council.



Due to its location on and adjacent to the sea banks which will be being re-profiled due to engineering requirements as part of the barrier project the project submission has not been able completed as the design and construction cannot be developed at this point in time. Thus an application to ACE has been unable to be completed. Meetings on site with the E.A. have indicated that a potential more suitable location seaward of the sea bank and further from the memorial site may be more appropriate.

Whilst reflecting elements of the Pilgrim story the structure and the themes and stories it develops is considered as more widely encompassing but due to the physical constraints of the bank engineering if the bid is successful installation is likely to be completed post 2020. The proposal of the installation as part of the Sculptures on the Edge series of artworks in coastal locations makes it non dependent upon a direct relationship with the anniversary year and the brief and artist responses all look to create a legacy commemorating wider themes of exploration, maritime history and location. The council, Lincolnshire County Council and partners were required to wait until August 2019 after the E.A. had appointed a contractor, later than anticipated, to develop discussions to see when works can be progressed to develop and submit the bid. With works to the sea bank anticipated to commence by the end of 2019 and hopefully be finalised in this area by July 2020.

Lincolnshire County Council are the lead applicant and project manager and are providing circa £22K of match funding, Boston Borough Council have committed £5K match funding and ACE supporting with circa £100K.

## 2.5 Boston Buoys: Sculpture Project

Allied to the Structures on the Edge project a scheme proposing a set of artistic interventions to six large scale redundant maritime buoys was developed during spring 2018. Artist briefs were worked up and circulated and again a high level of response from nationally and internationally known artists was received. Through short listing and subsequent interview three artists were selected to 'curate' the project, each having two buoys to work with. The design proposals were used to support an application to ACE with match funding made available from Boston Big Local (BBL), the E.A. and Boston Borough Council.

This bid has been successful and the Arts Council England have committed £100K to make the project possible. The University of Lincoln, Transported, BBC and partners were able to have an initial meeting with the three artists of national and international status on the 15<sup>th</sup> May, they are Bex Simon (an artist blacksmith and who has appeared on the up cycling TV programme 'Money for Nothing'), Carrie Reichart (an internationally known mosaic artist) and Jo

Chapman a specialist in outdoor sculpture and who has delivered contemporary buoys projects in Shetland amongst her works.

The bid was submitted on behalf of Transported through their accountable body, the University of Lincoln, Transported will manage the project with the close cooperation of Boston Borough Council.

The buoys are intended to be placed in key locations in and around the town centre and represent and reflect elements of the town's historic and contemporary stories as well as presenting a 'trail' for people to be able to follow.

Planning application submissions for the five buoys requiring planning were worked up on behalf of the artists and submitted for consideration by the July meeting of the Planning Committee and were unanimously passed.

Whilst not specific to the Pilgrims the programme design and commissioning has always been intended to maximise its impact from a 2020 unveiling. Adding to the cultural offer of the town and being an impactful intervention in the public realm during a time of heightened interest locally, nationally and internationally.

The Boston Buoys project was initially scoped to be 5 buoys in total being match funded by £14K by Boston Big Local (BBL) through a service level agreement with Boston in Bloom (BiB) Boston Borough Council had through existing budgets agreed to support with a contribution of £1K. During May and June of 2018 officers took the opportunity to advocate investment in this arts project with the E.A. who are working on the barrier scheme to enable another buoy to be added to the scheme close to the barrier installation. In September of last year they confirmed that they would contribute an additional £14K to the scheme enabling all three selected artists to work on 2 buoys each. The bid to ACE was for £100K.

### **3. Conclusion**

- 3.1 The projects, activities & events programme will enable Boston to usefully contribute to other existing and proposed schemes based around the heritage and historic offer of Boston, improving the town as a destination and place to live, work and culturally engage with. These include the Townscape Heritage Initiative, public realm interventions and improvements in the presentation of the streetscene all of which influence the experience of Boston and underpin its ability to attract interest and investment.
- 3.2 The list of activity is not exhaustive and during 2020 it is likely that it will be possible to incorporate more activity and help stakeholders and partners develop plans to deliver additional programmes and events.

3.3 The recommendations of this report are therefore that:

- The Environment & Performance Committee notes the progress of the various projects as detailed within the report

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no new financial implications arising as a result of this report.

#### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications specific to this report.

#### **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

None

#### **EQUALITY AND SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS**

None

#### **ANY OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

None specific to this report.

#### **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1. Summary of funding and costs

Appendix 2. Pilgrim Events Update

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.

#### **CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT**

A report on this item has previously considered by this committee on 10 January 2018, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2019 and 5<sup>th</sup> September 2019.