

Friends Of Bolingbroke Castle

Parish Meeting Report

Our village-based community group aims to promote the castle and works in partnership with the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire in providing guided tours for groups, organising events at the castle, and ensuring the future preservation of the monument.

After a long spell during the pandemic of outward facing inactivity, we came back strongly with the (delayed from 2020) re-enactment in the summer of 2021.

The event was purposefully pared down with a planned crowd of 600 people over the two days – 150 for each of 4 morning/afternoon sessions. This was done to address ongoing concerns from ourselves, the re-enacting group we have been working with and our perception of the general public's concerns around social distancing. Across the weekend, we sold under 400 tickets. This either reflected the continued public reluctance to join crowds or an over-optimistic view of the amount of marketing required on our part.

Still, the event made a modest profit and as a learning exercise for future events it proved very valuable. Many of our thinking and solutions, developed over the last two years since planning started for a 2020 version of the event, can be repeated. Apart from the clattering of mace and axe on shield and armour, that could be heard from quite a distance from the castle, we believe we kept any disturbance to the village to a minimum and notably surprised a few who had made plans to leave the village to avoid a predicted chaotic episode.

We have built a strong relationship with the re-enactment society (The Plantagenets) and they are keen to participate in future, hopefully more regular, events of this kind. Heritage Trust Lincolnshire also see the event as a great success and have identified an opportunity to develop a "brand" around the re-enactments at the castle. A revenue earning capability for the castle is key to gaining more investment from English Heritage.

We have now started planning further events for the coming months; starting with a meeting/quiz on 18th November, which will also include a talk on the Great Cowcher Project by Professor Louise Wilkinson (Professor of Medieval Studies at Lincoln University).

We are planning a star-gazing evening in January and have pencilled in a Burns Supper for 22nd January too.

The usual Dragon Egg Hunt will take place in the spring, and we are discussing dates with the Plantagenets for a bigger and better re-enactment – with more of a medieval village feel as well as the attractions of the re-enactors and other demonstrations and traders in keeping with the time.

Our group continues to work closely with Heritage Trust Lincolnshire and now the Friends of St Peter & St Paul, to develop joint events and to collaborate on projects to enhance the heritage assets within the village.

Membership costs remain cheap. We are developing discounts & benefits to encourage more membership and to reward those who already support us. See Colin Simpson (The Membership Secretary) for membership forms.

Thankyou

Bruce Talmage (Secretary and Acting Chairman - FOBC).