

# Friends of Bolingbroke Castle (FOBC) – Review 2022-2023

## Purpose and News

The Friends of Bolingbroke Castle's objectives are:

To support, to further the work of and to provide financial assistance to the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire ("Heritage Lincolnshire") in connection with the protection, development and management of Bolingbroke Castle

That in carrying out its activities, the Friends of Bolingbroke Castle, shall so far as is possible, endeavour to provide benefits to the village and the village community as a whole

In particular it will try and ensure that the views and feelings of the residents, the long established and recent, are taken into account when considering new initiatives

The membership, finances and social media attention have all grown over the last year, due mainly to the success of the summer re-enactment event that attracted over 1,000 people. We also managed a bigger and better January Burns Night, thanks to the Luncheon Club Ladies, and a summer BBQ.

However, the year has been less positive with regard to the projects that we would have wanted to undertake to improve the facilities at the castle. HTL has undergone significant organizational change, with a change in CEO, some key team members leaving (FOBC Charlotte Davey, our HTL friend for some years now, being one of them).

Consequently, there has been little noticeable progress on establishing a use for and maintaining the land that was very kindly donated by Sylvia and Maurice Bradbury and plans to develop the volunteer/Butchers' shed have also been put on hold.

The work being done to install new stock fencing of the Route Yard has taken a backward step and early audits and proposals by Willy Baumber have not been followed up. Plans to dredge the moat and use the recovered soil to shore up the footpath around the back of the castle have also not progressed.

On a slightly more positive note, CGM appear to be back to a reasonable level of service, having had logistical set-backs during Covid, and some of the castle grounds are starting to be tackled. But there is still a lot to do to restore them to the condition and standard that was set when the Moat was cleared over a decade ago and we must push for the resources and finances to make it happen.

We continue to try and bring pressure to bear on HTL to address these issues and are meeting regularly with their new management and team.

Looking to the future, we are again holding the re-enactment event this year on the weekend of 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> August, with a broader array of displays to make the event bigger and better. Additional displays under discussion/confirmed include, a falconry flying display, medieval cookery demonstrations, Byzantine knights, pole



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lathe work and pewter forging. Tickets will be going on sale soon at early bird prices (for a limited period). FOBC members will be able to take advantage of the discounted prices right up until the event.

FOBC continue to work closely with the Friends of St Peter & St Pauls church as it clear that there is a shared vision of how to secure and develop the rich heritage of the village.

We continue to work with Lincoln University on the Great Cowcher Project, although this too has taken a bit of a step back and is more likely to take place in 2024. Hopefully this won't pass us by, and we are still working on a smaller joint project to hold a series of events in the village in November of this year.

So, in summary, a very positive and ambitious (perhaps too ambitious) start to the last year hasn't quite turned out as we might have hoped. Many of the projects, particularly those on which we rely on HTL and/or funding from English Heritage or the Duchy Lancaster to move forward, have for various reasons not progressed – but we have still had some great events and the FOBC remains strong. Hopefully next year will be better.

The FOBC has long been at the core of much of the social cohesion of the village, with events for members, promotion of the castle as a venue and even the loaning of cider making equipment - which I have personally taken full advantage of over the last few years. I cannot recommend enough how important and rewarding it is to support village groups.

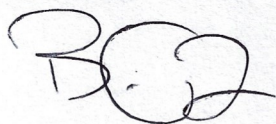
This is my last report as Chairman of FOBC, with a replacement ready to take the chairmanship at the FOBC AGM on 8<sup>th</sup> June at the Ramsden Village Hall. Do come along to the AGM. It's a chance to meet up with FOBC members, representatives from HTL, general hangers on and we are having a quiz too.

Membership of FOBC remains cheap and, by attending the events (the re-enactment in particular) the membership fee can be easily recovered if "value for money" is your primary objective. With prices set at only:

- Individual Adult (£5)
- Individual Adult over 60 (£3.50)
- Family/Household Membership (£7.50)
- Under 16 (Free)

You can sign-up online and get instructions on how to pay online too. Either through our Facebook page or our website or just let me have your details and I will get someone to give you a traditional paper membership form. Or you can just register for the "not too frequent" email to find out more about our events, how and where to get tickets, and progress on the castle.

Regards, thanks, and goodbye



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(FOBC Chairman)

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