

Boston Big Local Final Report

March 2024

Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Service – Environmental Projects

Our funding from Boston Big Local commenced in February 2020 and before we had had the opportunity to get started on our plans COVID 19 and lockdown happened putting a stop to community projects. During the lockdown period a public questionnaire was sent out to get residents' views on what needed doing in the Boston Big Local area to improve it and to find out if people wanted to volunteer. We had 87 responses which were analysed and was a good starting point for us. This lockdown period was also used to make connections with other Boston organisations including Boston in Bloom, the Prince's trust, the local churches, the Geoff Moulder Community Garden, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, Transported, the library, Platform Housing and Boston College. During the period February 2020 to March 2021, we worked with around 50 volunteers.

We were successful in getting Shine funding towards the Naturehood project for the year 2021 to 2022 and this gave us the opportunity to work closely with Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and deliver nature themed activities in the Boston Big Local area.

In the year April 2021 to March 2022, we worked with 588 volunteers. We started up Boston RiverCare and litter picks took place along the River Witham and the tidal Haven. These litter picks have been very successful and involved approximately 20 volunteers at each event and we have removed many bags of litter and other large items.



Litter Pick at the River Witham



Litter picking with the Princes Trust

The Naturehood project enabled us to have nine management plans produced by an environmental surveyor on local Boston sites. We also delivered 18 Naturehood projects at various sites during 2021/2022. In March 2022 we had a Friendly Bench installed in Broadfield Lane. Boston Big Local supported the project and paid for the concrete base for the bench. During this year we also made a successful connection with the Boston Men's Shed which has gone from strength to strength. During the year they made us bird box and bug box kits for us to use at community events. They have also made us a "nature guess who" game, bat boxes, plaques and markers for a nature trail. We have also put other organisations in touch with them and they have made planters and refurbished some benches.



In the year April 2022 to March 2023, we worked with a total of 760 volunteers and members of the community. We carried out 4 river litter picks, 11 naturehood events, and 18 other environmental events. In addition, we also attended the two-day Beach events in Central Park where we engaged with approximately 600 local people.



River LitterPick



Pebble Project at the Friendly Bench for the King's Coronation

The Boston Big Local project has enabled us to apply for additional funding, the major funding coming from Shine but also BTAC and ASDA. We have also had donations of plants from the Prince's Trust and pallets from South lincs Pallets to make our bug hotels.

In the current year we have worked with 958 people plus approximately engaged with 600 people at the two day Beach event in Central Park. We had 4 river litter picks, 13 events at the Friendly Bench and 59 other environmental activities with various groups and members of the community.



Green Volunteers in the town centre



Dead Hedge Workshop

During the course of the Boston Big Local project, we have assisted 3 Boston organisations to become properly constituted groups: Boston Men's Shed, The Friendly Bench Boston and the Geoff Moulder Community Garden. They now have management committees, policies and bank accounts in place. This will enable them to continue post Boston Big Local funding. We have also set up a RiverCare group to tackle the litter along the tidal Haven and the River Witham and plans in the future to get involved in conservation tasks, and the Green Volunteers, a group that meets weekly to tackle clean up tasks in the centre of Boston. We are planning to help these groups to become properly constituted to ensure they continue post Boston Big Local funding.

We have worked with the Thomas Middlecott Academy in Kirton. They have travelled to Boston to assist the Green Volunteers on clean-up projects in the town centre. We have also successfully put the Thomas Middlecott Academy in touch with Kirton volunteers and as a result set up the Kirton Clean up Squad. We are also working with the Boston Police Cadets, and they wish to join in regular environmental projects.

We have built up excellent relationships with Boston in Bloom, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, RSBP Frampton Marsh, Boston College, St. Boltoph's Church, the Centenary Methodist Church. Boston Men's Shed, RiverCare and BeachCare, the Prince's Trust, Boston Borough Council, the Wyberton Wombles, Transported, Age UK and others. All of these connections will assist us going forwards.

Our Boston Big Local project has assisted us in securing funding to continue to support the Geoff Moulder Community Garden in 2024/2025 (we received £6,000 from Starbucks). We have also applied for other funding (decisions awaiting) to hopefully help us to continue our environmental projects.

A few quotes from our volunteers:

When we asked Robert, one of our volunteers at the Friendly Bench, if he enjoyed being a part of project, he said; 'I love it, when I'm out here looking after the plants people passing come to talk to me and say I am doing a great job'

A comment from Maggi, the lady that organises the Geoff Moulder community garden:

"We now have three more lovely volunteers joining Joe and Belinda, Nigel, Sarah and Cally - and all are very keen. Joe has even been checking on the garden regularly between our Wednesday sessions and says it is really helping him.

A big thank you to you and Julie (social prescribing link worker) this has given the garden a new future. After lockdown there were only 3 of us able to continue. We sadly lost the lady who started the gardening group to cancer this week. A carer all her life it was her hope that the garden could be used to help people. I was glad that she knew about the new volunteers and was very pleased to hear how the garden is helping them.”

Case study from a volunteer who regular participates in our river litter picks:

We did two of these supported by Rivercare and Jackie of LCVS. We had good turnouts of approx 20 people each time over winter and early Spring and cleared many bags of litter plus larger sundry items, e.g large plastic barrels, plastic crates and sheets and hypodermic needles etc which were afterwards collected by borough council. Wyberton Wombles also came to assist. Jackie, with her very valuable funding, provided equipment and refreshments on both occasions, along with social media involvement and all participants. She was able to enlist the welcome help of St Nicholas Church Hall on the wet and cold Winter litter pick. Jackie has also obtained very welcome assistance from Asda with their Community Champion, Steve Bromby. Next Winter when the foliage on the riverbanks has died down, and when the litter can be seen and extricated, we hope to return again for what is such a worthwhile project. The job we do here now on a regular basis is very important, because so much rubbish finds its way into the Wash and the wider marine environment. The river discharges from a very large catchment, including Lincoln, Sleaford, Grantham, Horncastle, Woodhall, Boston and many drains/ watercourses, with all the resultant littering. Much of this is deposited at the high tide mark. I would like to emphasise just how important these litter picks are to the environment AND to the socialising they engender within the community.

The Boston Big Local project has enabled us to engage hundreds of local people in volunteering projects, we have set up new groups, worked in partnership with many local organisations and helped to improve the environment. People have gained new skills from attending our workshops, made new friends and discovered the benefits to their mental health that being out in the fresh air close to nature brings. The project has also helped to raise the profile of Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Service in terms of empowering people to have pride in Boston and laid a foundation for green spaces and sustainable nature projects.