



# LINCOLNSHIRE HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 2021

VOICES OF LINCOLNSHIRE - STORIES UNHEARD  
10TH - 19TH SEPTEMBER

*Compiled by Heritage Lincolnshire*

## BACKGROUND: HERITAGE LINCOLNSHIRE AND HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

Heritage Open Days (HODs) is a national festival, coordinated locally by Heritage Lincolnshire, which celebrates England’s fantastic architecture and culture by offering free access to places that are usually closed to the public or would normally charge for admission.

The Lincolnshire Heritage Open Days festival is of national significance, as one of the few counties whose HODs events are centrally coordinated and promoted. Heritage Lincolnshire has organised the county’s programme of events since 1994 when they were first inspired by the European Heritage Days that still take place across the continent. Over the past 28 years, there have been over 2,700 events across the county. Heritage Lincolnshire can only deliver this programme thanks to the continued support of the county’s local authorities. For the 2021 festival, we would like to gratefully acknowledge the contributions of:



**EVENT 20A:  
DISCOVER HECKINGTON WINDMILL**

## PLANNING AND DELIVERY

The festival is developed in collaboration with the Lincolnshire Heritage Open Days Steering Group, and Events Development Team, both of which are made up of representatives of the county’s local authorities, community groups, and historic sites. Heritage Lincolnshire coordinates the festival, providing advice, support, administration, design and promotion. This includes producing digital and physical festival brochures, as well as uploading listings to the national website, which features full details of all the events.

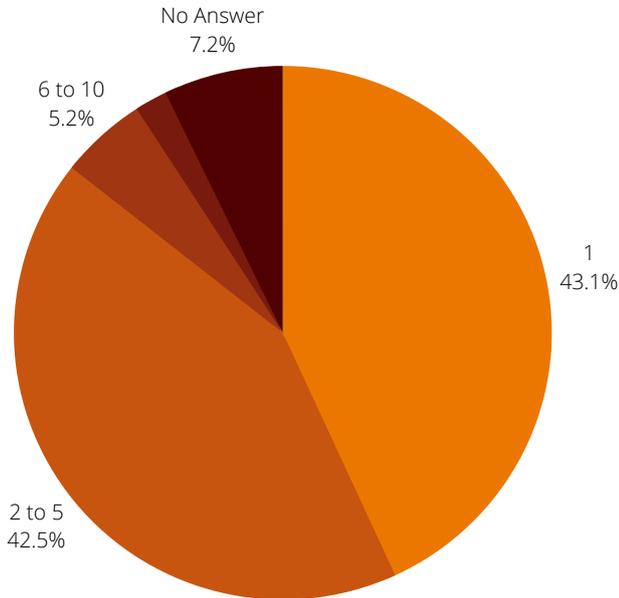
Events are planned and delivered mostly by volunteers who bring with them a passion and knowledge of local heritage that contributes a great deal to the special character of the festival. Visitors benefit from rare opportunities to access buildings that are rarely open to the public and to explore some of the county’s top historic attractions free of charge.

The main audience for the festival are local people, and we aim to encourage everyone to explore and engage with the heritage and historic places on their doorstep, which can be all too easy to overlook. However, we know that visitors head to Lincolnshire from across the country for the festival, and it serves as an important tool to promote the county’s cultural offer to visitors.

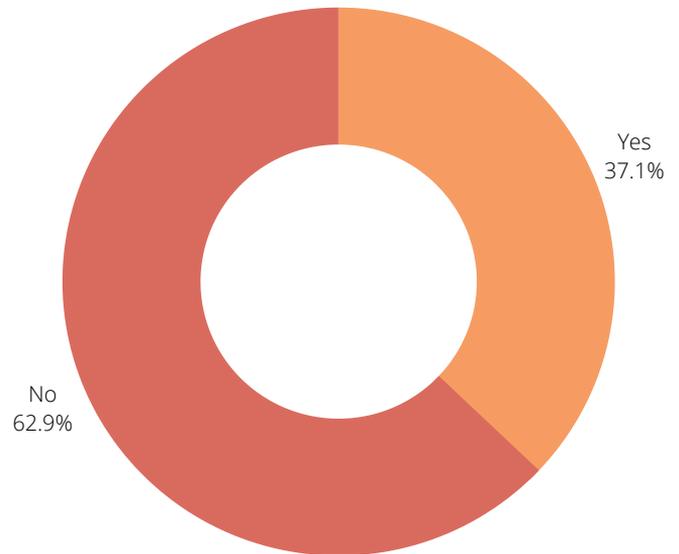


## MAIN VISITOR STATISTICS

We've translated the information gained from the feedback forms into charts so you can see some of the major trends in the data.



**HOW MANY EVENTS DID YOU VISIT?**



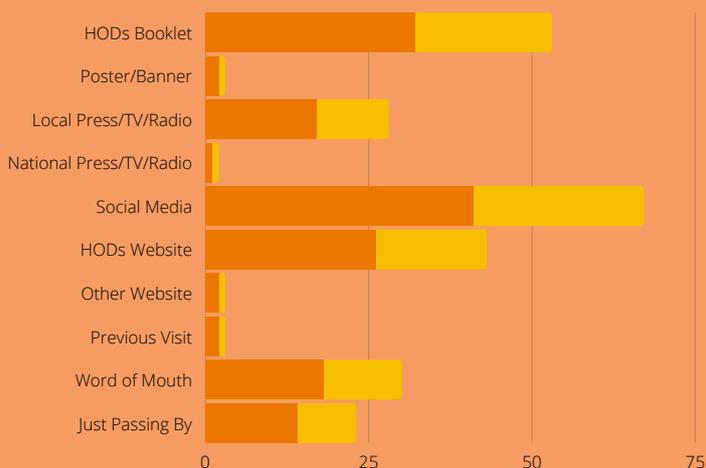
**IS THIS YOUR FIRST YEAR ATTENDING HODS?**

Here you can see that over 85% of visitors attended less than 6 events during the 2021 HODs Festival, with the highest number attending a single event (or at least a single event at the time the feedback form was completed). Over the past years, most visitors have attended 2-5 events as part of the Lincolnshire Heritage Open Days festival. There has been a gradual increase in the number of visitors who only attended 1 event, to the point where it has now just pipped the 2-5 statistics. There has been a small increase in the number of visitors attending 6-10 events, roughly equal to the number attending more than 10.

These findings are likely explained by a smaller number of events being on offer than in previous non-COVID affected years (194 in 2019).

In terms of returning visitors, we have seen a marked increase in the numbers after a steady decline since 2019. In 2020, only 56% of visitors had attended HODs events before, so a jump up to almost 63% may reflect an improvement in long-term engagement with the festival.

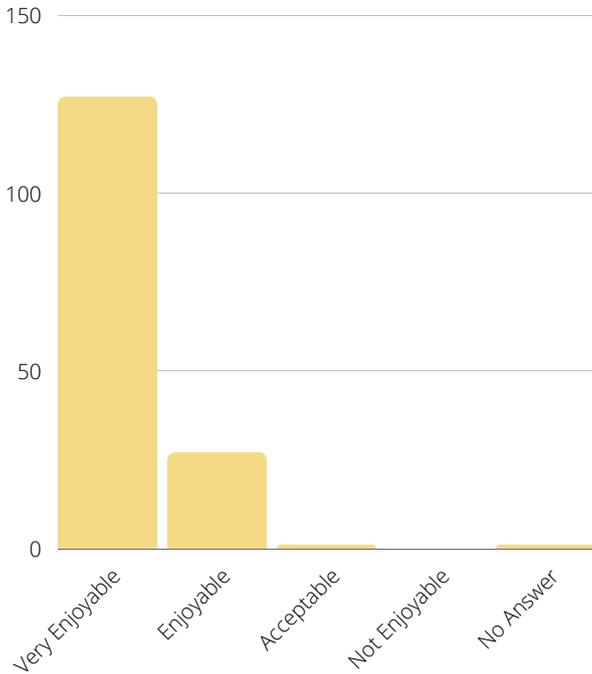
## HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT THE FESTIVAL?



50% of people found out about the festival by either Word of Mouth, the Booklet or the Website, which is similar to previous years. However, for the first time, Social Media became the most common way to find out about the festival.

This impact is likely because of the increased focus on social media Heritage Lincolnshire took on to promote the festival. Every event was listed as an event on Facebook and publicised on the platform, along with Twitter and Instagram. It was shared across various connected accounts, and where possible, linked to the social media accounts of the organisers too, for cross promotion.

**VISITOR FEEDBACK ON EVENTS**



**HOW MUCH DID YOU ENJOY YOUR VISIT?**

Visitor satisfaction continues to be very high. 82% of respondents felt that their visit was 'Very Enjoyable', and, coupled with those that found it 'Enjoyable', take that percentage up to 99%.

This reflects the warmth felt towards the festival and the staff and volunteers who put on these free events, which are greatly appreciated by visitors. This can also clearly be seen by the comments visitors left on feedback forms.

**VISITOR COMMENTS**

BEAUTIFUL CHURCH, ANCIENT GRAFFITI, WELL MAINTAINED, THANKS FOR OPENING IT UP.

GORGEOUS GARDENS AND LOVELY SCENIC WALKS WITH GIANT BENCH FOR UNUSUAL SOUVENIR PICS. WILL DEFINITELY BE BACK!

SOCIAL HISTORY WAS FASCINATING, AND VERY INFORMATIVE GUIDE! THANK YOU SO MUCH.

THE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS WERE AMAZING. NEVER KNEW WE HAD SUCH A BRILLIANT HIDDEN GEM IN GRANTHAM!

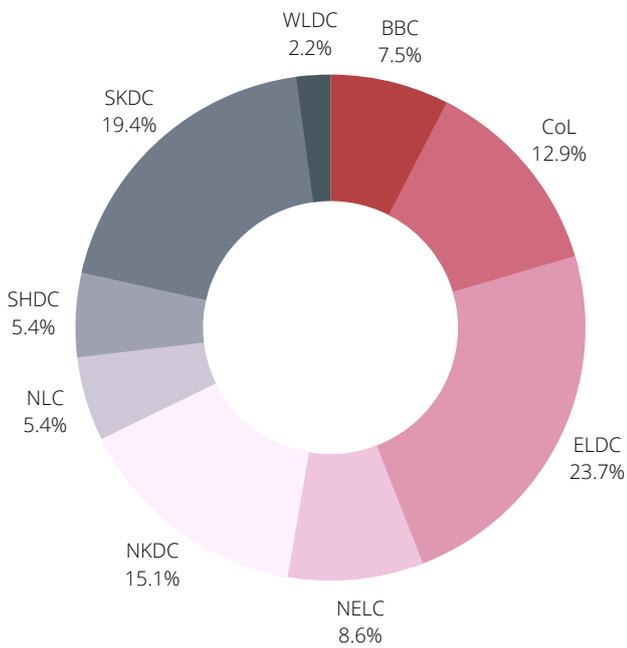
LOVED HEARING ALL THE FASCINATING STORIES AND SEEING THE VARIED GRAVESTONES

OUR GUIDE WAS VERY ENTHUSIASTIC AND KNOWLEDGEABLE. WE WERE ABLE TO SEE SECTIONS OF THE WALL NOT NORMALLY ACCESSIBLE, AND TO UNDERSTAND WHERE THE WALLS WERE.

EVENT 37B STAMFORD ENDOWED SCHOOLS CHAPEL - 800 YEARS OF HISTORY



**EVENT STATISTICS**



For 2021, the festival offered 93 events across Greater Lincolnshire.

**EVENT LOCATION**

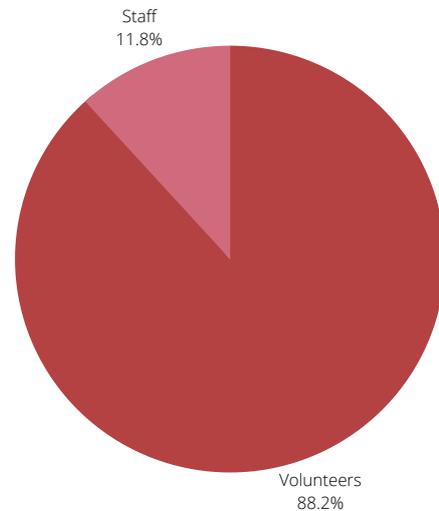
East Lindsey took the lead as the district with the most events, accounting for almost one in four events during the festival. North and South Kesteven, as well as City of Lincoln also offered a range of activities across the ten days of Heritage Open Days.

There has been a decrease in events offered by West Lindsey, North Lincolnshire and South Holland, so for 2022 we will work with the local authorities to attract new or returning organisers.

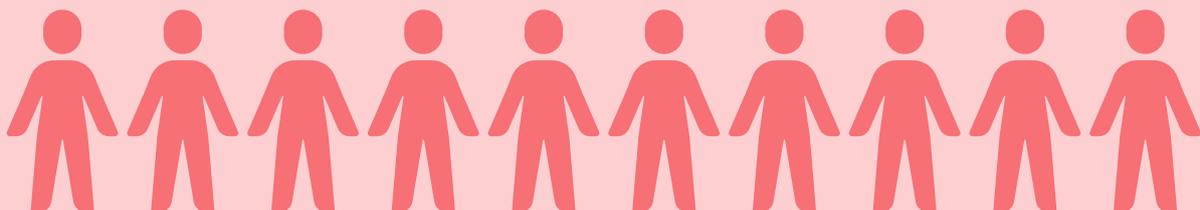
**ORGANISER FEEDBACK**

Every year our organisers also complete feedback forms to tell us a little more about their experiences, and to record their opinions on what worked well and what needs further development, both at event and festival level.

Many events are designed and delivered by volunteers, and this is reflected within the make-up of those running the events. This year, volunteers accounted for almost 90%, which is slightly more than in previous years but is reflective of an ongoing trend which accounts for 80-90% of event 'staff' and organisers being unpaid volunteers.



**HOW MANY STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS HELPED RUN YOUR EVENT?**



10 out of 11 (or 92%) of organisers said they would like to take part again next year. Those that didn't, said it was predominantly because their organisation takes part ever other year, or that the festival coincided with a special anniversary or activity.

## ORGANISER COMMENTS

HERITAGE LINCOLNSHIRE SUPPORT WAS EXCELLENT, ESPECIALLY PROMPT DELIVERY OF EXTRA BROCHURES.

IT WAS VERY GOOD TO BE MENTIONED IN THE BOOKLET AS IT ATTRACTED MORE VISITORS TO THE EVENT

LIKED THE BROCHURE DESIGN – IT MAKES YOU WANT TO PICK IT UP – CLEAR INFORMATION AND APPROPRIATE ADVERTISING.

GREAT SUPPORT FOR THE FESTIVAL. WOULD BE GOOD TO LAUNCH THE BROCHURES EARLIER AGAIN, COVID PERMITTING

REALLY APPRECIATE BEING INCLUDED IN THE BROCHURE FOR FREE. IT MAKES IT WORTH TAKING PART AS WE SEE LOTS OF NEW VISITORS IN THE FESTIVAL THAT WE DON'T GET NORMALLY. KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!

YOUR COVID INFORMATION WAS USEFUL AND EASY TO FOLLOW. THERE WERE SOME GOOD POINTERS.

## CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

Every year, we ask both visitors and organisers for constructive feedback on how we can improve the festival. This year we've received the following suggestions to work on for 2022:

**BROCHURE COULD BE LAUNCHED EARLIER TO INCREASE AWARENESS**

Our aim will be to return to the pre-COVID system of launching at the Lincolnshire Show, which is on 22nd-23rd June in 2022

**THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL NEWSPAPERS DIDN'T PROMOTE THE FESTIVAL VERY MUCH**

We do send press releases out to the local press, however, they may choose not to publish it. We will look at the feasibility of paid advertising for 2022

**THERE WASN'T A LOT OF ONLINE PUBLICITY BEYOND THE HERITAGE LINCOLNSHIRE WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES**

We have increased our online presence, but would like to do some cross-promotional work with some of the organiser sites to really get the word out online

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## ORGANISER SUPPORT

To organisers get the most out of their event we offered four free support sessions, each optional and complimentary, but designed to help organisers to plan and deliver the best event they could. They were designed to teach digital skills, as well as adaptive strategies for coping with COVID, and to have useful application to the everyday operations of the sites.



### JOIN OUR FREE ORGANISER SUPPORT SESSIONS

To help you get the most out of your event we are offering our organisers four free support sessions.

These are all optional and complimentary, but we hope they will help you to plan and deliver the best event you can.

They are designed to give you digital skills, as well as adaptive strategies for coping with COVID, and can also be applied to your everyday operations.

#### COVID-19 RISK MANAGEMENT

23rd March: 7.15pm – 8.30pm

#### HOSTING A DIGITAL EVENT

6th April: 7.15pm – 8.30pm

#### PROMOTING YOUR EVENT

27th April: 7.15pm – 8.30pm

#### USING HODS IN FUNDING BIDS

11th May: 7.15pm – 8.30pm

### TO REGISTER GO TO:

[www.heritagelincolnshire.org/heritage-open-days/organisers/digital-workshops-for-organisers](http://www.heritagelincolnshire.org/heritage-open-days/organisers/digital-workshops-for-organisers)

## SESSIONS

### COVID-19 Risk Assessment and Management:

This session covered the assessment and management of risk at events, especially in regards to the ongoing threat of COVID-19.

### Hosting a Digital Event:

This session showed organisers useful tools they could use to host a digital event. From Zoom to Facebook Live, Youtube to Story Maps, there are plenty of ways to create online content for visitors to engage with.

### Promoting Your Event:

This session demonstrated some free marketing tools and easy promotion strategies that organisers could use to tell visitors about their event. It's easy to do and would attract lots of attention to their site/organisation.

### Using HODs in Funding Bids:

This session showed organisers how HODs events could be used to support funding bids. Funders generally want to see a 'need or desire' for projects from their stakeholders; the general public, so this session showed how HODs events can be used to gain some great evidence to support this.

## ORGANISER FEEDBACK ON THE SESSIONS

The sessions were very well received, with 92% of organisers requesting that they be run again for 2022, with less focus on COVID-19 and an increased focus on marketing and fundraising, which is to be expected as the pandemic comes more under control. In 2022, we will also aim to host a 'surgery' style workshop, where organisers can drop in and out with any questions they might have, so the Event Development Group can respond to any specific queries and requests for support.

## CONCLUSION

Overall the 2021 festival has been a massive success, thanks to the dedication of everyone involved. Visitor enjoyment remains high, as does organiser interest, and as the impact of COVID lessens, we can forecast a return to the bigger, more expansive, festival style of pre-pandemic years.

Heritage Lincolnshire would like to once again extend our gratitude to the LHODs Steering Group, the Events Development Group, event organisers, volunteers, staff, the Heritage Open Days national team and of course the councils, without whom the festival just could not happen.



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL



EVENT 15A: DISCOVER GAINSBOROUGH  
- A WALK THROUGH TIME