

**Resorting to the Coast – Interpretation Plan  
November 2016**



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# **1. Executive Summary**

(2 pages)



## 2. Introduction

This document has been produced as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund and Essex County Council funded development phase for the 'Resorting to the Coast' Project. The project is exploring and interpreting the unique seaside and resort heritage of the Tendring Coastal Towns through a wide range of activities, events, programmes and exhibitions. The towns covered by the project are Harwich/Dovercourt, Frinton, Walton-on-the-Naze, Clacton and Jaywick.

### **Purpose of 'Resorting to the Coast' and This Report**

Resorting to the Coast is a project conceived and initiated by Essex County Council with the aim of bringing to life the seaside heritage of the Tendring District Coastal Towns. The towns initially proposed in the Phase One application for inclusion in the project were Jaywick, Clacton, Frinton, Walton-on-the-Naze, Harwich/Dovercourt and Manningtree/Mistley (although Manningtree & Mistley are no longer covered by the project).

Although the focus of the project is clearly defined – the history and heritage of the resort growth story in the coastal towns – this can be approached from many different angles and can engage many different audiences and participants depending upon the kinds of activities, events, interpretation conceived, planned and delivered. Ultimately the project seeks to challenge and potentially change pervading and somewhat negative perceptions of the Coastal Towns by showcasing and exploring a somewhat underappreciated side to their history, and to engage a wide range of people in thinking creatively about the towns' futures as resorts (informed by their past).

The purpose of this report is to provide some context for how Resorting to the Coast can develop as a project over the next two years, particularly considering the significant challenge of interpreting the seaside and resort heritage of the area, ultimately informing the development of an Activity Plan that will clearly set out what a two year programme of engagement will look like, what role partnership organisations will play, and perhaps most importantly, how the project can increase capacity locally to take up the challenge long-term of ensuring that heritage (and seaside heritage in particular) can contribute to cultural and economic development of the area, civic pride and through direct community participation thorough volunteering.

### 3. Context – What Does ‘Interpretation’ Mean in terms of ‘Resorting to the Coast’?

Before developing an Interpretation Plan, it is important to set out clearly the context and purpose for the plan in order to define what we mean by ‘interpretation’ for this project. Essentially asking the question – ‘What heritage are we interpreting?’

The original HLF Stage 1 bid clearly made the case that the story of the growth of the Tendring Coastal Towns as resorts was *in itself* an interesting point for further exploration and interpretation through a number of methods and strategies.

It is clear however that this desire to tell the story is interlinked with a desire to preserve and record – oral histories, resort development and its related architectural themes, social history.....Recording and preserving is of course not the same thing as interpreting (although one can lead to the other).

One key element of the ‘Resorting to the Coast’ concept is that there is a real need to diversify the tourism and visitor offer across Tendring, and the history of the Coastal Towns is a starting point for this, positioning (or perhaps re-positioning) them as destinations with an interesting cultural and social history (which they clearly have). This then challenges the pervading image and narrative which is generally one of traditional resorts with a relatively one-dimensional day-trip seaside offer and a limited broader cultural or heritage appeal which does not encourage visitors (or indeed communities) to explore the towns beyond the well-defined ‘resort’ areas (beaches, piers, pubs, cafes etc.). This of course will be more of an issue for Clacton than for Harwich, and this sets an immediate challenge for the project in that interpretation and audience engagement across a broad and diverse area may not facilitate a ‘standard’ approach or offer for audiences. Celebrating diversity will be key while aiming to ensure that ‘seaside and resort heritage’ remain the key focus of the project. The challenge of diversity means that different approaches are likely to be required to interpretation and activities, to enable as many people as possible to engage with the project in different locations/sites and methods (exhibitions, performances, online).

The desire to utilise the history and heritage of the towns for this purpose does not at all detract from the need to preserve and record, but it does have a direct impact on how we might understand ‘interpretation’. Interpretation in this context must of course be related to the real history of the towns, but it must also contribute to the key aim of supporting tourism and promotion of the area, and therefore also supporting civic pride, economic development and the creative and cultural sectors. This is not to say that all of the towns face the same issues or require a diversification of their tourism offer on a similar scale to each other.

The interpretation in this case is very much rooted in the real history of the Coastal Towns as resorts. This will not completely exclude other elements of the town’s history, but there must be a focus on the resort growth story – the people, the entrepreneurs who recognised the opportunities, the trains, the entertainers, and the wider economic and social story that leads to the concept of holidays, seaside resorts and large-scale tourism in the UK. The full social and cultural story of all of the towns pre-dates the growth of resorts in the UK, but their *growth as resorts is the focus* rather than rural or farming history for example.

In summary therefore, we are interpreting the story of the growth of the Coastal Towns as resorts, recognising that this is an interesting social and cultural history with architectural landmarks and personal stories available for interpretation, exploration and for fun!

Part of the challenge, which is relevant to all traditional seaside resorts in the UK in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, is to find effective ways of getting people to recognise that the heritage relating to our traditional seaside destinations is as worthy of recognition as other more accepted forms of 'heritage' including castles, churches, archaeology and historic military conflict. If this is successful, then it is likely that there will be a greater focus on, and a desire to preserve and interpret, the heritage related to the growth of resorts in the UK, and the architecture, social and personal stories that are a key part of this. This is a challenge in Tendring as can be seen for example through the work undertaken on the RSA Heritage Index which shows that Tendring has a relatively poor heritage offer (museums for example) and engagement with heritage.

This report has been compiled following extensive on site research across all of the Coastal Towns, visiting all of the heritage sites and small museums, meetings with representatives of the local heritage groups, surveys of visitors and residents (in support of the Audience Development work), informal conversations with visitors and residents across the towns (in pubs and cafes for example), as well as with strategic partners including Essex CC, Tendring District Council, Essex Wildlife Trust, University of East London, and Visit Essex. There has also been very close liaison with the other teams working on the Development Phase of Resorting to the Coast.

This is a good time to be exploring the seaside and resort heritage of the area, as it is a time when the subject is beginning to be recognised more than ever by Museum Services and academics for example, as a valuable and unique part of our national heritage and culture – one that has not been particularly well respected. The development of the Seaside Heritage Network (see below) demonstrates this new interest and desire to preserve, explore and interpret. What is clear however is that there is no clear vision for how this particularly heritage is to be interpreted for audiences, collected and preserved – a key aim of the Seaside Heritage Network to address this. What is clear is the seaside and resorts remain a national obsession (not always positive), and that many millions visit the English seaside every year, taking part in activities and leisure that is not so different from the early days of resort development.



## 4. Strategic Context

In this section we examine the relevance of Resorting to the Coast to wider strategies and/or studies that have an impact on the direction of culture and heritage in the Tendring District, or which could be considered as relevant to informing how heritage (and seaside heritage in particular) is considered strategically locally.

### Tendring Economic Development Strategy 2013

The Tendring Economic Strategy identifies tourism as an important sector for Tendring, while also recognising that there are challenges in terms of developing and supporting the tourism industry. It identifies Clacton (the main visitor destination in Tendring) as having been in decline for 30 years in terms of its offer.....

*'It is well documented that the town's tourism offer has declined over the last 30 years, meaning the town is now more reliant on its economic role as a local service centre, rather than as a visitor location.'*

This pervading narrative of decline is a major challenge of the key Coastal Towns of relevance to Resorting to the coast – Clacton, Jaywick and to an extent Walton. This narrative inevitably will inform perceptions of the value of Clacton's heritage – primarily 'seaside heritage' – as being less relevant to the town's future than it might be under more prosperous circumstances.

The strategy points to the following challenges and opportunities for the 'development of a Visitor Sector which meets the needs of the modern consumer...', many of which are relevant to 'Resorting to the Coast'.

- **Diversification** – as with many coastal areas, Tendring has a relatively seasonal visitor economy, with employment peaks in the summer months and troughs in the winter months. Securing a more diverse visitor offer can help to make the local economy more resilient, making employment opportunities more attractive to residents and increasing levels of income;
- **Protecting Assets** – Tendring's coastline is its major visitor asset but is affected by high levels of erosion. This can impact on the local visitor economy in a number of ways, including loss of visitor activities (coastal paths) and accommodation. Ensuring that major defence projects such as the proposed Clacton to Holland on Sea project are delivered effectively will therefore be important in protecting the future of the visitor economy in Tendring;
- **Destinations** – in diversifying the sector, the creation of new visitor / cultural destinations is likely to be important. There are a number of potential opportunities in this regard, including the Clacton to Holland on Sea coastal defence project which is likely to result in the creation of new beaches; the proposed St Osyth Priory redevelopment; and the proposed reuse of the Atlanta Building in Clacton. The high quality of the physical environment (both at the coast and away from the coast) remains an overarching asset on which to build;
- **Branding and Identity** – consultation with stakeholders suggests that the seaside resorts in Tendring (particularly Clacton) currently suffer from negative perceptions. Altering this image and developing an improved identity for the area is likely to be important in developing the visitor offer;
- **Labour Market and Skills** – a range of relevant courses to the sector are offered to local residents by providers such as the Colchester Institute. However, evidence suggests that demand for courses amongst young residents is relatively low. Despite this, the visitor economy still offers employment opportunities within Tendring and as such further efforts to engage young people into relevant training are important;
- **Business Support** – as the visitor economy changes, it is important to support local businesses as they seek to access new markets or refresh their offer. Technology is one example of this – in order to survive and compete; small businesses are likely to need support as they strive to keep up to date (e.g. front house technologies; computer booking systems; an internet presence and apps).

Diversification – It is clear that the strategy is recognising that Tendring needs to develop a more 'diverse visitor offer'. Currently the offer for visitors to some of the key centres (Clacton in

particular) is heavily focused on the traditional seaside resort, and that this is by its very nature seasonal which does not support a resilient year round economy. A more diverse offer can help to attract a more diverse visitor base, and this requires building upon Tendring's other assets which would include environment/natural and heritage. The two can go very well together, such as through promotion of the coastal path that connects up the towns as a sustainable route for exploration of the wider coastal area.

The Heritage and wider cultural/arts sectors are not well-developed in Tendring which the most significant sectors being the Care industry (15% of employees work in the Health/Care sector), Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering, and Construction (Source: Essex Partnership District Profile April 2016). The Tendring District Council 'Socio-Economic Baseline 2013' states that the Cultural and Visitor Economy has 'Moderate Growth Potential' compared to the Health and Care sectors.

*'Employment activity is clustered around Clacton and coastal areas. There is moderate growth potential linked to the diversification of the visitor offer and developing a more year round, sustainable visitor economy.'*

Visitors to the area can of course be residents of Tendring, making local visits and spending money in the local economy. For this to happen residents may need to recognise that the local area has something to offer them as 'visitors', and perhaps to have a sense of civic pride and interest. It is worth noting that Tendring has a significantly higher proportion of residents who are over 65 compared to other areas in Essex and the UK national average.

Destinations – It is recommended that there is the 'creation of new cultural / visitor destinations'. This is clearly a regeneration priority and some opportunity sites are highlighted including some in Clacton. The role of heritage, and particularly the role of the 'Resorting to the Coast' project, will play a role in changing perceptions and creating new or renewed interest in the area. This clearly links to 'branding' which is also a key issue considered below. Seaside Heritage is clearly part of Clacton, Walton, Jaywick, Frinton and Dovercourt's local heritage that is not currently being well interpreted or perhaps valued

Branding and Identity – This is the key issue of relevance to 'Resorting to the Coast', as there is a real opportunity for the activities proposed through the project to highlight the heritage potential of the coastal towns and attract new visitors and audiences for this. Changing perceptions is a key challenge, and with a rather one-dimensional offer focused on the traditional seaside day or short trip market the current perception is relatively poor. It is important that a Destination Management strategy can emerge that recognises the potential of 'heritage' and how this can contribute to improving perceptions and encouraging new visitors to the coastal towns. 'Heritage' in this particular instance is the social, cultural and architectural story of the growth of the towns as resorts. Employment activity is clustered around Clacton and coastal areas. There is moderate growth potential linked to the diversification of the visitor offer and developing a more year round, sustainable visitor economy.

### **Tendring District Council Corporate Plan 2016-2020**

The TDC Corporate Plan has been updated and simply summarised for 2016 to 2020 with very clear references to the importance of tourism and the coast. Under 'Our Opportunities' the following is summarised

- *Clear Vision for economic growth and prosperity*

- *Our coast*
- *Tourism, culture and sport*
- *Sea, road and rail connectivity*

In this summary the coast is recognised as a major asset along with tourism and culture. This provides some useful context for Resorting to the Coast as the coast is critical to the project, and the heritage of the resort development of the Coastal Towns is key to tourism and cultural growth. Further to this the Corporate Plan also identifies an 'Attractive events programme' as important to 'Employment and Enjoyment'. Well publicised and planned events will be a key part of the Resorting to the Coast programme and will therefore contribute strongly to this.

### **Destination Management – Tendring**

There is not yet a Destination Management Plan in place for Tendring or indeed any of the Coastal Towns. It is understood that a new Tourism Strategy is being developed which will shape the context for Destination Management planning in Tendring. The resource for tourism and Destination Management has to come from the experience, knowledge and resources that exist through a range of partners including the local heritage organisations. This is the base upon which a compelling and rooted Destination Management plan can be developed – the resource to feed the narrative and develop stories, themes and projects.

Getting local organisations and stakeholders to work together towards a common aim is going is important to Destination Management, and Resorting to the Coast as a collaborative project should be able to make a contribution.

Guidance is available from Visit Britain for Destination Management planning:  
<https://www.visitbritain.org/developing-your-destination-management-plan>

### **Seaside Heritage Network**

The Seaside Heritage Network is an emerging network that has been established through the efforts of Scarborough Museums Trust working collaboratively through a Steering group with Southend Museum Service, Blackpool Museums Project, National Piers Society, Manx National Heritage and representative from Leeds University. The work on developing the network and the concept of a collaborative groups of organisations being able to offer mutual support and guidance on developing seaside heritage collections, interpreting existing collections and audience engagement, has largely been funded by the Esmee Fairbairn Collections Fund (which is managed by the Museums Association). The Collections Fund aims to

- work with an existing collection or collections to improve understanding of them and increase their use; and
- through that collections work, involve, inspire and have impact on people, communities and audiences.

It is interesting therefore, and opportune for the project partners on Resorting to the Coast that the Seaside Heritage Network should be aiming to develop a broader understanding of the importance of 'seaside heritage' at the same time that Resorting to the Coast is getting established in Tendring. To date no clear guidance has emerged for any museum or heritage organisations that has significant seaside heritage collections (or ambitions to grow one), but through the Network that will begin to emerge. Resorting to the Coast should therefore be in a good position to inform and to

learn, enabling the local partners to develop collaboration and partnerships across the region and nationally that could help to sustain the project outcomes well beyond the initial two years.

The Seaside Heritage Network recognises that challenge of dealing with a part of our national heritage which is somewhat intangible, although also familiar to most people in the UK today. Many of the items relevant to seaside heritage (postcards, hats etc.) have generally been 'throwaway' they are often not collected by museums and not preserved for the future. Scarborough Museum and Southend Museum are two services that do have a significant collection, but interpretation and engaging audiences is also a challenge.

The aims of the Seaside Heritage Network are:

- To promote the value of seaside heritage and culture
- To further understand and research the British Seaside and Seaside-related collections
- To locate custodians of seaside heritage and share knowledge and expertise
- To provide membership to professionals working with seaside collections and all those interested in the seaside history, heritage and culture

These aims are not so different to the overall aims of Resorting to the Coast. The point here is that the growing Network and related projects and events will address somewhat the fact that 'seaside heritage' has often been seen by museums services and perhaps academics as a subset of 'social history' or 'maritime history'. It is important for Resorting to the Coast to recognise this as an issue and to engage proactively with the challenge of making seaside heritage relevant to the many different communities and visitors in the Tendring Coastal towns.

### **Great Places**

As well as being the lead organisation for Resorting to the Coast, Essex CC are also leading on an application to the Great Places scheme focusing on the Tendring area (including a key focus on Jaywick).

*'The Great Place Scheme will fund projects in areas where there is a commitment to embed arts, culture and heritage in local plans and decision-making. By strengthening the networks between culture, civic and community organisations, and by involving citizens and local businesses, projects will enhance the role that culture plays in the future of each place participating in the Scheme. In time this will lead to the wide range of social and economic benefits that arts, culture and heritage can achieve.'*

[www.greatplacescheme.org.uk](http://www.greatplacescheme.org.uk)

This would appear to be a great opportunity to embed Resorting to the Coast in a strategy that clearly links culture and heritage to local community development and civic engagement. At this stage it is not certain that the Essex CC application will be successful, but it does demonstrate a good ambition from ECC to utilise culture and heritage to support local development and economic outcomes.

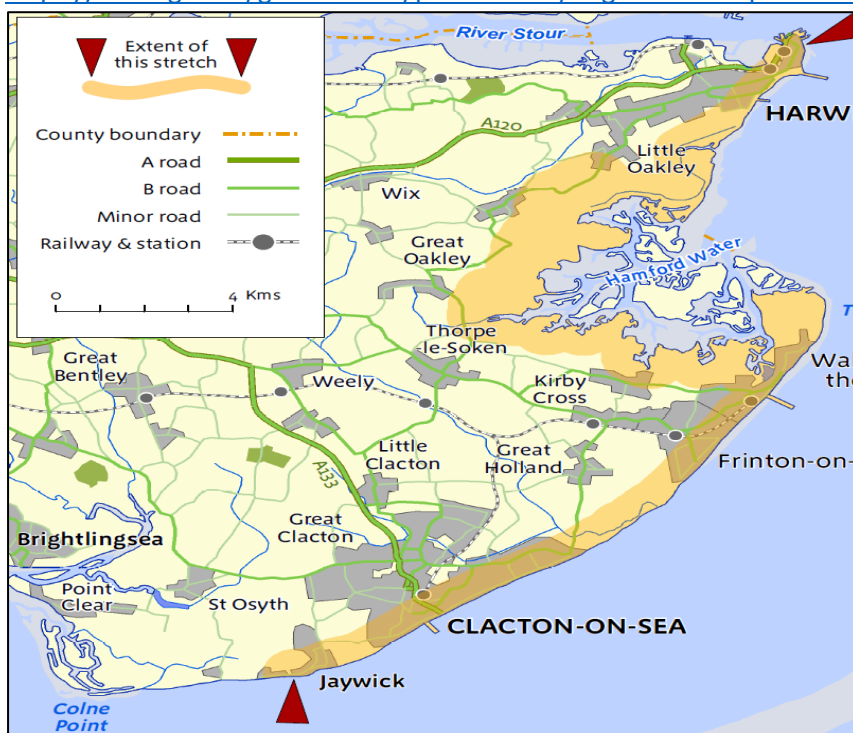
### **Essex Coast Path**

The Government is committed to developing a new National Trail around all of England's coastline, with the work being led by Natural England in partnership with local authorities and land owners. Natural England expects to complete the work on the Coast Path by 2020, and people will have the right of access along the entire stretch for the first time. The Essex Coast Path is a key part of this

and Natural England are working alongside Essex CC to see different stretches opened up progressively up to 2020. The key part of the Path of relevance to Resorting to the Coast is Jaywick to Harwich, which takes in all of the towns covered by the project including Clacton, Frinton, Walton. This stretch of path is expected to open in 2018 (no precise date yet as investigations are ongoing and plans will be subject to consultation, Government approval and the completion of establishment works by Essex CC as the relevant Access Authority). The national initiative is called the 'England Coast Path'. However the intention, should sufficient external funding be secured, is for this to be re-branded (or jointly branded) as the 'Essex Coast Path' in the future.

There are likely to be events to mark the opening of this stretch of the Coast Path in Essex, and the intention is that these should, where possible, coincide with events taking place for Resorting to the Coast. The Coast Path therefore should provide an excellent opportunity to encourage visitors and residents to explore the Tendring Coastal Towns, and the project partners, led by Essex CC, should be able to promote Resorting to the Coast events and programming. A key concern for Essex CC is to ensure that there are good access routes from the Coast Path to local towns and other areas of interest, including good public transport links. The heritage and cultural links between the Coast and 'seaside and resort heritage' are clear, and opportunities to signpost walkers through physical signs and digital technology (websites, town trails etc.) should be maximised, ensuring that information on the seaside and resort heritage of the area is available to those passing through the area.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-coast-path-in-essex>



Essex Coast Path : Jaywick to Harwich Stretch

### Lack of a Museum Service in Tendring

It is worth noting that Tendring District Council does not have a Museum Service of any kind, or indeed a central Museum for the purposes engaging communities and visitors in heritage activities and events. This is certainly not unique for District authorities in the UK, but in comparison to other areas in Essex for example Colchester, Southend, Braintree and Chelmsford, this does provide something of a strategic and capacity challenge. A strategic challenge because there is no clear voice

for heritage within the Local Authority structure to ensure that heritage is seen as key to the District's tourism, destination management and cultural development. A capacity challenge simply because a core funded Museum Service can take a lead on developing new programmes, exhibitions, exploring archives, securing funding and developing partnerships (with schools for example), and this work can clearly inform wider strategies, tourism promotion and social and cultural regeneration. In Tendring, as we explore below, there is certainly some capacity that exists between the local heritage organisations, but these are more or less entirely voluntary based with a membership that is largely retired (all of the local heritage groups struggle to engage younger people). The result of this is that there is very little collaboration between the local heritage organisations and TDC, and very little evidence to date of collaboration between the groups themselves. It will be important therefore for Resorting to the Coast to provide new capacity, support and impetus behind partnership working and collaboration between local heritage organisations, community organisations, and where possible TDC and Town Councils.

### **RSA Heritage Index**

The RSA has been working over the last few years to collaborate with the Heritage Lottery Fund on a project to better understand the links between heritage and identity at a local scale. This has resulted in a comprehensive Heritage Index which covers most areas of the UK, with local authority districts analysed for their overall heritage offer. The purpose is to provide something of an open-source tool for local partners in each area to understand how they can improve the engagement with heritage by the local population, identifying strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for new projects and initiatives.

Each District has an overall ranking for heritage, and individual rankings for a number of sub-sets. This is an interesting piece of work for Resorting to the Coast, with a key question being how to engage communities (as well as visitors) in Seaside Heritage through a range of activities and interpretation approaches?

The Tendring District Local Authority area is placed 149 out of 325 which is not a poor rating overall. However, a closer inspection of the individual rankings for various elements highlights the following issues

- Historic Built Environment: Tendring appears in the bottom 13% for its Historic Built Environment offer, down largely to a general lack of listed and historic buildings compared to other areas. There is not very much that Tendring can do about this other than looking to preserve what it does have, particularly in the Coastal Towns, and seek to list and preserve vulnerable heritage buildings (a number have been lost in Clacton over recent years for example)
- Museum, Archives and Artefacts: Bottom 11% (284 out of 325). This demonstrates a distinct lack of a clear museum and archives offer in the Tendring area and therefore a very limited participation with them by the local population. It also demonstrates very limited evidence of Local Authority expenditure and revenue relating to museums or formal heritage assets, heritage open days and indeed HLF funding for projects across the area (something which Resorting to the Coast is aiming to address). It is certainly the case that the capacity of local heritage organisations to fill a gap in a lack of centralised provision (a Museum Service for example) is limited, but the project should aim to strengthen local organisations' engagement and reach to audiences, focused specifically on the relatively under explored seaside heritage of the area.

- Culture & Memories: Tendring appears in the bottom 29% for Culture & Memories as evidenced through some of the following....blue plaques, local resident continuity (i.e. how engaged residents are with their local area), HLF funding for non-capital projects, European Designated Protection of distinct features (including food), intangible cultural events (something that could certainly be addressed by Resorting to the Coast).

Tendring District does much better for Landscapes and Natural Heritage for which it is in the top 11% (and this accounts for its overall high placing), as this reflects its strength in terms of natural areas and a coastal offer for residents and visitors. This is an opportunity for Resorting to the Coast as visitors and communities could be engaged in seaside heritage activities and interpretation alongside coastal walks, utilising the emerging Essex Coast Path for example that is being led by Natural England and Essex CC.

### **Radical Essex**

Radical Essex is a year-long project that was conceived by Focal Point Gallery in Southend-on-Sea, working alongside Firstsite in Colchester and other local partners including Colchester Borough Council, Essex CC and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council. Funded through the Cultural Destinations Fund which is a partnership between Arts Council England and Visit England, the project has been re-examining Essex in the context of radicalism in thought, lifestyle, politics and architecture. Events have been taking place (and continue into 2017) exploring the county's role in the history of British Modernism and its utopian ideologies under the themes 'The Modernist County' and 'Arcadia for All'. This is relevant strategically to Resorting to the Coast not necessarily because of the themes of Radical Essex (although there are some overlaps), but mainly due to its apparent success in generating publicity that has challenged pervasive narratives of Essex as a county. Radical Essex has engaged audiences in examining an alternative history of Essex, hosting exhibitions and a series of events that have generated good press coverage. This is a similar challenge that Resorting to the Coast faces, encouraging audiences to take a different look at the history of the Tendring Coastal Towns through an currently under explored and undervalued heritage of the seaside and resorts.

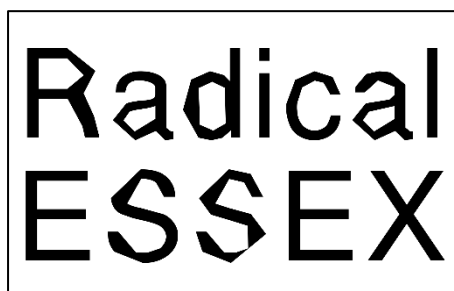
A key element of the Radical Essex programming was the Essex Architecture Weekend in September 2016, a programme of tours and events celebrating the county's pioneering role in twentieth century architecture. Sub-titled 'The Modernist County', the weekend centred on the county's three key modernist estates, Silver End, Bata East Tilbury and Frinton-on-Sea. Over 3000 visitors enjoyed events across the county, with Silver End Village Hall acting as a base for the weekend, hosting a programme of talks, music and events, alongside three new artistic and architectural commissions. The Frinton Park Estate was on the itinerary for exploration during the Architecture Weekend and, in a good example of engaging with a local heritage group of relevance to Resorting to the Coast, Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust were engaged to lead the guided walks of the Estate.



Snapshot of the Leaflet for the Essex Architecture Weekend

The approach to engaging audiences and interpretation for Radical Essex is very much to focus on alternative narratives of Essex, offering a unique and perhaps surprising perspective on a location's, people and movements, and deliberately appealing to an audience that may well be already engaged with artistic activity, visiting modern art exhibitions, interested in architecture, politics, and alternative ideas and philosophies. The concept however was to ensure that audiences went to visit the places central to this narrative – including Frinton-on-Sea – places that perhaps are not generally on the itinerary of the artistically engaged audiences. This at once encourages tourism and audience exploration, while challenging perceptions of Essex and maintaining what could be described as a 'high-brow' approach to interpretation and programming. There is much that the partners of Resorting to the Coast can learn from this approach, not least in terms of presenting alternative narratives and heritage that can engage different audiences.

[www.radicalessex.uk](http://www.radicalessex.uk)



#### **Coastal Community Teams and Coastal Communities Fund**

The UK has one of the longest coastlines in the world and Essex has the longest coastline in England. In 2015 the Government announced the ambition to help Coastal Community Teams become established across England. These new teams would support the following ambitions:

- Encourage greater local partnership working in coastal areas



- Support the development of local solutions to economic issues facing coastal communities
- Establish a network of teams across England who can work together and with Government to tackle issues facing coastal communities
- Encourage the sustainable use of heritage/cultural assets to provide both a focus for community activities and enhanced economic opportunities

*By bringing together local businesses, local leaders and volunteers, Coastal Community Teams can help tap into their local heritage and make the most of our stunning seaside assets to make a success of the tourist trade. The teams can also help ensure local people have the skills and opportunities so that they benefit from the new jobs and investment too.’ (Mark Francois MP – Minister for Coastal Communities, July 2015).*

It was anticipated that the priorities for Coastal Community Teams could include enhancing the accessibility of public areas, providing more community facilities, promoting the visitor economy, and creating links to support the growth and performance of the retail sector. There is a CCT for Jaywick currently, led by Tendring District Council alongside local stakeholders. There are no other CCTs in the area. However, CCTs are the Government’s current priority for identifying coastal regeneration initiatives and demonstrate a recognition that local partners need to play a major role in identifying future investment needs and opportunities.

Although the Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) is not the same scheme as CCTs, there is a growing recognition of the link between the two. CCF is the most relevant source of funding for coastal regeneration schemes and may be relevant to the Tendring Coastal Towns in the future. For example, the new EWT Visitor Centre at Walton-on-the-Naze benefitted from a £1.14m grant from CCF.

<http://www.essexwt.org.uk/news/2016/05/24/naze-centre-opens>

## 5. Seaside Heritage and Tourism

It is worth reflecting on the challenge of interpretation as an intellectual challenge when considering the subject of 'seaside heritage', and particularly its relationship to how concepts such as 'mass tourism' are frequently used and understood as a broadly simple concept. A challenge relevant to Resorting to the Coast is to make the 'heritage' we are focusing on relevant to audiences who may not recognise it as such. This is about positioning the heritage offer as something related to the current experience of tourism (which is what the majority of visitors to the Coastal Towns are engaged with), and at the same time introducing seaside heritage as something more complex in terms of its origins and development.

We can find an interesting analysis of the challenge in the introduction to a *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity and Conflict* (Channel View Publications 2005) by a leading academic figure in this field John K. Walton. Walton presents the somewhat superficial way that the history of tourism has been presented by academics in the past suggesting that Tourism Studies (not specific to any one university or college) generally suffers from 'present-mindedness' which has an impact on the way that the historical context is understood.

This book's introduction makes the point that the concept of 'mass tourism' is very often simplified and rarely deconstructed, and includes a broad sweep of many different periods and trends including 'Cook's tourists of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century', 'the extension of excursion activity and holiday-making among sectors of the lower-middle and working classes in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century,' through to popular tourism in the inter-war years and the rise of the 'package holiday' post-war. Walton makes the point that there is a tendency to assume 'uniformity of culture, manipulation of experience, and sheep-like passivity of consumers' which also needs to be challenged and deconstructed. The relevance to Resorting to the Coast is that this is the same challenge for the project partners, and a need to deconstruct the subject of 'seaside heritage' so that it becomes more relevant as 'heritage'. If we think we know about concepts such as 'mass tourism', and that they are in fact rather simple historic processes, then it may well be less interesting to academics, visitors and residents, researchers – in short all of the audiences for Resorting to the Coast. The academic argument, and one of relevance to the project, is that the study of Tourism can learn much from the broader humanities in order to understand and deconstruct concept such as 'mass tourism' and 'seaside heritage'.

*'...it is also of the utmost importance to understand processes in all of their complexity. A problem in tourism studies has been a prevailing present-mindedness and superficiality, refusing deep, grounded or sustained historical analysis even when dealing with essentially historical processes like the resort product cycle, which is about change over time but usually treated schematically and without reference to how the product has developed, under what circumstances...'*

*'The history of tourism needs to be incorporated into a holistic vision of cultural and social, economic and political changes ((and continuities) over time, rather than developing as just another sub-discipline defending its frontiers against interlopers and competing with them for attention and resources. This is an interdisciplinary enterprise or it is nothing. The themes explored in this book demonstrate the capacity for tourism to link up with an illuminate (for example) contested cultural histories of local, national and imperial identity; media representations of the experience of journeys, destinations and contested spaces; debates over the content and consequences of leisure and related ideas about respectability and transgression.....'*

In summary, what this insight from the academic debate around tourism studies tells us is that it is important to look at the heritage of the seaside and resorts as a complex and multi-faceted concept – one that can appeal or fascinate as ‘other’ while also being relevant to the everyday experiences of modern day tourism (i.e. the past has influenced the present and will influence the future). For example, the growth of the resorts in Tendring was driven by entrepreneurs who saw an opportunity. But this opportunity is not a simple concept and had been influenced by many social, cultural and health related trends which are not obvious to the modern day audience. It is worth taking time to consider the concept of ‘contested spaces’ (the influence of different social groups, local authorities and businesses all having an influence on the cultural and social direction that resorts would ultimately take).

## **6. Baseline Assessment of Current Heritage Offer**

In this section we ask the question - 'How well is the history of the Tendring Coastal Towns being interpreted currently?' In answering this question we must recognise that not all of the current interpretation, destinations or materials available have been developed or conceived to do this (i.e. interpret the resort development story). Rather we have found that interpretation is often very site or location specific, and focuses on a particular story or stories relevant to the particular town or location. This story may refer to the growth of the resorts (it is a core part of the story for some of the towns), but rarely is that the sole or main focus.

To diversify and develop the heritage and cultural profile of an area, it is important to build on existing assets, working with and supporting existing groups, attractions and individuals with knowledge and experience. This will ensure that where investment or capacity building is identified as needed, that existing groups gain from this and are able to sustain their important activities into the future. Local organisations, attractions and archives hold much of the resource material upon which 'Resorting to the Coast' and further heritage projects can build. Their capacity however is often limited and focused on some key assets, projects or research priorities, and their reach into local communities is sometime limited.

The Baselining work is based upon an analysis of the current offer for visitors and residents – formal or sometimes informal 'interpretation' - that presents information, narrative and introductions to relevant themes, pictures, oral histories, guides or more tourism and factual guides for visitors. This enables us to build a rounded picture of the way that each of the coastal towns is currently being 'presented' (whether or not this is relevant to the core themes of 'Resorting to the Coast'), and whether there are opportunities to utilise, link to or develop what is currently in place. The presentation and interpretation of a place clearly will have some impact upon the way the place is perceived by visitors for example.

Each museum, website or app is presenting an image and narrative of an area. So much research is done online by potential visitors to all destinations, so the image being presented is an important consideration. Each website for example is also an attempt to interpret the area, however subtly, providing clues and guides based on, to a certain extent, the perceived expectations of visitors to a particular area. In this way it is not possible therefore to see all websites or apps as purely objective – there is always something to get across, a point to convey or a narrative to tell. The role of heritage interpretation in relation to Destination Management and Tourism development is also important.

### **Baselining Current Interpretation as a Basis for Activities**

In order to develop a rounded understanding of the kinds of activities that should form the core of the Resorting to the Coast project, it is important to understand what is currently happening in terms of interpretation in the Coastal Towns relevant to the project, and what can be done to improve the situation and attract more audiences and visitors. The baselining exercise tells the story of what is happening currently, and therefore sets the scene for where we want to go, and how we want people to engage and participate in the future. It also provides part of the evidence base upon which decisions can be made relating to the kind of interpretation and activities that will be included by Essex CC in the delivery stage of the project.

## **Methodology for the Interpretation Baselineing**

The basic methodology for undertaking the baselineing exercise was through regular visits to all of the coastal towns included within the scope of the project, meetings with representatives of local history groups, and online research (for websites and apps). This provided a good balance as it was possible to put ourselves in the position of visitors to the towns (albeit with an agenda), as well as getting an inside view from the local groups on their activities, aspirations, challenges and opportunities.

## **Heritage Attractions**

In terms of baselineing and summarising the existing heritage interpretation across Tendring, with a focus where possible on the core theme of 'Resorting to the Coast', there are a number of factors that need to be considered:

Space - Physical space can be within a formal museum or gallery, or it can be in the form of information boards, or perhaps public exhibitions (outside). However all of these forms of what could be described as 'traditional' interpretation require space (as well as capacity and resources). We explored above the lack of a central Museum Service within the Tendring District, and how therefore there is no central heritage related capacity that provides a central resource and space, or informed capacity to develop exhibitions, and explore concepts, themes and narratives relevant to the local area. The existing main heritage attractions are essentially full. They are full of artefacts, pictures, maps and models. There is the space to significantly change the focus on exhibitions (for example to focus on Resorting to the Coast), but this would be a major challenge and would compromise other elements of the existing displays.

All of the local groups have archives, some of which are stored close or within the museums/attractions, and some which are effectively spread across the wider area (in garages, houses etc.). There are few formal collections' policies which means that a lot of artefacts are collected. There is some collaborative working with the Essex Record Office (for example through the You are Hear project).

Capacity - As with many local history societies, civic societies and heritage charities, much of the work of running the organisations is undertaken by volunteers. Few of the local groups in the Tendring Coastal Towns have any paid staff. This does not stop them from being incredibly dedicated and effective in terms what they do – keeping heritage attractions open and interpreted, securing funding, running events, talks and publishing books. Lack of capacity does impact upon their ability to develop new exhibitions for which research is needed for example, or take forward longer-term plans or ambitions for new and improved premises

## **Knowledge and Expertise**

Throughout the baselineing research to date, most of the meetings and discussions have been held with retirees (many over 70). There will be a challenge through Resorting to the Coast to support local groups who have significant knowledge and expertise relevant to the project, helping them to contribute to the various activities where appropriate. In Tendring in particular such groups are succeeding in collecting, archiving, researching and interpreting the heritage of the Coastal Towns in the absence of any significant external support or central Museum Service. The key challenge and opportunity for Resorting to the Coast will be to put, where appropriate, local groups and organisations in key position to inform, contribute and engage in the project in such a way that they can increase their own capacity and profile both in the short and longer-terms.

## **Organisations and Groups**

The main purpose of engaging local heritage groups at this stage in the project was ....:

- To ensure that they were informed of the project (for basic coordination purposes)
- To establish their level of capacity, knowledge and experience and consider any ongoing challenges and opportunities they may have as organisations

One of the outcomes from Resorting to the Coast will be to present the Coastal Towns as having an interesting social, cultural and architectural heritage, and that this can contribute to the tourism development, destination management, economic development and civic pride. For this to be sustainable the key partners in the project, led by Essex CC, must have the opportunity to contribute long-term to developing the heritage profile of the Coastal Towns and in the process ensuring that they remain sustainable and viable as organisations, and that they are having every opportunity to develop their own membership base, secure funding and partnerships where appropriate. Without an 'anchor' heritage attraction in Tendring or a Museum Service, the role of the many local heritage groups is ever more important. It is sometimes the case that local heritage organisations, which in Tendring are run entirely by willing, capable and experienced volunteers, are referenced as partners in projects without a full understanding of the impact on their capacity or resources. It is important therefore in completing a meaningful Interpretation Plan that full consideration is given to the capacity of such organisations to contribute to Resorting to the Coast, and what opportunities may exist for them to benefit from the project. The heritage that has been assessed through the baselining for the Interpretation Strategy is also largely all reliant upon these local organisations, so understanding more about them helps to provide important context for the baseline.

## **Jaywick Summary**

Jaywick is a residential area and visitor destination with a clear image problem. This is well documented through the national press, and there have been many different programmes over the years to regenerate the area socially and physically, one of the most recent being the Jaywick Coastal Community Team (more on this below) along with work undertaken through the Jaywick Community Forum. There have been recent interventions into the housing market by Tendring District Council and its partners with the aim of improving the housing stock in the area and attracting new home owners. There has also been investment in the road infrastructure which significantly improves the appearance of the area as well as improving transport options into the area.

The Interpretation of Jaywick's history and heritage, primarily as a resort developed from the 1920s onwards, is not very much in evidence on the ground, but slightly more apparent online. The Martello Tower is the only cultural and heritage 'destination' in Jaywick, supported by ongoing grants from Essex County Council and one-off grants for projects and exhibitions. The attractive sandy and somewhat secluded beach is the main attraction for day-visitors to Jaywick and the caravan parks attract longer-staying visitors to the area, many of whom do venture out to explore the area including visiting the Martello Tower. The caravan parks are separate from the core community areas of the Brooklands and Grasslands estates in Jaywick however, so there is not necessarily any significant sense that visitors are doing anything more than travelling through to get to the caravan parks.

In the context of the Resorting to the Coast project it is clear that Jaywick is significantly lacking in relevant interpretation. This of course gives the impression that Jaywick has very little worthy heritage to interpret, an impression that would be further backed up by the national profile as

officially the most deprived community in the whole of the UK. This provides an opportunity however with the public gaze very much upon Jaywick, and indeed 'poverty porn' visitors to the area (many visit the Martello Tower expressing an interest in this subject), to use the project and the profile it could generate to significantly challenge the perception that Jaywick is a place without any important heritage or indeed culture. This puts Jaywick in something of a unique position in terms of Resorting to the Coast, on the one hand having the opportunity to present Jaywick in more positive terms, but also the risk of the project not succeeding due to pervading negative views and impression (however misplaced these may be). Also, the concept of using heritage to directly 'respond' to negative perceptions of the area is problematic (as it sets up the sense that there is nothing objectively interesting about the area – but that we are looking for a story).

There is a desire to see more regeneration work and community projects develop in a less top-down or 'done to' fashion than has been done in the past. This comes through the narrative from Tendring District Council and its partners, recognising that previous projects over the years have tended to treat the area and its residents as in need of external support rather than as participants in the area's improvement. A key question therefore is to what extent does this important 'partnership' and 'collaborative' intent provide opportunities for local residents to get involved in activities that take place through Resorting to the Coast, and to what extent can these activities and projects contribute meaningfully to changing perceptions of Jaywick from within the local communities and externally? Whatever the project, this would require strong partnership working between local groups, residents, Tendring District Council and Essex County Council, and a key role for the Animator for the project would be to facilitate partnership working on the group as projects are taken forward.

#### The Narrative of Jaywick Presented Through Current Interpretation and Information

There is very little formal physical interpretation within the Jaywick area relevant or otherwise to Resorting to the Coast. The exception being the key cultural attraction that is the Martello Tower, and the signage from the Jaywick for Happiness project which links to an online resource.

The Martello Tower is well used by local residents and visitors, attracting around 8000 people each year (many repeat visits). The Tower is closed during the winter months other than for events. The community programme is largely arts and history related and includes workshops for children as well as adults and families. The permanent exhibition on the ground floor is dominated by the military story of the Martello Tower (this is Martello Tower 'C') including information on Armaments, replicas of equipment and uniforms used by soldiers at the time. This is the story of an isolated tidal marsh area long-before the advent of tourism and coastal resorts. There is some audio-visual material available with music and videos telling stories relevant to the tower (how it was developed as a visitor attraction for example). Access is good via a ground floor entrance.

There is a wider Martello Tower Trail that links to a digital app, created through the EU Interreg IVA funding programme – Walls and Gardens ([www.wallsandgardens.eu](http://www.wallsandgardens.eu)). Local partners included in that particular project include Essex CC, Tendring District Council and the Martello Tower. The trail encourages visitors to the area to 'Make a Day of it' and walk or bicycle between the various Martello Tower locations on the Tendring Coast between 'A' at Point Clear (now the East Essex Aviation Museum), and 'J' at Walton on the Naze. The full route being 17 miles long. This is a good example of an app that encourages residents and visitors to make the link between destinations along the coast in Tendring, and this type of approach would be relevant to Resorting to the Coast, although the current interpretive material is not currently strictly relevant. There also appears to be

something of a technical glitch on the site which directs visitors from the Martello Tower website to the app. This then goes to a French Language site for the whole project (i.e covering the whole of the French and Belgian areas as well).

For the visitor or resident, the Martello Tower plays a key role in presenting Jaywick as a historic location with an interesting history, mainly military in terms of defending the country against attack from the French under Napoleon. There is no permanent display for local history and therefore the story of Jaywick as a popular resort (a role which continues to the day) is not presented. This is not a gap in historic coverage or unfortunate omission as the Martello Tower is not a local museum as such and it has a broad remit that covers all art forms, community engagement and artistic development. A permanent display of this kind would not be possible given the space available and the competing demands for exhibitions and workshops.

Core funding from Essex CC demonstrates that the Martello Tower is a continuing priority cultural location (one of very few cultural facilities that do receive core funding), and that it has an important role to play in the area's ongoing cultural, social and physical regeneration. The core fund provides for building running costs, a small staff team including the Manager Kerith Ririe, and the community programme. There is no core funding for exhibitions, or other projects, but the team are proactive in helping partners identify sources of funding (from the Arts Council for example). What the Martello Tower offers Resorting to the Coast is the potential for a strong local anchor, both in terms of a physical space and for bringing local and District wide partners together (for example through the Coastal Open which is part of the Essex Summer of Art). Their experience includes partnerships between artists and creative practitioners (all forms), local heritage organisations, schools and local communities. The Martello Tower is accessible and has space for exhibitions, workshops and talks. External funding would be needed to support their active involvement in the project.

The Jaywick for Happiness project was completed in 2015 led by Essex based Community Interest Company Arterial Culture. The project, funded through an HLF 'Sharing Heritage' grant, resulted in a 'Heritage Trail' which is available online and through a printed leaflet. The trail is visible through a series of small signs erected across Jaywick which provide QR codes which link to the website where a personal story from someone who remembers Jaywick in the past can be read or listened to accompanied by photographs. This is simple and effective and the sign outside of the Martello Tower has helped to improve footfall into the Tower, although not all of the audio clips appeared to be working. The overall impression is one of times past in Jaywick, not necessarily looking at Jaywick as a continuing resort 'for happiness', and a number of the stories admit to the individuals not having returned to Jaywick for many years. This is a good example of how Oral Histories can be used to support interpretation, as well as preserving important personal stories of the area, and there may be opportunities to re-engage with the project through Resorting to the Coast. The links to events in the area have not been updated since 2015 which suggests a lack of ongoing capacity for updating the site.

Another interesting web resource that is easily available as a Google search is the Jaywick Tourist Board ([www.jaywicked.org](http://www.jaywicked.org)) which was created in 2008, in part as a result of work taking place looking at informing the future business plan for the Martello Tower. The work was at a time of serious strategic concern about the clear deprivation and isolation of the Jaywick communities (as is still the case today), and was a partnership between Haring Woods, Essex CC and Creative Partnerships. Part of the wider project was a commission entitled 'Arcadia Revisited 2008-2009' commissioned by Haring Woods and Essex CC with funding through the Arts Council, the website



was created to “explore the essence of Jaywick – the social, cultural, historical and environmental elements that contribute to a ‘sense of place’.....The project set out to engage with the community, and provide new information to be used by regeneration professional to inform the future development of the area by developing creative research on new possibilities for leisure and tourism in a coastal context. Out of this came the Jaywick Tourist Board [www.jaywicked.org](http://www.jaywicked.org), developed as a response to this unique location. Consisting of a number of ‘psycho-geographic’ tours on the internet and as an audio tour...”

The website includes walking tours with information at key points, and some audio support/information. ‘Walking away from Jaywick’, ‘Walking Back to Happiness’, ‘Let the Waters Roll Down’, the last of which has detailed information about the 1953 floods and other aspects of the area’s relationship to water. There is also a guide to creating new tours using Google Maps which could (in theory) be added to the website (although there is no evidence that this has yet happened). Overall the website is an intriguing introduction to many different aspects to Jaywick, including feedback on what visitors think of Jaywick as a visitor destination. It does not feel particularly coherent as a digital resource, not really intended as a resource for visitors. There is no real evidence that the site is being maintained (last obvious update from 2010). It does link the past to the present relatively well, but feels like the result of an intellectual process, rather than tourist information or a contribution to re-branding or promoting the area.

The Tendring wide web resource – [www.essex-sunshine-coast.org](http://www.essex-sunshine-coast.org). – does not actually include a specific introduction or guide to Jaywick. Other areas including Clacton and St. Osyth are included. There is however a link to the Martello Tower as an attraction on the [www.visitessex.com](http://www.visitessex.com) website with limited information.

#### Local Capacity

The Jaywick Local History Society was established in 2007 and has current membership of 70, most of whom are local to the Jaywick and Clacton area. Membership is £5 per year. There are fairly regular talks on a range of subjects relevant to local history, and these are generally held at the Golf Green Hall which is located in the ‘Village’ area of Jaywick. Subjects of talks include personal stories relating to WW2 and Witches. The group also hold small exhibitions at Golf Green Hall mainly focused on local pictures of the area’s history.

The group include representatives who have a long personal history in the area, and have good contacts with the Stedman family who retain a land interest in the area. They are limited in terms of storage for artefacts, pictures, maps and memorabilia, and they consider that the lack of a central archive resource may well have led to many interesting artefacts having been lost over the years as local people have died. The ambition is to establish a long-term permanent location as a central resource for local history interpretation and engagement in the Jaywick area.

The group have very few members under the age of 70 and struggle to engage younger residents in their activities. They have the ambition of working with local schools on specific projects, and funding from the Rotary may help support this in the future. The group have collected a number of oral histories from a previous project, although the whereabouts of the tapes is not currently clear (being resolved).

The group’s activities are mainly located within the ‘Village’ area of Jaywick, and very little engagement or activity takes place further into the ‘Brooklands’ or ‘Grasslands’ area. This is not

unusual for Jaywick as there appears to be little integration between the different communities of Jaywick, or indeed visitors and local communities.

The Jaywick Community Forum appears to have been fairly active over the last couple of years, recently publishing a Jaywick Vision and Plan 2015-2025. This was done in partnership with Planning for Real (local development organisation) who consulted widely with residents including a Jaywick Forum AGM on the 25th November 2015. The Plan is split into different priority sections, with the most relevant being the 'Investment Theme – Employment, Leisure and Tourism'. For example there is the aspiration to 'Create Holiday Destination..... Go back to real roots of Jaywick. Show through social media, highlight the positives of Jaywick. There are so many positives, make most of sea – create water-sports etc.' It would be possible for the Resorting to the Coast project to contribute to some of the aspirations in the plan. It is not obvious how much of the plan will be realised with so many priorities identified, and inevitably much of the focus is on subjects such as Anti-Social Behaviour, road infrastructure, jobs and private sector landlords.

The Jaywick Coastal Community Team (JCCT) was established in 2015 as part of the Government's Coastal Community Team England-wide initiative. The membership is mainly Council and Councillor representatives, with some local resident forum representation and other strategic partners including the Environment Agency and the Homes & Communities Agency. The Local Economic Plan, which is a very high-level document following guidance issued by DCLG focuses largely on infrastructure challenges and physical regeneration. The 'Key Aims' are:

'There are tangible economic regeneration and employment opportunities for Jaywick residents, supported by housing investment in regeneration areas Aspirations are raised; the new housing meets the needs of an ageing population; provides housing suitable for a flood- 6 risk area and the highway infrastructure is improved'

It is clear that Resorting to the Coast could contribute to the priorities for the JCCT, and therefore some liaison will need to take place between the project representatives and JCCT. It is not clear what capacity there is likely to be from the JCCT to contribute to the project, but having access to funding for engagement with the local population may help support this process, and utilising the JCCT local connections (along with Martello Tower for example) should assist in engaging audiences and potentially volunteers.

Another group with a clear role to play locally in terms of support engagement with culture and heritage is the Friends of Martello Tower. Set up in 2007 and formally constituted in 2012, they have 15 active members and are represented on the Tower Steering Group and play a part in the commissioning and procurement processes of artists and creative practitioners. Their objectives are set out in the statement below:

'To assist with the accessibility of Jaywick Martello Tower (JMT) for public benefit of recreation and learning. To assist the professional staff towards inclusive interpretation, exhibitions, events and workshops at JMT. To assist with the promotion of JMT as a community venue and tourist attraction. To support Essex County Council (ECC) in the management and sustainability of JMT.'

### Overall Impression

Overall therefore the sense of place for visitors may be that Jaywick does not have a particularly interesting history or heritage. The Martello Tower is an excellent space with a varied programme

(although little is strictly relevant to Resorting to the Coast), and the Jaywick for Happiness website and signs provide an interesting introduction to the area's history as a resort and community. There is clearly scope for more interpretation on the ground and online.

A challenge for the whole of Resorting to the Coast is that projects that celebrate and interpret the coastal towns' history inevitably focus on the past with a clear inference (generally not made explicit) that things were better 'in the old days'. This is a risk for Jaywick. The area is clearly however a popular visitor destination with three caravan parks attracting 1000s of visitors each year. Heritage interpretation in Jaywick will inevitably be utilised to an extent as part of the armoury that local organisations and their partners can use to challenge negative perceptions. How effective this is as a strategy (whether or not it is a conscious strategy) will be down to visitors and residents to decide, but there is clearly scope for the social history of Jaywick as a popular tourist destination and resort to be further interpreted. The audiences for this interpretation and activity are likely to be visitors to the area (mainly caravan parks), local communities, and non-visitors (i.e. those people who might visit but for the negative perception of the area).

#### Interpretation Opportunities

Whatever opportunities for interpretation relating to Resorting to the Coast exist in Jaywick, there are a number of key factors that have to be considered.

- What is likely to add capacity to local organisations to continue and expand their work?
- How can interpretation potentially bring local groups together as there appears to be a disconnect between local communities in the area?
- How can existing resources (for example Jaywick for Happiness) be utilised, re-engaged or expanded (if appropriate)?
- Will interpretation be aimed at the local population primarily, existing visitors, or potential visitors and audiences (or all three)? The approach to each is potentially different, but all could be interested
- How could interpretation avoid the potentially inevitable conclusion being drawn by audiences that 'things were much better in the old days'? This kind of interpretation is engaging to an extent, but it does not necessarily contribute to re-branding or promoting the area to more visitors.
- What kind of activity is likely to be sustainable beyond the lifetime of the project (if relevant)?

Linking to the original HLF application, below we reflect on the priorities set out for activities and interpretation...

- Oral Histories: There is clearly scope for more oral history activity, with the local history group concerned that the next few years will be critical in terms of capturing memories of many people who remember the original developments and the following 10-20 years. Some work took place through the Jaywick for Happiness project, and this could be expanded or integrated into a new project. The local history group are very keen to get support from the Essex Sound Archive and the Martello Tower could be a useful location for engaging the community.
- Travelling Exhibition: The local history group has access to significant records of the development including maps, pictures and posters etc. The Jaywick story of resort development through the entrepreneurial efforts of Frank Stedman who kicked off the process of resort development (selling off holiday plots to Londoners). There would be scope for a heritage project to inform future plans for development in the area, thinking about the original vision for Jaywick and

how this vision can contribute to new regeneration efforts which will inevitably see major change over the next 10 years and beyond.

- **Integrated Interpretive Activities:** There are existing town trails which could be expanded, updated or integrated into Resorting to the Coast activities, and there is already some smartphone app guidance for those visiting the area. Clear links to the Essex Coast Path (when formally opened) would help to encourage visitors to explore Jaywick's social history when walking through the area for example.
- **Seaside Heritage Day/Entertainments:** There is major scope in Jaywick at various locations to engage the community and visitors in events to celebrate 'traditional seaside entertainments'. Locations could include spaces around the Martello Tower, or spaces in and around the caravan parks where visitors come out to enjoy the beach, cafes etc.
- **Community Engagement:** The Martello Tower do collaborate with local schools where possible, and also work with local community Jaywick Neighbourhood Manager (Junior Wardens Scheme for example). The Community Forum has been active in the area and the JCCT has potential for community engagement opportunities (and is well placed to secure funding).
- **The Role of the Animator:** It would appear that the Animator could work to bring the various local groups together more effectively to maximise the resources, capacity and knowledge to benefit the area. Close liaison with the Martello Tower would be important although their commitment would be funding dependent to an extent.

### **Walton-on-the-Naze Summary**

Walton-on-the-Naze has very much the feel of a traditional small seaside resort town for day-trips and short breaks – sandy beaches, pleasure pier, simple pub and café offer. It is therefore absolutely central to Resorting to the Coast in terms of the potential to interpret and engage visitors and residents in relation to past, present and future, and it has more formal interpretation relevant to the project than any of the other Coastal Town locations included in the project. This is partly due to the Naze area which is further north of the main beaches which has two visitor attractions with a third close by. The Pier is clearly a major feature of the town and appears to be a popular attraction for families through the usual range of amusements, food and also some pier fishing. There is nothing clearly apparent in the way of basic interpretation on the history of the pier on site or online.

The heritage and natural history interpretation available is a combination of traditional small museum and online, supported by active local groups including Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust, Walton Community Forum, as well as Essex Wildlife Trust. The centre of Walton has recently lost its Tourist Information Centre, although there is information that this service has been moved to the new Essex Wildlife Trust centre on the Naze (close to the Naze Tower). It is interesting to note that the central Tendring TIC in Clacton Town Hall will advise visitors to head over to Walton-on-the-Naze for heritage interpretation, referencing the role of the EWT centre as the main Tendring wide resource for this. To date however there does not appear much in the way of a resource for heritage interpretation in the EWT Centre, or a formal TIC presence. EWT have only just officially opened the new centre after a soft opening earlier in the summer, and negotiations with Tendring District Council over scope of TIC provision is yet to reach a detailed stage. In the absence of this, the Walton Community Partnership effectively operate an informal TIC type offer from their building in the centre of town.

The main formal heritage space offering interpretation and information is the Maritime Museum which is absolutely full of information on the history and heritage of the area. The Museum is

managed by the Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust and run entirely by volunteers (the group has no paid staff). Interpretation is very much in the style of small locally run heritage centre, pictures, displays of artefacts, a number of personal stories, and there is space dedicated to the work that the Trust has done over the last few years restoring the James Stevens No.14 lifeboat, the 'world's oldest motor lifeboat' (more on this and the Marina below). The Museum is full of pictures, artefacts and information boards, and the building also holds the Trust's archive which is completely at capacity. There is not the space to add any new interpretation or displays, so changes in the display would probably have to come through removing existing display and interpretation.

The displays in the Museum are the most relevant to Resorting to the Coast, with significant information on subjects including both World Wars, notable local architecture relevant to Walton's development as a seaside resort, information on the key entrepreneurs largely responsible for Walton's development including Peter Schuyler Bruff, paddle steamers and Victorian sea bathing. Visitors can be guided round the various displays and there is a clear sense of what subject is being covered in which section which helps with clarity. Visitors would gain good information on the hotels, the entrepreneurs, sea-bathing, and the development of the pier for example, and staff are on hand to provide further information (depending upon time visited).

Interpretation is mainly in the form of printed laminated cards with information such as ... 'Before 1800, Walton was a fishing/farming community of about 200 people. At the time of unmade roads, few travelled any distance. Walking, riding carts or the stagecoach were the options – except of course – for travel by boat. Sailing the rivers and the sea was the easiest way to travel. It was also a period of unparalleled trade. The Port of London boomed, and its population expanded. Hard-working Londoners wanted fun on their days-off. Paddle steamers offered new pleasures: a trip down the Thames, and a port-call. The steamers provided dining and dancing and the whole trip was such a pleasurable experience that Londoners saved up for a big spend. They came to Walton by paddle-steamer.'

This kind of narrative provides a glimpse into the past and something of an explanation for why and how Walton developed as a seaside resort (at a fairly high level). This is generally the role of local heritage museums, covering as much of the heritage story as possible in a small space, and it is probably enough for casual visitors. There would certainly be scope for expanding the interpretation and exhibition, but not on the existing site. There is clearly also a wealth of information and artefacts stored in the archive that is also on the site of the Museum. This is a very cramped space and is not accessible to visitors unless by special permission and accompanied by the archivist.

Another popular destination that has an element of relevant interpretation, as well as arts and natural history, is the Naze Tower. Built in 1720-21 by Trinity House as a 'Navigation Mark' to aid shipping in the area (and Harwich in particular). The Tower is a major landmark of the area and is therefore a visual attraction in its own right. There is a tea room on the ground floor with visitors encouraged to use the first floor for actually drinking beverages as well as at outside tables. Getting hot drinks in particular up the spiral staircases intact is not a simple task! The Naze Tower is privately owned and is not particularly accessible given the obvious challenges of height with there being numerous floors up to the top access via a narrow spiral staircase. Heritage interpretation in the Tower is primarily focused on what is relevant to the building itself, with information on the tower restoration, World Wars, natural history (fossils etc.) and information on the coastline. The tower is also something of an arts space with original work available to purchase on display on three of the floors.

For wayfinding that includes heritage interpretation, there are a number of opportunities for visitors to explore the local area, the main ones being those developed by the Walton Community Forum – four town trails which are available as leaflets and online (not interactive). These cover four different trails – Wildlife Trail, History Trail, World War Two Trail, Little Explorer Trail. Of these the History Trail is the most relevant and it is simple to follow through the main part of the town. The trail covers notable physical landmarks including the Pier and The Parade in the town centre, and other features including the site of the former Martello Tower. This is a very brief introduction to the area's history which is probably enough for the visitor with a passing interest and some time on their hands. As with the exhibition at the Maritime Museum there is a clear sense that the current interpretation could be expanded for those interested (this would require additional promotion of course).

To link with the Trails provided there are some information boards available on the Naze which cover the same ground as the trails, introducing different aspects of the area's history. There is also information on the coast and the 'Crag Walk' which encourages visitors to head down to the walk and view the coast and the wildlife. The Crag Walk is clearly a project that was delivered through a successful partnership between Tendring District Council, Essex CC and other local organisations.

The James Stevens No. 14 Lifeboat is moored off a pontoon at the Titchmarsh Marina which is to the west of the town. This is an attractive location for boating visitors from across the wider area and has a gallery space that could be utilised for local history related exhibitions (interest was expressed). Currently there is a complete absence of obvious heritage information available at the Marina relating to Walton or the wider area which, for heritage, promotion and interpretation purposes at least, must represent something of a missed opportunity for the area given the range of visitors.

The online resource – [www.walton-on-the-naze.com](http://www.walton-on-the-naze.com) is presented as the main community and visitor resource for Walton, information is available on a range of subjects including Arts, What's On, and a (formative) Business Directory. It is on this site that the heritage trails are available with digital version of the leaflets. The information on local community services such as Essex Savers and Window Alarms alongside other more tourist information provides something of a confused message (residents, visitors or businesses?). The other side to this is that it does very much give the impression of a local community forum that is active and doing its best to present the town as a place where things are happening, driven by local groups and the community. Not all of the website is updated frequently with much information having been updated in 2014 (the Trail News section for example).

The Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust website does not contain any significant interpretation, other than a short history of the James Stevens No. 14 lifeboat (its history, restoration etc.). The information on the website is primarily there to inform visitors of the museum offer (Maritime and Railway Cottage). [www.fwheritage.co.uk](http://www.fwheritage.co.uk)

Another website of passing interest for the project is the Naze Protection Society ([www.nazeprotectionsociety.org.uk](http://www.nazeprotectionsociety.org.uk)). This references the work undertaken in partnership between the various partners involved in the Naze Heritage Project which resulted in the Crag Walk funding success and implementation. The site is managed by the Naze Protection Society which is a registered charity and has campaigned for investment in sea defences at the Naze. This website does

not appear to have been updated since at least 2013 however with very little actual information on the history and heritage of the area (not surprising as it is clearly dedicated to the Naze area).

There is very little on the Visit Essex website relating to Walton other than its listing as one of the smaller town destinations – ‘Family seaside resort with sandy beaches, seafront gardens and quaint narrow streets.’ In many ways this is all a current visitor to the beaches during the summer needs to know. However it doesn’t open up the possibility that there may be more to discover in the area, or promote the Naze element of the offer.

There is also very little focus on Walton on the Essex Sunshine Coast website. However the website does include a link to a 10 minute video that explains the Town Trails project and how it was developed by the Walton Community Forum in partnership with others, including Essex Wildlife Trust. The video has a narrative that recognises that Walton still has levels of deprivation and challenges as a seaside destination. However, it also manages to promote the many opportunities for exploring the area for visitors. It is not necessarily a tourist or heritage video with a clear and simple message, going into detail on how the ‘corporate identity’ for Walton-on-the-Naze was put together. The concept of a ‘corporate identity’ may appear to be somewhat odd when considering the subject is a small seaside town with a basic offer for visitors, but the concept of taking control of a brand and presenting it to a wider audience is sound enough.

#### The Narrative of Walton Presented Through Current Interpretation and Information

It is difficult to identify an overall coherent narrative in terms interpretation of the heritage of Walton-on-the-Naze. Of all of the local museums in the Tendring area, the Maritime Museum in Walton gets more seaside resort growth relevant heritage in to a small space than any other. The Museum avoids the simple ‘good old days’ narrative of the resort growth for example, preferring more factual information on individuals, past cultural trends, buildings and the wars. This enables visitors to get a good background and sufficient information to understand why Walton developed the way it did, and to an extent, why it is the way it is today. More information is available through books produced by the Trust for those that want more information.

The Naze is a destination in its own right, and it is presented as such with two of the town’s main visitor attractions there right next to each other. The Maritime Museum is not part of the site, but it is easily accessible when walking from the town to the Naze. The three sites are not marketed particularly as a coherent destination for visitors to Walton and consequently there does not appear to be much in the way of wayfinding for visitors at the beaches and the town. The Naze Tower has its own branding, positioning itself as a seaside arts and crafts space with the history presented in a fairly high-level fashion, and the Walking Trails available have their own branding (‘Visit Walton on the Naze’). EWT clearly has its own branding which will develop over the coming months and years to focus on the natural heritage of the Naze area in particular, and this will enable the town to capitalise further on its offer as a destination for wildlife, natural history and geology. The recent EWT work to secure further HLF funding for interpretation on the Naze demonstrates their ability as an organisation to undertake major projects that engage audiences, although this work is primarily focused on interpretation of the natural history and geology.

The more or less total absence of any seaside related heritage interpretation in the town or beach area means that visitors will tend to take Walton as they see it – a simple but very effective summer beach/pier destination for families. Survey work in the area suggests that Walton has a high number

of repeat visitors from across Essex and beyond into Hertfordshire and East London, so familiarity is clearly a key aspect.

The work to develop the 'corporate identity' led by the Walton Community Forum is a very clear indication that some in the town are concerned about the way it is represented and the need for regeneration. The Community Forum had secured investment over the years for small community projects and investment in buildings, for example their current location and the old post office building in the town centre, working very effectively with EEDA for example on the Market Towns initiative (disappeared along with EEDA in 2011). Other funding successes include a £450,000 grant scheme funded through HLF in partnership with Essex CC to improve and renovate High Street shops and buildings. The Town Trails are clearly an attempt to ensure that both visitors and (importantly) residents have a clear sense that Walton has an interesting local history and heritage, and that this should be valued. They are also an attempt to present Walton as a year-round destination with something for everyone even out of the traditional summer season. There is clearly also an attempt to present Walton with its own identity, different from Clacton and Jaywick in particular.

The Forum see that recent investment in the area, for example £350,000 in the Pier, is a sign that much needed regeneration can be achieved and that the visitor offer that is so important to the local economy can be improved. Other events that are run by the Forum in partnership with the Town Council attract large crowds from across the wider area – Classic Car Show, Christmas Market and royal celebrations (Queen's birthday for example). The narrative impact of this is clearly focusing on the 'traditional' English seaside/town offer.

#### Local Capacity

Compared to some other areas in Tendring, the capacity dedicated to heritage preservation, research and interpretation is very good. The Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust (FWHT) appears to be very active in the area with three physical heritage assets, a small number of publications and a keen and dedicated volunteer base that keep both Museums open during the core months and the James Stephen No.14 lifeboat running. It does appear however that the task of maintaining the lifeboat takes up the majority of the Trust's funding and significant volunteer capacity. The lifeboat takes approximately £8,000 a year to manage and maintain compared to approximately £2,000 for each of the Maritime Museum and the Crossing Cottage/Railway Museum.

The FWHT have recently secured the services of a new and passionate volunteer who is developing a programme of education, including a project that is looking at designing a future museum space in Walton (theoretical at this stage, although the Trust do has aspirations for a larger permanent space). This is an important concept for the Trust and could lead to stronger local partnerships with schools. However, the capacity apparently available to dedicate the time required appears limited at present. Work with schools to engage them in the local heritage could be something that Resorting to the Coast supports, potentially through the creation of new resources and support from a project Animator.

FWHT also undertake a number of events each year, talks, coffee mornings, tours of areas of Walton and Frinton. For example the Trust have engaged with the Radical Essex programme of activity that is funded by the Arts Council (part of the Cultural Destination programme being managed by Focal Point Gallery in Southend). A tour on the 10th and 11th of September of 11-18 Graces Walk of the Frinton Park Estate was one of a number of 'Architectural Tours' taking place across Essex providing



an insight the unusual or 'radical' architecture of Essex. This demonstrates the Trust's ability to engage with partners organisations on programmes of this kind.

FWHT are currently concerned about a potential '500% increase' on their rent for the Maritime Museum likely to be imposed by Tendring District Council. This appears to be a simple asset management issue with the Council (as with most other Council's across the UK) trying to 'sweat their assets' further given a significant drop in revenue available. There is likely to be some dispute however as to whether the Old Lifeboat Station is in fact an 'asset' if there was no local museum in there being managed by the Trust. The Trust are therefore likely to be keeping their options open in the near future with a permanent location a preferred option for the medium-term. Clearly if the Museum was to close for whatever reason, this would make a major dent in the interpretation available for visitors to the area.

Walton Community Forum were originally established through funding from the East of England Development Agency and other funders, and they still appear to be very active in the town. They oversee a Community Hub in the town centre, as well as the website [www.walton-on-the-naze.com](http://www.walton-on-the-naze.com), positioned as the 'official' website for information on the area (including heritage). The Community Forum clearly considered that opportunities for visitors to learn about the history of the area were lacking which is why the 'Visit Walton-on-the-Naze' website and town trails were created. There was limited liaison between the Community Forum and the Heritage Trust however on this work. The website is the result of work undertaken to create a 'corporate identity' for Walton from a heritage and natural history perspective – clearly aimed at changing perceptions of the town and encouraging visitors to explore further than they might currently be inclined to do.

Essex Wildlife Trust are clearly becoming more active in the area with the opening of the Naze Visitor Centre. Their agenda is very clearly the natural history/geology and engaging residents, visitors, groups and schools in this. EWT have apparently been awarded around £66,000 for a project to explore the natural history and geology of the Naze area, engaging schools in particular (no clear information at this stage as the project has apparently been approved but still in its infancy in terms of delivery). This looks like being an excellent opportunity to present Walton's interesting natural heritage and coast to new audiences, backed up by a major new visitor destination. The new Centre, only recently officially opened, provides a new year-round destination with facilities (café and toilet for example), and the potential for a small TIC operation (when agreed). Prior to this there have been no visitor facilities available to visitors outside the summer months when the Museum and Naze Tower are open for visitors.

The Naze Tower is privately owned but and presents itself as something of an arts destination. This is certainly a unique space for engaging with arts and crafts and is therefore something of an oddity as well as a success story. It is clearly an imposing landmark which does attract visitors to the Naze area.

The Naze Heritage Project appears to have been a good demonstration of the partnership potential in Walton, with Tendring District Council working in partnership with others to achieve an impressive project that has created a new destination in the area.

There is some interest from the Titchmarsh Marina in Resorting to the Coast, with some good space available in the main retail area which contained a gallery showing/selling art and craft from local makers/artists. The Marina is a key location for visitors by boat from across the East of England and

beyond, but the distance between the Marina and the main town and Naze area may put people off travelling further as there is a pub/restaurant, shops, shower/toilets etc. all available in the very pleasant surroundings of the Marina itself. This does appear to be something of a missed opportunity to promote the history and heritage of Walton however given the number of visitors to the area, and travelling interpretation from Resorting to the Coast could be located in the gallery area in the future.

### Overall Impression

Of the main four 'traditional' resorts (Walton, Frinton, Clacton, Jaywick), Walton has got the most easily accessible interpretation available to visitors and residents. With the exception of Harwich Old Town, it is therefore easier than the other Coastal Towns to have a 'heritage' experience in Walton. Much work has been done by the Walton Community Forum through their development and promotion of the Town Trails, and work to develop a 'corporate identity' for Walton as a destination for visitors (beyond the traditional day visitor to the beach or the restricted summer season).

The availability of floor space within the current heritage or visitor related buildings is limited at present, but there are good outdoor spaces at the Naze for example which would lend themselves to performances.

### Interpretation Opportunities

Whatever opportunities for interpretation relating to Resorting to the Coast exist in Walton-on-the-Naze, there are a number of key factors that have to be considered.

- What is likely to add capacity to local organisations to continue and expand their work? The main player in terms of local heritage interpretation relevant to Resorting to the Coast is Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust, and they have some specific priorities that must be considered
- How can more opportunities be presented to local groups to undertake more interpretation (utilising and interpreting what is in the archives for example)?
- The current Town Trails offer is clearly an opportunity for further interpretation if this is desirable and appropriate. The project was funded by Essex CC and therefore represents a good example of Essex CC facilitating local interpretation and place making initiatives, something that Resorting to the Coast could potentially achieve.
- As for other areas, we will need to consider whether interpretation will be aimed primarily at visitors (very seasonal for the seaside at least). The Naze attracts visitors throughout the year (due to the interesting wildlife, geology and bird migration) and the new EWT Visitor Centre will provide year-round facilities [www.walton-on-the-naze.com](http://www.walton-on-the-naze.com) be utilised, re-engaged or expanded (if appropriate)?
- What kind of activity is likely to be sustainable beyond the lifetime of the project (if relevant)?
- There is clearly some work taking place between the Trust and schools (albeit fairly limited in scope at present). What would benefit the Trust (and other Trusts) to engage with schools more effectively given limited resources and capacity?
- There are particular development opportunities for Walton that could be influenced by a clear articulation of the importance of heritage to the area. There is significant house building taking place on the old Martello Caravan site which is close but outside of the town centre.

Linking to the original HLF application, below we reflect on the priorities set out for activities and interpretation...

- Oral Histories: There is interest within the FWHT for undertaking more oral histories of local people associated with the town. The key issue is how they are incorporated into activities through the project, and support for FWHT in making use of them for their own exhibitions and interpretation.
- Travelling Exhibition 'Grand Designs': FWHT already provide tours of some of the architectural assets of the town including Frinton Park Estate. This includes participating in the Radical Essex 'Radical Architecture' weekend in September (10th and 11th). The Trust have significant information and artefacts that could contribute to a coordinated exhibition programme across the Tendring area.
- Integrated Interpretive Activities:
- Seaside Heritage Day: There is ample space in the main area of the town centre by the beaches for activities as part of a Heritage Day. The Naze could be a clear location for activities, particularly performances and outdoor events as there are good facilities on site at the EWT centre.
- Community Engagement: FWHT already have a good profile in the area and will continue to work on developing a larger and potentially more permanent presence in the town. Walton Community Partnership are the most notable and successful such organisation active in the Tendring Coastal Towns and clearly have routes in to the local community alongside an ambition to support heritage interpretation in the area as a key issue for local regeneration and economic development.
- The Role of the Animator: Walton is fairly well represented by local groups, and therefore the role of the Animator will be to liaise well with all of them and build on, support, partnership working. There is for example an established Naze Heritage Project working group (although this meets infrequently currently). Specific issue such as the ability of the Trust to work with local schools could also be a key area for support.

### **Clacton Summary**

Clacton is a popular seaside destination for visitors from across Essex and East London. A visitor to Clacton will generally be there for a day-trip seaside experience, or possibly a short-stay. It is by far the largest of the seaside resort destinations in the Tendring area, and one of the most popular in Essex. Southend-on-Sea is the most similar 'seaside' destination in Essex in terms of its offer and scale (although Southend has a much larger and more diverse economy than Clacton). Clacton's core seaside offer is clearly alive and well and appears relatively vibrant from a summer visitor perspective. The lack of a heritage offer is clearly apparent if one is inclined to seek it out (which arguably the vast majority of visitors are unlikely to do). For a town of its size the heritage offer may appear be an omission from the overall mix for visitors and residents (and residents in particular). However, the current situation probably says more about the expectations – expectations of visitors in terms of the kind of experience they want to have when in Clacton, and expectations of the Local Authority (for example) who do not necessarily consider that a heritage offer is important as part of the tourist or visitor mix. What this misses however are the expectations of the local population who arguably have a more limited cultural and heritage offer than might be expected for other towns of a similar size.

A good introduction into the way that Clacton is represented to visitors can be gained from a number of sources that are likely to be seen by many. Firstly the Visit Essex website which introduces Clacton as follows:

*'If you are in search of the traditional pleasures of the seaside with a modern twist, and would like to relive some treasured childhood memories, then Clacton-on-Sea is the perfect destination. Whether you come for a day out at the seaside, the fun and thrills of the fair or to visit the award winning seafront gardens you'll be sure to have a great time. This is the ideal location for either a long weekend break, family or group holiday! Accommodation ranges from holiday parks, traditional B&Bs to comfy hotels where prices remain very competitive.'*

Tendring District Council and their partners have relatively recently unveiled the Love Clacton advertisement which has been targeted at audience online and through regional television in Anglia region. It provides a useful introduction to what Clacton has to offer for the day-trip or short stay visitor (the first shot is a family leaving a caravan), with activities largely focusing on summer time (although not exclusively). The advertisement is probably unlikely to significant challenge perceptions of Clacton as a seaside resort, but this is unlikely to be the intention. The shots are clean and the concept of wholesome family fun runs throughout. There is no attempt to portray Clacton as a 'heritage' destination. To do so would mean significantly changing the emphasis of the promotional video.

<http://www.loveclacton.co.uk/>

Further analysis of the 'narrative' of interpretation is set out below, but it is clear that what is being presented to visitors (as it is generally targeted at visitors) is an uncomplicated message of traditional seaside fun – affordable, family orientated.

In terms of the local seaside resort offer the situation for visitors and their beach experience appears to have been significant enhanced following the £36m regeneration of the beach. This was primarily a sea defences strategy following years of erosion and a resulting loss of sand between Clacton and Holland-on-Sea. Surprisingly, given the scale of the project (both in terms of funding and engineering), there does not appear to be as much promotion of what is clearly a major achievement as might be expected, not least given that the presence of the beach is one of main reasons that people visit Clacton. The Visit Essex website references the project as 'underway' which requires updating, however it does clearly reference the '5kms creating 22 new glorious beaches in separate bays which can be enjoyed at all states of the tide' which should be attractive to potential visitors.

In terms of formal physical interpretation of Clacton's heritage, there is very little on offer. There is an impressive local museum on second floor of Clacton Library which is open twice a week – Tuesday and Saturday 9.30 to 12.30. The room is very small and could accommodate about 5 visitors comfortably at one time. Within the collection there is a clear focus on Clacton's history and heritage as a resort which is unsurprising, with a mixture of clear narrative and many old pictures supported by some artefacts. In the display you can get information on the history of Clacton's Fire Brigade, the Clacton Lifeboat, The Pier, Butlin's, Warwick Castle Hotel and there is Clown Bertram's ventriloquist dummy on display (somewhat scary for children!). The display, as with many such local museums, is very local history 'traditional' with information about the past presented for those with an interest. Visitors unaware of Clacton's past as a resort would certainly be confronted with a significant and interesting local history.

The display is less interpretation and more presentation in terms of facts on the history of Clacton. The narrative supporting the pictures is informative, for example:

*'Clacton Pier has a special place in Clacton's history as the first building of the new town. The simple wooden structure, 520 ft long, was opened in 1871. At first the pier was only used as a landing stage for the paddle steamers which at the time brought most of the visitors to the town. From 1878 the pier became the summer home for the Clacton Lifeboat and in 1885 the Hot & Cold Sea Water Baths were added at the pier entrance. In 1893 an impressive new pavilion was built at the pierhead with bars and a concert hall which could accommodate 1000 people. Will Pepper's White Coons gave daily performances of their minstrel show at the Pavilion Theatre and Professor Webb performed regular stunt dives from the Pier at the turn of the century. The Edwardian period was one of continued success but little development for the pier.*

*The First World War brought the failure of the Clacton Pier Company but Ernest Kingsman bought the company in 1921 and set about turning Clacton Pier into one of the country's leading tourist attractions. Kingsman's biggest success was probably the introduction of the much-loved children's entertainer Clown Bertram in 1922. His other main developments were the Ocean Theatre (1928), the Children's Theatre (1928), the Swimming Pool (1932), the Crystal Casino (1932), a rebuilt Blue Lagoon Dance Hall (c1932) and the Steel Stella (1938).*

*The pier was damaged by a mine during the Second World War, and deliberately breached soon after. Ernest Kingman dies in 1942 but after the war Ernest's wife and his son, Barney, continued to run the pier until 1971. The Pier has changed hands several times since but seems unlikely now to regain its former glory.'*

This is an interesting excerpt from the narrative available at the museum. The last sentence reflecting that the pier is 'unlikely to regain its former glory' represents a challenge for the whole Resorting to the Coast project. There is a clear sense from the museum that visitors will want to look back at the past, and to an extent they will naturally compare the past with today (perhaps unfavourably). The displays are indeed fascinating and informative, and all the more so as they seem so remote from what is on offer in the town today. This is not to say that the current offer is poor, rather that it is certainly different to what it was, and this inevitably leads to a sense that Clacton has lost much of its vibrant cultural heritage. This is of course not the role of a local history museum.

It is also interesting to note that there is no attempt to address past cultural attitudes when reporting 'Will Pepper's White Coons' for example. This is not a criticism as the museum provides a valuable collection on the past and there simply isn't the space to explore any subject too deeply.



Inside Clacton Local History Museum – Summer 2016

There is very little other formal interpretation available for the visitor or resident in Clacton. The other museum close to the Pier is the Pirate Radio Museum. This appears to have closed (unsure whether permanently or temporarily) with very limited information available online as to the Museum's status. The Museum presents a collection relevant to Clacton as pirate radio transmitter ships were moored in the waters close to Clacton during the heyday of pirate radio. There is some good logic therefore for the museum being in Clacton. It's location in close proximity to the Pier means it could well have attracted a visitor audience, but the subject matter may not have appealed to a day-trip audience (perhaps the subject matter is too specialist).

#### The Narrative of Clacton Presented Through Current Interpretation and Information

Clacton is a place that creates narrative that is not always locally generated – generally unflattering and related to its downmarket image. A good example is the removal by Tendring District Council of the Banksy image that appeared in 2014 was greeted by national interest, with very few positives for Clacton as a town or indeed the Local Authority.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-essex-29918326>

Strategic documents produced by Tendring District Council and its partners have suggested that the 'fun' needs to be brought back to Clacton, with the clear narrative therefore that it is not as fun now as it could be. Below is a quote from the 'Celebrate-on-Sea – Putting the Fun Back into Clacton' produced back in 2011 (and therefore may not be a key strategy for TDC currently).....

'Since its Victorian heyday Clacton-on-Sea has been famous as a place for fun, entertainment and relaxation, but changes in the tourist market and declining visitor numbers have meant the image of the town has changed and some of the fun has gone. Now it is time to put the fun back into Clacton and build the foundations for a more successful future.'

<https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/business/regeneration/clacton/Celebrate%20on%20sea%20reduced%20file%20size.pdf>

This kind of narrative recognises the need for change and improvement in Clacton, and therefore opens up opportunities for the 'seaside heritage' of the area to inform the future direction for promotion and regeneration. The challenge, as it is for the whole of the Resorting to the Coast

project, is to make reflections and references to the past relevant to the current context and challenges, rather than simply looking back to a time when things appeared to be better.

The narrative of the local exhibition (housed in Clacton Library) is very much a traditional display and an uncritical window into the past, and this is important as it provides a baseline of information for anyone interested in Clacton's fascinating story as a resort. Even within the museum however there is narrative that concedes that Clacton Pier's 'glory' days are behind it. This kind of narrative is likely to have an impact on how Clacton is perceived both by visitors and local communities.

Recent online (and TV) promotions confirm to expectations of Clacton as a short or day-trip destination, with the main message seeming to be that it is a simple seaside day-trip/short stay offer, effectively presenting this offer as more up to date and modern than people might think. Heritage does not come in to play in any significant way and is therefore not apparently part of the armoury used by TCD in particular that can be utilised to present towns and cities to different audiences, challenging perceptions negative stereotypes.

#### Local Capacity

Local capacity in Clacton for engaging with heritage related projects is relatively small for a town of its size. There are two groups of most relevance to Resorting to the Coast – Clacton Victoria County History (VCH) and Clacton Local & District Local History Society (LHS) who run the local museum in Clacton Library. The LHS has a current membership of 65 and is therefore relatively small, with an even smaller number of active volunteers (there are no paid roles). The museum is run on an entirely voluntary basis with only a handful of members committed.

The Essex VCH, which effectively oversees and supports the Clacton VCH is very short of available funding and capacity, very much relying upon volunteers across the different areas of Essex from Tendring to Southend. The local capacity the Essex VCH does provide is more around knowhow, partnerships and contact with researchers and academics across Essex. The recently 2012 published Clacton, Walton and Frinton – North-East Essex Seaside Resorts (Essex VCH Volume 11) demonstrates the breadth of knowledge and capacity with research covering the later Victorian Period up to the 2009. This research and knowledge has not yet been harnessed and utilised to engage the wider public or indeed visitors, but it has created an important resource that could be used to support interpretation through Resorting to the Coast.

#### Overall Impression

Clacton does not have an obvious heritage offer of any kind, and the publicity that is generated by businesses and public sector partners push a narrative that is clearly focused on the here and now (come and visit and have fun at the beach/pier/pubs/cafes). This is not at all surprising as it is what Clacton has been known for across the region and the perception of the area as being in decline is evident throughout strategic documents, news coverage and even in the area's own heritage exhibition. Efforts to promote the seaside heritage as valuable and relevant to visitors and communities are bound to be met with some scepticism, but working in partnership with local groups will help with engaging audiences and promotion of events. Clacton has the visitor profile and the space and locations to be at the very centre of Resorting to the Coast, and it potentially the town that will benefit most from improved perceptions that the project should aims to support.

### Interpretation Opportunities

- Oral Histories: The Essex Record Office have some recorded histories from the Clacton/Holland-on-Sea area, many of them supplied by Roger Kennell (local researcher and historian). There is currently no public access in Clacton to an oral history record, therefore any move to include oral histories as part of the interpretation for Resorting to the Coast activities will be an improvement on the current situation.
- Travelling Exhibition: Clacton has lost some of its notable architecture in recent years, with the controversial decision to demolish the Osborne Hotel building on Rosemary Avenue attracting criticism from local groups. The Waverley Hotel on the seafront has also been demolished and a new Premier Inn is on the prime site. This kind of 'regeneration' is not unusual where property values are relatively low and there is a significant difficulty in finding investors to undertake multi-million pound refurbishment work to historic buildings with an uncertain financial return. The lack of
- 
- Seaside Heritage Day: Clacton has the spaces and the strong tradition to be a successful location for a Seaside Heritage Day, and it could perhaps take place alongside other public events to maximise audiences and publicity.
- Community Engagement: There is not a great deal of engagement with heritage apparent in Clacton, with a very limited offer compared to towns of a similar size (or indeed much smaller). Therefore the project will be starting from a relatively low base but this offers major opportunities to improve the situation significantly through a diverse activity programme that offers ways-in to engagement for different groups
- The Role of the Animator: The Project Animator will have to work hard to make contacts in Clacton in order to promote the project, and must work closely with the local heritage organisations who have some very experienced volunteers who could offer assistance. Tendring District Council is likely to take the most interest in the project activities taking place in Clacton, and there should be good opportunities for collaboration in relation to the events calendar established in the town.

### **Harwich and Dovercourt Summary**

A visitor to Harwich and Dovercourt would probably start at the Old Town which very much has the feel of a place rooted in maritime history and heritage. The reasons for visiting the Old Town will probably be the heritage draw of the old town which would include the local pubs and the range of heritage buildings which include the Redoubt, Maritime Museum, Lifeboat Museum and Ha'Penny Pier. The area of Dovercourt which has traditionally been the more traditional seaside/resort location, has a different more modern / high street and retail offer than the Old Town, with the long stretch of sandy beaches feeling somewhat remote from Harwich Old Town.

It is entirely possible to visit all of the main heritage attractions in Harwich Old Town in one day (or even one afternoon), and take in a trip to Suffolk on the Harwich Harbour Ferry, or indeed spend some time at the beach at Dovercourt. There are no shortages of printed guides available and there are also good resources online to help the visitor explore. The Ha'Penny Pier visitor centre, operated by the Harwich Society, functions effectively as a Tourist Information Centre (although it is not recognised as such) with knowledgeable volunteers on hand to send visitors in the right direction and talk about different elements of the town's history.

The Harwich Society, one of the largest civic societies in the UK with a clear focus and role in preserving the town's built heritage, runs a number of the visitor destinations with an active



volunteer base. The society sees Harwich Old Town and Dovercourt as very much a day-trip destination – you can see everything in one day during the summer months when most of the heritage attractions are open to the public (they are generally shut out of season). Given Harwich’s geographic location, being very much out on its own in the far corner of Essex, it makes sense to brand the town in this way, as the visitor is unlikely to be on their way anywhere else if coming to Harwich. The big exception to this of course being those who are travelling to the continent via the Ferry Terminal, as well as those on an expedition (on foot) to Suffolk via the passenger ferries that run from the Ha’Penny Pier (to Felixstowe and Shotley). Harwich does have visitors from the Netherlands for example who find themselves with time to explore Harwich before a departure, and there are certainly visitors who have arrived as part of a longer exploration of the coast from Felixstowe for example.

The main heritage attractions are almost all focused on maritime and military heritage, with virtually no interpretation available on the ‘seaside’ heritage of the town, Dovercourt or the wider Tendring area. The key attractions are:

- Ha’Penny Pier: A short pier built in 1854 with a visitor centre, small exhibition and a broader offer that includes a café, seating for passing the time looking out towards Felixstowe, and is also where the Harbour Ferry picks up passengers and drops them off.
- Low Lighthouse: Now functions as the Maritime Museum, it is an interesting heritage building in its own right built in 1818 as a lighthouse. The exhibition contains artefacts relating to Harwich’s maritime past (and recent past). The exhibition includes information on the history of Harwich’s Navyard Wharf, the Duke of Wellington, The Frigate Jylland, has a collection of bottled ships, there are old maritime folk songs playing from a CD and a live radio link to the Port Authority (which comes in and out intermittently). The building is absolutely full of artefacts, with small steps to go between the three floors making it a challenge for the less mobile. There are also excellent views out towards the port of Felixstowe from the top floor. Very traditional small museum in terms of presentation and interpretation.
- The Lifeboat Museum: This building (built in 1864) was originally home to Harwich’s first lifeboat, and the exhibition inside (which is totally dominated the old Clacton offshore lifeboat the ‘Valentine Wyndham-Quin’) tells the story of the lifeboats and the lifeboat service from 1821 onwards. Visitors can climb aboard the boat accessible by small steps. The display includes mannequins in lifeboat gear, narratives on notable individuals (for example Frank Charrington), as well as maps and pictures. Very traditional small museum offer in terms of presentation and interpretation.
- The Redoubt: Circular military fort built in 1808 to protect the harbour from a Napoleonic invasion, it was originally protected by a moat and armed with 10 large guns. Today it is an interesting place to visit with information on Harwich’s military past including a special exhibition on WW1. There is some sound interaction with a conversations between two mannequins dressed in maritime uniform from the Napoleonic War period, talking about life at the Redoubt fort for those stationed there. Other areas of the Redoubt appear to be more general heritage interest with all kinds of random artefacts left for the visitor to make of them what they will – kitchen appliances, radios etc.
- Mayflower Project: The Harwich Mayflower Project promotes itself as ‘both a local community project and an international show-piece exhibiting one of the most famous vessels in history. The local aspect of the Project, concentrating on the construction of The Mayflower, combines traditional skills and experience of the past to educate and install a sense of pride and focus in Harwich.’ It is possible for visitors to look round the Railyard where the project is located just on the edge of the Old Town, speak to those leading the project and take a look at how the boat

is coming along. Partners in Harwich are signatories to the Mayflower Compact through which a number of organisations from Harwich, Plymouth and other relevant locations will hold a number of events to commemorate the voyage of the Mayflower with the Pilgrim Fathers in 1620 (bound for the new world).

The ferry from Harwich to Felixstowe passed right by some of the world largest container ships and is therefore a unique experience in itself, as well as linking up Harwich to other visitor destinations such as Landguard Fort and the surrounding parkland areas, and further on past Felixstowe and on to the Deben Peninsula. The visitor café at Felixstowe Port has very little information available on the maritime heritage offer at Harwich which would appear to something of a missed opportunity (for Harwich and Dovercourt at least). Visitors to Landguard Fort may well find the Redoubt Fort in Harwich equally interesting given the similar heritage offer, but there are no links made between the sites.

Overall there is very little interpretation or information for visitors or residents relevant to the core heritage of Resorting to the Coast – Seaside Heritage. Maritime heritage is of course related to seaside heritage, but the focus is different and in many ways more familiar to visitors who may naturally be more engaged with the UK's maritime heritage as a recognisable cultural heritage than 'seaside' – consider the many attractions across the UK that focus on Maritime Heritage including Chatham Historic Dockyard, Mary Rose, and the National Maritime Museum Greenwich for example. Harwich fits well into this national historic narrative and its built heritage of the Old Town has the feel of a place where sailors, pirates, press gangs and customs officials may well still be going about their business. Culturally Harwich plays up to this with events such as the Shanty Festival that takes place every October, an exhibition in the Ha'Penny Pier that focuses very clearly on Pirates from the Elizabethan period - 'Harwich and the New World' exhibition which has free admission and gives information on links with early voyages of exploration including Jamestown and Christopher Newport.

Another link to the theme of Pirates is the presence of the LV18, an ex-Trinity House vessel which has been preserved and is now a visitor attraction with display relevant to its use as home to Pirate Radio.



Aboard the LV18 at Ha'Penny Pier Harwich – September 2016

Harwich is well catered for in terms of digital resources available online, with the Harwich Society providing much excellent content and guidance. The main Harwich Society website [www.harwich-society.co.uk](http://www.harwich-society.co.uk) has a Maritime Heritage Trail that guides walking visitors through the old town and along the seafront, but not as far as Dovercourt. Therefore the trail does an excellent job of introducing visitors to the town's extensive maritime built heritage, but it does not have any references to seaside or resort heritage of the area. This is not an omission as this is not the role the Trail or indeed the Harwich Society (although they are interested in engaging with Resorting to the Coast to develop more engagement with the areas resort history).

An interesting website that does cover the broader history and heritage of the Harwich and Dovercourt area, including the resort and seaside heritage, is [www.harwichanddovercourt.co.uk](http://www.harwichanddovercourt.co.uk) which provides an excellent collection of photographs and information on the history of Harwich and Dovercourt, probably the most comprehensive collection of its kind covering any of the Tendring Coastal Towns. There is also a significant collection of images and information on the resort and seaside heritage, with opportunities for people to send in their own historic pictures to inclusion on the site.

#### The Narrative of Harwich Presented Through Current Interpretation and Information

As set out above, the narrative presented through interpretation and promotional material relevant to Harwich is very much focused on its long and important maritime heritage. There is very little of relevance to the core theme of Resorting to the Coast – seaside and resort heritage. This is somewhat surprising given Dovercourt's history as a resort destination, including the Warners Holiday Camp that is no longer there but was where the location scenes for the popular comedy series 'Hi-de-Hi' were filmed. Warners closed in 1990 and was demolished for housing. There is no central museum in Harwich or Dovercourt that covers all aspects of the town history, therefore each of the heritage sites is very site specific in terms of its subject matter and interpretation. Because none of the locations has a 'seaside or resort heritage', there isn't an exhibition available relating to

this part of Dovercourt's past. The most likely location for an exhibition on the seaside and resort heritage would be the Low Lighthouse/Maritime Museum, given its location on the beach at Harwich (although still some way from Dovercourt Bay beaches. However, this building is currently completely full of artefacts so would present the Harwich Society with something of a logistic challenge.

In the most prominent brochure available to visitors to Harwich and Dovercourt, Harwich is presented as 'Historic' while Dovercourt is presented as the main 'Town Centre', which in fact it is, in terms of what most people might recognise as a town centre – banks, high street chains etc. The brochure in question is 'Discover Dovercourt Town Centre and Historic Harwich' and was funded through the SusCod project (Interreg IVB programme which has Essex CC as a key partner organisation).

*'Whatever your interest – be it shopping, heritage, coastal walking, leisure activities, relaxing on a beach, watching the ships and boats in the harbour or sampling great food and drink, Dovercourt Town Centre and Harwich can offer them all.'*

<http://harwich-society.co.uk/2016leaflet/>



*One of very few signs of Heritage Information or Interpretation relevant to Resorting to the Coast (or otherwise) at Dovercourt – Cliff Park September 2016*

### Local Capacity

The Harwich Society has an excellent membership base of almost 2000 which provides a good level of income to support what is an entirely volunteer led organisation. The society has significant influence in terms of planning and the preservation of the built heritage, and publishes 'Highlight – Newsletter of the Harwich Society' which includes features on local heritage as well as planning matters. Despite the impressive membership (not all are from Harwich), the active volunteers who are responsible for opening and running the heritage assets that are so important to Harwich Old Town as a visitor destination make up only a small proportion of the overall membership. Therefore the task of taking on additional heritage related work, exhibitions and interpretation is generally prohibitive. All of the buildings managed by the Harwich Society are full of artefacts and as heritage assets in their own right which require ongoing maintenance and repairs. Costs are covered through membership fees and entrance fees for visitors to the various sites (mainly the Redoubt, Maritime Museum and Lifeboat Museum) and the leases for their key heritage attractions are all from Tendring District Council. Harwich Society struggles to engage new active volunteers and younger

people, and recognise that it is difficult to get volunteers to take on multiple tasks as they tend to be very interested in one element of heritage or activity. Harwich Society has an archive at their HQ at Foresters on Church Street, and two archivists who take a lead on responding to requests for information, and for an ongoing digitisation process that the Society is undertaking.

Harwich Festival of the Arts Trust has emerged as an important organisation and movement in the town over the last few years, moving from a volunteer led once-a-year focus to a year-round organisation that now has paid staff and 30 active volunteers. The Trust are responsible for managing a year round 'box office' at Dovercourt Library which is a centre of information on all of the arts, cultural and heritage activity taking place in the town, selling tickets year-round for all major events. The Trust has secured regular funding from Essex CC Strategic Fund and Arts Council Grants for the Arts for all of its activity including the annual Festival of the Arts. The Trust has also started to secure contracts for cultural events in Harwich, the most recent being for the Illuminate Festival which is being funded by TDC and is a weekend event that is part of the international build up to the 2020 anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower to America. The Harwich Festival of the Arts Trust is therefore becoming a key player in terms of capacity for culture and heritage events in the area, complementing the Harwich Society's key role in maintaining heritage buildings and the character of Harwich Old Town. The Trust is potentially therefore a key player in terms of engaging with Resorting to the Coast, working with key partners to promote and potentially manage events and programming. This could be important as the heritage offer in Dovercourt is largely absent (compared to Harwich Old Town) and the Trust are experienced in working with communities in this area (which is most relevant to Resorting to the Coast).

<http://www.harwichfestival.co.uk/>

### Overall Impression

Harwich and Dovercourt are different to all of the other towns included within the project. Harwich's heritage is well preserved and presented through a number of good quality local museums and exhibitions all run and maintained by the Harwich Society. Harwich Old Town is where the overwhelming majority of the heritage is to be found, and this includes the historic streetscape, buildings (including pubs) and Ha'Penny Pier. It is also clear from talking to local organisations and residents that there is something of an independent feel to the place that separates it from the rest of Tendring (and indeed the rest of Essex), and with the close proximity of Felixstowe and the ferries connecting Harwich to Suffolk, it is uniquely placed to engage a different audience with the seaside heritage of the area (compared with the visitor profile of the other Coastal Towns).

Dovercourt is relatively peaceful during the summer peak seaside season compared to other areas such as Frinton, Clacton and Walton, suggesting something of an undiscovered seaside gem – or perhaps a forgotten seaside destination. Investment in some of the local hotels indicates confidence in the future however in the Dovercourt area.

### Interpretation Opportunities

- Oral Histories: There is no significant collection of oral histories available within local history exhibitions or online. The opportunity to develop this, particularly in relation to Dovercourt (the resort) is one that the Harwich Society in particular would like to pursue.
- Travelling Exhibition: Harwich has the most comprehensive collection of exhibitions anywhere across the Tendring Coastal Towns with a number of excellent and informative local museums that

occupy some of the town's most important heritage buildings. What is certainly missing however is any sense of Harwich or Dovercourt having a significant resort story as the heritage focus tends to be exclusively on the maritime (and to an extent military) heritage of the area. As set out above, this is not surprising given the History of the Old Town in particular, however an exhibition that can inform communities and visitors of the seaside and resort heritage of the area would provide new perspectives on the past, and may support regeneration of Dovercourt which still has an excellent beach offer which appears to be far less popular than the more familiar Clacton, Walton or Frinton.

- Seaside Heritage Day: Harwich has the most comprehensive programme of locally organised events across all of the Coastal Towns, many through the Harwich Festival, so there are opportunities for collaboration and partnerships to promote and engage audiences in any seaside heritage celebrations (even if they are taking place elsewhere).
- Community Engagement: Opportunities exist to work closely with Harwich Festival of the Arts and Harwich Society to engage communities in activities and events. Information on events could be promoted at existing heritage sites to engage visitors, and the Harwich Festival and Harwich Society have good experience of working with local schools
- The Role of the Animator: The Harwich Society and the Harwich Festival have excellent networks, good membership and volunteering levels. They also have significant experience of running events and festivals (with Harwich Festival of Arts in particular demonstrating success with events, arts participations, literature etc.) It will be important for the Project Animator to harness this to achieve successful partnership and audience engagement in Harwich and Dovercourt in particular.

### **Frinton Summary**

Frinton has a very pleasant offer which is simple and effective, small retailers on the main road in to town towards the seafront – Connaught Avenue. The beaches are sandy and there are many 100s of well-maintained beach huts. Above the main seafront area is the Greensward which offers significant open space adjacent to the town centre.

The main interpretation opportunity for visitors to Frinton is at the Crossing Cottage, Railway Museum and Gardens. This is an excellent destination that is right on the edge of town which makes it a good location for visitors to chance by it without the need to head into the centre of town (although that is still only a short walk away). It does feel somewhat on the fringe of the town however and very much removed from the seafront and Greensward area. This is rather fitting however for a town that has protected itself over the years from any intrusion that is not seen as in-keeping with its character. There is virtually no other formal heritage or interpretation offer anywhere else in the town or along the seafront.

Managed by the Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust, The Railway Museum, Cottage and Gardens are certainly one of the most charming heritage destinations in the whole Tendring area. The Museum also clearly tells the story of one of the most important advances in terms of the development of the seaside resorts – the railway.

There is significant interpretation available in terms of presenting a cottage as a residence for the Stationmaster with many historic artefacts going back through the decades.

Information on the Frinton Park Estate development is available including original plans and narrative telling the story of the original architects including Oliver Hill.

*'Oliver Hill returned from a spring holiday in Palm Bay, Monte Carlo, fired with inspiration and enthusiasm for modernist continental architecture. Hill designed the whole scheme, including specifying the road names (suffixed Ways), and some of the best houses together with the Estate Information Bureau (now the Round House) and the proposed hotel.'*

This is traditional presentation of facts about the developing of one of the most notable architectural features of Frinton, and the majority of the exhibition materials follow this principle.



Example of a display panel upstairs at the Frinton Railway Cottage Museum – August 2016

Frinton as a place is very much presenting itself, led by the Town Council and other local partners, as a success story in keeping out the many different facets of the modern resort, seaside or day-trip market. The first pub in the centre of the town (ever) opened in 2000 (The Lock and Barrell in an old Ironmonger) despite the best efforts of the Frinton Residents Association. Fish and Chip shops are absent from anywhere near the seafront or the Greensward, as are any signs of commercial activity. All of this suggests that interpretation of Frinton's past at any exhibitions or events will attract local interest that may be concerned about the narrative of Essex most 'exclusive' resort. The challenge for Frinton in terms of interpretation is that it would inevitably explore the long history of controlled development which has largely maintained the area as being free of the familiar offerings of many seaside resorts. This would certainly provide an interesting comparison with other towns, particularly Clacton whose original developers had ambitions for exclusivity as well.

There are two main Digital sites that contain valuable information for the potential visitor to Frinton. The first is [www.frinton.org](http://www.frinton.org) which does not appear to be regularly updated (has links to Essex CC 2009 Election results), but does contain some good information on the history of Frinton along with some interesting photographs. Not all of the links on the 'History' link work, but the one entitled 'Frinton Park Estate' does and it contains pictures and some narrative on the history behind the estates development (much as the exhibition does at the local Museum).

The other digital site for information on Frinton's heritage is managed by Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust – [www.fwheritage.co.uk](http://www.fwheritage.co.uk). However, factual information on Frinton is limited, although there is

a page of information about the famous Frinton Crossing Gates – long seen locally as an iconic entrance to the town (and perhaps a barrier), removed by Network Rail but returned to the site where they are in the care of the Trust (although not operational as active railway gates). This whole episode generated national coverage and represented the town's (or those representing the town) desire to ensure that Frinton remains as unchanged as possible.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2009/apr/20/frinton-on-sea-railway-gates>

#### Interpretation Opportunities

- Oral Histories: Given the successful battle against commercialisation of the seafront and Greensward that has taken place for over 100 years, it would be very interesting to capture oral histories of those who have been at the vanguard of this effort, as it has created something of a unique seaside experience in the context of Tendring (and beyond). There is no oral history collection of Frinton available to the public and collecting more of these is something that the Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust is keen to get on with. Even relatively modern oral histories (for example from 2000 and the opening of the first pub) would provide an interesting insight into the resort development.
- Travelling Exhibition: A travelling exhibition is likely to face logistical challenges in Frinton, as although there is plenty of space on the Greensward for example, activity of this kind is not generally encouraged. A critical perspective on the resort development story may also face some scrutiny from local organisations keen to preserve the image of Frinton. There are locations such as the McGrigor Hall (location for the popular Frinton Summer Theatre), although such a venue is unlikely to engage new audiences for seaside heritage. The story of resort growth in Frinton is likely to provide an excellent and intriguing comparison with other areas.
- Seaside Heritage Day: As with the travelling exhibition there is certainly the space for such an event(s). It may not be easy to persuade key players in Frinton to approve of the events, although this very much depends upon what makes up the heritage day or events.
- Community Engagement: Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust are key players for engaging with communities across both Walton and Frinton.
- The Role of the Animator: Given the history of the area and the continuing focus on preserving the nature of Frinton as free from inappropriate and commercial activity (on the Greensward and seafront at least) it will be important for the Project Animator to find early ways of engaging with local groups if events and activities in Frinton are to be a success.



## **7. Interpretation, Themes and Activities**

In this section we consider the key Interpretation opportunities and engagement strategies opened up by the research, and consider what kind of activities, events and programmes will potentially open up opportunities for local communities, visitors as well as community and heritage organisations to engage productively with Resorting to the Coast. The main intention is to inform the development of an Activity Plan which will set out exactly how the project will be run on the ground and what activities, events and programmes will be funded. The Activity Plan comprises a core part of the Stage 2 Application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

### **Seaside and Resort Heritage – The Challenge of Interpretation**

As recognised by those behind the Seaside Heritage Network, seaside and resort heritage requires a special focus to enable it to emerge as a separate heritage entity from the Social History and Maritime History. The positioning of a subject matter that is very much part of our national consciousness needs careful attention if it is to become tangible for different audiences. If, as a nation and a population, we still very much engage with the seaside, then why is it important to understand it as ‘heritage’? Resorting to the Coast will need to become a vehicle for stories that can interpret the seaside heritage of the Coastal Towns, without these stories being simply factual. A factual account is the traditional method of the current museums in the area, ensuring that visitors get a basic introduction to how Walton-on-the-Naze for example developed as a place with a pier, a railway station and some historic buildings. This provides a baseline of information and interpretation which is important for maintaining an ongoing heritage offer long-term.

The challenge therefore for Resorting to the Coast is how the seaside and resort heritage can be presented as less ‘everyday’ and perhaps more challenging, alternative and unusual, with the aim of challenging audiences to see beyond the basic facts and become more critically aware of a part of our heritage that most people can already relate to through personal experiences (holidays and day trips), nostalgia and concern for its future. After all, as Alain Corbin points out in ‘The Lure of the Sea – The Discovery of the seaside 1750-1840’, the obsession with the seaside as a place of fun, social interaction and holidays was effectively created by a number of movements that transformed our collective attitude to the sea across Europe – Romanticism, landscape painting, fashions in medicine for example. Prior to this there was nothing inevitable about our attachment to the sea or the beach. The point being that there is scope for interpretation to challenge our collective comfortable relationship to the seaside and resorts – we know that they used to be very popular, that they used to be very fashionable, but with the advent of the cheap foreign holiday (for example) resort towns have struggled to be relevant in the same way, and therefore the offer appears to be less attractive than in the heyday of the Great British Seaside holiday.

In the following section we explore how it will be important, given the challenge for interpretation articulated above, to provide different ways for different audiences, communities and visitors, to be engaged and that this should be focused on a number of interrelated activities over the (proposed) two years of the project.

### **Activities and Interpretation**

Activities and Interpretation are linked. Resorting to the Coast as a project will be built upon activities that should open up different opportunities for communities and visitors to engage. It is helpful perhaps to raise some key questions that we can then attempt to address:

- A) What can be done to raise the profile of the seaside and resort heritage of the area?
- B) Related to the above, how can we ramp-up audience engagement on the back of this raised profile?
- C) How can we understand and help to achieve, through the activities and profile raising, a wider impact on the perception of the Tendring Coastal Towns (for example improved marketing and promotions, cultural regeneration, civic pride)?

In attempting to answer Question A we need to consider how activities will engage, excite and challenge audiences, preferably as broad an audience as possible. It is likely that when activities through Resorting to the Coast take place within the Coastal Towns that the majority of residents and visitors will be interested in some aspect of seaside culture or heritage – whether as visitors for the day, residents who may be engaged or employed in the tourism industry locally or perhaps unemployed and concerned about the future of the sector, or business representatives. We can assume that everyone will have a view. It will also be important to generate publicity for the project to help a broader and longer-term engagement with the project (newspapers, social media for example).

In attempting to answer Question B we need to consider how the project can engage people in project activities and help them to have an enjoyable experience, learn more about the heritage of the seaside, and begin the process of people recognising that the seaside and resort heritage of the area is important to the cultural identity of the area, for supporting and informing tourism strategies, regeneration and cultural and arts development (something that is not in evidence in any significant way currently). Question B also opens up a challenge for the partners involved with Resorting to the Coast to help people gain new skills and confidence through volunteering for example.

Question C creates a challenge for the partners leading the project to utilise the momentum, knowledge, information and profile generated through the project to inform relevant strategies and processes (tourism, economic development, culture), ensuring that the unique heritage of the Coastal Towns is valued and continues to be interpreted, contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place. A good example of this kind of approach can be found in the recently published Blackpool Destination Management Plan – *Destination Blackpool 2015-17* which has focused on embracing the seaside heritage of the area as key to its future, with Blackpool Council taking a proactive approach to preserve the built heritage and intervening in the market to protect and invest in key seaside heritage assets.

*'Blackpool has been the UK's most popular seaside destination for more than a century. Our ambition is to keep the resort at the forefront of tourism for generations to come by creating a place that has a rich blend of heritage and contemporary attractions.'*

<https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Residents/Planning-environment-and-community/Documents/Destination-Blackpool-2015---2017.pdf>

### **Heritage Interpretation Baseline Research and Opportunities for Resorting to the Coast**

The baselining research across the Coastal Towns tells us that there is very little activity, event programming or interpretation relating to the core themes of Resorting to the Coast. There is a

strong focus on heritage in Harwich, mainly focused on the Old Town, but this is primarily maritime focused (as opposed to seaside), and there is a strong local museum presence in Walton-on-the-Naze and Frinton supported by the Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust. The collections in local museums do cover key aspects of the resort growth story of the area, but given the limited resources, space and volunteer capacity, the interpretation is generally in the form of traditional display boards providing basic information.

From this baselining work we can therefore clearly state that there are major opportunities to increase opportunities for audience engagement with the history, heritage and culture of the seaside and resort growth in the area. Below we examine some of the opportunities for activities and interpretation:

- Entertainments: People still go in their millions to the seaside across the UK to be entertained and have some fun. This is no different to how it was before the 'demise' of the traditional seaside holiday, but the means of entertainment today can appear to be quite different. As a heritage project with a focus on the seaside as a core subject, there would appear to be many opportunities to engage professional and amateur performers, theatre/drama groups to re-create the 'traditional' seaside entertainments, perhaps focusing on specific characters from the past. There are a wide variety of events that take place across the Tendring Coastal Towns from the Clacton Sea and Beach Festival, Walton Carnival, and various events through the Harwich Festival. Entertainment events taking place under Resorting to the Coast could well promote other aspects of the project over the two years.
- Research, Talks and Conferences: All of the local history groups, as well as other organisations such as Harwich Festival and Jaywick Martello Tower, organise and host a range of talks and lectures throughout the year. These tend to be relatively small scale affairs with people attending who have an interest in local history (although they do attract younger people on average than their core membership). Some of the local heritage groups, most notably Clacton VCH, undertake research projects working with specialist or academics, and this is something that all of the local groups would like to do more of. There is significant scope to increase engagement with the heritage of the Coastal Towns, and in particular with heritage relevant to Resorting to the Coast, through a well-publicised and high-profile series of events which could open up opportunities for academics, authors, researchers and educationalists to engage with local organisations. This could be through a number of 'conferences' which could well be run in partnership with a university. This kind of activity would support the local groups in an area that they already have experience of, and therefore could potentially help build capacity locally and raise the profile of the heritage of the area to a regional or national audience.
- Exhibitions: Exhibitions take place across the Tendring Coastal Towns as can be evidenced from the baselining research. However, as for many local heritage organisations, this tends to be restricted to small displays in local museums, or one-off events in Church Halls for example – Clacton Local History Group hold a number of exhibitions in St. James' Church Hall in Clacton. There is significant scope for new exhibitions that could attract and engage new audiences from across the area – both visitors and residents. Resorting to the Coast as a project could help provide capacity and resources to scale up exhibition opportunities, enabling local heritage groups and many other people with an interest in local history to

support a larger programme. More interactive elements including video, film and oral histories could be utilised to engage a younger audience than is generally attracted to current exhibitions. Greater use could be made of local archives which local groups often struggle to utilise or explore. The exhibition(s) could be linked to other events (such as research and conferences and entertainments) to provide content.

- Engaging with Schools: There is very little regular and sustained engagement with the seaside heritage of the area by schools across the Coastal Towns. Harwich and Dovercourt appears to be one area where more regular engagement takes place, often through the Harwich Festival (for example Write Away focusing on literature with local schools). Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust are working on a focused project with Tendring Technology College looking at how the Trust could look differently and consider new perspectives on subject areas that will feature in the 2017 programme of exhibitions. Given the clearly stated challenge that all of the heritage groups face of engaging with younger people, it is important that Resorting to the Coast can increase capacity in this important area, and that this engagement with young people through schools (or youth groups) will help to sustain interest in the seaside and resort heritage beyond the lifetime of the project.
- Digital Resources: It is unlikely, given the likely constraints on the Resorting to the Coast budget and the apparent difficulties of maintaining interactive digital material (including local examples), that the project will be able to create and sustain major new digital products (augmented reality for example and new apps for exploration), or indeed that there is any real appetite for this from local heritage groups, visitors or residents. All of the local heritage organisations have a web presence, and they all contain interesting information on the history of the local area. Some of them contain trails or guides (Harwich Society and Walton Community Forum for example). Given the absence of a central museum service and the current lack of coordination between local heritage groups, it would appear that there is an opportunity to provide a coherent central resource of information on the seaside and resort heritage of the Coastal Towns. This would link to research work undertaken by local groups through the project as well as utilising existing work such as that undertaken by Clacton VCH/Essex VCH. What could be produced is a reliable 'online compendium' of digital resources available for different audiences. The information would also be available for visitors and for strategic partners who may wish to utilise the resources for the purposes of developing locally relevant tourism strategies for example.
- Oral Histories: This is an activity that will benefit from the excellent contacts that local heritage groups have into their communities (especially among retirees for example), and is an activity that they all wish to pursue more than is currently possible with limited capacity and resources. The Essex Record Office Sound & Video Archive have the ability to support local organisations (which could include schools, community groups etc.) to develop the necessary expertise and technical knowledge. Oral histories would support the development of other activities and resources including the exhibition, website/online compendium, and a school engagement programme.

### **Themes, Methods and Volunteering Opportunities**

Having established that there is scope for the following activities set out above, we now examine these in more detail, with a particular focus on themes, methods of interpretation and volunteering opportunities. It is important to recognise that although the activities and interpretation of themes

set out in this document have been developed based on research, discussions and meetings with a wide range of partners, and through survey work (formal and informal), the overarching aim of the project given the low starting point in terms of engagement with seaside heritage is to create capacity, platforms for collaboration and exploration, and raise profile and publicity – all in to ensure that the projects aims are sustainable beyond the two year lifetime of the initial project. The point therefore is that there must be significant scope for the project partners, and this must include the Project Animator and local heritage groups, to shift the focus on activities and interpretation as necessary to engage audiences, respond to specific opportunities, and to take advantage of other activities or events that can be complementary and help to generate interest and engage audiences. The exploration of interpretation and activities set out below therefore seeks to provide an initial framework or infrastructure for how the project could develop, ensuring that opportunities are clear from the beginning, but that these are not set in stone and can be adapted, changed and developed.

### Entertainments

As a heritage project it would be appropriate to offer an introduction to the area's cultural past through a 'revival' of some of the traditional seaside entertainments. A challenge however is to make this kind of engagement event more than simply an amusing or charming window into a past that has long gone. This kind of approach would still provide something of an education to those visiting or living the Coastal Towns today, and it would open up opportunities for audiences to become aware of other activities and events (through attracting a crowd). However, there should if possible be an emphasis on considering the future of seaside entertainments and culture (this was an ambition set out in the original HLF Stage 1 application).

There is some evidence that there is an existing audience from the more traditional seaside summer show in places like Clacton, as evidenced through the 2016 programme at the West Cliff Theatre which has been inspired by an original show from 1894 (there will also be a programme in 2017). <https://www.westcliffclacton.co.uk/tag/summer-show/>

The potential for interpretation is very broad as different professional performance or drama organisations will inevitably approach the challenge in different ways. However, the core concept, in relation to the wider project's activities and events, is to generate interest and publicity for the project, excite and educate audiences, and provide opportunities for volunteers to gain new skills and develop confidence.

### Themes to Explore

- In order to engage audiences in the real history of the area, the original performers from the 'heyday' of seaside traditional entertainments (pre WW2 and up to 1960). This could include Pierrot Troupes/Concert Parties for example or a focus on notable performers from the area including Clown Bertram.
- There should be scope for those developing the shows to help audiences understand how popular culture was affected at the seaside by issues such as cheaper foreign holidays (especially to Spain), electrification of the railways (quicker journeys in and out of the towns impacting on evening show audiences), and television. This would also provide an opportunity for audiences to understand how expectations of performances have changed as technology has developed.
- The history and culture of the holiday camps that were such a major feature of the area (particularly Butlins in Clacton and Warners in Dovercourt), both of which have been gone for some time. Performance exploration of the entertainments that were regular features at

Butlins in Clacton, encouraging audiences to get involved in the process demonstrating the impact that the holiday camps had on the area in terms of tourism and culture.

- Performances, or complementary information, could also help to bring to life some of the buildings that were significant sites for performances. For example the Pier Pavilion (or Jolly Roger) that is still on Clacton Pier today but not used and largely derelict.

#### Opportunities for Volunteering

- The emphasis should be on engaging a team of professional performers who can develop and deliver a successful series of shows and performances, reviving or responding to the performers relevant to the Coastal Towns history. However, as part of the process the professional team should be responsible for engaging volunteers who want to learn new skills and who can take part in performances. This could be done through engaging with local community groups, or drama / youth groups, and potentially through collaborating with other events and programmes that take place across the Tendring Coastal towns (particularly during the summer tourist season)
- Other local groups who are not inclined to get involved with the performances could work with the drama group to promote the events, whipping up interest with audiences prior and during the events for example, and supporting the promotional drive through social media.
- Research taking place as part of the wider project could inform the development of the entertainments, and existing archives could be utilised, engaging and supporting volunteers in the process

#### Research, Talks and Conferences

As can be evidenced through the new but growing Seaside Heritage Network established by Scarborough Museums Trust, and conferences such as the recent *Wish You Were Here...* organised by the Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust (October 2016) which explored the current burgeoning interest in seaside heritage, there is interest across England and the rest of the UK in engaging with seaside heritage. There is clearly a sense emerging among academics, museum services and tourism managers that this is a key part of our nation's history that has not been as well explored or perhaps valued as it might have been. The story of the seaside and resort growth in Tendring has many similarities with other areas, but is also unique to the area (and indeed the five Coastal Towns in Tendring are different to each other).

Resorting to the Coast as a high-profile project should seek to put the Tendring Coastal Towns on the map, not simply for celebrating and exploring their unique seaside heritage, but for exploring and critically engaging with a national obsession -the Great British Seaside, its past, present and future.

The conference events should be an opportunity for collaborations and new partnerships to develop, the sharing of ideas and development of project, and for practical skill sharing. This could include workshops on various practical themes including oral histories, social media and promotion, working with universities and academics, securing funding and developing projects with schools.

#### Themes to Explore

- The development of the Essex seaside resort: How typical were the various features of local development? How were they shaped by local, regional and national taste, fashion, policies and economies?

- How important was the relationship between the communities of East London (and beyond) to the settlement and development the Tendring Coastal Resorts, as the two are clearly linked (paddles steamers, Coastal plotlands developments in Jaywick, industrial development and leisure, transport).
- To what extent has government policy, planning and regulation shaped the development of the resorts compared to the free market of property speculation, commerce and entrepreneurial endeavour?
- How can intangible heritage (such as community mapping, memory, oral history) shape and inform the heritage of the Tendring Coastal Resorts?
- What are the untold and uncelebrated stories and historical issues that need to be explored in relation to the seaside heritage of the Tendring Coastal Towns, and what partnership(s) can be put in place to support this?
- How can seaside heritage inform tourism and branding strategies in Tendring?
- An exploration of the liminal space of the seaside and resort, and how the concept of liminality has changed and what this means for the future of the seaside town and resorts
- What are the most effective research and community engagement tools and strategies for capturing historical and cultural information for heritage projects?

#### Volunteering Opportunities

The lead for the conference programme should probably be the Project Animator, working with Essex CC and other local partners including local heritage groups. However, there are major opportunities to engage volunteers in the programme including through

- Event organisation
- Promotion and social media
- Video and editing
- Working with universities, and universities getting their students involved to learn the practical skills of putting on heritage and cultural conferences

The intention should be to formerly engage local heritage organisations in developing the conferences, utilising and supporting their volunteers in the process and helping them to make new contacts, develop new skills and gain new profile and publicity for the work that they do.

#### Exhibitions

An exhibition programme for Resorting to the Coast would certainly fill a gap in terms of provision on the core themes of seaside and resort heritage in the area. Local museums do have exhibitions (as set out above), with the most relevant to the theme being Walton Maritime Museum and Clacton Local History (in Clacton Library).

Resorting to the Coast can provide much-needed new resources, capacity and oversight to take a creative approach to an exhibition programme that ensures engagement with as many new audiences as possible. The standard approach to exhibitions of pictures and posters in a Church Hall

will not be making the most of this opportunity. There must be promotion of any exhibition programme at other project events, for example the traditional entertainments, online and through schools and other networks that the project partners are developing. The exhibition programme must be accessible to audiences who would not normally visit a local exhibition, gallery space or museum, otherwise the project is not sharing the heritage beyond the traditional constituency in the Tendring Coastal Towns – generally retirees who form part of local heritage organisations for example. It is clear that local museums do not have the space and flexibility to take in any new exhibition material, and many local groups are planning well-ahead for the next few years making it difficult to accommodate what may occur through Resorting to the Coast.

Given these challenges, it will probably be necessary to develop a touring or travelling exhibition that can become a core part of the activity programme for the project. This will potentially propose a logistical challenge for those delivering this element of the programme but thinking of new ways to engage people is important in the context of the project. The solution to this should be established through a procurement exercise for experienced exhibition/events organisers to establish what is possible. However in order to maximise exposure a 'pop up' exhibition could travel between the five coastal towns, and could include elements of audience engagement, performance, audio-visual, and more traditional exhibition display boards.

#### Themes to Explore

- The original ambitions of the entrepreneurs of the Coastal Towns, how the plans developed and the stories and challenges behind this, development, population growth and the emergence of a resort economy ('Grand Designs' is in keeping with the original HLF application)
- Link to the Traditional Seaside Entertainment, and utilise video recordings of performances to engage audiences in thinking about the past, present and future of seaside entertainments

The emergence of the resort and the seaside in popular culture. An exploration of our changing attitudes to the seaside across the UK (and in particular Tendring Coastal Towns which came along a bit later than many other resorts), to re-mystify and deconstruct the subject of seaside heritage, taking people out of their everyday attitudes of seeing the resort and seaside as something 'everyday' and 'normal'. This is a broader challenge for the heritage industry in engaging with seaside heritage, with the need to engage people across the board in a vital part of our heritage that is not necessarily seen as such.

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Examples of pop-up travelling exhibitions include:

- Mary Rose Pop-Up Exhibition (out of doors with a tent):

<http://advisor.museumsandheritage.com/features/the-mary-rose-museum-touring-the-uk-with-a-pop-up-museum/>

- Their Past, Your Future: Focusing on 60 years since the end of WW2 (1945 – 2015). A travelling exhibition undertaken by the Imperial War Museum and funded by the Big Lottery.





### Volunteering Opportunities

- Engaging local heritage organisations and community groups, as with other elements of the project will be critical to the success of the exhibition. This approach provides access to a large number of skilled and knowledgeable volunteers, as well as helping to support publicity and promotion of the exhibition
- The Project Animator and the professional exhibition team should be able to support local residents to help on different elements of the exhibition including: manning the exhibition and talking to visitors, supporting the technical delivery, supporting the promotional campaign

### Engaging with Schools

When engaging with school on heritage projects it is important for those leading the process to be clear about what they want to achieve, and what is likely to appeal to the schools (this includes both pupils and teachers who have to consider learning outcomes and links to the national curriculum). For Resorting to the Coast the subject matter is at once clear but also potentially vast in terms of scope, and will probably be different depending upon which town the activities are taking place in. It will be important to clearly set the parameters of the projects and enable schools to engage on subjects or activities that interest them most. Resorting to the Coast will provide resources for materials practitioners' support and promotion/celebration, so this should appeal to schools which often struggle to fund outdoor programmes of activity and research or engage with creative practitioners.

To engage schools the project partners led by the Project Animator should seek a broad engagement initially with schools, possibly through existing school collaboration groups including Head Teachers Forums or the Tendring Teaching School Alliance, as well as through formal (or informal) meetings and workshops involving subject leads. The team engaged to lead should also engage with local heritage organisations who will have existing contacts and an interest in further developing their profile and work with local schools (not least to engage a younger audience including families).

There are clear opportunities in the National Curriculum, particularly Key Stage 2 which is the most likely group for engagement (although some interest is apparent from Key Stage 3). For example the

National Curriculum guidance for Key Stage 2 History opens up opportunities for a local history subject to be explored:

- *a study of an aspect of history or a site dating from a period beyond 1066 that is significant in the locality*
- *a significant turning point in British history, for example, the first railways or the Battle of Britain*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-history-programmes-of-study/national-curriculum-in-england-history-programmes-of-study>

A good example from the Essex area of a Heritage Project that involved engagement of a number of schools all examining and exploring different elements of a shared heritage – in this case the history of the Railway Line and Estuary from Thurrock through the Shoeburyness – is the On the Line project developed and delivered by Metal Culture in 2013. 22 schools were involved in total and they each selected a particular subject that interested them and a creative practitioner to work with (musicians, artists, costume designers etc.). All of the schools contributed to a final exhibition that was open to the public.

<http://www.metalculture.com/projects/line-3/>

#### Themes to Explore

This is a very broad challenge and there should be significant scope for the team that comes in to deliver this strand of activity to work closely with schools, the Project Animator and local heritage groups to define the areas that interest them, and what kind of specialist practitioner support they will want for the project. It will also be important for each school project to create a set of resources that other schools can utilise. Potential themes could include

- Engaging in exploring the traditional performers of the Tendring Coastal Towns (see above) and considering how expectations of seaside performances have changed, the reasons for this and what this potentially means for the future of entertainments at the seaside (and their particular town of interest).
- Exploring the changes made during the main development of resort and town developments including the impact of the paddles steamers and trains for example. Pupils could be encouraged to explore how the development of seaside towns and resorts was different to other towns not on the coast, and that this development was rapid and largely the result of the visions of a number of development entrepreneurs. Before 1860 most of the Coastal Towns (with the exception of Harwich) were very small settlements/hamlets.
- The pupils could be supported to develop tourism programmes and promotional guides with a focus on celebrating the seaside heritage and culture of the area. This could involve working with local heritage organisations to research key aspects of the seaside and resort heritage and how this could form the basis a promotional campaign. This would encourage pupils to consider the heritage of the area creatively.

#### Volunteering Opportunities

Given safeguarding issues when working with schools, it is important for any associated volunteering roles to be carefully considered. However, all of the forms of pupils' engagement are effectively volunteering roles, and any involvement of family members, including as audiences at events staged as part of the work will also be important outcomes for sharing and exploring heritage.

The key opportunity would appear to be through engagement with local heritage groups and their experienced volunteers who can assist in terms of researching subjects, exploring archives and storytelling. This is as much an opportunity for their organisations as for the pupils, as opportunities for engage younger people and families are paramount.

### Digital Resources

The proposed website/online compendium is proposed as an essential piece of infrastructure that the wider Resorting to the Coast can build on as a collaborative tool that will also help to sustain the project outcomes beyond initial two years. There is no shortage of digital resources relevant to heritage across the Tendring Coastal Towns. They are all very locally focused and not all of them are maintained, and there is no authoritative account of the seaside and resort heritage available (not that this would be expected). This leaves a clear gap for the project to fill with a central digital resource that is managed (as an independent site) by the Project Animator, working alongside all other project partners (most importantly local heritage groups) to develop resources that provide a comprehensive introduction to the seaside heritage of the Tendring Coastal Towns. This would provide a focus for the project and all resources created could be uploaded to the site, including school resources, oral histories, events, exhibition materials and videos of entertainments and talks/lectures.

It is proposed that there are two key and interrelated purposes that the website must be capable of supporting. The first is essentially the capturing and making available all of the work undertaken through the project and creating a searchable 'Online Compendium'. The second is more externally facing and will be focused on promotion and marketing. Below we explore both in more detail.

- Project activities, research and local use (Online Compendium):
  - o A key part of the project is to support local heritage groups to undertake research, or make use of their existing archives, artefacts and knowledge in order to create a publicly accessible new resource. The resource will bring together all research that takes place relevant to the seaside and resort heritage of the area, and this will be searchable by all interested parties. This element of the project we are calling the 'Online Compendium' and it would be overseen for the initial two years of the project by the Project Animator with new information and research being uploaded on a regular basis (documents, videos, oral histories, maps and images).
  - o School resources will also be included in the Online Compendium. There is a separate strand of work within the project that focuses on working with a number of local schools across the two years. From this work new school resources will be created that will be uploaded to the website and can therefore be accessible to other schools. Resources will include documents, images and videos.
  - o Exhibition Material: Resorting to the Coast also includes a travelling exhibition which will be put together in 2018 and will travel to each of the Coastal Towns. Material from the exhibition will be uploaded on to the website (display boards and information, pictures and videos). This will need to be stand-alone initially to engage those not able to visit the exhibition in person, but will eventually become part of the Online Compendium
- External Facing: Visitors, tourism and residents
  - o Town Trails: Using the Essex Coast Path as a spine for exploring the seaside and resort heritage of the Tending Coastal Towns, the website will also need to host a simple Trail page which provides information for visitors to the area on what they can see and experience when visiting. Information will be provided on site to

support the trails so there will be a clear emphasis on linking exploration on foot from strategic points on the Coast Path. The Trails could link to a Google Map and could be developed over the lifetime of the project and beyond.

- Basic information on key heritage assets and destinations relevant to Resorting to the Coast would be available for visitors and residents, and this would also provide a link to established tourism websites including Visit Essex and Tendring District Council for example.
- Links to other partnership sites of relevance including Natural England (for Essex Coast Path), University of East London (partners on the conference) and others as appropriate such as the Seaside Heritage Network

### Themes to Explore

The purpose of the website/online compendium will be to act as a central resource for the project, accessible by anyone with an interest in seaside and resort heritage of the area. Therefore the themes will be related to the themes explored through other elements of the project,

### Volunteering Opportunities

The website/online compendium will have to develop as a partnership and between the Project Animator (and Essex CC), local heritage groups and other organisations with an interest in the subject matter. Therefore the role of the Project Animator will be crucial in establishing a system for information, knowledge, pictures and digital files to be uploaded in a coherent fashion, working alongside volunteers from all of the heritage groups (researchers, archivists, curators).

### Oral Histories

We know from liaison with the Essex Record Office Sound & Video Archive that there are significant gaps in the collection of recording relating specifically to the seaside heritage of the Tendring Coastal Towns. Clacton has the most comprehensive archive, but there is a major focus on Butlins, and other town's seaside heritage are generally covered in passing on broader narratives. We also know that the local heritage groups are very keen to pursue more oral histories for their own collections as well as to contribute to the Essex Sound & Video Archive. Oral histories therefore provide an excellent activity that can directly engage volunteers in developing new skills, contributing to important local collections as well as the proposed exhibition, website/online compendium and schools programme.

### Themes to Explore

Rather than consider in detail what themes could be explored through Oral Histories, it may be more appropriate to consider where the current gaps exist with a view to filling these gaps and therefore contributing to other elements of the programme. Below is a summary of the collection and gaps;

#### *Jaywick*

- Most of the recordings feature Jaywick as a relatively small part of a longer recording.
- There is an emphasis on the 1953 floods and the Second World War

#### *Clacton*

- Good coverage of Butlins
- Butlins well covered but other elements of the resort not well covered
- The A.B Kennell tapes provide a good source of evidence relating to the development of Holland-on-Sea as a resort (these are tapes given to the archive by Roger Kennell who is a key player in Clacton VCH and is very much engaged with Resorting to the Coast)

### *Frinton*

- Most of the recordings feature Frinton as a relatively small part of a longer recording.
- Lack of interviews with residents.

### *Walton-on-the-Naze*

- Most of the recordings feature Walton as a relatively small part of a longer recording.
- Lack of interviews with residents

### *Harwich/Dovercourt*

- The 'Harwich Mem-Web', 'Tendring Archivers' and 'Memories Exchange' recordings can be seen as attempts to provide a good spread of interviews relating to the area.
- Most of these do not focus on the area as a resort however

### Volunteering Opportunities

With some basic training it is possible to mobilise volunteers from local heritage groups to get out into their communities, utilising their contacts and networks, and collect some valuable oral history resources. Training should be provided through the project (perhaps delivered by the Essex Record Office) and the Project Animator should support a collaborative network of volunteers working across all of the Coastal Towns. Uploading oral histories to the project website/online compendium will also help generate interest and enthusiasm.

## 8. Partnership Development to Sustain the Project Outcomes

In this section we briefly cover some of the work that has been done in the development of this report to establish a network of local heritage and community organisations across the Coastal Towns, and the reasons why this is important for the project's short and longer-term success. Interpretation and the delivery of activities which involve volunteers rely upon good relationships between all of the proposed project partners.

### Tendring Coastal Towns Collaboration Group

This has been established to support the process of developing Resorting to the Coast from the original concept set out in the Stage 1 HLF application, through to the development of the Activity Plan and ultimately the delivery of the project on the ground.

With the lack of a central and resourced Museum Service in Tendring there is a related lack of coordination between heritage organisations in the area, and therefore perhaps the advocates of local heritage have not had as much influence as might occur elsewhere in terms of local strategies, branding and advertising (for the example Tourism strategies). For Resorting to the Coast to be successfully delivered in partnership with local groups and communities, and for it to have a positive impact on the perception of the Coastal Towns as visitor destinations, it will be important for the heritage community to have a clear voice and strategic input where appropriate. Resorting to the Coast has already created this opportunity and there is strong commitment from all partners to continuing the collaboration meetings, developing concepts and project ideas, looking together at cross-Tendring funding and partnerships to promote the seaside heritage of the area, and to share knowledge and expertise in relation to volunteering, engaging with communities and schools, exhibition design and facilities (buildings, rent etc.).

The organisations involved to date are

- Harwich Society
- Harwich Festival of the Arts
- Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust
- Jaywick Local History Society
- Jaywick Martello Tower
- Clacton VCH
- Clacton Local History Society
- Walton Community Forum

Friends of Jaywick Martello Tower will attend future meetings, and other groups may join over the next few months. To date meetings have been held on the 4<sup>th</sup> October, and the 9<sup>th</sup> November (both held at Foresters, the home of Harwich Society). The next meeting will take place in Harwich on the 5<sup>th</sup> December, and there will be further meetings each month prior to the project beginning (assuming this happens) in Spring 2017. This process will ensure that the Project Animator has a well-established collaborative group to engage with as soon as they are appointed, rather than having to put new systems in place.

The Key Issues that have emerged from the Collaboration Meetings to date are:

- Engaging young people is a challenge as most of the active volunteer membership are retirees

- Difficult to engage volunteers (and often volunteers are very focused on one area of interest)
- The Project Animator role for Resorting to the Coast must work in close partnership with local heritage organisation in the Coastal Towns and be available on a regular basis (rather than being located remotely)
- Working with strategic organisations such as Tendring District Council and Visit Essex is challenging in terms of ensuring that the heritage of the area is well represented through online resources for example
- Any exhibition developed through the project should be as interactive and accessible as possible and the local heritage organisations should be engaged in the development and delivery
- Support, capacity and resources are required for local heritage organisations to make the most of their extensive archives, and Resorting to the Coast could provide assistance with this
- All of the local heritage organisations are keen to develop their capacity and skills to undertake oral histories, and recognise that this could contribute to Resorting to the Coast. The project could therefore create something of a legacy in this respect as well as supporting the work of the Essex Sound & Video Archive (Essex Record Office).

#### Partnership with University of East London

From the development of the concept of Conferences and Research as a clear opportunity to engage audiences in the project, support local collaboration and establish new projects and partnerships, it is clear that the support of an academic partner would be helpful in furthering these aims. Given the obvious geographic fit with the seaside heritage of the Tendring Coastal Towns (East London was where most of the original visitors came from arriving first on Paddle Steamers and then on the trains), discussions were held with the University of East London. Initial focus was on a concept of two conferences that would be best run in partnership with a University experienced in attracting quality speakers, developing workshops, capturing content digitally and being able to promote the events through established networks. This partnership work is still in development, but UEL are now committed to working collaboratively with Essex CC and other local project partners should the project go ahead with HLF funding.

#### Survey Work

Survey work in support of the Development Phase of Resorting to the Coast has been important to in identifying opportunities and challenges, and informally for gathering insight into how seaside heritage is likely to be perceived by residents and visitors to the Coastal Towns.

Informally, from conversations on research visits to the towns and heritage sites (pubs, cafes, museums, Tourist Information Centre) we can report that there is a general lack of clarity about what is meant by the term 'seaside heritage'. In developing conversations, there appears to be some issue with people recognising that 'seaside heritage' would be classed as heritage at all, compared for example to more traditional forms of heritage such as castles, cathedrals/churches etc. Part of this seems to stem from the fact that although millions of people in the UK still visit resorts each year, many of them to Clacton, Walton, Frinton and Jaywick, there is a concern that the seaside/resort offer suffers in comparison to its heyday (largely before the advent of cheap foreign holidays and changing expectations of entertainment for example – pre 1960s). Although this may be appear to be troubling for a project such as Resorting to the Coast, it in fact opens up many

opportunities to re-engage people with the heritage of the seaside, helping to excite and perhaps re-mystify (as opposed to de-mystify), and using engagement with audiences to think about the future of the seaside, and in particular the Tendring Coastal Towns.

In relation to the onsite survey conducted in support of the Audience Development element of the Development Phase.....

Question 34 of the onsite survey asked – ‘Would you be interested in finding out more about the seaside heritage of the town’. Just over 61% answered in the affirmative to this question. While this response is not overwhelming in its enthusiasm, it does perhaps demonstrate that people are interested, but they are not entirely sure what ‘seaside heritage’ means. Anecdotal feedback from undertaking the surveys on the ground confirm that this is indeed the case, and those undertaking the surveys were often asked to provide an explanation of what was meant by ‘seaside heritage’. This lack of clear understanding reflects a wider issue that movements such as the Seaside Heritage Network are keen to address, supporting museums and heritage organisations to engage.

This situation confirms therefore the need for Resorting to the Coast to open up many different opportunities and ways-in for audience engagement and volunteer participation, through offering a varied but interconnected range of activities and events. In terms of interpretation, this situation suggests that audiences will have to be challenged to see the seaside and resort heritage as being legitimate heritage, and to understand its significance in terms of place-making and the impact on the local economy. Given the well-known challenges facing towns including Jaywick, Clacton and Walton, it will also be important to engage audiences in thinking about the future and how heritage can be utilised to support tourism and cultural development.



## 9. Developing an Evaluation Framework for Resorting to the Coast

Considering the evaluation of Resorting to the Coast at this stage of the project will help in considering what kinds of outcomes we would want to see from the project and its activities, and what kinds of changes or impacts the activities have had (or will continue to have) after the project has finished. Below are some key excerpts from the original application which provide a clear guide to how and why the project was originally conceived, and it is reasonable for the project partners to develop the project in this original spirit (even if some of the details of delivery and partnerships are likely to be different)...

*'.....will help to create local pride and interest in this heritage amongst their inhabitants. Furthermore, visitors to the resorts will enjoy a richer and more interesting experience, and the project will encourage more visitors to the town. This will in turn contribute towards their regeneration, important because the recent decline in seaside tourism has had a detrimental effect on both the economy and the historic environment in coastal towns.'*

### **What Are the Aims of the Project that an Evaluation Could Focus on?**

Ultimately the project seeks to have an impact on the way the heritage of the Tendring Coastal Towns is understood, perceived, valued, celebrated and protected. For this to happen it is argued, a perception change is needed at all levels: residents, visitors, researchers, local groups and local authorities. The impact of the project's activities therefore have to be sufficiently broad to impact upon a wide range of audiences, while not being so dispersed that they end up having limited or no impact on perceptions.

It is probably the case therefore that activities should reinforce each other and interrelate, that some should be more about immediate engagement, publicity and fun, while other lead on from this to create opportunities for more research, learning and the engagement of new and different audiences.

With this in mind therefore, we can aim to summarise the overarching aims of the project through identifying a number of themes which are relevant to the project, to HLF outcomes, and which can be measured during the lifetime of the project and at the end (and beyond). All of the themes clearly interrelate....

These themes are:

- Perception Change relevant to the heritage
- Direct engagement with the heritage
- Creation of new resources to support engagement and interpretation of the heritage
- Future projects and impacts relevant to other heritage (sustainability of outcomes)

### Perception Change

The key question is – 'How do you get people interested in the resort growth history and heritage?', with a follow on question – 'How do you influence perceptions so that people recognise and value the very significant cultural, social and built heritage of town such as Clacton, Jaywick and Walton-on-the-Naze?'

The audience for this perception change has to be relatively diverse:

- Residents and communities to take an interest and recognise the value of the heritage through engaging in events, exhibitions, and other activities
- Visitors to take an interest and recognise the value of the heritage (this of course includes would-be or potential visitors to the towns) through events, exhibitions/interpretation
- Local Authorities and their partners (TDC, ECC, Visit Essex) through adopting policies that better recognise and promote seaside heritage (tourism and promotional strategies for example)
- Local groups with an interest in heritage, community development and regeneration through focusing more on researching, running events etc. relevant to the seaside heritage of the area
- Academics, schools and pupils through more local studies, more research papers and events (whether directly overseen by the project or not)
- Business recognising the potential to utilise the value of seaside heritage for promotions and marketing

### Direct Engagement

It is important to the HLF and to all involved in the project that people engage in activities that help to explore, celebrate and educate. The audience for this kind of engagement and activity is also relatively diverse:

- Residents and communities to get involved in watching, taking-part, volunteering, developing confidence and skills
- Visitors to learn something new and interesting about the heritage of the towns that they are visiting and to have fun, and for potential visitors to have their eyes opened to the heritage potential of the coastal towns they are not visiting currently (due to negative perceptions of the heritage value for example)
- For Local Authorities to support the process of direct engagement with activities through commissioning, supporting events, promotion of events
- For schools to engage in local histories studies that focus on local seaside and resort heritage and the related social and cultural history, perhaps working with local groups and practitioners, and for academics and researchers to undertake new research relevant to this heritage
- For local groups to engage as active participants in activities, events and promotions during the lifetime of the project, and to continue this kind of engagement beyond the project with an increased capacity and knowledge base
- Local heritage organisations joining networks relevant to the project including Seaside Heritage Network

### Creation of new resources

How do you best support local organisations, researchers and academics, schools, local interest groups and communities to get involved in interpreting the story of the Tendring Coastal Town resort growth, and contributing knowledge and information to it? Perhaps a shared resource that provides information, facts, stories and insight that is built up over the two years of the project and lasts well beyond (see the Website/Online Compendium above). A resource that can be used for local studies by schools, and as a basis for talks and exhibitions by local groups, and that can be utilised to support future destination management and tourism initiatives that tell an alternative or different story of the Coastal Towns than is generally available. There is no central resource of this kind and no museum service in Tendring. This is an opportunity to support new collaborations between a range of partners.

- Local heritage and community groups contributing to the resource, collaborating with academics and researchers, and engaging with audiences themselves including schools
- Schools and youth groups utilising the resources for local studies, special projects etc. which in turn can effectively engage families in activities (and potentially as volunteers)
- Local Authorities have a reliable source of information upon which to base new promotion, tourism and regeneration strategies, as well as a reference point for planning applications and listed buildings
- Academics and researchers from across the UK engage with the resource being relevant to debates regarding the future of the seaside and resorts in the UK, and perhaps a greater focus on the relevant heritage on courses available at local universities (University of Essex in particular)
- Private sector partners have a reliable source of information for promotion of the area, engaging visitors and developing events

### Future Projects

If perception change is to be achieved and sustained, Resorting to the Coast must be a catalyst for more projects, activities and engagement beyond the initial two year period.

- Local groups develop more projects, research and exhibitions utilising the resources that have been created through the project and continuing to expand them
- Local Authorities continue to promote the area with reference to the relevant heritage, developing events and programmes
- Other projects developing from many other sources including schools and businesses
- Partnerships between heritage organisations, researchers and academics lead to new projects relevant to seaside heritage
- Other creative or heritage projects emerge that can continue the focus on seaside heritage, perhaps funded through other sources such as Arts Council England, Big Lottery, other trusts and foundations, and local authorities

### **Evaluating the Impact**

Based on the above themes and the activities that could be developed under them, we need to consider what kinds of impact(s) could be measured throughout the duration of the project and beyond. This is also helpful for the project leads (mainly the Project Animator) who can draw up some initial baseline information, utilising where possible some of the work that has taken place during the lifetime of this project. This could include revisiting surveys undertaken for the Audience Development report.

### Perception Change

- Resident and Visitor Attitude surveys towards the value of the local heritage
- Attitude surveys from would-be or potential visitors to the Coastal Towns
- Local Authority and other organisational strategies and policies which recognise the importance of seaside heritage to regeneration, place-making, planning, tourism, business engagement etc.
- More focus by local heritage and community groups on the relevant heritage – events, publications, workshops, open days, talks
- More schools recognising the value of engaging in local studies activities focused on the relevant heritage, and a perception change amongst teachers
- More business initiatives that pick up and reference the relevant local heritage

### Direct Engagement

This is all about people engaging in activities:

- The number of new events and activities relevant to the heritage
- People taking part in watching performances, or taking part in performances
- People visiting exhibitions (including online where relevant)
- Volunteering increases in relevant heritage through local groups for example and people gaining new skills and confidence as a result
- Visitors taking part in watching or engaging with performances, exhibitions, events etc.
- Schools taking part in the project and related local studies and specific projects (and parents engaging with this as well) and pupils and teachers saying they are more aware and informed
- New research projects taking place locally (or those elsewhere in the UK influenced by Resorting to the Coast)

#### Creation of New Resources

This is really about creating a resource to sustain interest and therefore help to sustain the project outcomes and perception change

- New online resources created
- Online viewers of the resources and downloads
- Specific groups such as Local Authorities, schools or U3A utilising the resources to stimulate interest, develop new policies and strategies
- Participants involved in creating and researching the resources as volunteers
- People saying that they have learnt something from the resources
- Better utilisation of local archives and digitisation of material to inform the new resources

#### Future Projects

- Number of new projects developing and getting funding and support (stemming from Resorting to the Coast)
- New events and programmes developing
- New school projects or local research projects developing

## **10. Follow-on Projects and Complementary Activities**

There are a number of options to be considered for follow on projects and activities, as well as complementary activities that could take place augment and enhance the delivery of Resorting to the Coast.

### BFI Britain on Film – COASTAL

Given the timescale and obvious overlap in terms of subject matter and audience engagement, a bid has been developed alongside the Interpretation Plan as the deadline for submission of bids was the 20<sup>th</sup> November.

<http://www.bfi.org.uk/supporting-uk-film/distribution-exhibition-funding/programming-development-fund>

### COASTERS

Funded by the Arts Council Strategic Touring Fund and managed by Sea Change Arts based in Great Yarmouth, Coasters is a three year project that seeks to bring world-class circus and street art work to coastal towns across England. There are obvious similarities with the concept of Traditional Entertainments (see above) as a core activity for Resorting to the Coast. Initial discussions have taken place with Sea Change representatives and it appears that there will be more opportunities to develop content in coastal towns that are not currently included in the programme. Project partners will work with local partners to build audiences among groups not currently engaging in arts activity, and there is the intention to increase visitor audiences to each participating location.

<http://seachangearts.org.uk/about/>

## **11. Role of the Project ‘Animator’**

The opportunities highlighted in this report for interpretation, activities, engagement with local heritage group and volunteers – all of this has to be well-managed. Ideally this management will be locally based (i.e. within Tendring as opposed to working from County Hall Chelmsford – this is something that local partners particularly want to see). It is important however that the Project Animator is well managed and accountable to Essex CC for their work, and that they are able to create a shared understanding between local groups/organisations and Essex CC.

Below we set out some of the key roles and responsibilities that are relevant to the role of Project Animator, in the context of the project and specifically the activities that are envisioned to take place.

- Main liaison between Essex CC and consultants and practitioners engaged to work on delivering key aspects of the Activity Plan
- Play a key role in the appointment of consultants and practitioners in support of Essex CC, and ensure that there is good local representation on appointments (where appropriate).
- Be responsible for managing HLF administration (outcomes, finance reporting and managing budgets)
- Responsibility for maintaining and supporting the Tendring Coastal Towns Heritage Collaboration Group, ensuring that there are excellent communication challenges between all partners including consultants, local organisations and other groups as appropriate
- Be responsible for working with strategic partners to influence strategy and related projects (events, tourism, economic development, community development, education for example)
- Be able to support the local heritage organisations in developing new projects and partnerships and in identifying funding opportunities
- Managing conferences and events (in partnership with UEL for example)
- Manage the website and online compendium project and set out clear working relationships with local heritage groups to populate