

BRAYFORD TRUST BUSINESS PLAN 2019-2024

The Brayford Trust is a both a private company (limited by guarantee) and a public benefit charity. It operates on a *not for profit* basis under contract to the City of Lincoln Council to **manage, conserve and develop Lincoln's Brayford Pool.**

Under the terms of its contract with the Council the Trust is required to provide a periodic five-year Business Plan. This document is the plan that has been submitted to the Council covering the period 2019/20 to 2023/24. It is awaiting Council consideration.

Although the formal consultation process on the Business Plan has now ended ideas for improving the Pool as an important '*Jewel in Lincoln's Crown*' are always welcome.

Please send any comments to: brayfordbusinessplan@gmail.com.

BRAYFORD TRUST LIMITED
BUSINESS PLAN 2019/20 TO 2023/24.

1 Background

The Freehold of the Brayford Pool is held by the City of Lincoln Council. In 1741 the Council leased the Fosdyke canal and parts of the Brayford Pool on a 999 year lease (ie to 2740) to one Richard Ellison. His successor granted a sub-lease to the Great Northern Railway Company for 894 years (the unexpired part of the lease) from 1846. This sub-lease has subsequently passed between a number of bodies and is currently held by the Canal and River Trust (CRT).

In 1976 the British Waterways Board (a predecessor of the CRT) granted a 300 year sub-lease from its own interest in the Pool back to the City Council, ***except for a navigable channel running through the Pool which it retained*** to provide a route to and from the Fosdyke Canal and the River Witham and for which the CRT is responsible. In 2010 the Council ***leased its interest in the Brayford Pool to the Brayford Trust for a period of 125 years***, ie to 2135.

Brayford Pool lies close to the commercial heart of Lincoln, at the junction of the Fosdyke Canal and the River Witham and is widely regarded as ***one of the jewels in Lincoln's crown***. Although its days as a thriving inland port, with bustling wharfs, warehouses and railway junctions served by canal barges are long gone, the Pool and its surroundings ***remain an important commercial centre*** and a critical asset to the City's townscape and economy.

Brayford Wharf North is home to two hotels, two pubs, many restaurants, and a cinema. The Lincoln Boat Club and the Lincoln Sea Cadets are also based on the North Bank of the Brayford Pool. The rebuilt Harbour Master's Office now occupied by Wagamama is arguably the pre-eminent restaurant location in Lincoln and the Viewing Platform, which for safety reasons has been out of commission for some time, will be refurbished and brought back into use in 2020.

The ***University of Lincoln*** - one of the principal drivers of the City's economy – has its main campus on the South Bank of the Pool. The Lincoln campus will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2021 having grown an ***international reputation*** for teaching and research over its short history in the City, making a substantial contribution to putting Lincoln on the world map.

The south bank is also home to the ***Lincoln Canoe Club*** which has had many successes over the years, with at least one Club member in fifty-one of the past fifty-six years having represented Great Britain in an international canoeing competition. This includes representation at Olympic Games and World and European Championships. At present, one of the Club's female athletes is on the verge of gaining qualification for 2020 Olympic Games and 3 other members are planning their training in preparation for the 2024 Olympics.

Brayford Wharf East boasts residential flats and businesses, as well as further university buildings. All these developments benefit from their poolside location, making the ***maintenance and preservation of the Pool and its environs of critical importance to the economy of the city***.

The moorings within the Pool are not only in an ideal location for accessing the Fosdyke and Witham Navigation, but also benefit from the rare advantage of ***being located in an historic City Centre***.

The Pool also offers a base for the operation of a trip boat and opportunities for informal recreation. **The moorings are the major source of income for the Brayford Trust in carrying out its remit.**

In short, the Pool continues today as it has for many hundreds of years...a **wonderful natural resource in the centre of a busy city**; a tourist destination in its own right; a catalyst for economic development; and a city centre amenity to be appreciated and enjoyed by the public at large. The **Trust's primary objective is to preserve and build on these strengths.**

In 2007, the then recently reconstituted Trust inherited a very limited marina operation comprising a set of newly constructed floating moorings (Phase 1), other moorings which were in **very poor repair** (and in some cases dangerous) as a result of many years of neglect. The former Harbourmaster's building at Brayford Wharf North was dilapidated and unusable in its current form. Objectives for rectifying the situation were set out in the Trust's Business Plans for 2007/8 to 2011/12 and 2013/14 to 2018/19.

Perhaps the most **significant achievement in recent years (overlapping more than one Business Plan period) was the completion of Phases 2 and 3 of the moorings**, financed partly out of accumulated balances and partly with the aid of a grant from Lincolnshire County Council and an unsecured loan from Investors in Lincoln. Phase 1, which was completed in 2006 was financed with a loan from the City of Lincoln Council. Interest is being paid on this loan and annual provision (investment fund) is provided for repayment in 2035.

2 Major achievements under the 2014/15 – 2018-19 Business Plan

The primary capital objectives under the 2014-2019 Business Plan concerned upgrading the moorings acquired from the university to the same standards as Phases 1 & 2. **The objectives were met and all of the moorings are now at a high standard** with only routine maintenance required during the period of the current Business Plan, along with making sensible provisions for rolling replacement over future years. **The moorings will not be allowed to return to the poor state in which they were inherited...**they provide the Trust's life blood.

Alongside the provision of the new moorings a major dredging exercise was carried out to provide a minimum water depth of 1.3m at the moorings. The total cost of the moorings/dredging exercise was in the region of £580k and the work was achieved with the support of Investors in Lincoln which provided an unsecured short-term loan of £200k at a low interest rate.

The refurbishment of the final set of moorings included providing eight 'Visitor Moorings' aimed at supporting tourism to the City. These moorings are for cruisers and are located adjacent to the Harbour Office where they can be managed effectively. **They are charged on a daily/half daily basis and are very well used.** Their location closed to the Harbour Office not only allows for efficient management but also provides an opportunity for Harbour staff to provide information about Lincoln to visitors, a service that is very well received by visiting boaters.

The Trust did consider providing additional Visitor Moorings on Brayford Wharf East for narrow-boats, but it has proved possible to cater for visitors in narrow-boats to be accommodated within the existing moorings without the additional cost and unnecessary development. There have been suggestions for additional 'day moorings' on the North Bank. The trust does not consider this to be necessary but will keep the matter under review.

Improved shore facilities have been provided in partnership with the university and are now considered suitable for purpose.

The Trust has also been working with the university to ensure that sufficient car parking spaces remain available as the University's redevelopment plans are implemented. This has been achieved to date and the work is ongoing.

Mooring Fees were maintained at competitive rates throughout the period of the previous plan but fell behind (when compared with nearby marinas) as a result of the poor condition of the fixed moorings (now all replaced by Phase 3) including dredging. The fees will be reviewed as a normal part of Trust business. Occupancy had dropped but has now recovered to 95%.

The acquisition of the University's leasehold interest in its Lincoln Marina moorings was completed and as part of the overall transaction, the University also granted the Trust a lease of the Marina Office and shower block with the lease of the moorings. The acquisition cost of £253,000 was financed by mortgaging the moorings back to the University.

The former harbourmaster's building at Brayford Wharf North was closed and eventually released for development as a restaurant, providing arguably the pre-eminent restaurant location in Lincoln and yielding a long-term private sector sourced rental income to the Trust.

In partnership with Investors in Lincoln, a project to create an additional restaurant adjacent to the Viewing Platform was developed to Planning Permission stage (approved on appeal). This would have provided an additional long-term private sector sourced income for the Trust. However, in the final event the City Council declined to grant Landlord's consent for the development (as is their right) but did instead agree to provide an **annual grant (index linked) of £25,000** to the Trust.

A regular 'litter pick' operation (by boat) was introduced to help maintain the good appearance of the Pool which, because of its location, is unfortunately seen as a place to discard bottles, cans, plastic etc.

A new lease of the wine barge was originally agreed at a commercial rent. The Barge was subsequently sold and the mooring is now leased on a commercial basis to the Students Union (University of Lincoln) and operated as a Cocktail Bar.

Mooring Fees were increased to reflect the vast improvement over the previous moorings and to keep in line with other commercial locations. ***It should be noted that Mooring Fees are by far the main source of income for the Trust*** and are essential for the preservation of the Pool. Fees are now the same on all moorings and are reviewed on a regular basis to keep them broadly in line with similar facilities in the area/region.

And finally, it is important to say a big **THANK YOU** to the boat owners who choose to moor on the Brayford. We know that they have a choice and without them the Pool could very easily return to the appalling condition in which it could be found 50 years ago in 1969, when the Brayford Trust was originally incorporated.

3 Introduction to the 2019/24 Business Plan

Brayford Trust Ltd. (The Trust) is both a private company (limited by guarantee) and a public benefit charity. It operates on a *not for profit* basis under contract to the City of Lincoln Council to **manage, conserve and develop Lincoln's Brayford Pool to the benefit of all.**

To help provide accountability to the citizens of Lincoln the City Council ***nominates two elected members as trustees/directors*** to the Board of the company. One City Council nominee is by custom the ***Leader of the Council*** and acts as ***Chairman*** of the Trust. In addition:

- a) The University of Lincoln...appoints two trustees/directors
- b) Investors in Lincoln...appoints two trustees/directors
- c) Canal and River Trust...a right to appoint two trustees/directors but does not exercise that right.
- d) Corporate Members...we do not currently have any corporate members (but see (e)).

- e) Lincoln Business Improvement Group...appoints one trustee/director.
- f) The 'Ordinary Members' of the Trust appoint two directors.

The Trust believes that the broad basis of this governance system is effective and efficient (particularly the presence of two City Councillors on the Board) and does **not see the need for any changes** at the current time, neither by way of additional Trustees/Directors or additional committees.

It is important to note that although the Trust has a very close working relationship with the City of Lincoln Council the Trust is **not directly controlled by the Local Authority**, its relationship being governed by two documents:

- A **Lease dated 13 January 2010** running for 125 years
- A **Management Agreement** for a term of 125 years being coterminous with the Lease.

Under the terms of the Lease the Council demises to the Trust for 125 years all the property **known as Brayford Pool** (the Pool) in the City of Lincoln. Exceptions include a '*navigable channel*' through the Pool retained by the Canal and River Trust, providing a route for boats passing to and from the Fosdyke Canal and the River Witham and any statutory rights of competent authorities including (but not exclusively) the Canal and River Trust and the Environment Agency.

The Trust is obliged under the Lease to pay the Council the yearly rent of one peppercorn.

Under the terms of the Lease and compliance by the Trust of a range of conditions the Trust is allowed to '*peaceably hold and enjoy the Property during the term of the Lease without interruption by the Council*'.

The Management Agreement complements the Lease and requires the Trust to manage on the Council's behalf Brayford Pool for the use of members of the public for the **mooring of boats and other activities associated with inland waterways**.

The Trust is required to **provide a Business Plan to the council every five years**. This current plan runs from 2019/20 to 2023/24. Although the Trust is accountable under its lease **only** to the City Council, the Trust has nonetheless **consulted with a cross section of organisations** on the development of this Business Plan, including:

- a) The general public. At the suggestion of the City Council this consultation was conducted via an article in '*Your Lincoln*', a free publication from the council which is hand delivered to **all households in Lincoln** (45,000 distribution). The '*Your Lincoln*' article contained a link to the Trust's draft Business Plan which was placed on the Trust's page on the Lincoln BIG website. A dedicated e-mail address (brayfordbusinessplan@gmail.com) was set up for comments. Consultation was open from Early November to 23 December.
- b) In addition to the hard copy delivery the '*Your Lincoln*' publication was placed by the City Council on their website and promoted by the Council on Facebook and Twitter. Additionally the Trust drew the attention of all boaters on the Brayford (via email) to the '*Your Lincoln*' publication and via that the Business Plan.
- c) Founding Members...University of Lincoln; Lincoln BIG, Investors in Lincoln and the City of Lincoln Council were all consulted via their nominated Trustees/Directors.
- d) Businesses and other organisations surrounding and using the Pool were consulted via their membership of Lincoln BIG (all levy payers) and in particular members of the Brayford Employers Forum.
- e) All Boaters mooring on the Brayford were consulted by email, plus the Lincoln Boat Club and the Sea Cadets.

4 The 2019/2024 Business Plan: Detailed Proposals

Any operational plan covering a five-year period is **essentially strategic** in nature and must primarily set out **statements of general intent** as well as some more specific actions, as has been the norm in previous plans. This is particularly so when the remit of the 'Business' in question is to **maintain a natural resource that is subject to the vagaries of nature** and impacted by phenomena outside of the control of that *business*. In the case of the Brayford Pool for example the increasing frequency of very high volumes of flood water flowing into the Pool from both the River Witham and the Fosdyke Canal.

The 2019/2024 Business Planning period is **primarily one of consolidation**. The Trust proposes to carry out the following activities (subject to funding) in order to discharge its obligations under the Lease and the Management Agreement.

(a) Marina Operation

The Trust's primary objective under its lease with the City Council is to preserve for the benefit of the public the natural, artistic, cultural and recreational amenities of the Brayford Pool. In order to raise the funds necessary to meet its objective the Trust **is required to manage the Pool for the mooring of boats and other activities associated with inland waterways**; in essence to run a Marina.

The Trust's primary activity will therefore be to **run the Marina in a business-like fashion** in order to raise the funds necessary to meet its broader objectives, **in particular to build up reserves for dredging as necessary**. It should be noted that occupancy on moorings currently exceeds 90%.

(b) Moorings

The moorings are now all up to a high standard and we **now move to a period of consolidation** and do not currently see a requirement for any additional capital developments in the short term, the only expenditure being on routine maintenance and provisions to reflect depreciation of the moorings, our primary asset.

Fees from the Moorings are **by far the major source of income**, without which the Pool would rapidly return to the appalling state in which it could be found in the 1960's. Fees are reviewed on an annual basis to keep them adequate for delivering the mission and competitive with other marinas, being careful not to undercut commercial operations which would be unfair given our public sector financial support and charitable status. The fee level has fallen in comparison to other marinas over the past two years as a result of the problems with the old fixed moorings, now all replaced.

The **Visitor Moorings are working well** and are meeting the needs of visiting boaters. Their location close to the Harbour Office allows for efficient management and enables Trust staff to provide information about Lincoln to visitors, a service that is very well received. We do not believe that any additional visitor moorings are required at this stage, neither on the south bank nor on the north bank (where moored boats would obstruct open views across the Pool) but we will obviously keep the matter under review.

(c) Dredging

Dredging is probably the most important activity for the Trust to manage, but also the most complex to plan for with any degree of accuracy and our most expensive maintenance activity. It is without doubt **one of the greatest challenges in maintaining and preserving the**

Brayford Pool. There can be little doubt that if the increased incidence of high-water levels and flooding in recent years continues it will bring with it an increasing need for more regular dredging.

We have therefore included in our financial projections provisions to build up the **necessary level of reserves** in order to deal with the problem as and when required and we will maintain a careful watch on the need for dredging, particularly on and around the moorings. The CRT are, of course, responsible for dredging the navigable channel.

(d) Charitable Status

The Trust will maintain its status as a **Registered Charity** concerned with the preservation for members of the public of the natural, artistic, cultural and recreational amenities of the Pool.

(e) Accounts

Accounts will be maintained and **independently audited** on an annual basis. The advice of the auditors will be used as necessary to inform any changes in practice required. VAT records and returns will be maintained as required by the relevant Government Departments. Annual Accounts will, of course, continue to be placed in the public domain via Companies House and the Charity Commission.

(f) Statutory Reports

The appropriate reports and confirmation statements will be provided to Companies House and the Charity Commission.

(g) Health & Safety

We will continue to contract with Arion to provide Health & Safety advice.

(h) Public Relations

Public Relations (PR) is a two-way transfer of knowledge and information between an organisation and its 'publics'. Ongoing consultation is a valuable PR tool to maintain effective relationships with the cross section of people and organisations. We will review our PR activity from time to time and as part of the PR review we will look again at our **Membership Scheme** to see if any changes are required, with a particular focus on 'Ordinary Membership'. We will also look for additional opportunities for engagement with the public.

(i) Website and Social Media

The Trust does have a website but this simply provides an email service and a link to the Brayford Pool page on the Lincoln BIG website. This arrangement was originally adopted to save on unnecessary costs but this was some time ago and technology has changed. We will therefore take advice as to what, if any, developments might be sensible, without simply changing for the sake of change.

(j) Housekeeping...tackling waste plastic etc

The regular 'housekeeping' operation will continue to be conducted by boat to keep the Pool predominantly free of rubbish, waste plastic and other litter. Although this activity can and will be undertaken on a regular basis it is not possible to guarantee that such a large area of water with two incoming waterways will be completely free of debris at all times.

(k) Weed Control

The seasonal growth and dispersal of weed does contribute to trapping litter and sometimes it can itself be very unsightly. It is however a natural occurrence, given the fact that two waterways feed the Pool on a constant basis. Where floating weed is causing a problem (for example in

moorings) it will be removed so far as is possible. The Canal and Rivers Trust will be consulted about any major weed growth coming from either the Witham or the Fosdyke. Professional advice will be sought in relation to the control of any invasive weed species and appropriate action taken.

(l) South Bank: Protection from Erosion

Advice will be sought on activities to maintain the stability of the south bank of the Pool and keep it free from erosion and collapse, whilst at the same time having due regard to any statutory duties to protect rare, endangered or specified species. Any actions recommended will be carried out, subject to the availability of funding, for which grant-aid might be sought (see also (m) below).

(m) Environmental and Ecological Issues

Three important points to note:

- Reports were recently commissioned by the City Council from the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust on all of the 'Wildlife Sites' across Lincoln, including the Brayford Pool. The full report is not yet available but it is interesting to note that in an early summary report it was noted that far more key waterside and aquatic plants were recorded than during the previous baseline survey on 24 October 2006, **possibly reflecting a natural increase in the floral diversity due to improvements in the environment.**
- The Trust has agreed in principle to a proposal from the **Lincolnshire Rivers Trust** to establish new habitat on the south bank of the Brayford Pool to be a haven for water wildlife. This will initially be on a **pilot basis** with a view to its longer-term development if successful. The Rivers Trust is currently seeking external funding for the project.
- A group has been established with the University of Lincoln to investigate the possibility of developing a joint **Environmental Plan** for the Brayford. The group met for the first time on 12th December. The Trust **intends to pursue this route** rather than add unnecessary bureaucracy by establishing a separate external group.

(n) Swans, other wildfowl and wildlife

The Trust **does not have any direct responsibility for wildfowl or other wildlife** on the Brayford, but is required under the terms of its lease to, 'occupy operate use and manage the Property (Pool) in accordance with the principles of good environmental practice having regard to any statutory duties and proper purposes of protecting rare endangered or other specified species and their habitats including the swan population...'

The swans are, of course, wild birds and although their numbers may have currently diminished the number of other birds, in particular Canada Geese, Mallard Ducks and Moorhens has substantially increased. There is also evidence of at least one otter in the Pool, to the annoyance of some anglers, but a protected species under European and British law.

The large flock of immature swans that could once be seen on the Brayford has moved elsewhere...many to locations along the Witham and a 'ringing exercise' being conducted by the university might shed more light on the issue in the future.

No one can be sure why the swans have chosen to leave and many theories abound, ranging from poaching to climate change...and the presence of Otters! Experts that the Trust has consulted point to the fact that the exodus might have been caused (and certainly exacerbated) by **two pairs of breeding swans having chosen to nest** (one pair successfully with 8 cygnets) on or near the Pool. Swans are very territorial and will chase off any others encroaching on their territory...including their own young once they are fully grown.

Others having consulted (frequently the same!) experts suggest that developments around the Pool might be one cause of the exodus. It is worth noting that the Trust has not been responsible for any new developments on, in or around the Pool, having only refurbished existing buildings (Wagamama) and moorings and has no current plans for any developments.

It is also worth noting that prior to the development of the university campus the area to the south of the Pool was an abandoned and contaminated railway shunting yard, which has been substantially improved by the campus developments over the past 20 years.

If the breeding pairs leave others might return as many are not that far away...we must wait and see. But meanwhile we will work with others (in particular the University of Lincoln...see (m) above) to improve the biodiversity of the area. We will also continue talking to researchers at the University of Lincoln who are monitoring wildfowl behaviour via a ringing project.

(o) Improvements to the South-East corner of the Pool

The area at the south-east corner of the Pool needs some visual improvement. The old launching ramp is still a favourite area for preening (swans and other birds) but some also use other areas on the south bank. It would be aesthetically pleasing to replace the short run of temporary fencing with a gate to match the existing railings, the gate being to recognise the history of the area as a launching platform and to allow similar use in the future, if required.

A history board might also be appropriate. We will also **explore options for regular cleaning and improvements to the ramp**, which would improve the general appearance of the area and would maintain the ramp as a 'preening/rest area' for waterfowl.

(p) The Islands

The main island, with its tree, has been a feature of the Brayford for generations. The two additional floating islands were commissioned by the Brayford Trust in 2013 with a view to replacing the 'swan ramp' preening area (old launching platform) because Network Rail planned to remove the ramp to make way for their new bridge, although following a re-design this did not prove necessary.

An 'observational report' provided (via the university) from Biomatrix who originally manufactured the floating islands concludes that the three islands have provided a **valuable refuge habitat for a wide diversity of species** from otters and swans to ducks, fish and pollinators. The report contains **recommendations for the future maintenance of all three islands** which the Board of the Trust will consider and implement, subject to funds (including the possibility of grants) being available.

(q) Salaries

Salaries for the small team running the Brayford on a day to day basis will be reviewed annually (January) and revised, informed by movements in the Retail Price Index.

(r) Angling Policy

The lease imposes a range of conditions relating to angling and we will review our policies in discussion with the relevant groups to ensure that the policies remain fit for purpose. Signage might also need to be provided, subject to funds being available.

(s) Use of Fireworks

On occasions fireworks are used as part of activities that take place around the Pool. This can be very distressing to wildlife and we will review the policy in consultation with Lincoln BIG who run most of the activities.

(t) The Viewing Platform

The City Council's *Viewing Platform* was taken out of use following safety concerns. The Council has agreed to fund its repair and work will be undertaken aimed at re-opening the

facility in 2020. It will be important to take measures to ensure that the Viewing Platform is not used for informal moorings as this could be damaging and dangerous.

5 Other Activities (funds permitting)

This Business Plan covers a five-year period and in addition to the activities mentioned earlier the Trust intends to explore the following, funds permitting:

(a) Information Boards

The series of information boards around the Pool are now quite 'tired' and, in partnership with Lincoln BIG, we will look at their renewal to bring the exciting story of the Brayford and its environs up to date.

(b) Railway Signal Box

The railway Signal Box close to the south-east corner of the Pool is redundant and is a Listed Heritage Building. It is however currently **too close to the railway line to be used as anything other than a signal box!** We will explore with Network Rail the possibility of moving the signal box a few metres north away from the railway line to bring it back into some sort of use, possibly in partnership with the university.

(c) Connectivity with the City Centre

In pursuance of its wider remit to influence and contribute to the development of the full environmental, economic and recreational potential of the pool and its environs, **the 2007/8 Business Plan** included the preparation in partnership with the University of an **Enabling Development Framework** addressing various issues identified in the plan.

Planning issues identified for consideration through the Enabling Development Framework included **improved connectivity between the Pool and other areas of the City**, and a fully accessible pedestrian circulation around the Pool.

It was and still might be beyond the Trust's resources to fund such projects in their entirety, but it will seek **to encourage and support others** in progressing these objectives. The University's current developments between Brayford Wharf East and the High Street will offer opportunities for **improving connectivity with the town centre**, whilst the Trust will be alert for funding opportunities for new and improved pedestrian bridges over the Witham at Brayford Head and the western end of the Pool itself, where there used to be a bridge.

6 Financial Outlook for the Plan Period (2019/20 to 2023/24)

The Trust's main physical asset from which it can raise funds is the Pool itself. Its sources of revenue income are the mooring fees along with the rents we receive from commercial lettings (the Wine Barge, the ground rent on the Wagamama Lease and the trip boat), electricity charges, membership fees and (from 2018/19) an annual grant from the City of Lincoln Council of £25,000 (reviewed every five years index linked).

An outline of projected income and expenditure for the five-year period is set out in a separate Annex, which the Trust considers to be **Commercial in Confidence**. It is particularly important to note that the financial projections assume:

- **Consolidation of the current operation, with no further major investment in moorings or other capital facilities envisaged in this planning period.**
- **Regular reviews of income, in particular mooring fees.**

- *The development of a substantial reserve for future dredging operations, the timing of which cannot be accurately determined.*
- *No additional committees or other unnecessary bureaucracy*