

Introduction and Welcome

Chris Winter, Conference Chair and HTF Director

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First of all I need to pass on apologies from Mike Loveday, who was looking forward to renewing many old acquaintances in Lincoln but due to sudden family illness is unable to be with us today.

So I have the privilege of welcoming you all to what should be a very interesting event and which is also quite a significant event for HTF.

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I am delighted to welcome you all to **Lincoln** as the Forum has had a very long and important relationship with the City. I was delighted that Keith Laidler was able to take you for a guided tour of the City yesterday afternoon to renew this partnership as Keith – former Director of Development & Environmental Services at City of Lincoln Council - was one of the first Chairs of the then **E** HTF. Not only that but he Chaired the Forum's conference in 1990 when first of all HRH Prince of Wales opened the event – and I was delighted when he agreed last year to become Patron of HTF.

Secondly the Minister then launched PPG16! Which we all came to know and love – now replaced by PPS5 – which I am sure we will come to love.....

This in turn lead to the City developing its archaeological database – which in turn has lead us to where we are today – the presentation of cutting edge technology which will bring together all of the records and data for use by everyone – local authority, the public, visitors, developers .. and is a window to the future. You will hear more of this of course later.

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Thirdly Lincoln was one of the pilots for the Historic Core Zones Project which in the late 1990's showed the way for better traffic management in historic town centres. What is so rewarding to look back on is not just that 20 years on the final phase of the project has been completed but that the radical principles put forward by this project – through pilots in Shrewsbury, Ludlow and Bury St Edmunds as well as Lincoln – have now become main stream.

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Fewer lines and signs in sensitive areas is accepted good practice; the public realm is an important element of the townscape; high quality materials are essential for this public realm – Mike Loveday would have told you about the work he does with HEART and how the public realm is the town's 'front room' and how local distinctiveness is so crucial to the vitality and viability of our historic towns and cities.

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It is this local distinctiveness which we are also celebrating today and capturing this for ALL users to access and use to ensure this vitality and viability for the future.

In 2004 the Forum came to Lincoln for its Annual Conference – entitled Modern Places Historic Places – which launched the Forums publication “Focus on the Public Realm”

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and celebrated ‘liveability’ and a renaissance in the City.

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ALL users – as I said at the beginning need to have access, and input into, the data and the collection of data which builds the body of evidence to support the value of the historic environments – in social, economic and environment al term.

We have worked hard in the intervening years to establish this value – it’s more than just old buildings – and it has been hard work convincing some!

It is not going to get any easier either. The current financial and political climate, the uncertainties surrounding PPS5 are not going to help heritage on its struggle up the agenda. But we’ll keep on trying.

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Which is what we were doing at the beginning of the year when I did four regional seminars around England under the banner of Conservation Areas At Risk and from which I had a very clear message that what was NOT required was character appraisals which sat on the conservation officer’s book shelf, but the information – that was so crucial to planning decisions, enabling development as well as development control – was freely and easily accessible and was OWNED by everyone and therefore VALUED by everyone.

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This has been embraced here in Lincoln and with support from English Heritage, HLF and the private sector is some else that I will be able to look back on – with great satisfaction – and say “I was at the conference that launched that in its infancy”!

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So our first speaker is going to talk about this value:

Graham Fairclough is Head of Characterisation at English Heritage and ...