

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR POLICY, PLANNING AND  
CORPORATE SERVICES****THE GRAVEYARD SHIFT – A HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND PARTNERSHIP  
PROJECT****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek Committee approval to submit a Stage 1 Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid for “The Graveyard Shift,” and to commit a small amount of match funding if successful. This is a partnership project led by Nottinghamshire Local History Association, in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council’s Conservation Team and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. The project’s main aim is to record the gravestones of every parish church in the County and to make the results available online, which has never before been attempted on a County-wide basis.

**Information and Advice**

2. Graveyard recording has happened as an ad hoc community activity, but there has never been an attempt to record the individual gravestones of an administrative area the size of a county to a standard format and to provide an online database of the results. The project has three strands; volunteer engagement for graveyard recording and delivery of the online database; conservation work in graveyards leading to habitat creation and improvements for biodiversity; and an innovative programme of community engagement celebrating the County’s rich Gothic heritage. The project also seeks to deliver community engagement activities centred on libraries and other NCC facilities, working closely with libraries, arts and archives colleagues.
3. The Conservation Team’s Community Archaeologists have been trialling graveyard recording through externally funded projects such as the HLF Trent Vale Landscape Partnership Project, as well as internal funding streams such as Building Better Communities and Local Improvement Schemes. This work has led them to identify that many gravestones are deteriorating rapidly and the unique information they contain will be lost in years rather than decades. On the positive side, the current popular interest in all aspects of family history and genealogy means there is a significant number of volunteers available and willing to undertake the recording. This project has the potential to develop a volunteer workforce in a majority of the parishes in the County. It also has a potential to increase inward investment through increased visitor numbers, as genealogy tourism is a growing part of the sector.

4. Nottinghamshire Local History Association (NLHA) is the umbrella organisation for local history societies and groups in the County, and has a wide range of contacts and resources. As lead partner, they will have overall responsibility for the project, including project oversight, database and website development. The partnership between the Council's Conservation Team and the Wildlife Trust is well-established, and is well placed to support NLHA in developing capacity successfully to deliver the project going forward.
5. If the application is successful, any staffing costs related to the delivery of the project will be covered by the project funding.
6. The Project will have two Stages, in line with HLF practice for Main Grant applications; a Stage 1 Development Phase lasting 12-18 months, to undertake further trials and finalise technical and financial details, followed by a further bid for the Stage 2 Delivery Phase, which it is currently predicted would last 3.5 – 4 years. The current estimated total request to HLF is just under £700,000. Match funding for the Development Phase of £2,500 has been identified from Conservation Team income. If approval is given to continue with the funding bid, the partnership would learn if it has been successful in December 2014.

### **Other Options Considered**

7. The option for NCC not to be involved in the project has been considered. If NCC is not involved, it is unlikely that the project would proceed, as the community archaeologists have unique experience of undertaking graveyard surveys. This could not be replicated by other archaeological organisations. The work of the community archaeologists is structured so that they can develop and maintain links with community groups, which commercial archaeological organisations are not well placed to do. Initial discussions with local Heritage Lottery Fund officers have indicated they are keen to see a project of this nature attempted and to see Conservation Team involvement.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

8. The Graveyard Shift project seeks to engage volunteer activity to record an important body of information about the people of the County and their heritage before it is lost. The financial implications to the authority are limited, and the positive outcomes for learning, community cohesion, and volunteer activity are significant.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

9. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working, and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

### **Financial Implications**

10. HLF seeks match funding in cash and in kind from project partners of between 5% and 10%. At Development Phase the anticipated NCC cash match is £2,500 which can be met from

Conservation Team budgetary provision. The remainder will be met by NLHA. A further report will be brought to Committee if the Stage One bid is successful.

### **Public Sector Equality Duty implications**

The Project specifically seeks to engage with and involve all ages and abilities.

### **Implications for Service Users**

The Project aims to involve a significant number of people across the County, and will be successful only if this ambitious engagement target can be achieved. The partnership is committed to encouraging involvement from groups which are traditionally resistant to engagement with heritage activities, such as young people and minority groups such as the Goth community.

### **Implications for Sustainability and the Environment**

This project aims to capture significant information about the heritage of the County before it is lost for ever, and to make that information sustainable by presenting it through the internet. In the process, the project will improve habitats and biodiversity in parish churchyards, improve community cohesion, and create many new volunteering opportunities across the County.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

That the Culture Committee:

- 1) approves County Council participation in a funding bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for "The Graveyard Shift" Project.
- 2) approves a contribution of match funding of £2,500 towards the Development Phase of the project, should the application be successful.

**Jayne Francis Ward**  
**Corporate Director Policy Planning and Corporate Services**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact: Heather Stokes, Team Manager Conservation.**

### **Constitutional Comments (LM 13/10/14)**

11. The Culture Committee has delegated authority within the Constitution to approve the recommendations in the report.

### **Financial Comments (SEM 14/10/14)**

12. The financial implications are set out in the report.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All