



Leicestershire
County Council



Environment and Heritage Services



ANNUAL REPORT
2008 - 2009

Community Services Department
Leicestershire County Council

OUR VISION

To play a significant role in the improvement of local community wellbeing, to protect and enhance the county's environment and heritage, and to improve access to recreational and learning activity and resources, for the people of Leicestershire, its visitors and for future generations.



Artworks and Resource box activities

Community Services Department

ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09

Summary and Highlights

Environment and Heritages Services is the principal provider of cultural, heritage, environmental and planning services for Leicestershire. An important element of the Service's strategy has been the high levels of engagement with partners, stakeholders and communities, ranging from Government departments and regional bodies to schools, district and borough councils at a local level. Our Service review in 2007/8 has positioned us well to optimise these partnerships, to face current conditions and to benefit from challenges in the medium term.

The Service is a national leader in its community work with the voluntary heritage sector and with young people. The Creative Leicestershire programme (see page 18) is regarded as one of the best in the country. The approval by Government of the Minerals and Waste Development Frameworks positioned Leicestershire in the top 5 of all planning authorities and our overall performance during the year met the highest performance targets set.

Environment and Heritage has a highly skilled and experienced team, supported through comprehensive training and development programmes.

Our Annual Awaydays for staff in 2008 focused on Climate Change and the emerging green agenda. The findings of our 'It Isn't Easy Being Green' conference have been fed into the Corporate Climate Change programme and signalled cultural shift for our staff in terms of our Green credentials.

Despite the financial and economic challenges, the Service has continued to develop capital projects and to harness external funding and commercial opportunities as the strategy to revitalise our sites and complete major regeneration projects, remains important in the long term. The Service's track record of raising funding remains high, with £4.7m in 2008/9, and work achieved to raise £4.6m in 2009/10.

Noteworthy projects include the further development of Ashby Canal, Watermead Connect2 and plans for a visitor centre, museum redevelopments at Melton and Harborough and the restoration of the scheduled colliery monument at Snibston. Projects such as these have become catalysts for further regeneration benefits, and our volunteer programmes are already successful. Engaging young people in particular the unemployed, is a real opportunity for the Service, and the partnership with Stephenson College, Coalville, Leicestershire Together and Snibston has enabled a range of volunteer, apprenticeship, and work placements to be made available.



Watermead Country Park



Snibston, Miners Gala 2008, Ferret Racing

Details of achievements during the year follow, but some highlights are:

- We had contact with over 2 million visitors and service users during the year.
- Over 600 grants were awarded to local communities and organisations to enhance community development, village halls, the environment, arts and community museums.
- All our museum sites were successful in returning VAQAS status (Visitor Accredited Quality Attraction) and Green flag status. Bosworth Battlefield and Snibston were both awarded bronze awards in the regional tourism awards.
- The overhaul and redevelopment of our website and launch of blogs and other social networking sites has already paid dividends with our users.
- Usage of the online Record Office catalogue has increased by 87% over the previous years, and visits to the Railway Archive website (www.railwayarchives.org.uk) produced 60,000 visits in the year.

- Historic buildings grants of £26,000 in total levered in £850,000 investment to restore significant buildings across the county.
- The five year long Community Heritage Initiative, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, was completed in November 2008. Over 67% of parishes have been involved.
- More than 2000 of the rights of way waymaker posts were replaced or repaired and over 250 gates installed, improving access for the public to the countryside and improving our performance on the Best Value indicator of ease of use of the network by the public.

This report demonstrates another excellent year for the Service, with high levels of satisfaction from the residents of Leicestershire and others who visit the County, and others who benefit from our services in other ways. The high quality of provision, geared to meet evolving customer preferences, is due to the individual and collective spirit and commitment of all staff of the Service, and will position the Service well for the future.

RECORD OFFICE FOR LEICESTERSHIRE, LEICESTER & RUTLAND

The Record Office at Wigston Magna cares for and makes available the written heritage of Leicestershire, including archives, books, photographs, maps, newspapers and video and sound recordings. It includes under its wing Modern Records, located within County Hall, storing documents required on a more regular basis by all departments. The Record Office also provides services by joint arrangement to the City of Leicester and Rutland.

Performance Indicators

	2007/2008	2008/2009
Visits to the Record Office	24474	23573
Researchers	12650	12634
Postal/Email enquiries	2448	2911
Telephone enquiries	7219	6857
Webpage visits	30122 (11588 April-Aug)	18058 (April-Aug)*
Number of archive deposits accessioned	170	174
Number of items conserved	14438	1214**
Number of items consulted	22423	19705
Visits to Modern Records	427	271
Number of files booked out (Modern Records)	5462	2296

*Figures only available for the first half of the year, owing to licensing issues

**Basis of calculation changed from counting individual pages within books etc to an overall total of items conserved

Collections: Archives

One hundred and seventy-four new deposits of documents have been accessioned so far this year, with a further 24 awaiting formal accessioning. The total of 198 deposits received is thus slightly more than last year's total (184). One hundred and fifty-seven collections (79%) have been catalogued online. When all the other pressures of the year are considered, this is a truly creditable effort on the part of Record Office staff.

Highlights included:

- Stead & Simpson Records: Two significant donations have been received from this important local shoe retailer. The records, which date back to the early days of the company, include minutes of the board, advertising material, photographs and material commemorating milestones in the company's history.
- Wyggeston Grammar School for Boys: A large additional deposit of records of this prominent local school was taken in and catalogued.
- An album of photographs, probably of employees of Caseloid (manufacturers of celluloid products) on active service during the Second World War: The album includes several servicemen whose photographs have been annotated "killed in action".



Letter from George Stephenson

One of the year's most significant purchases, with the support of the V&A Purchase Grant Fund, was a letter of George Stephenson to his son, proposing the development of a major colliery at Snibston. The letter disparages local labour ("we can make nothing of the men here") and suggests the recruitment of miners in Newcastle.

A project to input all data from over 7000 archive accession cards to the database was begun, involving both the archivists and archives assistants. This work will prove invaluable, as it will allow searching of all depositor and collection level information for every accession held by the Record Office.

Use of the online archive catalogue continues to grow. Figures are currently only available for April to September, but visits have increased dramatically by 87% from the same period in 2007. The Railway Archive website www.railwayarchives.org.uk, showing the Newton collection of photographs of the Great Central Railway, also continues to be popular, with annual visits totalling over 60,000.

Collections, Cataloguing and Networking: Local Studies Library

From April 2008 to February 2009, the Local Studies Library received 725 books and pamphlets and 2,489 newspapers and periodicals. These totals exclude a considerable amount of ephemera, posters, maps, sound recordings and audio-visual material.

Highlights included:

- a valuable pamphlet dated 1683 written by Rev Newton on the murder of Thomas Ridgeway by his wife in Ibstock. It gives a first hand account of Rev Newton's several interviews with Mrs Ridgeway in Leicester Gaol, culminating in her final confession that she had purchased arsenic to poison her husband. The case stands out as an example of not only murder, but a trial for 'petit treason' - the punishment of the time, meaning she would be burnt at the stake rather than hanged. It is available as scanned images, in its original format, and on CD-ROM
- the archaeology department of the University of Leicester has donated an archive of over 1,000 archaeological reports, including a searchable database on CD-ROM which will be of great interest to our researchers

We are also continuing to contribute to the Stamford Mercury Archive Trust, which provides us with microfilm copies of the Stamford Mercury. The trust has several county councils involved in assisting the scheme, which helps both to provide a proper archive of original newspapers, and microfilm copies up to an accredited standard (overseen by the British Library).

A busy year has seen four archive assistants and one archivist trained to catalogue on TALIS. We have brought in extra bar-code scanners with a view to tackling the library cataloguing backlogs at various workstations around the Record Office. Recently we began a pilot scheme in the Reception area - 'Borrow a book' which has up to 20 books loaned to us from the local library - to encourage greater access to public library services, and create better links with our local public library staff.

Maintaining regular contact with other local studies librarians in book selection sessions has led to the creation of a local studies contact point via e-mail so that we are receiving up-to-date information from library staff for new acquisitions, including new local authors & donations. A new local studies forum improves communication and co-ordination between libraries and the Record Office. It will ensure we will have a higher profile, and improve the service that we offer, to both staff and members of the public.

Storage Issues

The strongrooms of the Record Office have, in effect, been full for some time. Weeding of collections and re-boxing had long ago been exhausted as solutions to the problem. Creative methods of storage and minor relocations of collections (such as photographic negatives) have reclaimed small amounts of shelf space but even these solutions are finite. An allocation of space equivalent to 1,800 archive boxes was therefore obtained at the Leicester City Museums' store and the transfer of collections has begun. This will provide perhaps three years space at no inconvenience to the users of the Record Office; the collections identified for relocation all being 'closed'.

Conservation

Some 1,180 archive collection items for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland were conserved during the year.

Highlights included:

- 7 maps/plans cleaned and encapsulated, including 1759 Ridlington map, and tithe map for Ullesthorpe (1839)
- 26 page album from 2nd Bn Leicester Regiment rebound
- 129 papers /books from the De Lisle collections cleaned and re-boxed
- 851 photographs from the Territorial Army collection, Stead & Simpson shoes collection and Desford churches removed from glass frames and acidic mounts and encapsulated
- 2 parchment deeds with seal repaired
- Stamford Mercury newspapers dating from 1715-1741 cleaned and packaged for microfilming by the British Library
- Thirty-four items were conserved for the Local Studies Library collection, including the encapsulation of three Framework Knitter adverts and the repackaging of 28 Rigby Graham prints.



New storage space has been obtained

Conservation: Special Projects



Map Conservation

Ashby Museum's Maps and Plans - In partnership with Ashby Museum, and with a grant from the AIM/Pilgrim Trust Conservation Grant scheme, work on 8 maps and plans (1836-1980) was completed with the help of volunteer Bill Cochrane.

Snibston: Mines of Memories Project - Work on 10 plans and drawings relating to the Whitwick mining disaster for Snibston's HLF-funded project was completed between January and March 2009.

Conservation: Exhibitions and Enquiries

This is a major element of our Conservator's work. This year she was involved in the production of six in-house exhibitions, including 20 panels of a Militia exhibition, 16 panels for Shirley Aucott's Women of Leicester exhibition, and 14 panels for the Archdeaconry exhibition.

Enquiry and survey work included:

- Advice sought from Rutland Museum about Ketton Cement's Queen Elizabeth 1 seal and deed 1594, which is to go on display in June 2009. Conservation is making a box to house the document and seal
- Microfilming English and Gujarati Newspapers relating to the Partition of India, 1947

Standards and Approvals

The Record Office is required to meet national standards of collection management and access, including approval by The National Archives (TNA) for the holding of Public Records and other controlled archives. In the annual self-assessment of local authority archive services in England and Wales, overseen by TNA, we scored more highly overall than in 2007, with 3 out of a possible 4 stars (2 stars in 2006 and 2007) with an overall score of 70.5% (67% in 2007).

Modern Records

The Modern Records section has been subject to major changes this year. The development of an authority-wide records management strategy, which is already having an impact throughout the County Council, has affected both visitor figures (slightly down to 271) and the number of files booked out (2296). Efforts have also been made to modernise working and storage conditions in the Modern Records store; reducing the loading on shelves and relocating records.

Access: Website

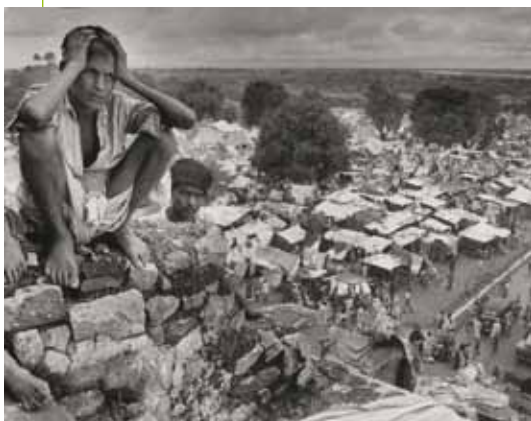


Image from the **Legacy of Partition** Exhibition

This year has seen the transformation of the Record Office's home page (http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/community/museums/record_office.htm) with brighter illustrations and easy links to a wide range of interesting features, such as past exhibitions, conservation advice and 'Raiders of the Lost Archives' (which showcases 'gems' of the collections). Customer information, such as Record Office policies and archival news, is also available at the click of a mouse.

Another exhibition, **The Legacy of Partition, 1947-2009**, has been added to the website, accompanied by some detailed teaching resources and clips from oral histories gathered during the course of this 18-month project.

Website visitor figures show a 56% increase compared to similar periods last year.

Outreach: Exhibitions

Our varied exhibition programme this year was:

- **Mamma Mia! How the Hokey Pokey Men Came to Leicester** - an exhibition devised by local historian, Arthur Beyless which traced the story of the first Italians who brought their ice cream to the streets of Leicester in the mid nineteenth century
- **Stopping Places: Stories of Life on the Road** - an exhibition about local Gypsies and Travellers, told through their own words and images
- **Rural Scenes of Leicestershire** - an exhibition by members of the Leicester Forest Photographic Society depicting the countryside in all its moods
- **Sex, Lies and Parchment - the Records of Leicester Archdeaconry Court** - this arresting title led to a surprisingly large amount of interest in the little known role of the local church courts in enforcing moral discipline
- **125 Years of the YMCA in Leicester** - a celebration of the varied activities of this organisation, prepared by members
- **What Bard Hath Sung of Thee? One Hundred and One Women in Leicester** - an exhibition by local historian Shirley Aucott, chronicling the lives of some of the local women who have played a pivotal role in political and welfare campaigns since the eighteenth century



Opening of **What Bard Hath Sung of Thee? One Hundred and One Women in Leicester**

- A small exhibition entitled **The Legacy of Partition**, formed as part of a project to gather memories of local people caught up in the Partition of India 1947-1948, has toured local libraries in Leicester throughout 2008 and formed the basis of a larger exhibition at the Record Office in March 2009.

Outreach: Talks / Presentations / Workshops

The statistics of the year are as follows:

Talks at RO	In County	In City	In Rutland	TOTAL
29	39	11	1	79
Attendees				
413	1109	253	24	1799

We gave fewer talks than in the previous year's record (101), but we talked to more people (1793 in 2007/8)! The biggest audience of the year was the Leicestershire and Rutland Family History Society AGM held at Beauchamp College in March 2009, with approaching 100 people to hear a talk on Prisoners of War. We have more county library staff participating in our talks & tours of the Local Studies library than ever before; 8 sessions have been booked up to April 2009. Current bookings are for over 60 staff to attend the sessions. Pat Grundy, our genealogical researcher, held another very popular series of family history workshops around county and city libraries.

We hosted two workshops in January 2009 for the Cultural Olympiad 'Journals' project, where young people who will be keeping journals of their experiences of the Special Olympics in Leicester this summer were able to see diaries and journals of the past.

Outreach: Community Archives

Celebrating Gypsy and Traveller Life in Leicestershire: A partnership project with Leicester Museums, funded by Renaissance East Midlands, collecting oral histories, and copying documents and photographs from local Gypsy and Traveller families. A significant community archive has been deposited at the Record Office and it is hoped to create a website resource from these materials.

Exploring the Legacy of Partition: An 18-month long project funded by Their Past Your Future 2 money administered by MLA, is coming to an end. A new archive of 19 oral histories, copies of documents and photographs, an exhibition and teaching and learning resources has been created, with a considerable website presence. Major project events included two authors of a book on Partition from India and Pakistan holding a debate in Leicester's Town Hall in November 2008. The final project event will be at the beginning of May in Braunstone Civic Centre.

Leicestershirevillages.com: Record Office staff continue involvement in this website, and Jan Pearson is leading a project on Guiding in Leicestershire, which aims to sign up units around the county to this website.

Melton Carnegie Museum Developments: Record Office staff are involved in two of the project teams, advising on material from our collections to supplement the displays and developing a community archive.

War Memorials Project

We have been involved in the early stages of a countywide project to document war memorials – their design and condition, the history of the people named on the memorial, the history that lies behind the decision to erect a memorial – working with the Heritage Wardens network. A pilot study of the memorials in Croft and Coalville has led to the development of a resource pack for potential researchers.



Coalville War Memorial

Supporting Teaching and Learning

The final touches were put to the Emsource website resource on slavery in June 2008. This was the final product of a series of workshops that were piloted on year 9 (13-14 yr olds) at Abington High School, Wigston, as part of the MLA-funded Strategic Commissioning project for 2007/2008. Following on from this, flyers were produced and circulated to all Leicester City and County schools in time for the start of the autumn term advertising the resource and the Record Office as a place for teachers to exploit.

In the autumn of 2008, an Education Forum was set up to bring together teachers who had worked with the Record Office contacts on Strategic Commissioning projects over the last two years. The aim was to consult with teacher practitioners in the field of secondary school teaching to obtain their views on what resources/services the Record Office can best offer and market in a 21st century world. Over the last few months, a resource on WW2 sources has been produced, revised and extended because of this consultation. It is now divided up into nine themes and it also contains oral history reminiscences. It will be circulated to all secondary heads of history and teachers for comment.

The Record Office has also had visits from Little Hill Primary School in Wigston (on 19th century local sources) and from Hastings High School in Burbage (slavery resources). We continued to work with PGCE History students at the University of Leicester to introduce archives into the classroom. This year, with funding from MLA East Midlands, we undertook a joint survey of four cohorts of teachers who have taken this course to find out how they have used archive material in their teaching.

Volunteers and Work Experience Placements

The number of volunteers in the Record Office has shown a steady increase this year, from 29 in 2007/8 to 40 in 2008/9. They put in a staggering almost 3,000 hours worth of work during 2008!

- Members of NADFAS, supported by other volunteers have been cataloguing nineteenth century building plans for Leicester. The original aim of adding details of all pre-1900 plans to the database is almost within reach and, by popular request, has been extended to include all plans created before 1914.
- The Friends of the Record Office Indexing Project has now completed indexing calendars of prisoners covering the years 1774-1900, amongst Quarter Sessions records and a pilot CD is to be made available in the searchroom.
- The Indexing Project has also completed indexing five volumes of admission registers for Leicester Workhouse, 1879-1889 and two volumes for Blaby Workhouse, 1911-1919. Work has now commenced on admission registers for Barrow-on- Soar, 1884-1933.
- Listing of several major collections, including Stead & Simpson Records by a volunteer with professional expertise in the shoe trade

The office arranges work experience weeks, involving short induction sessions from staff with many opportunities for the students to undertake practical activities, enquiry work and some cataloguing. Three students came to the office in March and August 2008, and another in March 2009.

Staff

Restructuring of the service brought about some major changes during the year. Two long-serving members of staff, Aubrey Stevenson, Local Studies Librarian, and Bill Cochrane, Senior Conservator, left during summer 2008. We have recruited Jenny Moran to the newly designed post of Keeper, Access and Information, and Keith Ovenden as Assistant Keeper (Archives).

MUSEUMS

Leicestershire Museums Service interprets and gives access for as wide an audience as possible to Leicestershire County Council's important and unique collections. It does this through site museums in most districts and by reaching beyond sites and buildings through the "museum without walls" concept. All museums - Melton Carnegie Museum; Harborough Museum; Charnwood Museum; Donington Le Heath Manor House Museum, Snibston Discovery Museum and Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre - deliver a lively programme of exhibitions, activities and events including the highly popular family holiday activities. The "museums without walls" concept embraces the Collections Resources Centre, where un-displayed collections are accessible, virtual museums. This includes Collections on Line and the Bosworth and Foxhunting voices micro websites, touring exhibitions, talks, handling sessions, reminiscence sessions, community archaeology and linkage with independent museums and the Open Museum. 2008-2009 has seen increasing emphasis on volunteering and community engagement. In addition, plans for participation in the Cultural Olympiad have been developed and an Interpretation Strategy about the vision for museum programming and target audiences was completed; work has also begun on a Collections Development strategy, which is about ensuring that our collections are relevant to modern audiences.

Key achievements for Leicestershire Museums during 2008-2009 have included:

- Continuing the Archaeological Strand of the Bosworth Battlefield Project** - Following on from the opening of Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre in December 2007, the Heritage Lottery funded (HLF) archaeological quest for a more accurate picture of where the 1485 battle took place continued and HLF have agreed to extend the work for one more season. The work is producing a detailed picture of the landscape and environment during the medieval period around the battle area. A medieval coffin, skeleton interactive and the Yeomen of the Guard temporary exhibition have been added to the Bosworth visitor attraction this year. Visitor figures have been at encouragingly high levels, and, since re-opening after the winter closure period have broken all records.



Bosworth Battlefield

Bosworth Battlefield

"I am just writing to congratulate the centre and thank you for the day out my family and I had yesterday when we visited. We had a truly wonderful and enjoyable time. The exhibition is certainly the best thought-out and constructed I have yet been to, and my grandchildren (3 and 6) enjoyed it so much they demanded to go round a second time! We found the exhibits both educational and attractively presented (not always the case at historical sites), and the guides helpful and surprisingly well-informed."

- Working with Volunteers** - Volunteers work across museums in a range of ways; for instance, there are regular volunteers, short-term volunteers, volunteers who belong to county council networks and members of Friends groups. Examples of their work include:

At Snibston, following a Community Services department wide recruitment campaign in January 2009, the Coaltracks volunteer team increased in number. The team contributes over 400 volunteer hours each year and plays a key role in maintaining the railway track at Snibston, enabling the train to run for visitors.

Volunteers attend the Collections Resources Centre working on the archaeology, cultural life and natural life collections including collections care, documentation and temporary exhibitions. At Harborough, a group of volunteers worked on an index of crafts, on the new Railways display and produced a number of factsheets to complement the museum displays.

Voluntary networks are one of Leicestershire's specialities and Leicestershire Museums are regarded as a national leader in Community Archaeology. One of the highlights of 2008-09 was that a dedicated Community archaeologist was appointed. Work is now underway to revitalise and refocus the Archaeological Parish Warden Network, the Fieldwork Group and the Young Archaeologists Club. National Archaeology Week has become an important tool for promoting local archaeology and, in 2008, 27 local events were held. Work is under way to improve this in 2009 when there will be two weeks of activities and events.

- **The Portable Antiquities Scheme in Leicestershire** has recorded two rare Viking objects among the thousands of artefacts recorded over the year. The first is a Viking Kingdom of York silver penny, found in Rearsby, dating to AD 895-902; it has an incorrect inscription which is very rare. The other is a copper alloy sword pommel from the Snibston area, its design, with interlace decoration, is usually only found in Scandinavia, making it an exceptionally rare find for Britain.



Sword pommel (second from left) and Kingdom of York silver penny

- **Renaissance East Midlands Programme** - Collections Access Officers worked with the wider Museum Community this year, providing practical support in terms of collections care and displays at Castle Donington Museum, Foxton Locks, Ashby Museum, Hinckley Museum, Kegworth Museum and the Charles Moore musical instrument collection at Leicester University. Cali Maxamed, the Service's curatorial trainee under the Renaissance funded positive action scheme, completed his first year with the Service and his first academic year at Nottingham Trent University's Heritage Management course.



Scarf Hoarders Exhibition at Snibston

Exhibitions

The full museums exhibitions and events programme across all sites involved many informal partnerships:

- At Snibston the Fashion Gallery's Changing Room included the beautifully presented 'Scarf Hoarder' exhibition, and, contributing to the Cultural Olympiad, 'Sporting A to Z Fashion Alphabet' which built on the excitement of the 2008 Olympics. The programme of exhibitions in the Community Gallery at Snibston included the Coalville Photographic Society, Centenary of the Institution of Structural Engineers and the 8th Annual Art exhibition by students at King Edward VII College.
- The "In The Toybox" travelling exhibition appeared at Charnwood and Melton museums, being an exploration of playthings of the past and what these tell us about attitudes towards children and gender. Also at Charnwood Museum "Olympic Dreams" showed memorabilia tracing the history of the games and "I do Like to be Beside the Seaside" celebrated 150 years of British summer holidays. The British Sari Story presented traditional and 21st century saris, also displaying the winning designs from the British Bridal Sari 2008 competition.
- At Harborough Museum exhibitions included "Harborough Curiosities" showing many unusual and curious items from the Market Harborough collection, "The Long Road to Freedom" about the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and its links to Leicestershire, "Local Heroes" celebrating local people who have achieved great things for the town, "Buttons, Braid and Brocade" showcasing waistcoats from the county's collection and "Loss & Belonging" developed by the Record Office and including a number of striking works from the Artworks collection. Special events included school holiday craft activities for children, the annual Rotary design awards with students from the Robert Smyth School.

Awards and Anniversaries

- Museums maintained VAQAS status – the standard for visitor attractions - at all sites. The Museums Libraries & Archive Council's accreditation status was also maintained at all museums while the newly opened Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre gained accreditation status and is now the only accredited museum on a battlefield in the UK. Snibston received a bronze award in the regional 'Enjoy England Awards' for Best Family facility and became a satellite centre for the Science Learning Centre East Midlands. Carolyn Holmes, Senior Curator of Natural Life won the Outstanding Service category in the County Council's You're a Star recognition scheme.
- Harborough Museum celebrated 100 years of the Liberty Bodice, 100 years of Little Bowden School, 75 years of the Market Harborough Drama Society, 50 years of the Market Harborough Rotary Club, and 25 years of Harborough Museum, the latter marked by a trail of silver artefacts around the Museum! Meanwhile Charnwood Museum prepares for its 10th birthday in April with the "A Celebration of Charnwood" exhibition.

Harborough Museum

"Harborough Museum which is situated so conveniently in the centre of town is a great asset to this area. In my childhood and my children's time I remember museums being rather dull places. Harborough Museum dispels this as it is a lively, interesting and friendly place to visit."

Collections

The focus in 2008-09 was collecting for current and future projects and contemporary collecting, preserving typical or unique artefacts with the future in mind. For instance the collections team are currently working on a year long programme of contemporary collecting especially around themes of sustainable retailing and green issues on the high street. The collections team also piloted a programme of capturing new aspects of the coal mining collections, which will feed into both the Mining Lives project and the development of the Mining stories at Snibston. Following a contact made at the Miners' Gala, parts of a private collection of coal mining artefacts were purchased, including several fine examples of the various designs of Safety Lamp, and a collection of harness and literature relating to the Pit Ponies.

- A Mid-Victorian Account Book from the Sheepy Magna Wheelwright's Workshop was collected which details work done in the 1870s at the very workshop reconstructed on the Snibston site. This shows how Mr Skelton the wheelwright was repairing carts and doing other work for approximately 100 customers in Sheepy and the surrounding villages.
- At Harborough the work repacking items in storage and updating the computerised inventory of the entire Harborough Museum collections continued. There are currently 14,615 entries for the Harborough Collections on the computer database. Items taken into the collections include: images and a townscape report of Market Harborough undertaken during 1998, an inflated plastic champagne bottle from a millennium party held in Market Harborough, a box of Daynite Rubber Buttons, sheets of rubber buttons dated 1955, the sign from Wellington Yard, signed copies of "A Runner's Tale" and "Childhood Memories", and a number of photographs and articles to support research of the local area and the collections.
- Acquisitions for the toys and games collection included a number of contemporary items: an Interstate games console and games, a Commodore Home Computer and the year's "must have" toys: Dr Who, Polly Pocket and My Little Pony. Other items included locally made 1950s Palitoy doll and box and model aeroplanes and a Punch and Judy booth and puppets, used to entertain children in the Loughborough area.
- Archaeological acquisitions included an almost complete pottery jug from Shelthorpe, Loughborough, made in Nottingham around AD1300, Roman pottery and kiln furniture found in fields near Peckleton, showing that a kiln was there, one of many in what became Leicester Forest, which produced pottery for home use for the Leicester market AD100-AD300. Also added to the collection were Neolithic pottery (5,000 years old) from near Ratcliffe on the Wreake, and the contents of a Roman well excavated near Rearsby including a beautiful pewter jug dating to © AD250.

- Showing how collections can be used with audiences, the Curator of Home and Family Life held 40 adult outreach sessions in which object handling was combined with illustrated talks for community groups including healthcare groups and persons in residential care.
- **Development Work at Charnwood Museum** - A programme of development work was carried out at Charnwood Museum. This involved a wide range of upgrades and repairs to the permanent displays, replacement and upgrade of the textile industry DVDs and gallery listening posts, the installation of a new wall hanging system so that staging temporary exhibitions in the Charnwood Gallery is more efficient and improvements to the lighting in both temporary exhibition galleries. The displays featuring archaeology and faith were re-done and a range of general repairs and maintenance carried out.
- **Harborough Museum: Delivering the Treasure project** - The Treasure Exhibition project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and other agencies progressed well during 2008-09. It will showcase the amazing local find of gold and silver coin hoards and a Roman helmet within a shrine setting, which transforms our knowledge of belief in later Iron Age and early Roman times. Opening in the autumn of 2009 with a formal launch and family event. The community museum in Hallaton is also on target for a May launch of its own Treasure exhibition. In addition, a travelling exhibition featuring the Treasure is now booked by museum venues in Leicestershire and beyond from August 2009 to early 2011. Work has started on creating the replicas to be displayed. To whet our appetites a Treasure conference is planned with experts talking about the finds in their wider context of Iron Age Britain.



Some of the Treasure

The project will also include a re-display of Harborough Museum's displays about the town and the locality. Many old favourites from the collections will still be available and some items previously in store will be displayed. The Treasure itself will be housed in a rotunda in the centre of the Museum gallery. There will be six modules, each of which will look at an aspect of the Treasure. Each module will include a display case, a game or puzzle, text and images about the finds, and sources of further

information. There will also be two computer touch screens with more information, and a large monitor showing a short film by the Harborough Movie Makers.

- **Extension and Display Project at Melton Carnegie Museum** - In April 2008, the Heritage Lottery Fund awarded £969,000 to develop the Melton Carnegie Museum with an extension and new displays around the theme of Town and Country in the 21st Century. The extension doubles the size of the museum. A community space on the first floor will create a dedicated space for activities and events for use by schools, community groups and volunteers. There will be a Community Archive to support work being undertaken by local history groups and partner organisations including Melton Borough Council and the Museum of Hunting Trust. Additional permanent displays will focus on rural life in the area including the contemporary rural issues and will reflect home and family life and working life in the countryside the borough. The displays will feature topical issues including post office closure, transport and "green issues" as well as diversification of the rural economy. Work started in the summer of 2008 and is currently on target, the extension with new displays will open in spring, 2010.

Melton Carnegie Museum

From Brassed Off 23rd July: (Held in St. Mary's Church, Melton)

"Good that museum activities are still taking place, while museum is closed."

- **Donington le Heath Manor House** - In 2008-09, Donington le Heath Manor House presented no less than 24 wide-ranging, historically based special events, school holiday activities, outdoor Shakespeare and early music performances. The figures for school group usage have increased with the Learning Team organising a range of very successful Tudor and Stuart sessions. The Friends of Donington have continued to be very active, for instance working with the Ranger Team on the gardens, which have attracted very favourable comments.
- **Snibston Development Programme** - Following extensive consultation with local communities, agencies and users, the development programme 'Mining Lives' was launched to conserve and interpret the unique range of colliery buildings at Snibston. Classed as a Scheduled Ancient Monument by English Heritage because of its national significance the County Council is working to remove the colliery buildings from the 'Buildings at Risk' register. The programme will realise the restoration of the colliery buildings and access to parts of the site previously not possible. Displays in the Snibston galleries, and within the Colliery buildings, will interpret the history of the site, involving local communities and the former coal-miners, their families and businesses.



Miners Gala 2008, Snibston

Janine Jones (New Look Young Welsh Designer 2009)

Janine Jones, a final year student at Nottingham Trent University visited the Collections Resources Centre to research the costume collection for her design entry into the 'New Look Young Welsh Designer Competition 09', organised by New Look.

Janine used the Collections Resources Centre to study the costume collection for influence and inspiration for her designs, for the competition. She researched 18th, 19th and 20th Century Menswear collections - in particular the shirts, trousers, waistbands, pocket details, prints and accessories from the same period which included ties, purses, bags and shoes to complement her designs.

From the shortlist of entrants Janine was selected as the winner and a selection of her designs are now being made into garments.

She wrote the following to thank the service for making the collection accessible and for the value of their influence on her designs.

"I have some great news. I have attended the presentation ceremony at London and have won the competition. New Look are going to make a selection of my designs. I was very nervous and excited just to be short listed!

Thank you so much for all the support you have given me with my work."



Structural Engineers Challenge Day for Schools at Snibston

The economic regeneration of the site and Coalville Town Centre are inextricably linked in this project, and training, skills and volunteer development, increased visitors and tourists to the area and overnight stays in the National Forest will enhance economic outputs. Enhanced community cohesion and greater sense of identity and place for local communities will be an important outcome of the Mining Lives project.

Mines of Memory was a 12-month project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. From December 2008 to December 2009, the project worked with local people to record memories of working at Snibston and Whitwick collieries. The work resulting from this successful project is feeding directly into Snibston's Mining Lives project (see above). It included 23 new oral history interviews, 2 reminiscence events with over 750 participants, a series of morning talks with over 80 people attending and the first Miners' Gala in the area for 25 years, which had over 2,500 visitors. In addition, the project also mapped collections relating to the collieries and made them available through Collections Online, produced 4 display banners about the history of Snibston and Whitwick collieries available to tour to community organisations and other venues, involved local people and community organisations in the development of the project and successfully worked in partnerships with North West Leicestershire District Council, East Midlands Oral History Archive, Whitwick Historical Group, Coalville Heritage Trust and Swannington Heritage Trust.

Snibston

Denis Baker of Snibston Miners Gala

“This project has really built bridges with the local community”

The Hemington Bridge timbers

The Hemington timbers consist of a series of 11th century bridge timbers which had originally spanned the River Trent, and the timber of an adjacent water mill. The timbers were uncovered during aggregate extraction work near Hemington over 15 years ago and are nationally important.

With support at the onset from British Sugar, the bridge timbers have been soaking in large purpose-built tanks at Snibston containing sugar solution donated by British Sugar. This is an innovative conservation method in which the liquid sugar crystallises and replaces the water within the wood structure, based on work on a log boat at Poole Museum.

In April 2008, British Sugar donated a fresh batch of sugar. In February 2009, a drying chamber was fitted out with fans and dehumidifiers donated by Poole Museum, and the timbers stacked in the chamber. The drying process will take up to 18 months after which time the conservation will be complete.

The Water Mill timbers, which have been conserved by a different method using Polyethylene Glycol, will be cleaned and dried by York Archaeological Trust and will return to Snibston next year.

This is now the final phase of conservation, involving the controlled drying of the timbers. Later in 2009 options for the interpretation of the timbers, their access and display, will be considered as part of Snibston's revitalisation programme.



A new donation of sugar

ARTS AND OUTREACH

Arts and Outreach is well placed to address a range of social and cultural agendas. The Service is not site based, although a number of its activities take place in museums and other venues.

Arts Development

Works with a range of partners such as community organisations, artists, arts organisations and creative businesses, local authority and key strategic agencies.

- **Centre Stage, rural touring theatre scheme** - 149 professional theatre performances, programmed and promoted by volunteers, to audiences of over 8,000. Complimentary tickets continued to be taken up by Children in Care and their Carers
- **Centre Screen, rural cinema scheme** - 113 screenings took place in rural venues across Leicestershire, programmed and promoted by volunteers
- **Shire Grants** - 14 Arts Development grants were awarded totalling £13,595, which enabled recipients to realise projects worth £407,524
- **Dance Development** - The Dance Development Officer for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland took up post in June 08 and has already made a significant impact in the sub-region
- **Classical Music** - We funded classical concerts with five festivals and organisations and in partnership with Orchestras Live and North West Leicestershire District Council. Supported a collaborative creative music project on the theme of Life in the Forest.
- **Snibston Arts Vision** - Continued to support the development of the Snibston Arts Vision including a Street arts project at Century Theatre with Mantle Arts as part of Find Your Talent and the development of an Audio Tour with Watch-This-Space
- **Community Environment** - The Community Environment team has continued to work in partnership with Mantle Arts to commission artists to lead on participatory and Public Art projects in North West Leicestershire.

Creative Leicestershire

Began in 2005 to support small arts, media and design businesses in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. The programme has continued to be supported by all 10 local authorities in the sub region and has become a model of good practise nationally. Headlines for the programme this year include:

- Funding secured from Arts Council and emda for the 2008-11 Forward Plan for Creative Leicestershire
- Over 1,600 small arts, design and media businesses in the sub region signed up to receive ebulletin information



Betty Loves Tea. Illustration by Hollie Brown, winner of a Creative Leicestershire bursary

- Began one-to-one specialist business advice service in April 2008. Adviser has now seen over 150 people
- Over 700 people have attended events programme during the year
- 23 small businesses received funding through bursary scheme
- 3 directories are now promoting over 400 local creative businesses online
- Increased engagement with Higher and Further Education sector includes the launch of new graduate start up bursaries at De Montfort and Loughborough Universities

Creative Leicestershire continues to engage at a strategic level with support for the Creative Economy. We are a member of the East Midlands Creative & Cultural Economy Partnership and a member of the national LGA Steering Group for the promotion of the creative economy within local authorities.

For more information see www.creativeleicestershire.org.uk

Arts & Outreach, Creative Leicestershire

Teresa Green, Textile Designer & Creative Leicestershire Bursary Winner

“Just want to say a huge thank you, for the support and funding with the website. It finally went live with a few hitches on 10th April. All running ok now, and orders coming through well after some recent press in Country Living Magazine, so its all come at once which is great.”

Community Museums

Supports over 45 independent museums across the County and in Rutland and the City of Leicester, in partnership with the Leicestershire and Rutland Museums Forum. This work now forms part of the Renaissance East Midlands Museum Development Programme.

- The community museums section has continued to support the work of independent museums across Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland in partnership with the Leicestershire and Rutland Museums Forum.
- Supported over 45 independent museums across the County and in Rutland and the City of Leicester, in partnership with the Leicestershire and Rutland Museums Forum. This work now forms part of the Renaissance East Midlands Museum Development Programme.
- 4 independent museums achieved Museum Accreditation
- 21 grants worth over £10,000 including five grants worth over £2,300 to independent museums serving priority neighbourhoods.
- Support for large projects including the development of the new Heritage Centre in Diseworth, the redevelopment of Measham Station to include new accommodation for Measham Museum and the redisplay of Hallaton Museum as part of the South East Leicestershire Treasure project.
- Heritage Awards took place in Hallaton
- Planning has begun to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Leicestershire & Rutland Heritage Awards in 2009.



Peter Clowes (Honorary Curator) explains the frameshop at Wigston Framework Knitters Museum

Regional Museum Development

Leicestershire County Council leads museum development on behalf of Renaissance East Midlands, providing support for independent and small/ medium sized local authority museums (as non Renaissance partner services) to meet professional standards across the East Midlands.

The Museum Development team includes the Leicestershire Community Museums Officer and is led by the Regional Museum Development Network Manager as part of Arts and Outreach. Four other county Museum Development Officer posts are located in Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Northamptonshire.

- In 2008/9 the team worked with over 250 museums to provide professional advice and support on museum and associated matters.
- 39 grants of between £250 and £3,000 totalling £78,000 were awarded to museums undertaking projects in the areas of audience development, collections care, documentation and learning, and as match funding for large development projects.
- The Museum Development team supported 20 museums in the Survive and Thrive regional programme which helped them to review and improve governance arrangements and organisational structures.
- The team also worked with other regional projects such as the Collections Access Assistants programme to benefit small museums, and commissioned research into cultural volunteering in partnership with the Arts Council and English Heritage.
- The team supported the Accreditation scheme with over 20 museums achieving Accreditation status.
- Five Heritage Awards events were run, one in each county, based on the Leicestershire and Rutland model (which has been running since 1989)

Arts & Outreach

“Art and design is just a wonderful vehicle for giving every child success... and that can filter into the rest of school, so I think the rest of school needs to understand how strong art design and design technology are”

Find Your Talent (FYT) Leicester Shire

An externally funded three-year national pathfinder working towards developing a universal offer of arts, creativity and culture for those aged 0-19 across the City and the County. The purpose of the programme is to support children and young people to become informed consumers, critics, creators and commissioners of arts, creativity and culture.

Since Find Your Talent was launched at Curve on September 23rd 2008, the team have:

- Developed cross-cutting partnerships across the County and City Councils and across a wide range of local, regional and national organisations from the voluntary, community and independent sectors.
- Co-ordinated and administered a range of grant programmes that are predicted to have involved over 30,000 children and young people by 31st July 2009.



Find Your Talent Launch event (photo courtesy of Alan Fletcher)

- Designed and developed a comprehensive CPD programme for delivery over the coming months.
- Commissioned a piece of scoping work to better understand how ICT and new media can support the above aim.

The team are working together with Children's and Young People's Service to support and execute a culture change, towards organisations across Leicester Shire working to ensure meaningful engagement of children and young people in the design, delivery and evaluation of their services.

Contact details: www.leics.gov.uk/talent, Talent@leics.gov.uk

Arts & Outreach, Centre Stage, Plungar

"The performances are always exceptionally good and worth attending. Can't believe our village has access to this resource."

Culture, Health & Wellbeing

Key priorities in 08/09:

- To develop and implement a programme of activities to celebrate all aspects of culture during the period of the Cultural Olympiad and beyond.
- To increase the profile of the Cultural Olympiad in Leicestershire through advocacy, promotion and marketing to appropriate stakeholders, including the use of the 'Inspire LeicesterShire Culture' branding.
- To work towards the development of a central website presence for Cultural Olympiad initiatives through the evolving 'LeicesterShire Strategy for the 2012 Games' website.
- To work towards the development of a single "What's On" database of all cultural activities within the county.
- To help deliver the Ambitions, Priorities and Areas for Action of the culture theme of the 'LeicesterShire Strategy for the 2012 Games'.
- To ensure that Cultural Olympiad initiatives in Leicestershire link into regional programmes and strategies including 'Igniting Ambition' and maximise the benefit for culture in Leicestershire.
- To develop an effective communications network for the Cultural Olympiad in Leicestershire through the work of the Cultural Olympiad Management Group.

Progress to date:

Development of a Cultural Olympiad Action Plan which currently details around 100 cultural activities and initiatives that are to be delivered during the period of the Cultural Olympiad.

- A draft advocacy document has been produced to help a range of people understand what the Cultural Olympiad is about and how they can get involved in delivering cultural activities during this period.
- Associated 'Inspire LeicesterShire Culture' branding has been developed to help give the initiative a clear identity.
- Cultural Olympiad Management Group has been established to oversee and develop cultural activities during the period of the Cultural Olympiad in LeicesterShire.
- Links into regional initiatives and tying in with the 'Igniting Ambition' regional plan.
- Developing bids for funding through the '3 Cities Plus +' Regional Showcase for the Cultural Olympiad in 2010 and 'Then and Now Part 2' project for a 'Utility Clothing' exhibition.

Learning & Inclusion

The team leads on the development and delivery of the learning opportunities for all age groups across arts, museums and records. It provides access to the work of heritage services and all that they have to offer for people of all ages and backgrounds, whether at Leicestershire County Council sites or elsewhere. In 2008-2009 the following was achieved:

Learning Team

- A new range of sessions for schools at Snibston was developed and a group of new Project leaders trained to support this.
- We engaged with almost 6,000 children and developed 27 workshops as part of a new outreach programme based around Donington le Heath Manor House, Charnwood Museum and Bosworth Battlefield.
- Snibston Discovery Museum was officially recognised as a 'Satellite Centre' for the Science Learning Centre East Midlands as part of a national programme to provide high quality professional development and training for primary and secondary science teachers.
- New partnerships were developed with this regional Science Learning Centre and the CYPS Anti-Bullying Team. A series of heritage sessions to support Anti-Bullying Weeks, is now being offered as part of the overall outreach offer, having been significantly over subscribed.
- Over 26 new museum based resources and sessions were developed for schools and were a mixture of site based and outreach services.
- We developed a range of tailored projects with 8 Special Educational Needs schools
- With the Autism Outreach Team we developed cultural activities for autistic children and young people currently excluded from mainstream education; this is now being taken forward as part of Find Your Talent programme.
- We provided a diverse range of workshops for schools for National Science Week; these were all fully subscribed.
- Established a new Science Club at Snibston programme for children between the ages of 8 and 13.

Arts & Outreach, Open Museum

Adult Learning Manager – Learning Support (adults with learning difficulties & disabilities)

“The [Write:Muse] workshop has given me some excellent ideas that I could use...I will be able to use these ideas and resources to effect better teaching and learning.”

The Open Museum brings museum collections and related information into communities

- In 2008/9 20 new venues and user groups are now engaging with the Moving Objects scheme
- The Moving Objects scheme reached over 65,000 people in Leicestershire with a 19% increase in bookings
- An evaluation of the Moving Objects scheme was delivered and the recommendations of this are being taken forward as part of the overall improvement plans for this scheme
- 27 creative writing workshops and events were delivered involving a wide range of participants including Special Educational Needs pupils, Post Graduate Certificate in Education trainee teachers, occupational therapists and English as a Second or Other Language learners
- 'Words and Things', a major resource pack to support creative writing using museum objects and works of art, was developed.
- Partnerships established with four local independent museums to support creative writing initiatives



Open Museum - Moving Objects



Behind the Scenes - using Moira Furnace displays for inspiration

Artworks and Resource Box Services

- The use of the Artworks Collection as a learning resource was enhanced through the development of a new “Held in the Hand” box. 13 artists from across the UK were commissioned to create tactile objects small enough to be “held in the hand”. This small collection is housed a special box that includes support material and artist information. It is now available to go on loan to schools and community groups in Leicestershire to inspire a range of creative projects. Each object is designed to provoke a different response to both visual and tactile stimulus. Each will also be used to explore the nature of different materials providing a rich source inspiration for learning especially in art and creative writing as well as other cross curricula subjects.?
- A pilot programme involving artists working with teachers using Artworks in selected schools was successfully completed. The project demonstrated how the art from the collection can be integrated into non art disciplines and cross curricula activities to support creative learning in schools. It was found that art can help less confident children with their vocabulary and descriptive language and was particularly effective with creative writing activities
- Over 43,000 people used Artworks and Resource Box in the year. This includes, education sites from nursery to university, community groups, historical societies, independent museums, hospitals, prisons and charities covering an age range of 4 to 103.
- Resource Box delivered over 1000 loan items in a single term. The majority of these were used by schools to enhance national curriculum topics.
- 37 new loan boxes were created for Resource Box. These include a range of Faith boxes, replica Roman armour in child size and character boxes for creative writing and reminiscence.



Artworks and Resource box activities

Arts & Outreach, Open Museum – Resource Box

Darren Schofield, Brocks Hill Primary School

“Thank you for sorting out such a good selection of Roman artefacts. We have had a great term with the topic. We had an Ofsted inspection this term and they graded us “Outstanding” with one of our strengths being our rich curriculum full of “hands-on” working. I am very grateful for the part your service has played in this, providing great resources to enrich our work”

PLANNING, HISTORIC & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Planning

The Planning Service delivers the County Council's statutory role as the Minerals, Waste & County Planning Authority. It prepares the minerals and waste development frameworks which requires the County Council to ensure that there is an adequate supply of minerals to meet national, regional and local requirements and that waste facilities are provided to meet national objectives for waste management in a sustainable way. It links closely with the County Council's Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy and procurement for waste management facilities. The Service also deals with planning applications for minerals, waste and County Council developments and ensures compliance with planning requirements. As county planning authority it also responds to strategic development proposals and co-ordinates developer contributions for the County Council services. The Service currently leads on airport matters.

In 2008/09 the Planning Service made progress on the Minerals and Waste Development Frameworks in line with the Local Development Scheme. Preparation of the Core Strategies and Development Control Policies were undertaken during the year. The Core Strategies and Development Control Policies documents were submitted to the Secretary of State on 23 June 2008 for examination. Work on preparing for the examination took place during the year including responding to representations made and questions from the Planning Inspector appointed to examine the plans. The Examination in Public was conducted between 24th February and 6th March. The Inspectors report is expected in May 2009.

Close liaison with the County Council waste procurement process has taken place over the year, particularly in terms of the procurement for a major waste facility. Additional resources have been provided to meet the demands on the service in this area of work. The service has also been heavily involved in the Waste Implementation Programme Board and projects in order to assist in the delivery of county waste facilities.



Waste facility granted planning permission at Shawell

The service also acted as coordinator for the Department on responding to district council local development frameworks. Responses were made to Hinckley & Bosworth site allocations & development control DPD preferred options; Charnwood Borough Council, Oadby & Wigston Borough Council and North West Leicestershire District Council on further consultations on their core strategies; and Blaby District Council on their core strategy alternative options. Officer comments and consideration has been given on Northamptonshire County Council – Waste and Minerals Submission Documents; South Derbyshire District Council – Core Strategy Issues and Options; Corby and North Northamptonshire – Core Strategy. Also, the service made a contribution to the proposed eco town proposal at Pennbury by giving appropriate advice on archaeology, ecology, minerals, waste, developer contributions and general planning.

It currently provides an input to national debate on minerals and waste policy issues and leads regional fora on waste and mineral matters.

This year the Service dealt with 331 (452 last year) planning determinations and was consulted on 173 (188 last year) development proposals by the District Councils. The County Council has to meet national performance requirements (NI157). Overall 85% (compared to 88% last year) of all planning applications determined by the County Council were done so within 13 weeks. Applications known as county matters were determined at a level of just over 60% (79% last year) within 13 weeks. In terms of the County Council's own applications, nearly 81% were determined within 8 weeks (66% last year).

Fees for planning applications were increased this year. The fee income from planning applications achieved £244,000 (£285,000 last year) compared to a budgeted income of £271,000.

This year also saw the roll out of electronic submission of planning applications through the planning portal and the development of validation check list. Planning Delivery Grant of £151,835 (compared to £53,920 last year) was awarded for planning achievement. Progress on a replacement PLANCON system was progressed during the year by the use of a business analyst. Implementation is to take place during 2009/10.



Enforcement at a waste transfer station

There are currently (for 2008/09) 175 mineral and waste sites within Leicestershire at various stages of activity that require monitoring. Of those sites identified as requiring a monitoring visit, 56 fall within the criteria as laid down by regulations that attract a fee. The fees are set nationally at £288 per visit for an active site, and £96 for an inactive site to cover the cost of the monitoring activity. For 2008/09 this generated an income of £28,128. The fee charging regime was introduced in April 2006 and the government is scheduled to review the charging scheme by 2011. The County Council has been asked to assist in that review by ensuring detailed records are kept of the costs incurred in monitoring these sites. Last year (2007/08) 98% of sites achieved their target monitoring visits. For 2008/09 this figure is 95%.

A County Council Developer Contributions Officer has been in post since the end of July 2007. The key purpose of the post is to improve the co-ordination, effective management and monitoring of the developer contributions process for the County Council. The post provides the stimulus to pursue opportunities to enhance the overall approach to and value of developer contributions throughout Leicestershire by helping to deliver appropriate community benefits for all by building on the existing working relationships between the County Council and the District/Borough Councils and other service providers. The Developer Contributions Policy document was partially reviewed during the year and a full review is planned for 2008/09. The post has been successful in developing the data base, bringing in outstanding funds to the County Council and assisting in preparing the County infrastructure plan. Some 166 planning applications were processed for developer contributions during the year and £2,602,893 of outstanding contributions were brought in (compared to £1.75 million last year) and negotiations have secured over £630,000 in S106 agreements.

Work on issues surrounding aviation continued with the servicing of the Joint Member Airport Working Party. The airport have been monitoring noise from the airport using a noise metric developed by the County Council.



Grants and Historic Buildings

Grants were offered to 36 historic properties which visibly contribute to the local historic environment - amounting to £26,000 in total, supporting a total restoration budget of £875,000. The grants were offered in all districts of the county.

Under a separate scheme especially for Melton town centre a partnership of funding from the County, English Heritage and Melton Borough offered nearly £90,000 of grants to nine historic buildings in the town centre within a total restoration budget of £143,000.



Melton Bandstand restored to its original splendour through the Melton PSICA project

Historic Building advice was given across the county to crafts people and on materials and techniques. This included some important historic buildings in the County's ownership, for example Snibston, Beaumanor Hall and Castle House. The section also helped Rutland County and Harborough District Councils with planning advice on an agency basis. The Section continued to add listed building designations and over 258 reports to the Historic Environment Record.

Geology

As well as commenting on geological planning issues the team has also been adding information to the County's geological site website. Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) are now part of the National Indicator reporting process and they will be reported on by the team in 2009-10. The team helped set up a regional Geodiversity Group and undertook a scoping project for the East Midlands Biodiversity Partnership with a view to establishing the costs of creating a regional online RIGS resource.

Planning Archaeology

The team commented on 946 planning applications, of which approximately half required conditions or recommendations as part of pre-determination work. Field inspections were undertaken for 34 sites during the year, to check on progress, quality of work and to discuss any other developments.

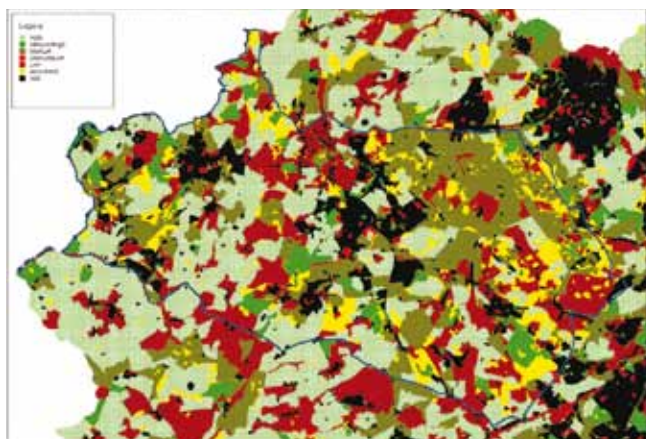
One site of special interest discovered during exploratory investigations was the circular Roman building near Rutland Water (illustrated), the Newbottle settlement near Ketton and Roman skeletons found during exploratory work alongside the Fosse Way for the Enderby Park and Ride.

The team maintained and developed the Historic Environment Record (HER) with 342 new monuments being added, 7,643 records being modified, 488 sources and 493 events added. There are now 15,156 records, consisting of 5,679 buildings, 2,818 findspots and 6,659 monuments.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) project came to the end of the data recording phase and entered the analysis phase. This scheme is funded with help from English Heritage and has been completed to the highest standard and will provide an invaluable new resource for the county's and districts' built and countryside planning. A woodland opportunity map was produced as one example of the HLC's immediate use. Members of the team gave papers at HLC and regional conferences. The team made sure the county's historical environment information was part of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) process.



Roman settlement near Rutland Water



Woodland opportunity map produced for the National Forest Company from the HLC work of the team

Ecology

The team acquired two new ecology officers in the new posts of Senior Ecologist and Community Support Ecologist. With the continuation to the contract of a Planning Ecologist during the year, the ecology section was up to full strength. The team continued to offer ecological planning advice to four districts and Rutland under SLAs, and to the County itself. Nearly 4,000 planning applications were checked against the ecology databases and nearly a thousand were responded to in detail. 6 sites required site visits and 14 sites were assessed for compliance with hedgerow regulations. 35 General enquiries were answered as were 90 enquiries from the public on planning matters. The section is also responsible

for maintaining the Local Wildlife Site (LWS) inventory and for re-surveying old and new sites across the two counties. 62 new LWSs were surveyed and designated, and 85 existing LWSs were re-surveyed and had their designations confirmed. The North West Leicestershire survey was continued with the help of contract surveyors, and the results contributed to the SHLAA work in that and other districts.

The County Recorder network was re-established and supported – especially since the appointment of the Community Support Ecologist. The third annual Recorders' Conference took place in February and was well attended by 45 local naturalists for the whole day.

The team ran two Nature Conservation Fora at County Hall for the local conservation and naturalist communities attended by 45-50 people each time.

The main Ecology database was increased to 440,015 records, including many from the local ornithological society, from local beetle expert Derek Lott and the county's local spider expert. In addition the year saw the completion of the WI Wildflower Survey and the CHI project mentioned later which added several tens of thousands of records. The GIS (Geographic Information System) is progressing.



Community Heritage Initiative and Heritage Wardens Support

The CHI project ended during the year after providing excellent support and encouragement to local groups in studying and recording their local environment. The project is regarded as an excellent example of good practice and was commended in the Local Government Chronicle Community awards.

Its outputs are impressive:

- Over 67% of parishes have been involved in the scheme with the vast majority continuing to actively record and participate in the Countywide network
- 25,000 copies of the Branchline newsletter distributed
- 9,200 enquiries answered from the public
- 80 talks to local groups
- 400 young people engaged in 6 projects
- 162 courses and lectures provided with 2,200 attendees
- 8 local natural history groups supported with substantial projects
- 15,800 online recording forms downloaded
- 20,000 wildlife records received
- 77,000 web page visits
- 350 media releases.

The work has continued with the appointment of a Heritage Support Officer who has been arranging training for Heritage Wardens every week throughout the year, revised the Branchline newsletter to cover more areas of interest and brings the various warden networks together, continues meetings and conferences and maintains the website for the wardens' use.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Countryside Service

The re-structure of the Rights of Way and Country Parks Teams to form a new integrated Countryside Service was almost completed during the year. The Service is now managed as a single unit with expertise from the two former teams brought together to provide a customer focused approach with closer links to The Sustainable Community Strategy, The Local Transport Plan and other County and National Policies.

The new staffing structure will facilitate implementation of the various site management plans and will work with partners within and outside the County Council to deliver a first class service to Countryside Service customers.

The high quality facilities across the Country Park portfolio have continued to be delivered throughout the year and have been supplemented by some significant achievements:

- At Watermead Country Park the reed beds have been extended in several places with a new path, gates and fencing around the reserve. A new viewing platform and ranger observation tower have been built and scrub invasion removed. Planning and design work on the proposed visitor centre have reached a stage at which application for planning permission is imminent.
- The Connect2 access development project has made excellent progress with the building of long stretches of multi-user pathway and work was on site at the end of the year on the construction of the first of a number of easy access bridges at Thurmaston.
- At Market Bosworth Park new surfaced tracks have been built giving access for all from the car park to the Bow Pool with links to the town centre.
- At Burrough Hill new interpretation boards have been installed and a new leaflet will provide people with better quality information about the site.
- Planning work has been completed for the improvement of Crow Mills picnic site and Misterton Marshes site of special scientific interest.
- The office at Broombriggs Farm, which is the base for Beacon Hill Country Park, has been re-furbished and is now a fully functional modern working environment.
- Beacon Hill is a focus for the Forest Schools project, which will provide an opportunity for school groups and others to spend time in the park learning about outdoor play and other development and life skills. Additional informal natural play facilities are also under development at Beacon Hill and Watermead Country Parks.
- At Snibston and Bosworth Battlefield Country Parks and at the other Western sites the new team has consolidated work programmes and has begun to put into practice the new approach to looking after a large and varied group of sites.



**New Canal Bridge at Watermead Country Park
– Connect 2 Project**



Access for all at Market Bosworth Park

Rights of Way staff have continued to implement the Action Plan set out in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. At the heart of these proposals is encouraging and engaging with more people and a broader range of the population. The group is seeking to increase levels of walking and riding in all sectors of the community and contribute towards raising physical activity levels

With the support of funding from the Local Transport Plan (LTP), three major schemes of path maintenance and improvement were completed. These were focused in and around the three settlements of Melton Mowbray, Market Harborough and Barrow Upon Soar. In total more than 220 kilometres of paths were surveyed and a series of works carried out. A key feature was the continued expansion of the gap, gate stile policy. This continues to open up well used routes by removing barriers. This has proved very popular with the public including a number of formal thanks being received. These include from the public, user groups and local councils.

This year, the LTP schemes were co-ordinated with the wider waymarking programme which also resulted in a further 210 kilometres of paths being surveyed. More than 350 stiles were removed and when required more than 250 gates put in. Several hundred new finger posts have been put in pointing the way ahead and more than 2000 of the well known yellow waymarker posts replaced or repaired.

To keep paths open during the summer months, the crop monitoring programme has proved very successful. More than 400 paths were surveyed and in all instances paths were kept clear by farmers without the need for final formal action. Also, the Headland Management programme continued to support the local cutting of headlands with grants alongside the wider programmed clearance programme.



New Gates at Gumley

The team continues to deal with a large number of reports from the public about a range of issues found on the more than 3000 kilometres of paths in the county. All of this work has led to a very respectable Best Value Performance result, with a slight increase on the year before.

The work of the Countryside Service is regularly reported to the Leicestershire Local Access Forum. The group met 6 times during the year. Further details on the group can be found at www.leics.gov.uk/laf

With the new Countryside Service team a more co-ordinated approach is now available to promote Countryside Access. The website has seen a major revamp of the information available. See www.leics.gov.uk/countryside. This one stop shop approach now allows for users to download the wide range of publications, as well as request copies.

The Rights Of Way staff also continue to carry out maintaining and making available the Definitive Map of public rights of way. (see www.leics.gov.uk/maps) This statutory function includes the processing of formal diversion orders and modifications to the map. This includes a wide range of consultations and where required the attending of public enquires.

The team also monitored and contributed towards the management of key open access areas in the County. This included a successful partnership project with Natural England at Burrough Hill.

Environmental Management – Rights of Way

Carlton Parish Council

“We write to express our sincere thanks for the replacement of stiles by gates on public rights of way in and around Carlton. These works have been greatly appreciated by parishioners, local people and visitors, some of whom have found themselves excluded from their local countryside for many years because of disability or loss of mobility due to age or arthritis. These works have made a real difference to the lives of many people, and are greatly valued.”

Community Environment

Introduction

The Community Environment Team has a focus on working with Leicestershire communities to support and improve community facilities and environments and to work in partnership to deliver regeneration and improvement projects. Work in 2008-09 has centred on:

Community Grants

A review of Community Services Grant schemes was carried out during the year to assess and make recommendations relating to the purpose and operation of the grant schemes to ensure that they are targeted in accordance with County Council priorities and delivered in the most efficient and effective means available. The review considered all the grants in the context of their strategic fit, the provisions of the community sector compact, resource availability etc and made a series of recommendations to ensure efficient administration and effective targeting. The review recommendations were confirmed in February 2009.

Community Development

FLAG helped to fund urgent structural repairs at Margaret Street Church, and in previous years, an energy audit and roof insulation.

Comment from Diane Bull, Trustee of Margaret Street Church in Coalville.

“What can we say except thank you for helping us to preserve our Community Building for future generations as well as current users”

Grant schemes have continued to support and enable work for and by Leicestershire communities:

- **Community Centre projects** - funding and officer support was provided to 11 centres providing social and developmental opportunities and services for communities with a focus on areas of deprivation often in urban areas.
- **Village Hall Grants** - During the year offers were made to 13 village hall committees for a range of works to improve their facilities. Over £47,000 of grant aid was offered for schemes costing over £923,845, including extensions, improved disabled access, replacement windows, kitchen refurbishments electrical works, heating, damp proofing and flooring.
- **Community Plus SHIRE Grant Scheme** - 519 community groups were supported with the cost of meeting and activity space by grants totalling £154,215.
- **FLAG (Forward with Leicestershire Aggregates Grants)** schemes supported schemes for environmental improvements and community building improvements in areas affected by aggregates extraction. Grants amounting to £306,900 were awarded to 23 projects with a total value of £848,422.
- **Community Environmental Improvement Grants** – 23 grants have been awarded to schemes for a wide range of work including play areas, planting and landscape management and habitat creation. Grant offers of £98,000 have been made with a total schemes value of £619,000.
- **Historic Building Grants** – Grants administration support has been provided to the Historic and Natural Environment Team, which has offered £20,180 towards the repair and restoration of 31 historic buildings or structures with a total cost of £767,039.
- **The Asfordby Mine Grant Scheme** to mitigate the impact of the coalmine and tip at Asfordby has now closed after offering a total of £159,000 towards 13 projects costing £345,000.



Blackbrook Play Area – FLAG Scheme

Community Development

FLAG helped to fund refurbishment and access improvements at Quorn Village Hall. Comment from Lindsay Swinfield, Quorn Parish Council.

“We have received several complimentary comments about the refurbished toilet facility, and we are seeing a definite increase in hall usage; the word seems to be spreading!”



Launch of Ashby Canal Extension

Ashby Canal Restoration

The extension of the canal from Snarestone to Measham has taken a major step forward with the start of restoration work at the Snarestone terminus. This work began in February 2009 and is due for completion in July 2009. It is the second phase of restoration work (following land acquisition which is ongoing) and included the connection to the existing canal, a 100m nature reserve alongside the existing canal and improvements to the canal winding (turning) hole. The canal will continue to be restored in phases to Measham.

Measham Station Restoration

The station building has been restored for commercial and community use and will provide a new site for Measham Museum. The building has been restored by renovating original features where possible and by using high quality new materials to make repairs and improve its appearance. The Museum is due to open in 2009.



Measham Station

Arts Projects



Mine marker

- Forest Road railway footbridge in Coalville has been revitalised by a scheme involving local young people to design, develop and paint murals on the bridge. The bridge has also been enhanced by arts metalwork and complementary work to refurbish railings, rebuild walls, resurface the footway and clean, repoint and repair the adjoining railway road bridge and was completed in May 2008.
- On the Ashby Canal, following a study to identify opportunities for arts projects, a scheme to research and install mine seam markers has been carried out. The markers interpret the underlying coal seams at points along the canal and provide a link with the heritage of the area and history of the canal.
- At Grange Road, Hugglescote a project is in progress to develop artwork for the entrance to the village in conjunction with the local community.

Environmental Management

Mrs Lynn Stanton from Huncote Community Primary School who borrowed the renewable energy kits from the Resource Box Scheme said

“We had great fun using the kits at Huncote - the Year 6 pupils demonstrated them to the whole school during our eco week...The instructions were great and even my SEN group managed all of the tasks with a little reading support.”

Site Management

Site Management Agreements with landowners continue to be managed and monitored with advice and information also provided to help guide the use of other sites. All Highway Verge Nature Reserves have been assessed to establish a baseline for monitoring and as a first step in developing proposals for surveying, specifications and management. Input is provided to the FWAG Board, Soar Wreake Partnership and Grand Union Canal Partnership where co-ordination of County Council responses to the Grand Union Strategy has helped shape proposals.

Sustainable Development

2008-09 saw a significant gearing up of the Authority's work on sustainable development with:

- Review and adoption, in March 2009, of the Authority's Environment Strategy.
- Completion of the work of the five Member Panel on the Environment which produced six reports for Environment Scrutiny/Scrutiny Commission and Cabinet (Environmental procurement; Environmental leadership; Environment targets; County Hall Waste Audit and Action Plan; Water and Biodiversity; Carbon Management and the Energy and Water Strategy) which fed into the Environment Strategy (an additional item relating to Transition Towns will extend into 09/10).
- Establishment of the Environment Change Programme Management Board.
- Completion of the Carbon Management Plan, which will deliver 30% carbon dioxide emissions reduction over the next 5 years and the Local Area Agreement target of 4% reduction per annum for the next 2 years.
- The Climate Friendly Communities support delivered to communities at Tilton on the Hill, Billesdon and Ibstock produced some stunning local initiatives, which confirm the strong groundswell of support for environmental initiatives within Leicestershire.
- Continuing support for ENABLE produced an excellent pilot project for the Big Switch Off in October, which led to a reduction in electricity use of 13% at County Hall and 69% at the best achieving school (Anstey Latimer Primary). The annual event was again well attended and stimulating.
- Work with District Councils on Climate Change initiatives, particularly the delivery of National Indicators on carbon dioxide emissions reductions (NI185) and Climate Change Adaptation (NI188), was delivered through the establishment of a co-ordination group (CLIMA – Climate Mitigation and Adaptation) which successfully applied for funding from Leicestershire Together, for LAA funding and for Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership Funding from GOEM.
- The Anaerobic Digestion Initiative supported one scheme in preparing an environmental impact assessment and a planning application is expected in 2009.
- EcoSchools continues to go from strength to strength with over half of Leicestershire schools now registered for the scheme with almost 50 receiving support through our contract with Groundwork Leicester and Leicestershire.

Green Infrastructure

The development of Green Infrastructure (GI) as a substantial core activity continued in 2008/09 with:

- Appointment of a 6Cs Strategic GI officer based within the Team.
- The letting of a contract to Chris Blandford Associates to prepare a 6Cs GI Strategy (expected Summer 2009).
- The call for GI projects funded from Growth Point funding and the agreement of a framework for assessing applications.
- The development of the Stepping Stones project into a GI project, with the main objective of promoting and enhancing GI and green space around central Leicestershire.

Stepping Stones (a partnership project with five District Councils) organised a range of activities and events including a successful community and private environmental grants scheme, rural skills training, and the third Wildlife on Your Doorstep event at Watermead Country Park. Stepping Stones officers and other team members also supported the Tree Warden network of 131 parish based volunteers with training courses, advice, and a Free Tree scheme.



Wildlife on Your Doorstep

Landscape Planning

Works have been undertaken at local, county and regional level including:

- Leading on the Charnwood Forest Regional Park Initiative. A landscape and settlement character assessment was carried out by consultants and recommended a working boundary for the proposed Regional Park. A stakeholder meeting was held in November 2008 to keep partners and public updated on progress and to launch consultation on a Draft Vision Statement for the Regional Park.
- Managing the County Council's Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) saw staff process 77 applications to undertake works to protected trees, liaise with District Councils on their TPOs, and answer numerous tree related queries from the public.
- Contributing to the work of the newly formed East Midlands Regional Landscape Group.
- Ongoing advice to the Planning Team on landscape aspects of planning applications.

Landscape Design



Sensory Garden, Ashby de la Zouch

Work includes advisory inputs, outline and detailed design, contract preparation and contract supervision, and has been undertaken for a wide range of scales and types of scheme including:

- Highways related schemes including Earl Shilton Bypass, Park and Ride schemes at Enderby and Birstall, Loughborough Inner Relief Road, Loughborough Town Centre, Loughborough Eastern Gateway and the Sibson Road car park extension at Birstall.
- Environmental improvement schemes at Ashby de la Zouch, Syston, Lutterworth, Melton Mowbray and Birstall.
- Development and implementation of 3.4ha of new native woodland at Donisthorpe Woodland Park including National Forest 'Trees from Seed' community planting day.
- In addition the team has supported the design work of others through:
- Contributing to the production of a Design Guide for the County Council's own developments.
- Ongoing consultations on landscape aspects of highway alteration schemes, totalling 63 in 2008.



Birstall Car Park Extension

VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT

Volunteering and the involvement of volunteers within Environment & Heritage and other sections of Community Services have developed substantially over the past 2 years. Volunteers have always been an important resource and their contribution to the delivery of services throughout the department is increasing substantially.

The one year temporary post of Volunteer Coordinator became a permanent one in September 2008 and although originally attached to Arts & Heritage, is now based within Commercial & Support Services. The Volunteer Coordinator role continues to have both a developmental and a strategic aspect with the Council's volunteering programmes and to cover the whole of Community Services in Leicestershire.



Volunteers at Swannington Heritage Trust

As volunteering became a major cross cutting theme in LAAs and a priority within national government, so Leicestershire County Council recognized the increasing importance of volunteering. In order to develop volunteering within the department further still, a successful bid was made by Environment & Heritage to Stronger Communities in early 2009.

The £200,000 awarded over 2 years has resulted in the creation of the VIP Project (Volunteering, Internships & Placements) with a new Volunteering Development Officer post based at Snibston. This new role deals with volunteering for Leicestershire County Council in North West Leicestershire and will develop volunteering and new projects often working alongside other agencies and volunteering organizations.

The Volunteer Protocols and Procedures document was specifically designed to help staff within the department to better manage their volunteers. It provides guidance on the principles of good practice in volunteer management alongside current County Council policies and is available on CIS. Its practical approach has been noticed and also utilized by some other projects within the Council to their benefit.

The CSD Volunteer Co-ordinator is able to support staff with their queries and questions and offers periodic training courses on involving volunteers. A network of Volunteer Champions recruited throughout the service promotes and encourages both the involvement of volunteers and good practice within their own sections. Regular newsletters provide Champions with updated information on volunteering to disseminate to colleagues.

Volunteer numbers are now fast approaching the 200 figure and these are additional to the numbers of local groups, societies, organisations, Friends groups and warden schemes whose volunteers enrich our services with their valuable skills and expertise. Their contribution has yet to be accurately quantified, but by even the basic estimation of e.g. each of 200 volunteers contributing 2 hours a week over 50 weeks (and many contribute far more hours) those volunteers alone could contribute over 20,000 hours per year. This, in monetary terms of minimum wage rate, contribution is worth near £115,000 annually.

The variety of available opportunities shows the considerable range of Environment & Heritage's services and varies from IT and photographic activities to all aspects of local history and heritage, to getting hands on with reed bed or wetland work. Development of further opportunities is a priority area and enables a wide and diverse range of opportunities to be offered.

The value and importance of volunteers and how their contribution enhances Environment & Heritage's services has become firmly embedded within the department. Since 2007, there has been significant enrichment of the department's approach to volunteer management and range of opportunities to the benefit of all staff, managers, volunteers and people who choose to use our services.

FINALLY

This Report provides an overview of key activities and achievements during 2008-2009. We are committed to continually reviewing and seeking to improve our service delivery, and welcome your views and feedback.

If you would like to discuss aspects of this Report, please contact us:

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www.leics.gov.uk/index/community/community_services.htm