



for  
Coastal  
Communities

## PARLIAMENTARY BRIEFING

Tuesday 12 September –

10:00-11:00

Online

Chair: Sally-Ann Hart MP

### Speakers:

Samantha Richardson MBE – National Coastal Tourism Academy Director

Dr Allan Brodie – Bournemouth University

Dr Anya Chapman – Bournemouth University

### HEADLINES & ACTIONS

- Seaside Heritage is currently undervalued in comparison to other forms of heritage.
- Funding streams have been reduced impacting the amount of money available to support maintenance and restoration.
- Consideration should be given to reinstating the coastal focused funding streams such as the Coastal Communities Fund or equivalents to support conservation and restoration.

### BACKGROUND

This roundtable discussion will provide members with an introduction to Seaside Heritage, the qualities that define it, issues, challenges, and opportunities for coastal communities.

The session will include details of the Seaside Heritage Network's "Top 10 Bucket and Spade List" which will be revealed at an event in Blackpool on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The event is part of the Year of the Coast 2023 celebrations and seeks to build public awareness and support for some of our most treasured heritage assets.

#### IN ATTENDANCE

Sally-Ann Hart MP (Chair)

Virginia Crosbie MP

Alex Cunningham MP

Sir Peter Bottomly MP

Duncan Light (Bournemouth University)

Kathryn Ferry

Anya Champman (Bournemouth University)

Allan Brodie (Bournemouth University)

Ross McLeod (RNLI)

Samantha Richardson (NCTA)

#### Researchers on behalf of:

James Wild MP

Peter Aldous MP

Margaret Greenwood MP

#### SECRETARIAT

Alice Watts

#### APOLOGIES

Apologies sent were noted

## WHAT IS SEASIDE HERITAGE? – Dr Allan Brodie – Bournemouth University

- Many coastal communities seem on the surface to be prosperous areas however deprivation is often at the heart of these resorts.
- Seafronts are the main power driving the local coastal tourism industry.
- Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) bring issues especially where there is severe neglect to these building that often have a high heritage value
- Seafronts are often places that provide nostalgic memories and commemoration.
- They are often the sites of art and culture, housing public works of art.
- The Seaside Heritage Network's Bucket and Spade list voted for the favourite seaside attraction.
- The list was won by Saltburn Cliff Tramway, with Blackpool Tower coming second and Morecombe Winter Garden coming third.
- For the full list: <https://seasideheritage.org.uk/bucket-spade-list/>

## ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES - Dr Anya Chapman – Bournemouth University

- Transport, industry, science and war all considered as heritage but seaside heritage is often forgotten.
- Seaside heritage is not as highly valued as other forms of British heritage.
- Conservation authorities have paid very little attention to the architecture of seaside heritage.
- These valuable forms of heritage also fall below the radar of statutory protection for heritage, with much lost to demolition or decay.
- There are no funding streams open to private/commercial owners of piers and many require significant investment to be maintained.
- Funding challenges also extend to public sector ownership.
- Withdrawal of coastal specific funding by the Coastal Communities Fund and Coastal Revival Fund has reduced access to the funding required.
- Nostalgia for seaside heritage has become more apparent over the last decade and is part of the enduring appeals of seaside resorts.
- Little coverage of the more positive stories which needs to change.
- Awareness campaigns such as the Pier Society, RNLI bi-centenary, England's Coast Path & Year of the Coast 2023.
- The British seaside invented the modern seaside holiday – it would be great to get British resorts recognised as world heritage sites to put their significance on the international stage.

## DISCUSSION – Main points

- Local authorities finding it difficult to access funding, especially now that the previous Coastal Communities Fund has been absorbed into a broader fund that does not just cover the coast.
- The higher up the heritage food chain you are the more likely you are to get funding. Seaside heritage needs recognition to get on to the radar of funding streams. New blood/advocates and funding needed.
- There is a need for a seaside equivalent of the Town Deal for of heritage/seaside action zones which could lead to Leveraging private sector investment off the back of this type of funding.

- Investment needs to be more holistic raising up in the whole area rather than specific sections that can cause certain streets to be left to decay.
- A coastal version of the Rural shared prosperity fund would be supportive that also considered the impacts of climate change on assets and buildings.
- Nature of coastal climate means often windows or doors need to be replaced – which (if replaced after 1850) means it is a lot harder to get these buildings listed.
- RNLI – 200 years old on 4th March 2024. 200 voices podcast. 1st August 2024 – capturing one moment, one crew photos (crews and their local communities) <https://rnli.org/about-us/our-history/2024>
- Not all private ownership piers are struggling but many have difficulties with substructures (infrastructure, not commercial enterprise) due to lack of regular investment. Grant funding pots for churches, perhaps something similar needed for piers.
- There is an importance of getting seaside heritage recognised to put the coast on the international tourist map and recognised for its significance. Push seaside heritage and getting a seaside resort as a world heritage site but there are also difficulties around this title.
- Recognition would help with the maintenance of buildings as a whole rather than just the bottom floors which would make better use of seaside housing stock as it would open up the potential for using whole buildings.