



CONSIDERATE



Lincolnshire
COUNTY COUNCIL
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Greater
Lincolnshire
Local Enterprise Partnership

Coastal
Communities
Fund



Green Tourism Ambassador Programme

Lessons Learnt Report
December 2022

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1. Introduction

1.1 Context

Following the launch of [Lincolnshire's Green Tourism Toolkit](#) in March 2022, Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and the Greater Lincolnshire LEP developed the Green Tourism Ambassador Programme ('the Programme'), a pilot project running from June to December 2022 to further support businesses with the implementation and uptake of 'green' initiatives on the Coast of Lincolnshire, funded via the Coastal Communities Fund (Dept. Levelling Up, Homes and Communities).

The aim of the Programme was to upskill coastal tourism businesses representatives to integrate sustainability into their operations. This knowledge would then enable the participants to act as "Ambassadors"; endorsing and promoting responsible practices to other businesses in Lincolnshire, with the eventual goal being to roll out the Programme county-wide. To support the delivery of the project, LCC procured the help of Considerate Group, the specialist sustainability consultancy that created the Green Tourism Toolkit for LCC in March 2022. The Programme followed the same structure as the Toolkit and addressed the People, Planet and Place pillars, as well as the importance of data monitoring and management for businesses, and how to obtain funding for green initiatives.

As part of the seven-month Programme, the Ambassadors:

- Undertook a **sustainability review** of their business to understand their performance at the start of the Programme and measure the progress achieved over the course of the Programme.
- Used Considerate Group's **data management platform [Con-Serve™](#)** to measure their businesses' resource consumption and identify inefficiencies.
- Attended six interactive training **workshops** designed to upskill them and add tangible benefits to their businesses.
- Implemented sustainable practices following the knowledge gained during workshops, which were illustrated in **case studies** developed for each business.
- Were awarded a **Green Tourism Ambassador Certificate** to acknowledge their status as a Green Tourism Ambassador for the Lincolnshire Coast.

Outputs delivered to the Green Tourism Ambassadors:

- x2 Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reviews per business
- x1 annual Con-Serve™ subscription per business
- x6 group training workshops per business
- x7 support sessions per business
- x1 case study per business
- x1 Green Tourism Ambassador certificate per business



1.2 Participating businesses and representatives

The following businesses completed the Programme:

1. **Batemans** – Jaclyn Bateman, *Marketing Director*
2. **Holivans Ltd** – Gareth and Kelly Rowland, *Managing Directors*
3. **The Embassy Theatre** (Magna Vitae Trust) – Pollyanne Trapmore-Shaw, *Theatre Manager and Producer*, and Matt Ocroft, *Technical Manager*
4. **The Skegness Pool & Fitness Suite** (Magna Vitae Trust) – Naomi Wilkinson-Baker, *General Manager* and Paul Marper, *Operations Manager*

2. Findings and Recommendations

2.1 Planning and Organisation

The following section reviews the planning, organisation and promotional elements of the Programme. The feedback and recommendations given stem from the participants' comments as well as Considerate Group's observations.

2.1.1 Recruitment and Engagement

LCC and the funders of the Programme were responsible for recruiting coastal businesses. The Programme was advertised on the LCC online communication channels in May 2022, a little under three weeks before the official start of the Programme on 6th June. The short timeframe and the recruitment process, which mostly relied on existing relationships, rather than using local stakeholders such as tourism officers to help promote the Programme and recruit, made it hard to find participants. 10 businesses initially signed up, however only six businesses sent representatives to the first workshop, with two of these businesses then dropping out by the end of June, after the second workshop. This resulted in only four businesses completing the Programme. The main reason participants gave for dropping out before the first workshop were time pressures, given that the Programme took place over the busy high season. The other two participants were representatives of Fantasy Island & Skegness Pier, for which management decided to work solely with existing advisors.

The four remaining participants represented a good range of businesses: Batemans, a brewery and visitor centre, Holivans, a caravan park, Skegness Pool & Fitness Suite, a leisure centre, and The Embassy Theatre. This was helpful to illustrate common issues across the tourism industry, create interesting conversations, and encourage collaboration amongst the Ambassadors who were able to openly share information.

Future recommendations:

- Allowing a longer period of time for recruitment (at least 2 months before the start of the Programme).
- Ensuring each stakeholder is aware of its specific role and responsibilities regarding recruitment and engagement, e.g. tourism officers advertising the Programme to businesses in their areas, and LCC offering clear incentives to participants.
- Ensuring eligible businesses are aware of the Programme by using various channels, including but not limited to: the local tourism officers, social media, newsletters, word-of-mouth.
- Organising an online presentation accessible to all, providing an overview of the Programme and detailed information on commitment: timeframe and dates, topics covered, who would be the best business representatives, etc. This would provide an opportunity for potential participants to ask questions and to fully understand the Programme before committing.
- Highlighting the business case for the Programme and the financial benefits it can give. This point was raised by one of the participants: *'make sure businesses understand the reason why experts are being brought in'*. This could be introduced in the initial online presentation suggested above.
- Offering a further online meeting to the businesses who have signed up ahead of the Programme, to engage the participants and offer another opportunity to ask questions.

2.1.2 Timeframe

The Programme ran from June to December 2022, leading the participating businesses to raise the issue of timings: aiming to avoid the peak season (starting in mid-June and ending in mid-September), as well as the school holidays, resulted in two workshops being held two weeks apart in June, two on the same day in October, and two on the same day in November. The long break over the summer made it hard to keep momentum and to ensure that the businesses still felt engaged with the Programme.

Whilst the title of 'Ambassador' was initially intended for individuals, it then became clear that the busy period made it hard for the same person to attend all sessions and most businesses appointed two representatives to ensure attendance to the workshops. It was then decided that the 'Ambassador' title would be awarded to businesses rather than individuals.

The Ambassadors found it difficult to make progress during the high season, and only started putting actions in place from September. This made it harder to illustrate benefits from the Programme in the case studies, as there was not enough time to implement initiatives and see their benefits.

Future recommendations:

- Starting the Programme during low or shoulder seasons and ensuring it is completed before the peak season begins, e.g. from October to May.
- Organising the workshops regularly (ideally every two weeks) to boost engagement and keep momentum between sessions.
- Starting to plan for projects (some of which will be illustrated as case study topics) early in the Programme to allow Ambassadors the time to implement initiatives and see their benefits.

2.1.3 Collaboration

A recurrent issue raised by the participants was the difficulty in collaborating with other organisations in the county. They would have liked more participants in the Programme to make it even more impactful, leading to the four businesses creating their own sustainability networking group. Whilst still in the very early stages, the Ambassadors are confident that this is what is needed in the community, and are inviting everyone to join.

During calls with Considerate Group, LCC also raised it had been interesting and insightful to meet the Ambassadors in person, although quite late in the Programme (November 2022).

Future recommendations:

- Ensuring LCC engages with the Ambassadors from the start of the Programme to create a stronger sense of collaboration and support.
- Promoting partnership and creating momentum for collaboration amongst businesses by taking advantage of the first in-person gathering to establish a network of Ambassadors. During the pilot Programme, the participants asked for their email addresses to be shared to the group, but this could also be done by creating a dedicated platform (e.g. Facebook group, shared folder...).
- Setting up a space for tourism businesses to meet and discuss. This could be a forum organised by LCC, providing all tourism businesses in the county with an opportunity to express concerns, share best practices, and establish partnerships.

2.2 Delivery and Outputs

The following findings and recommendations come from data extracted from the Con-Serve™ platform and surveys conducted by Considerate Group, as well as discussions with the businesses and LCC.

2.2.1 Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) review

The participating businesses undertook an ESG review - an online survey developed by Considerate Group - to assess the sustainability performance of tourism businesses. After completing the review, the participants received reports at the beginning and end of the Programme to measure their sustainability performance and track the progress achieved. The reports were very useful to establish a baseline from which the businesses' teams could work from to develop action plans and quick wins. From their initial ESG review results, Skegness Pool & Fitness Suite developed a sustainability action plan, including gas and electricity reduction initiatives (e.g. switch off policy).

Figure 1 below is Holivans' overall sustainability score at the beginning (July) and end of the Programme (December). The total score went up by 17 points with a significant improvement in the 'Social' category, where the score increased by 23 points, thanks to changes implemented over the course of the Programme (e.g. giving customers the opportunity to participate in activities supporting environmental enhancement, staff input on sustainability initiatives, and the development of a sustainable procurement policy).

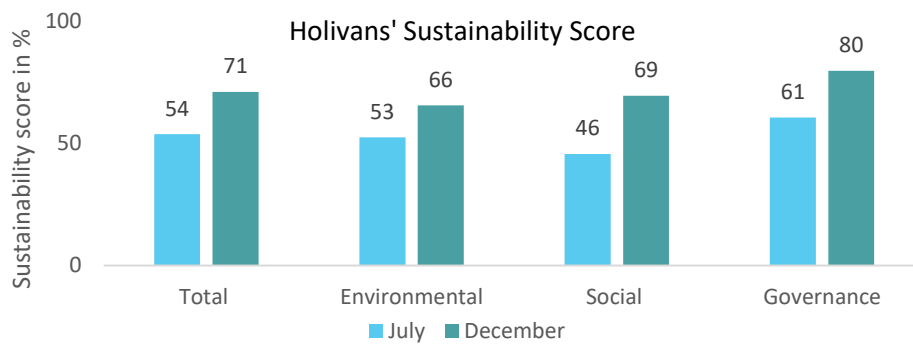


Figure 1: Holivans' sustainability score from ESG reviews in July and December 2022

Future recommendations:

- Starting the Programme during low or shoulder seasons and ensuring it is completed before the peak season begins will allow time for businesses to make even more progress.
- Running an ESG review annually will illustrate long-term progress and results.

2.2.2 Con-Serve™

Considerate Group's ISO 50001 accredited data-monitoring platform, Con-Serve™, allows hospitality and tourism businesses to simply, but comprehensively, measure resource consumption and broader ESG metrics including: electricity, heat, water, waste, food miles, business travel, volunteer hours, etc. As part of the Programme, the businesses received an annual Con-Serve™ subscription from June 2022 until May 2023. The platform was presented during the second workshop, on 23rd June 2022 at the Aura Business Centre, Skegness, when the Ambassadors also received a handbook for the platform and a recording of the training workshop to use for reference. In addition, a data analyst from Considerate Group attended each monthly support session, conducted with each business, to answer Con-Serve™-specific questions. While historical data was uploaded to the platform prior to the workshop, the first demonstration was done during the group session which led to confusion as all businesses are quite different. Most businesses used the following monthly drop-in sessions to have a better understanding of Con-Serve™ features.

Figure 2 below shows Skegness Pool & Fitness Suite's electricity and gas consumption in relation to footfall, from May 2021 to October 2022. This shows that whilst August was the busiest visitor month in both 2021 and 2022, the gas consumption significantly decreased in 2022, in comparison to 2021. This is mainly due to significant investment by East Lindsey District council in the beginning of 2022 to improve the boiler systems in the outdoor pool.

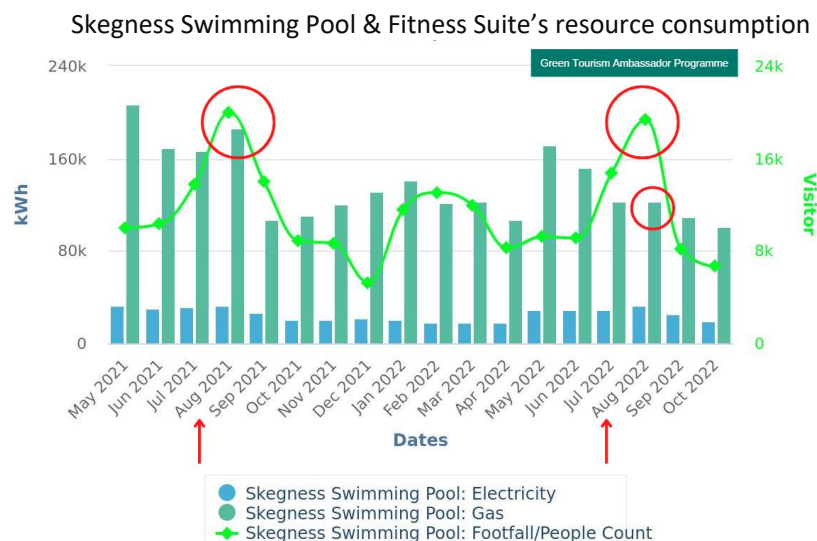


Figure 2: Skegness Swimming Pool & Fitness Suite's electricity and gas consumption in relation to footfall, from Con-Serve™

Future recommendations:

- Scheduling individual Con-Serve™ pre-workshop sessions to provide a quick demonstration of the platform and upload the businesses' historical data.
- Focusing the data collection and monitoring workshop on the platform's features, data analysis and creating personalised automated reports.

2.2.3 Workshops

Six workshops were held over the course of the Programme:

1. Introduction to the Green Tourism Ambassador Programme – 15th June 2022 at the Aura Business Centre, Skegness
2. Data Collection & Monitoring, Con-Serve™ - 23rd June 2022 at the Aura Business Centre, Skegness
3. People – 19th October 2022 at The Embassy Theatre, Skegness
4. Place – 19th October 2022 at The Embassy Theatre, Skegness
5. Planet– 10th November at Holivans Caravan Park, Mablethorpe
6. Funding & Next Steps – 10th November at Holivans Caravan Park, Mablethorpe

The workshops were conducted by the Considerate Group team and were attended by at least one Ambassador for each participating business – with the exception of Jaclyn Bateman, who could not attend the second workshop on data collection and monitoring but had access to the recording. The participants mentioned that it would be beneficial to have someone from LCC attending these sessions to facilitate communication, raise engagement, and reinforce collaboration in the county.

Ahead of the Introduction workshop, participants were asked the following question: *In one word, please describe how you feel about becoming a Green Tourism Ambassador for the Lincolnshire Coast.* The term 'proud' appeared in 50% of the responses, and 'empowered' appeared in 33% of the responses. Other terms mentioned were 'inspired', 'hopeful', and 'privileged'.

Considerate Group circulated a post-workshop survey at the end of each session, of which the response rate varied. The Ambassadors predominantly found the workshops 'very informative', with a few responses indicating they found them 'moderately informative'. The Ambassadors also shared positive feedback about the People, Place and Funding workshops during calls with Considerate Group. There were no 'slightly informative' or 'not at all informative' responses recorded.

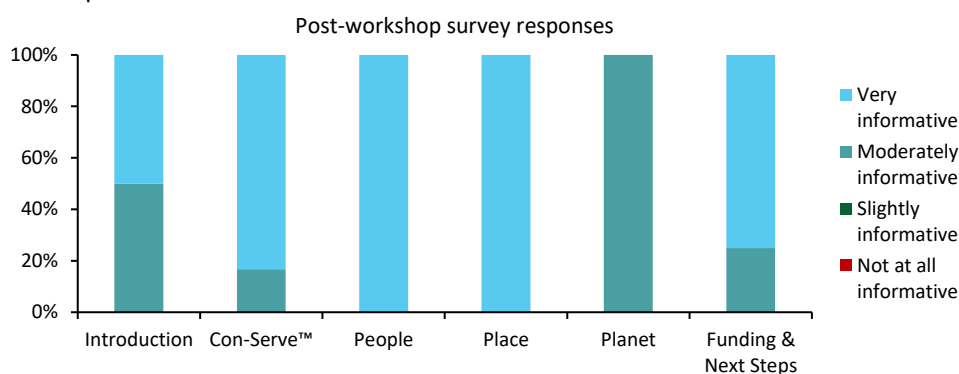


Figure 3: Responses from post-workshop surveys conducted from June to November 2022

There was no feedback provided for the question: *'Is there anything you feel we missed, and you would like to have discussed during the workshop?'*, which indicates the Ambassadors considered everything was covered in the workshops.

Future recommendations:

- Hosting workshops at the businesses' locations to encourage ownership and add relevance to the themes covered in the sessions. Four of the six workshops were held at the participating businesses, which helped with illustrating each topic with concrete examples.
- Inviting a representative from LCC to at least one of the workshops. This point has been raised by the participants to address location-specific issues and challenges and would be beneficial for LCC as funder of the Programme.

3. Impact of the Programme

The Green Tourism Ambassador Programme for Lincolnshire Coast was designed to upskill individuals and have an impact on participating businesses as well as the wider community of tourism organisations on Lincolnshire Coast.

3.1 Impact on the Ambassadors

Findings from the workshop surveys and discussions with businesses, both in-person and during monthly online sessions, showed that **the Ambassadors felt inspired and empowered by the Programme**. In response to the *'What did you enjoy the most about this session?'* question after the Introduction to Sustainability workshop, one participant responded: *'realising there is more to sustainability, each point was given in an easy way to understand'*.

During a case study 'interview call', one of the Ambassadors shared that the tone and content of the Programme had been very well thought-through, and **sustainability came across as a serious topic and something essential to address for all businesses**, which had a positive impact on the people attending the workshops who brought these ideas home.

3.2 Impact on the participating businesses

Whilst at different stages of their sustainability journey, the businesses all made great progress over the course of the Programme. Tools like the ESG reviews and Con-Serve™ provided the businesses with **insight into their sustainability performance**, highlighted inefficiencies and identified areas of potential improvements in the business: for example, as shown in Figure 1 on page 5, Holivans' sustainability score went up 17% over the course of the Programme.

The development of case studies highlighted less measurable benefits such as the creation of environmental working groups and the development of sustainability strategies. Once posted online, these case studies will provide great promotional material for the businesses with potential to attract a more eco-conscious customer market.

As part of the Programme, the businesses reaped significant **financial benefits** thanks to energy savings and reduction in water consumption (Figure 2, page 5), and have implemented initiatives to **future-proof their organisations**, and **reduce their negative impact on the planet**.

3.3 Impact on the community

The learnings each individual gained during the Programme extended to the wider community:

- The Ambassadors all asked for email addresses to be shared in order to set up a **sustainability networking group**, which will be open for anyone to join.
- The businesses are increasingly **raising awareness amongst their customers** by putting up signage and giving more insight on their sustainability initiatives.
- On social media, the businesses have shared their initiatives using **#GreenTourismLincolnshire** – a hashtag promoted over the course of the Programme.
- Since the launch of the **Green Tourism Toolkit** earlier this year to 1st December, 83 people have downloaded the Toolkit, which has also cumulated 6,967 page views (22.18% of the website's total page views).



4. Next Steps

4.1 Maximising the value of the Green Tourism Ambassador Programme on the Lincolnshire Coast

As the pilot Green Tourism Ambassador Programme for Lincolnshire Coast comes to an end, next steps must be considered to ensure that the Ambassadors are empowered to keep driving change in their businesses and in the community, and that the investment by the Coastal Community is capitalised on.

- The sustainability network set up by the Ambassadors themselves has the potential to lead to great multi-sector and community-wide projects. Considerate Group could **support the network** by providing guidance during monthly support calls and offering advice on initiatives.
- Workshops have proven to be a very engaging component of the Programme, and businesses would benefit from **additional in-depth training workshops** on specific topics within the People, Planet and Place pillars.
- As sustainability is a long-term project, **follow-up case studies**, building on the ones created by Considerate Group in December 2022, would highlight what the Ambassadors have managed to initiate and implement in their businesses over time.
- Sustainability initiatives and projects are best guided by an encompassing **ESG strategy**, from which **guidance plans** are developed. This could be done at destination level and/or at business level.
- Measuring and monitoring impact is a key aspect of 'greening' a business. Running an annual **ESG review** followed by a report will illustrate long-term progress and results.
- **Con-Serve™** has been a valuable tool for the Ambassadors, and they are now interested in rolling the platform out to other branches of their businesses. Renewing their subscriptions would help them continue to identify inefficiencies, reduce resource consumption and save on energy and water.



Did you know?

Considerate Group is a Certified B Corporation - a community of leaders, driving a global movement of people using business as a force for good.