

Place:

Maritime Heritage Centre, 36
Eastborough, Scarborough

Type of Meanwhile project:

Cultural Engagement

Meanwhile funding: £4,000

Stakeholders:

Lindy Rowley: Scarborough
Maritime Heritage Centre;
Stuart Cameron: Director of
Crescent Arts; Irene Webster:
Civic Officer, Scarborough
BC; Janet Jefferson:
Councillor, Scarborough BC;
Malcolm Hall: Scarborough
Town Centre Manager; Nick
Taylor: Scarborough Urban
Renaissance Manager

The Meanwhile project was
taken forward by Scarborough
Borough Council's Window
to the Borough group which
consists of councillors, officers
from a number of council
departments, Scarborough
Renaissance, the Safer
Communities Partnership,
and organisations from the
voluntary sector.

Scarborough



Scarborough is a thriving seaside resort that attracts high numbers of tourists to its coast, however in recent years the town's fishing industry and the level of commercial activity on the high street have been in decline. Due to the emergent regeneration of Scarborough, new projects that celebrate its heritage are bringing the town back to life. One such project is the Scarborough Maritime Heritage Centre.

Project aims...

Due to the decline in the fishing industry, it was felt within the community that the maritime history of the area must be preserved. A group of locals decided that there was a great need for a reputable organisation to receive and hold archives and artifacts as there was nothing in the area or on the coast doing this. In response a committee was established in 2004 to explore the idea of creating a Scarborough Maritime Heritage Centre (SMHC).

The aim of the Maritime Heritage group is to build up an archive of Scarborough and the Yorkshire coast's maritime life and to raise awareness in the community and with visitors of Scarborough's history.



'The effect of this project, has for us been great, we now have a home somewhere to do our work & somewhere for people to visit & see our memorabilia & to talk to us. It has given the community a focus, it has also brightened up an empty shop, so giving a lift to the area, thereby improving Scarborough's main tourism street.'

Lindy Rowley

Project outcomes...

After five years searching for a space, in 2009 an opportunity arose. Scarborough Borough Council established Windows to the Borough Working Group, as a response to concerns about the rise in empty shops in the town. The help of the Group and the Meanwhile project funding provided the ideal opportunity for the Maritime Heritage team to use a temporary space to house their collection, and test out their idea for having a centre.

The centre is located in a unit on a busy high street. Passers-by are greeted by a professional sign and an array of interesting objects in the window. Inside the space every single bit of wall, ceiling and floor has been used to display the collection of objects such as photos, books and artefacts that the community have donated. The rear of the property is used as the office, where the various volunteers spend time carefully archiving all the material.

Resources...

As well as having an archive, a shop and an exhibition space, the group has a number of resources available to the community such as a website, a newsletter and the opportunity for people of all ages to volunteer. Currently there are eight volunteers and the website has become a very popular resource for local and global enthusiasts.

Is it a success..?>

With the landlord agreeing to a one year lease, the group have been able to really take ownership of the little space they have. The abundance of activity and life in this small shop is proof enough of the need and desire that there is in the community for a permanent space dedicated to this aspect of Scarborough's culture and history.

There has been clear support from residents and visitors for such a centre and also from members of the fishing community and those with an interest in the history of Scarborough. A number of other groups and organisations have also worked with SMHC as their interests coincided with the group. The hope is that this project continues and that in the future the SMHC will have a permanent location providing school workshops, a cafe and a space that is open to visitors and locals alike.