

# The Lowestoft Story

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Lowestoft has always had an important relationship with water and especially the sea; it has influenced the lives and industry of the people who have lived and worked in this special place. What began as an ancient fishing port became the place of Birds Eye and frozen food, evolving into an important centre for renewable off shore wind energy. We are now celebrating and sharing the story of our seascape and unique position as the most easterly point of the UK along with our stunning marshlands, rurality and the Norfolk Broads.

Lowestoft is a golden beach and the beautiful Broads; a place that connects with and celebrates the sea and somewhere with new found energy that is powering the economy and bringing the town to life through culture and creativity.

## **why Lowestoft needs a place story**

Lowestoft is embracing, harnessing and promoting its' unique position as a leading light and a place of 'firsts'. It is regenerating and revitalising itself around its waterfront areas, blue flag beaches, accessible countryside and sea vistas. The mediaeval High Street has the opportunity to be a focal point for the independent and creative; marine related businesses are thriving with scope for more and culture through initiatives such as the First Light Festival will put the place on the map attracting a new audience. This is a place for young and old that isn't afraid to celebrate a slightly less brash sense of place by the sea whilst being a base for clean energy and not afraid to 'do things differently'. To deliver this requires an aspirational but achievable view of what Lowestoft and the surrounding area can offer as a place, the experience it will provide and how it is special. This story sets out the overarching sense of place ambition for Lowestoft.

For Lowestoft to thrive there has to be a shared view of what the place will be, leadership to make that happen, sense of place areas to focus on so this is achieved, a quality standard to be attained, new behaviours to be adopted and a place experience to be delivered. The story provides the blueprint for this and what sets Lowestoft apart from others.

## **our Lowestoft story**

This story articulates the distinctiveness, character and characteristics of Lowestoft and the key elements for the development and promotion of the place. This overarching view consists of themes which are chapters of the story, and they represent what need to be the fundamental aspects of Lowestoft as it grows and develops. The theme areas combine elements that are already important in the place alongside new ingredients for the Lowestoft experience.

## **harnessing and celebrating the energy of the sea**

Lowestoft developed as a place because of the sea; this relationship shaped the sense of place and personality of the town and area. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Lowestoft was one of the country's leading tourist resorts and a major fishing port with a fishing community 'The Grit' that literally grew up on the beach and epitomised the nature of the place. Fishing gave way to oil and gas exploration and as this has faded in importance renewable wind energy has taken its place; the sea has always been the provider in one way or another. And whilst the

port is important so are other businesses such as CEFAS which is a world leader in marine science and technology and Birds Eye who produced the first fish finger in Lowestoft!

Tourism has equally changed and whilst Lowestoft still attracts thousands of people every year it is to an experience of cliff walks, sea views, the amazing beaches and a quieter enjoyment of this special seascape.

As Lowestoft grows and develops it will have the sea as a determining factor which affects everything it does as a place; public realm, signage, opening up sea views and making it as easy as possible for people to enjoy the seaside experience. This fantastic asset must never be taken for granted as it is critical in celebrating the heritage of the area as well as the new industry it is creating and is just as important for incomers as residents. There is a new and exciting energy about Lowestoft.

### **exploring the eastscape**

Lowestoft benefits from a great variety of landscape and seascape with big skies, beaches, Broads, coastline and marshland. Within a relatively small area you can have myriad experiences from a busy beach and bustling town centre to almost splendid isolation in a wonderful rural environment. There is space to breathe and enjoy and for all the family and all ages a chance to discover and explore more.

We celebrate being the most easterly point in the UK where the sun rises first. This allows us to be morning people up first with the sun and encourages a healthier lifestyle of walking, cycling and just being active. And we want to share our easterly experience with a new concept, multi arts event, First Light Festival which will take place on South Beach during the summer solstice including music, dance, science, well-being and sports.

Whilst Lowestoft might be best known for classic seaside fun and activity linked to the beach it has the extra benefit of being right on the Norfolk Broads with the different experiences this provides; an abundance of outdoor opportunities for all ages. Boating, bird watching and learning about nature and wildlife are all on offer in a unique environment where there are more waterways than Venice and Amsterdam! A great place for an adventure with sparkling water, big horizons or under starry skies. Lowestoft is a place where you can connect with the land, sea, sky and be as one with the elements.

### **Lowestoft: the leading light**

Lowestoft has been the place to be for visitors and business and it will be again. The natural beauty is still there and the apparent disconnect with port and industry give it an authenticity and charm that is hard to find. This is a place that is rekindling its confidence and celebrating being on the edge; a place of firsts from the fish finger to first light and there will be many more. There is a fresh energy for Lowestoft to think differently and do things differently using the metaphor of 'first', after all you can have the first coffee in the UK there every day and so much more. This is being driven by a new industry but also culture and creativity as Lowestoft makes the most of its many assets and is developing a new level of confidence and aspiration.

### ***creating a new first place***