

# ClfA

## [RE]INTRODUCING THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

Cara Jones ACIfA (6085), Head of Skills and Development, ClfA

### **Faced with a project that is a perfect opportunity for public engagement activities but aren't sure where to start? Well, there's a toolkit for that!**

There has been a long tradition of public engagement in British archaeology. Community-based activities take place all over the UK – for some of us, those opportunities provided our first taste of life as an archaeologist. As we all know, delivering and participating in community archaeology can bring with it social and wellbeing benefits and can support local communities to take a lead role in caring and celebrating their local heritage. In Scotland, this is enshrined within the planning strategy *National Planning Framework 4*, which states the potential requirement to provide public benefit through the use of conditions or legal/planning obligations, while the Procurement Act 2023 (which covers England, Wales and Northern Ireland) states the importance of 'maximising public benefit' when carrying out 'covered procurement'.

Community engagement through developer-led archaeology is one of the areas that contributes to supporting the delivery of public benefit, as seen in our own professional practice paper, *Delivering public*

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*benefit*, together with the European Archaeology Council guidance on public benefit. However, recent studies (including the survey of local authority planning archaeologists undertaken by the ClfA Community Archaeology Special Interest Group in 2021) show that community engagement through the planning system is not embedded in sector practice. The responses from this survey also highlighted a need to provide support for archaeological advisers and practitioners in designing public engagement activities that are proportionate to the work being undertaken. This, in turn, would support the delivery of public benefit across a range of different types and scale of archaeological interventions.

To address these issues, last year saw the launch of the Public Engagement Toolkit – a suite of guidance designed to support the promotion and delivery of public engagement in archaeology. Joining the ClfA toolkit family, the resource was funded by Historic England, designed by DigVentures and informed by key stakeholders, with the concept originating from the ClfA Community Archaeology Special Interest Group.

This resource aims to support practitioners by providing an online resource for those who commission community archaeology activities. Guided by the ClfA Community Archaeology Special Interest Group and the Project Advisory Board, the project consultants (DigVentures) developed a toolkit which aims to support those who are keen to include provision for public engagement activities but are unsure how.

The end product is a suite of guidance (in the form of a ClfA toolkit) divided into three sections –

- 1 What is public engagement?**
- 2 Making public engagement happen**
- 3 What does engagement look like?**

The content is supported by 'Infosheets' which provide context to 'public engagement in archaeological practice' and 'planning frameworks, ethics and public benefit', plus a guide to 'evaluating and understanding impact' and advice on 'creating a public engagement plan'. Also provided is a glossary of terms commonly used in association with public engagement. All of this content is web based and can be found on the Toolkit section of the ClfA website.

If you would like a live presentation or info session on this toolkit for your organisation, then ClfA and the Community Archaeology SIG would be happy to help.

Get in touch with Cara at [cara.jones@archaeologists.net](mailto:cara.jones@archaeologists.net) to find out more.

### Acknowledgements

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*Toolkit launch at ClfA 2024 with members of the delivery team and the Community Archaeology Special Interest Group. Credit: ClfA*

### Go further

Explore the toolkit at your own pace by accessing it through the ClfA toolkit webpages – [www.archaeologists.net/work/toolkits/engagement/introduction](http://www.archaeologists.net/work/toolkits/engagement/introduction)

Find out more about the 'Delivery of Public Benefit and Social Value for Archaeology in the Planning Process' in Scotland through this ALGAO:Scotland Report – [www.algao.org.uk/news/tue-14022023-0904-delivery-public-benefit-and-social-value-archaeology-planning-process](http://www.algao.org.uk/news/tue-14022023-0904-delivery-public-benefit-and-social-value-archaeology-planning-process)

Engage with the European Council for Archaeology library of guidance on their website – [www.europae-archaeologiae-consilium.org/guidance](http://www.europae-archaeologiae-consilium.org/guidance)

Explore ClfA's public benefit webpages – [www.archaeologists.net/work/profession/public-benefit](http://www.archaeologists.net/work/profession/public-benefit)

Join the ClfA Community Archaeology Special Interest Group to keep up to date with this work and upcoming events – [www.archaeologists.net/groups/community](http://www.archaeologists.net/groups/community)