

**Karen Stafford, General Manager, Bodiam Castle & Bateman's
Bodiam Parish Assembly update, 2 May 2024**

Over the last twelve months we have **continued with our care** of the castle and grounds, **investing in our conservation** and **making the experience** the best it can be for all of our visitors - we were pleased to welcome just over 150,000 visitors.

Last year we **undertook major conservation works to the Postern Tower**, far from being disappointed by the sight of the scaffold, **visitors were delighted to see and learn** about the work we're doing to safeguard the castle for generations to come.

We continue to **manage our land to benefit nature** and **improve our carbon sequestration**. We face continuing challenges of our changing climate and this winter has been extremely challenging with the continuous flooding of the car park.

Despite the challenges we managed to have a strong start to Easter and thank you for your patience on peak days when the car park was full.

For the rest of the year theatre, archery, trails and reenactments will continue to entertain our visitors. At the end of June, for the Festival of Archaeology we will be hosting talks and tours while undertaking an archaeological dig on Frearn Meade to see if we can advance our knowledge of the Roman-British site.

We are continuing to improve the visitor experience at Bodiam and are currently working on a funding bid to improve the interpretation in the castle and open up the North East Tower. And early next year we will also be updating our visitor welcome area and improving the crossing from visitor reception.

As an organisation we continue to rely heavily on the income generated through visits and memberships. I'll remind you that under 5s can access National Trust sites for free, and it's also possible to obtain a Junior memberships for anyone under 18 at a cost of only £12 per annum.

The residents pass for Bodiam and Ewhurst residents is available from visitor reception during opening hours with your ID, it covers access to the surrounding grounds for up to 2 adults and 3 children.

We are keen to ensure everyone feels welcome when visiting National Trust properties and to be more accessible, and our wheelchair accessible passenger buggy has transported hundreds of people up to the castle this year.

Finally, I want to recognise and thank the volunteers at Bodiam Castle who give their time and knowledge which allows us to care for this special place for generations to come.