Engaging your Community
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Who is your community? Look beyond your existing audience and reach out to new audiences by inviting them to get involved. As a closed church, Holy Trinity no longer had a visible community so the project needed to recruit from the wider community in Islington.
How to engage your community: create opportunities to involve local people and stakeholders and enable people to shape the scope, aims and activities of project. Here are some of the ways in which you can reach out:

• **Consult** local people and potential project partners
• **Design** your project to benefit the building and people
• **Fundraise** for your project to attract grants and donations
• **Publicise** project and successful grant awards
• **Recruit** volunteers to deliver heritage activities
• **Share** outcomes with wider community
• **Evaluate** experiences of volunteers and project partners
• **Celebrate** end of project together!
Research: a team of research volunteers investigated the lives of some of the 178 people who were buried in the crypt of Holy Trinity Church between 1829 and 1854, using local archives and online resources to find out who they were.
Training: we devised a varied programme of professional training, mentoring and support for volunteers to equip them with the skills and knowledge needed for carrying out research.
Understanding past lives: piecing together the details of the lives of those buried in the crypt helped us understand better the people who formed Holy Trinity’s first community.
Sharing knowledge: telling the stories of those buried in the crypt while exploring the places connected with them was both an educational and rewarding experience for the volunteers.
Curating the exhibition: selecting which tales to share with the wider community demanded close collaboration and creativity from our curatorial volunteers.
Wellbeing: engagement brings many benefits for volunteers which can be identified by a thoughtful evaluation process. These include
- learning new skills
- enjoying new experiences
- forging new friendships
- boosting self-confidence
- encouraging inter-generational contact
- taking pride in shared achievements
- connecting with place
Project champions: all the volunteers have become brilliant ambassadors for the building and are committed to bringing it back into public use. Allowing people to have a direct connection with a building helps create, strengthen and diversify the community which will look after it in future.
Inspiring examples of engagement elsewhere:

• St Pancras Old Church, Camden
  https://spochistoryproject.wordpress.com/

• St Helen, Escrick, North Yorkshire
  www.escrickheritage.org

• Becontree Estate, Dagenham
  www.whitehouseart.org/verity-jane-keefe

Questions and Comments?