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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Volunteers unite to transform local community spaces**

**132 local people** have got involved in **14 green space projects**, organised by Lincolnshire Co-op's community team.

Projects have varied from litter picks, transforming community gardens, and enhancing much-loved local services, such as **Billingham Swimming Pool**.

Volunteers have also worked to improve school playgrounds, including one on the roof of **Strand Primary Academy** in Grimsby.

This project has required collaboration from across the community; Strand Primary Academy were Lincolnshire Co-op **Community Champions**, and local members, colleagues, and customers raised **£673** for them during this time, which was used to fund the playground's transformation.

Lincolnshire Co-op's careers team has also been supporting students at **Havelock Academy** in Grimsby, by offering real-life work experience opportunities, in collaboration with **Greater Lincolnshire Careers Hub**.

For this project, students were given the opportunity to project manage the renovation of **Strand Primary Academy's** playground, from start to finish.

**Students aged 11 to 14 years old** were given specific roles to reflect typical employment, and worked together to create a design, manage the budget, and source the necessary items for the playground renovation.

**12 Havelock Academy students** then worked alongside pupils at **Strand Primary Academy**, Lincolnshire Co-op colleagues, and other volunteers to bring their design to life.

Lisa McCall, Head Teacher at Strand Primary Academy, said: *"This project has been a longtime coming, and it's amazing to see it all come together. The rooftop garden will be a calming space for reflection, as well as helping children learn about nature and gardening.*

*"Each of our classes will be attempting to grow their own vegetables out here too, giving them a sense of responsibility. We would like to be able to donate the produce to local good causes, once it's all underway!"*

Green space projects are one of the ways that Lincolnshire Co-op is encouraging the community to stay active, connect to their local environment, and build relationships.

Sam Turner, Community Manager at Lincolnshire Co-op, has said: *“Our volunteers have been helping to build and protect spaces that we can all come together to enjoy, which is really special in itself.”*

*“However, another really important element of the campaign is to encourage people to come together in outside spaces, something that we know can be beneficial for both mental and physical wellbeing. So, while doing good, volunteers are hopefully feeling good for it, too!*

*“Even though our green space projects have now come to an end, we have lots more volunteering opportunities available; you could lend a hand at a wellbeing walk, a community cuppa, or one of our three community libraries.”*

More information can be found on Lincolnshire Co-op’s website:

<https://www.lincolnshire.coop/community>

**Ends**

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**Notes to editors:**

1. **Lincolnshire Co-op** is an independent co-operative society. Its purpose is to bring together ideas, energy and resources to make life better in communities. It has around 300,000 members and 2,900 local colleagues in Lincolnshire and the surrounding counties and an elected board of directors who oversee the business.

The society provides **valued services** and supports the **local economy** from outlets across its trading area including food stores, filling stations, post offices, travel branches, funeral homes, a florist, a crematorium and community libraries. It also cares for people's **health and wellbeing** through its pharmacies and support for a network of wellbeing walks. Local good causes benefit through its Community Champions scheme and together, colleagues and members also look after the **local environment** through volunteering.

As well as its trading outlets, Lincolnshire Co-op owns properties, from flats and houses to commercial premises. The society brings land and buildings back into use to create attractive environments. With Lincolnshire Co-op as landlord, rents stay local and are invested in schemes that benefit the community.