

Hull Kraken helps pull in 2.4m visitors to city as £30m maritime project progresses

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Hull Kraken brought the city's streets and buildings to life this summer, driving more than 2.4 million visitors in an aquatic economic boost.

The tentacle takeover, funded by Hull City Council, The National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic England, marked the start of a series of major events for the £30 million Hull: Yorkshire's Maritime City project.

Unleashed on the [Hull Maritime Museum](#), Princes Quay, Trinity Market, the old M&S building on Whitefriargate and the [Spurn Lightship](#), this was the largest city-wide tentacle installation delivered by artistic company, Designs in Air, and the first time a Kraken took over a ship. A nest of eggs was also on display at Monument Bridge.

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As well as bringing people together from across the country in a safe way, the event was an opportunity to raise awareness of the Hull Maritime project and update visitors on the progress to date.

Councillor Daren Hale, leader of Hull City Council, said: “We are all thrilled with the turnout and the overwhelmingly positive responses we’ve had from the people of Hull and those who travelled to the city from across the country to experience the Hull Kraken. It was fantastic to see so many people supporting the city and enjoying the arts again.



The Kraken at Hull’s Maritime Museum.
(Image: Hull Museums)



Spurn Lightship under Kraken attack.
(Image: Hull News & Picture)

“There was a great buzz around the city throughout the three-week period, with our footfall increasing massively year-on-year and at peak times increasing by more than 65 per cent in certain parts of the city, compared to 2019.

“As well as bringing some much-needed fun and excitement to the city during the summer holidays after months of lockdown, we hope the mythical creature has sparked the imagination of visitors about what might be in the depths of oceans that Hull mariners sailed upon.

“Building on the city’s incredible legacy and sense of pride, Hull: Yorkshire’s Maritime City project aims to conserve and celebrate the city’s key maritime heritage and bring it to life, contributing to the ongoing cultural renaissance of Hull and helping to boost the local economy.”

The free trail honouring the legend of the mythical monster of the deep featured maritime characters and living statues, theatre performances and live music along the route. A [comic](#) inspired by Hull's maritime past via a fictional backstory was also produced.

The giant inflatable tentacles, up to 10 metres long, were produced by Designs in Air, with work previously seen in China, Australia, Hong Kong, Germany and Portugal. They have also featured at many major events and exhibitions including the London Olympics, the Eden project, Glastonbury Festival and Cirque du Soleil.

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Kathryn Shillito, executive director HullBID – the organisation that monitors and collates the footfall figures – added: “The Kraken event gave an economic boost to city centre businesses as inevitably visitors, both locally and regionally, will have gone on to eat, drink and shop. With great excitement we see the redevelopment of the city’s historic maritime assets taking place to fulfil our role as Yorkshire’s Maritime City, and the opportunities this will bring.”

Further elements of the project will involve the refurbishment of Hull Maritime Museum, restoration of the Spurn Lightship and the Arctic Corsair and regenerating the North End Shipyard on the River Hull.

Julie Buffey, business owner in Hepworths Arcade, said: “The Hull Kraken installation has lifted the profile of our historic arcade.

“The footfall since the installation is at 2017 levels and has created a real buzz and lifted the spirits of all the businesses in here. It has attracted all age ranges and it really is a joy to see all the smiling faces and is a photographer’s dream.”

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