

Minutes of a meeting of the **SPALDING TOWN FORUM** held in the Meeting Room 1, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Wednesday, 8 March 2017 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

Chairman - J D McLean

Councillors:

G R Aley (Vice-Chairman)
D Ashby
G K Dark
R Gambba-Jones
C J Lawton
A M Newton
G J Taylor
P A Williams
H Drury
E J Sneath

Community Representatives:

George Scott – Spalding Transport Forum; Gavin Allmand – Spalding Town Centre Trading; Sue Stubley – Spalding Town Centre Trading; David Burgess – Market Traders Association; John Honnor – Spalding and District Civic Society; Pastor Kevin Taylor – South Holland Community Church and Roger Perkins.

29. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

30. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 December 2016 were signed as a correct record.

31. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.**

There were no declarations of interest declared.

32. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MINUTES.**

The Structure of LCC highways has been finalised, Councillor Newton to get confirmation.

Bus station update, Councillors Taylor & Lawton confirmed minor works re safety are in process, Nick Kendrick involved. Update to follow.

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 8 March 2017

Item 24 - Xmas lights - a smaller committee of Town Forum steering group to organise Xmas events and tree is being set up. Any member interested should email chairman

Item 25 - Transport Forum update – the roof of platform 1 has been repaired. Meeting with Mark Lambert, East Midlands Trains, to discuss rooms inside that are in disrepair. The forum along with John Hayes MP have written to the Chair of Transport Select Committee, Louise Ellman. Government paper coming out re rail finance and government enquiry – ask transport forum to submit paper??

Item 27 - gold bloom award - ongoing discussion, other ideas are doing similar thing at Council Offices or South Holland Centre as it would be easier to obtain permission. Later update once more news.

33. MONKSHOUSE SCOUTS, CUBS, GUIDES AND BROWNIES HEADQUARTERS

With the Chairman's permission, this item was brought forward on the agenda. The frontage of the Scout headquarters is in disrepair – Councillor Newton showed some photos to group to show the extent of the degradation of the car park and surrounding area.

Councillor Newton had emailed Richard Knock at SHDC to find out who owns it, he was unsure. Chairman suggested the way forward to find out owner. The repairs need to be put into a programme to make more useable. It was suggested that repairs could be linked with Spalding Town special expenses if its owned by SHDC? Continue discussions and move forward.

34. BT PHONE BOX ADOPTION

The phone box is located on the riverside opposite the White Horse pub – committee suggested that if adoption were to go ahead it would be best to keep management with SHDC.

Councillor Gambba-Jones suggested that if the idea is going to be submitted to the Cabinet, more research and information would be needed – Paul Clark and Emily Holmes had already been involved, so may have figures for restoration and maintenance.

It was noted that there would be ongoing expenses and insurance costs involved as it would be an asset on a public highway. Councillor Gambba-Jones gave example of Cheltenham – 6 boxes used to show off historical events of the city, a Heritage project - the phone boxes are locked to the public. Discussed that phone box windows are now plastic, and BT may have spares. Adoption could include paint. It was suggested to ask people who have already done these projects for their costs, or get a group of volunteers to maintain.

Agreed: Councillors Drury and Gambba-Jones to liaise with Emily Holmes and then progress this matter further.

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 8 March 2017

35. SHEEP MARKET TOILETS

It was highlighted that cleanliness issues and vandalism in the toilets had occurred when someone accessed the disabled loo when it was closed.

The group discussed who currently cleans the toilets – team of 10 people who maintain cleanliness of whole district.

Councillor Gambba-Jones confirmed that they only have a small budget to cover all toilets in district for year. He outlined that early every morning stock is replenished in every loo but the toilet rolls are stolen throughout the day and holders kicked off walls. It was discussed that this also happens in private toilets in Broad Street business centre.

It was discussed that an introduction of a payment of 20p per use (as in previous years) could solve the problem. Some members agreed with this idea, however others members stated it wouldn't solve the problem as wouldn't create enough revenue. An attendant service could work but unfeasible costs. Dirty or closed toilets are a bad reflection on town and would generate more complaints if shut.

It was noted that it could affect tourism – it is showing off the town – businesses could benefit so suggested sponsoring loos as the District Council do not have the revenue to maintain. Councillor Gambba-Jones said this had happened before and businesses were given the opportunity but didn't take it up.

Members discussed CCTV and shop watch. Try and monitor loos to avoid vandalism. Suggestion of shop watch radio for attendants to use – it was agreed this would help matters.

Action: Town Forum Chairman to email Joe Reeves to keep eye on loos. Stuart Brotherton and shop watch also be contacted.

36. SPALDING TOWN FORUM STEERING GROUP

Spalding Town Forum Steering group had their first meeting with an adequate attendance – few connections being made between separate plans. Setting objectives and scopes. Interested parties to email Chairman of the Forum on moving forward.

37. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

Gavin Allmand representing Spalding Town Retailers Association tabled a note giving members a background of the Association, which led to discussions in the room about the position of town centre trading. A letter had recently been sent to councillors post resignation of the town centre manager, to which they received a reply from Councillor Lord Porter.

Retailers clearly concerned about town centre. Trade hard and reduced footfall. The following points were discussed:

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 8 March 2017

- The town is being pushed down route for another bid – businesses remain sceptical over bid for town centre.
- Section 106 funding was awarded to fund town centre manager for 3 years and as he didn't last 3 years in post retailers would like the unspent money to be repatriated to council to be held for specific projects to maintain town centre. The money could be used to fund bus from Springfields into town to encourage people to shop in town centre. Could approach coach companies and have an experimental year. Tried through Chamber of Commerce to get a bus to take people from Springfields to town. Sourced one for £30k, but Norfolk Green were not keen so the plan didn't go ahead. Was going to be bus stop outside the back of Hills, but not enough money to build bus stop so all fell through. Councillor Sneath agreed busses into town are very important, though as a County Councillor, bus companies cannot just alter their routes. Though buses do it in Boston, so why cant we in Spalding?
- Businesses need to be encouraged to come into town not Springfields.
- Local plan mentioned - Springfields have proven that there is insufficient space in Spalding for retail expansion until 2036. They have taken the time to put forward retail issues, whereas town retailers have not.
- Car parking in town, pedestrianisation does not allow car parking but Spalding offers good value for money in car parking rates.
- Transport Forum representative commented that extra trains were run on Saturdays and Sundays over the Christmas period – improved customer footfall so proved it works.
- It was agreed that help is needed to make Spalding a vibrant town and increase footfall. Not sure how to do it, as there isn't a single body that has authorisation to do things, does this give rise for a Town Council?
- Councillor Lawton sold Spalding to everyone she saw – doesn't go to Bourne and Peterborough as Spalding is a vibrant town.
- Sue Stubleley claimed independent retailers are on life support, can't compete with the shops that Springfields attracts, though town has a fabulous food contingent.
- Councillor Taylor posed the question – why do shoppers go to Springfields instead of town. Why don't they shop further down Bridge street? Suggested that the town centre could open in evening during August?
- Could utilise the space outside Boots and maybe have a live band?

Mr Allmand confirmed that the current chair of STRA is Darren Sutton, owner of bookmark/charmed interiors and would welcome interested members to their next meeting. Once date and time set and email would go out to Councillors.

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 8 March 2017

38. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Spalding Town Forum is scheduled to take place on 14 July 2017 in Meeting Room 1 commencing at 6.30 p.m

(The meeting ended at 9.00 pm)

(End of minutes)