

Minutes of a meeting of the **SPALDING TOWN FORUM** held in the This meeting will be held in line with the Local Authorities & Police & Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority & Police & Crime Panel Meetings) (England & Wales) Regulations 2020, on Wednesday, 3 February 2021 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

R Gambba-Jones (Chairman)

A C Cronin

H Drury

R A Gibson (Vice-

Chairman)

M Hasan

C J Lawton

J D McLean

A M Newton

G A Porter

G P Scalese

G J Taylor

In Attendance: Councillor E J Sneath, R Perkins (Castle Sports Complex Bowls Club), J Bland (Civic Society), Executive Manager Delivery, Place Manager and Town Centre Improvement Plan Coordinator, Democratic Services Officer

48. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Gambba-Jones was elected as Chairman of the Spalding Town Forum for the period 2021-23.

The Chairman and the Forum offered condolences on behalf of the district to the family of Captain Sir Tom Moore following the announcement of his death.

49. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2020.

AGREED:

That the minutes be signed as a correct record.

50. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

There were none.

51. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MINUTES.

Members of the Forum asked for an update regarding minute 45 from the previous meeting.

Cllr Drury responded by advising the Forum that he had been in

Action By

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contact with Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership and had also sent an email to Councillor Davies. Due to the current restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, consideration was still being given to whether a road safety audit would take place, and as a result, a date had not yet been set.

Members also enquired about an update requested from the Communities Manager at minute item 44, regarding the town's Christmas decorations. The Place Manager informed the Forum that the Communities Manager would provide a response to Councillor Newton and the Chairman.

**52. DRAFT BUDGET 2021/22 AND QUARTER 3 2020/21
OUTTURN FOR SPALDING SPECIAL EXPENSES**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Commercialisation (S151) which provided information on the Spalding Special Expenses Draft Budget 2021/22 and report the Forecast Outturn for Quarter 3 2020/21.

The following issues were raised:

- Member raised concerns regarding Spalding Cemetery. It was proposed that the Council be put on notice to enable drawing down on reserves with a view to a comprehensive plan of a list works which needed to be completed to improve conditions around the Cemetery. Members also highlighted and welcomed the support from the residents in helping to look after the grounds at the Cemetery.
- Members also debated and agreed that more needed to be done in improving the Christmas lights and town centre to attract more people into the area with a further look at entertainment and festivities for Christmas 2021.
- Councillor Newton requested a breakdown of the Spalding Special Contributions. The Strategic Finance and Compliance Manager confirmed that this information would be forwarded to Councillor Newton following the meeting.
- Members enquired about re-establishing a sub-group to focus on future Christmas celebrations for Spalding. The Chairman agreed to meet with Councillor Taylor and Councillor Drury to discuss the possibility of forming a sub-group.
- The Chairman enquired how financing around Christmas decorations would be sustained and whether any S106 funds accrued which would come directly to Spalding could assist in the re-supply of funds. The Chairman also requested future updates to the Forum around outturn and variations to remind the Forum of how the budget was

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- being used.
- The Place Manager invited the Chairman to attend future meetings of the Town Improvement Plan Steering Group to ensure the views of the Forum were represented.
- Members debated whether the contingency fund which was in place to assist with the cutting of grass verges had been removed. The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Strategy and Partnerships informed the Forum that the contingency fund was previously separate but had now been worked into the costings so there was no need for a contingency for the cutting of the grass verges. The Strategic Finance and Compliance Manager was requested to check this information and update Councillor McLean. Members debated whether having a contingency fund could be considered by the Forum. The Chairman advised that members could raise the issue at the next meeting following the AGM to enable Cabinet to factor a contingency into the Spalding Special Expenses in the future.
- In relation to allotments members enquired whether Officers were anticipating more vacant plots and if consideration could be given to advertising any vacancies in the local press. The Place Manager advised the Forum that consideration could be given to local advertising if this would help generate interest. The Chairman advised that there was an upcoming Portfolio Holder meeting in which this could be discussed.

Members enquired where responsibility laid in relation to the upkeep of the war memorials. The Place Manager informed the Forum that the funds for the upkeep of the war memorials was in the general budget under Ayscoughfee Gardens. As the memorials had listed status, specialist cleaning and maintenance would need to be considered.

53. SPALDING TOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN - UPDATE

The Forum received a presentation from the Town Centre Improvement Co-ordinator regarding the Spalding Town Improvement Plan works.

The Town Centre Improvement Co-ordinator shared that, after the last Town Forum meeting in September 2020, restrictions had eased, and the Communities Team had been able to organise a scaled down version of the Pumpkin Parade. Further plans, which were due to take place had to be postponed due to further lockdowns.

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Members were informed that the focus was still on the development of a two stage programme of short to medium term projects with the focus on getting the basics right, and medium to long term ideas and projects with the intention to deliver longer term change.

Some of the initial projects which had been undertaken were:

- Town Centre User Survey
- Floral Displays
- Empty shop window artwork
- Promotion
- River Enhancement

The Portfolio Holder for Commercialisation and Growth informed the Forum that one of the key areas that the Town Centre Improvement Team were looking at was supporting current business owners in Spalding with recovery post lockdown once they were able to re-open.

The following issues were raised:

- Members thanked the Town Centre Improvement Co-ordinator for the work which had been carried out to date and for the updates to the Forum.
- Members enquired whether the user surveys could be sent out early, to be completed online to gain feedback which could be worked on during lockdown. The Portfolio Holder for Commercialisation and Growth informed the Forum that due to the current restrictions and uncertainty around the lifting of restrictions post lockdown it was felt that the survey should not be sent out until further guidance was given by the Government.
- Members asked what the current situation was regarding the water fountain. Members were informed that an options appraisal had commenced, however no decision had been made regarding the placement of the fountain. Members were advised to contact the Portfolio Holder for Assets and Planning with respect to the water fountain.
- Members debated whether there would be monetary assistance either from the Reserves or from Members' Budgets for the floral displays to assist with maintenance and watering. The Chairman advised that this should be looked at from the Reserves initially as there was uncertainty as to whether contribution could be given via Members' Budgets.

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Members expressed appreciation for the Wombles who were working to assist in keeping Spalding tidy. Members agreed that the community effort by residents demonstrated community spirit during a difficult time.

54. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were none.

(The meeting ended at 7.54 pm)

(End of minutes)