

Minutes of a meeting of the **SPALDING TOWN FORUM** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 30 September 2025 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

R A Gibson (Chairman)

G P Scalese
S Chauhan
M Hasan

J Le Sage
M Le Sage
I Sheard

A Spencer
G J Taylor
D Ashby

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors J Whitbourn.

In Attendance: J Bland (Civic Society), D Jones (Pedals), Pastor K Taylor (Churches Together in Spalding and District), The Press, Councillor E J Sneath, C Lawton (League of Friends of the Johnson Community Hospital), Pastor C Sandhu (Lighthouse Church) and Wootton (Lincolnshire Community Foundation),

11. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2025.

AGREED:

That the minutes be signed as a correct record.

12. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

There were none.

13. ACTIONS

The Chairman discussed the actions raised from the previous Spalding Town Forum meeting on the 18 June 2025.

AGREED:

All actions had been completed.

Action By

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14. SPALDING SPECIAL EXPENSES Q1 FORECAST REPORT 2025-2026

The Chairman introduced the Chief Finance Officer to present the Spalding Special Expenses Quarter 1 Forecast report for 2025/26.

The Chief Finance Officer provided a summary to the Spalding Town Forum members detailing the forecast outturn position against budget.

- The budget of £223,000 for 2025-26 was approved by Full Council on the 27 February 2025.
- The forecast outturn for the year was £211,000, indicating a projected underspend of £23,000.
- Quarter 1 was still early in the financial year, and therefore most forecasts remained broadly in line with the budget.

The underspend was primarily attributed to:

- Advance income from cemetery plots, which had exceeded expectations.
- Over achievement of hire income from Spalding United Football Club, which had performed better than anticipated against the original budget.

Section 2 of the report provided a detailed breakdown of budgets and forecasts across service areas.

Section 3 outlined the forecast reserve position.

- The Spalding Special Reserve opening balance on 1 April 2025 was £216,000.
- After accounting for the £24,000 budgeted contribution towards vandalism repair works at Ayscoughfee Leisure and the Quarter 1 underspend, the forecast closing reserve balance was £215,000.

Members considered the report and made the following comments:

- Members sought clarification on increases in premises costs, particularly for Ayscoughfee Leisure and cemeteries, noting that the budgeted figures appeared significantly higher than the previous year's actuals.
 - The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that the figures reflected planned works and utility costs.
 - The Chief Finance Officer committed to providing a comprehensive breakdown of the premises budgets for both service areas

outside the meeting.

- Members asked if the underspend at year end would be transferred to the earmarked Spalding Special Expenses Reserve and was this ring-fenced for the Spalding Town Forum.
 - The Chief Finance Officer responded that the Spalding Specials Reserves were ring-fenced to Spalding Special Expense area and could be used for future investment, with its use subject to approval either under delegated authority (up to £75,000) or by Cabinet for higher amounts.

AGREED:

That the Spalding Special Expenses Q1 Forecast 2025/26 report be noted.

15. SPALDING BID MANAGER UPDATE

The Chairman introduced the Business Improvement District (BID) Manager to present a verbal report on the work of the Spalding BID.

The Spalding BID Manager outlined current initiatives, future plans and opportunities for collaboration with councillors and community groups, and highlighted the following key points:

- Spalding in Bloom 2026:
 - Plans were underway to deliver a more impactful floral display across the town, with support from businesses, community groups. Ideas included adopting planters, installing floral displays along the river, and using creative features such as flower-filled boats.
 - The BID Manager emphasised the importance of celebrating Spalding's heritage as a flower-growing region.
- Town Tidy Weeks:
 - A new initiative aimed at encouraging businesses to take pride in their premises and surrounding areas. This would go beyond litter picking, involving weeding, cleaning, and general upkeep.
 - The BID hoped to work alongside groups such as the Wombles and other volunteers.
- Digital Platform – “Hello Spalding”:
 - A new app was being developed to promote local

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- businesses, events, and services. It would include GPS functionality, event listings, car parking information, and a click-and-collect feature to support local retailers.
- The app was inspired by the successful “Discover Kings Lynn” platform.
- **Crime and Safety:**
 - The BID had gathered impact statements from businesses affected by anti-social behaviour, which were shared with Lincolnshire Police and the Council’s Community Safety Team. A “See It, Report It” campaign was being developed to encourage better reporting of incidents.
 - The BID was also exploring a business watch scheme, including the provision of radios to improve communication between traders.
- **Events and Footfall:**
 - BID was supporting the Council’s Christmas light switch-on and makers market with additional entertainment.
 - Plans were also in development for a food safari, bike nights, folk festivals, and summer events to increase footfall and community engagement.
- **Springfields Collaboration:**
 - BID had established a positive working relationship with the Springfields Retail Director, who was offering free marketing opportunities to Spalding town centre businesses via their VIP database and social media channels.
 - Discussions were ongoing regarding improved transport links between Springfields and Spalding town centre.
- **Business Support:**
 - Monthly networking meetings and topic-specific surgery sessions were being introduced to support local businesses. Topics would include commercial waste, planning, and digital marketing.

Member considered the update and made the following comments:

- Members welcomed the BID Manager’s presentation and offered support for future events, particularly those aimed at increasing footfall.
- The BID Manager’s initiative and the idea of radios for town centre businesses was praised. Members asked if the radios would be provided to businesses free of charge.
 - The BID Manager confirmed that radios would be

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- offered at a significantly reduced cost, with bulk purchasing enabling affordability.
- Members highlighted the importance of partnership working and praised the BID's positive and proactive approach. The link between cleaner streets and safer streets was emphasised, along with the need to attract local visitors and promote Spalding's unique offer.
 - Members asked whether BID had considered encouraging longer opening hours for businesses, particularly during summer evenings.
 - The BID Manager acknowledged the challenge for independent traders and suggested that click-and-collect functionality could help bridge the gap.
 - Members expressed initial scepticism about BID's value but stated that the presentation had won them over.
 - Members praised the food safari and business networking ideas and offered to support future initiatives.
 - The BID Manager welcomed the offer and reiterated the importance of quantifiable success and partnership working.
 - A concern was raised about the number of gambling establishments in the town centre and asked whether they were involved in BID activities.
 - The BID Manager confirmed that such businesses were levy payers but would not be promoted via the app or marketing channels. However, they had contributed to the impact statements on anti-social behaviour.
 - Members stressed the importance of inclusive communication and asked that BID not rely solely on digital platforms.
 - The BID Manager agreed and confirmed that printed materials, press releases, and community engagement were part of the wider strategy.
 - Members asked whether BID had considered a shuttle bus between Springfields and the town centre.
 - The BID Manager confirmed that discussions were ongoing, and that signage and marketing materials were being developed to encourage cross-visitation.
 - Members raised concerns about the visibility of free parking signage in Vine Street and asked whether the initiative was being adequately promoted.
 - The BID Manager confirmed that a banner had been installed and that the initiative was being trialled until the end of December, with footfall data being monitored.

The Chairman thanked the BID Manager for the detailed

presentation.

16. TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER UPDATE

The Chairman provided a verbal update on the implementation of the Spalding Town Centre Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).

- The TRO had been in place for many years but had not previously been enforced due to the absence of appropriate signage and infrastructure.
- Following extensive public consultation, the majority of respondents had expressed support for pedestrianisation during the restricted hours of 10am – 4pm daily.
- Signage had been installed and enforcement had commenced. However, it was reported that an error in the signage wording had resulted in the restriction being applied 24 hours a day, rather than the intended 10am–4pm window.
- The Chairman confirmed that this was a mistake made by Lincolnshire County Council and that corrective action was being taken.
- Any penalty notices that had been issued before 10am and after 4pm had been rescinded.
- Enforcement officers had been instructed not to issue further tickets outside the designated hours.
- Members were assured that the signage would be amended as a matter of urgency.

Members considered the update and made the following comments.

- Members welcomed the update and emphasised the importance of pedestrian safety, noting that the TRO was introduced to protect shoppers and visitors during peak hours. It was stressed that enforcement should be balanced with support for local businesses, particularly those operating in the evening economy.
- Members asked could physical barriers or gates be installed to prevent vehicle access during restricted hours.
 - The Chairman explained that while this had been considered, it was not currently feasible due to staffing limitations and the requirement for manual operation. Enforcement would instead rely on signage and enforcement officer patrols.
- Concerns were raised about vehicles parking on Broad Street adjacent to Elderkins and Coney's, where drivers appeared unaware of the restrictions and vehicles were reversing out of the one-way street, creating safety risks.

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- The Chairman confirmed that enforcement officers were monitoring these areas and issuing tickets where appropriate.
- Members asked whether police enforcement was being considered for vehicles driving through the town centre during restricted hours.
 - The Chairman clarified that only the police had the authority to enforce moving vehicle violations under the TRO, and that Lincolnshire Police had been provided with a copy of the order.
- A suggestion was made to utilise CCTV footage to identify vehicles breaching the TRO and that the cameras that faced Broad Street could potentially capture registration numbers.
 - The Chairman responded that while this was a good idea in principle, the police had indicated they lacked the resources to monitor footage in real time.
- Members raised concerns about cyclists, e-scooters and mobility scooters travelling at speed through the pedestrianised zone.
- It was suggested that signage could be introduced to encourage cyclists to ride at walking pace.
 - The Chairman proposed inviting a police representative to a future meeting to discuss enforcement and safety measures and asked Democratic Services to follow up.
- Members agreed that further engagement with Lincolnshire County Council and the police would be beneficial to address this issue.
- Members highlighted the positive impact of pedestrianisation, noting that the town centre felt safer and more welcoming, although concerns remained about the potential impact on businesses.

The Chairman announced that additional disabled parking bays had been installed in Sheep Market, Red Lion Street, and behind the South Holland Centre to support accessibility.

AGREED:

That the Forum would continue to monitor the implementation of the TRO, with further updates to be provided at future meetings.

17. ACTIVE CYCLING ROUTE

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An update was provided on the development of active travel infrastructure in Spalding, with a focus on improving cycling and walking routes across the town.

The Forum was informed that:

- An upgraded bike stand was planned for installation in the Sheep Market. The stand would be protected from vehicle access and would offer increased cycle parking capacity in the town centre.
- Officers from Lincolnshire County Council Highways and the Active Travel Team were continuing to work with the Spalding Town Board and Pedals to identify suitable locations for additional cycle parking, with cycle parking corrals being the preferred design.
- Following feedback from Pedals, signage directing cyclists to Springfields had been approved, with installation dates to be confirmed.

- The Spalding to Pinchbeck Active Travel Route was progressing in five phases. Phases 1 and 2 were scheduled for implementation in spring 2026, following resolution of drainage issues. The route would improve pavements and access for cyclists, pedestrians, and other active travel users.

- Engagement had taken place with residents of Swallow Court, who had previously raised objections.
 - Members reported that concerns had been addressed and that residents were now more optimistic about the scheme.
 - The route would be delivered via the TRO process, with construction expected to begin in March 2026.

- The Active Travel Team had also engaged with local schools to address parking congestion during drop-off and pick-up times. Collaboration with Parking Services was underway to explore enforcement and education options.

Members considered the update and made the following comments:

- Members welcomed the update and praised the progress being made. They highlighted the benefits of cycling for health and wellbeing and supported the schemes efforts to reduce short car journeys. However, concerns were raised about cyclist behaviour, particularly in areas with elderly

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- residents and dog walkers.
- It was suggested that signage be introduced to encourage responsible cycling, including the use of lights and appropriate speed.
 - Councillor Ingrid Sheard confirmed that discussions were taking place with Lincolnshire Police regarding enforcement.
 - One proposal under consideration was for Police Officers to carry bike lights and offer them to cyclists for a small fee, with the alternative being confiscation of the bicycle if safety standards were not met.
 - Members asked whether the police had ever confiscated bicycles for non-compliance.
 - Councillor Ingrid Sheard agreed to follow up and provide further information at a future meeting.
 - Members stressed the importance of inclusive communication, noting that many older residents may not engage with digital platforms.
 - It was suggested that printed materials and community outreach be used to raise awareness of cycling initiatives.
 - Members proposed inviting a representative from Lincolnshire Police to a future meeting to provide an update on enforcement activity related to cycling, e-scooters, and road safety.
 - The Chairman agreed and asked Democratic Services to follow up on the action.
 - Members raised concerns about children cycling unsafely, particularly in groups across roads.
 - It was suggested that schools be encouraged to reinforce safe cycling practices and road awareness.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Ingrid Sheard for the Active Cycling Route update.

18. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES AS URGENT

The Chairman introduced one urgent item for discussion: the potential use of Spalding Special Expenses to support improvements to Spalding's play parks.

- The Chairman of the Forum noted that a question had previously been raised at Full Council regarding the condition of local play areas and the availability of funding.
- The Chairman proposed forming a working group to visit

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and assess all play parks within the Spalding Special Expenses area.

- The aim would be to compile a report on their condition, prioritise those most in need of repair or enhancement, and develop a business case for funding proposals to be submitted to the relevant portfolio holders.
- The Chairman emphasised that the group would focus on practical improvements, such as repairing existing equipment, rather than full park redevelopments, and that expectations should be managed accordingly.
- Members noted that some parks were still well-used and in good condition, and that assessments would help to identify where repairs were most urgently needed.

Members considered the Chairman proposal and made the following comments:

- The Portfolio Holder for Assets and Strategic Planning confirmed that reports were already available for the parks and that quotes were being sought for necessary repairs.
 - It was noted that only a subset of Spalding's 20 parks fell within the remit of Spalding Special Expenses.

The Chairman of the Forum allowed some further member discussion:

Spalding Town Board Consultation

- Members highlighted the launch of the Spalding Town Board consultation, encouraging members and residents to participate. Printed copies of the consultation were available at various locations including the Council Offices, Boston College, the South Holland Centre and Ayscoughfee Hall. Drop-in sessions were scheduled for 14 and 21 October, midday to 7:30pm, at the South Holland Centre. Members were urged to help promote the consultation and encourage public engagement with the proposed Riverside and town centre projects.

River Access Improvements

- An update was provided on discussions with the East Mercia Rivers Trust, who had expressed interest in improving access to the river Welland.
 - Potential developments included the installation of canoe portages and a boat ramp on the opposite bank to the Welland Yacht Club.
 - The member confirmed that the Trust was supportive, and that further work was underway to

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- explore feasibility and funding options.
- The Forum was also informed that the next Celebrate the River Day was being planned for mid-2026, with a provisional date to be confirmed.

Anglian Water Compensation

- A member reported that Anglian Water had identified residents and businesses affected by recent water supply disruptions.
- Compensation payments of £50, £100 or £150 were being issued depending on the duration of the outage.

Abbey Path Car Park Condition

- A member raised a concern about the condition of the car park behind Abbey Path, describing it as full of rubbish and weeds.
- It was noted that the site was not a formal car park but the remnants of a demolished building.
 - The Portfolio Holder for Assets confirmed that the site was under review and that commercial interest had been expressed, with potential plans for sale and redevelopment.
 - In the meantime, efforts were being made to improve the appearance and functionality of Council-owned car parks across Spalding.

The Chairman thanked the members for their contribution.

19. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Spalding Town Forum is scheduled to take place on the 14 January 2026.

(The meeting ended at 8.20 pm)

(End of minutes)