

Minutes of a meeting of the **SPALDING TOWN FORUM** held in via Zoom, on Tuesday, 22 March 2022 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

R Gambba-Jones (Chairman)

A C Cronin
R A Gibson (Vice-Chairman)

M Hasan
C J Lawton

J D McLean
G P Scalese

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors A M Newton, G A Porter, G J Taylor and E J Sneath, together with Pastor Kevin Taylor (Churches Together in Spalding and District) and J Bland from the Civic Society

In Attendance: Councillor P Redgate, the Assistant Director – Finance, the Assistant Director – Leisure and Culture, the Democratic Services Manager and the Democratic Services Assistant.

19. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2022.

DECISION:

That the minutes be signed as a correct record.

20. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

There were none.

21. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MINUTES.

Concern was raised that responses had not yet been received to queries raised at the previous meeting. It was agreed that responses to the following outstanding questions would be chased up and circulated to all as soon as available:

- Could it be clarified whether allotments were rented by SHDC from the Church and then let out by SHDC?
- Further information regarding the reasons for the high maintenance budget at the Halley Stewart was requested.
- Could the Halley Stewart be used for all sporting events

Action By

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and not just Football?

- The Chairman confirmed that it could be used for any sporting purposes, but it was more a case of needing to promote the venue and what it could be used for.

Clarification to be given to Members about what made up the £200k cost to run the Spalding Market.

22. Q3 2021/22 OUTTURN FOR SPALDING SPECIAL EXPENSES

Consideration was given to the report of the Deputy Chief Executive – Corporate Development (S151) which sought to note the Q3 forecast outturn for 2021/22.

The Assistant Director – Finance introduced the report and noted the following points:

- There was a predicted overspend of £2,205 and if there was an overspend at year end that would be covered by the Spalding Special Expenses reserve balance.
- The key reason for the outturn movements was due to increased utility costs.

Members asked the following questions:

- It was difficult to forecast utility bills as until very recently fuel prices were stable. Were the increased costs of utility bills part of the projected overspend?
 - Officers advised they would check this information and report back.
- Was there any flexibility in extraordinary circumstances within the set fees and charges for an increased charge to be given to hirers of facilities to cover increased electricity costs when using the floodlights etc.?
 - Officers responded that it would depend on the arrangements with the leaseholders/hirers, and they would discuss with the Service Manager as to whether there was any scope to increase service charges.

23. STREET ART WALL PILOT

Councillor Redgate, Chairman of the Street Art Wall Task Group explained the work of the Task Group and presented the ideas by the artists for 2 locations in Spalding: The Castle Sports Complex Swimming Pool fencing facing the Westlode Street Car Park and

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the redundant toilet block behind the Castle Bowls Club.

Members raised the following points:

- Human faces didn't seem to have the same effect as the animals and cartoons and should probably include more dialogue.
 - Councillor Redgate would feed those comments back to the artists and incorporate some more dialogue.
- How would success be measured?
 - Artwork would not be indefinite, and artists would be able to change the artwork periodically. Art was subjective and the officer appointed would be the bridge between artists and residents.
- What was the scale of the art going to be?
 - At the swimming pool the art would be 6-8 boards of 8ft x 4ft Marine Plywood and there would be 2 boards of the same size affixed to the toilets.
- How would responses to the trial be collected?
 - Consultation would take place on social media to gauge responses and Councillor Redgate clarified that positive and negative feedback would be accepted.
 - Officers confirmed that all art ideas would have to be submitted before permission was granted for the art to be produced.
- It was hoped that the feedback received gave the chance for more street art to take place and for people to work out their own meanings in the art.
- Art was subjective and where would the line be drawn as to what was acceptable?
 - Officers confirmed that within the policy there was a number of key considerations that would deem whether a piece of art was acceptable.

24. SPALDING TOWN CENTRE TRAFFIC RESTRICTION ORDER

The Chairman stated that he had added this item on to the agenda to give a bit of perspective following an article in the Peterborough Telegraph. The article detailed a similar problem occurring in the City Centre and described a change in legislation to allow Councils outside of London to apply for a Designation Order for Civil Enforcement of Moving Traffic Contraventions

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which would enable the enforcement of moving traffic offences.

The Chairman was looking to the Forum for support in asking LCC to attend a future meeting of the Forum to explain why the TRO wasn't being enforced and to look at parking in the town centre A

Members raised the following points:

- Would SHDC apply for the Designation Order?
 - The Chairman responded to say that it would likely fall under LCC's responsibility to apply for the Order.
 - It was difficult to understand who was responsible for enforcing the TRO.
- The Police seemed to be checking for cyclists riding through the Town Centre rather than cars.
- If the traffic wardens could give out tickets in the rest of Spalding, why couldn't they give them out in the Market Place?
 - The Chairman responded to say that it was a grey area as the area was not technically covered by LCC's area of responsibility due to the TRO. He understood that if signage had been different, it could be enforced but nothing further had happened since then.
- There was a lot of divided opinion about the TRO among residents – consideration was given to the Forum working with the Town Centre Steering Group to present a joint voice to the County Council.

AGREED:

- The Forum would ask the Spalding Town Centre Steering Group if they wanted to carry the issue forward
- Councillor Gibson to speak to the County Council about someone from the Highways department to come along to the next meeting to discuss the TRO or at least provide some more information about options for enforcement of the TRO.

25. SPALDING LEVEL CROSSINGS

The Chairman raised the level crossings as an issue in Spalding that needed to be addressed and he was looking to the Forum for suggestions on how to move the issue forward. It was a County

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Council/Highways issue at the core, but also for the local MP to speak to the minister with responsibility for railways to see what could be done. He explained that Network Rail had recently announced that they would be carrying out extensive repairs to the level crossings in Spalding but noted that it was the second or third time that sort of work had been carried out.

Members raised the following points:

- Woolram Wygate was a challenge for everyone using the road as the level crossings and traffic lights did not work together well. Could the barrier timings be looked at by Network Rail;
 - The Chairman commented that, according to Network Rail, they had no data available on the number of level crossings failures in Spalding since the upgrades.
- Concern that if issues continued it would discourage investment in the town.
- There was a need to have a proper traffic plan in place.
- A traffic survey needed to be undertaken to assess the impact of the level crossings over a significant period on the town.

26. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION AND THE POTENTIAL FOR A SPALDING TOWN COUNCIL

The Chairman had added this item onto the agenda due to Lincolnshire County Council's Leader Martin Hill announcing his preference for a unitary council covering the whole of Lincolnshire which had generated some debate around what may happen to currently unparished areas and discussions had already begun in Grantham to form a Town Council.

He noted that it was not a popular debate, but Spalding did need to be represented in one way or another and the people of Spalding needed to think about how they wish to be presented. Different Councils had different aspirations and it was currently unclear what the Government's intention was regarding Local Government Reorganisation.

He also suggested that Town Councils did keep the costs down and make a positive contribution to the community. It may also be possible to share facilities with the District Council and borrow the resource and expertise that currently existed within the District Council.

27. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

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The following points were raised for clarification:

- Why was the Castle Sports not included as part of Spalding Special Expenses?
 - The Chairman confirmed that the Castle Sports Complex was funded by the central SHDC budget rather than Spalding Special Expenses.

- What was the breakdown of costs for the running of the markets?
 - Further information would be provided to Members outside of the meeting.

(The meeting ended at 7.58 pm)

(End of minutes)