

Minutes of a meeting of the **SPALDING TOWN FORUM** held via Zoom, on Thursday, 13 October 2022 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

R Gambba-Jones (Chairman)

A C Cronin
R A Gibson (Vice-
Chairman)

C J Lawton
J D McLean
G P Scalse

E J Sneath
G J Taylor

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillor G A Porter, together with George Scott (Spalding Transport Forum)

In Attendance: R Perkins (Castle Sports Bowls Club), J Bland (Civic Society), the Assistant Director – Finance, the Strategic Finance Manager, the Assistant Director – Strategic Growth and Development, the Community Safety and Enforcement Manager, the CCTV Manager, the Democratic Services Team Leader and the Democratic Services Assistant

12. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meetings held on:

- 8 June 2022
- 17 August 2022

AGREED:

That the minutes be signed as a correct record.

13. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

There were none.

14. Q1 SPALDING SPECIAL EXPENSES FORECAST OUTTURN 2022/23

Consideration was given to the report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Development) and S151 which considered the Spalding Special Expenses Outturn for 2021-22 and Quarter 1 Forecast for 2022-23.

The Chairman expressed concern around the terminology used within the report and requested that future reports included further commentary to explain the function of each area of the Spalding Special Expenses budget.

The Assistant Director – Finance attended the meeting and confirmed that further narrative would be given under each budget

Action By

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heading within the next report to explain the functions they performed. The following points were noted within the report:

- The outturn presented was for the financial year ending on 31st March 2022 and included a £26,000 contribution towards Spalding Cemetery improvements.
- The Q1 position for the current financial year was relatively unchanged from the set budget as work was ongoing to assess the impact of the inflationary cost of living on future budgets.
- Commentary included within future reports would contain any assumptions that had been made over cost pressures.

Members raised the following points:

- The Christmas decorations budget was of concern as to whether it was sufficient and where additional funds could be accessed if required.
 - Officers responded to confirm that the Spalding Special Recreation budget line included an £800 Chairman's contingency budget which could be transferred to the decorations budget if needed.
 - A written response would be requested of the manager responsible for the Christmas decorations budget to clarify the budget setting and maintenance for Christmas decorations.
- What did the unused £6,000 agency budget within Ayscoughfee Leisure refer to and did this money get carried over into the 2022/23 budget?
 - Officers confirmed that the £6,000 referred to a budget provision that had not been used by 31st March 2022 and was moved into the Spalding Special Expenses reserves budget line.
- Members agreed with the Chairman's comments regarding the language used within the report and the need for further commentary to be included in future reports.
- What did the budget lines included within the 'Subjective Analysis' column refer to?
 - Officer explained that the terminology used within that column of the report were generic finance terms for classifications of financial expenditure and that further commentary pertaining to this terminology would be included within future reports.

15. SPALDING TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

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The Assistant Director – Strategic Growth and Development gave a brief update on the Town Centre Improvement Plan and highlighted the following key points:

- High Street Business Support Programme had supported businesses with online marketing and improving online presence
- Independent Businesses Promotion would be rolled out again in the lead up to Christmas via videos shared on social media
- Grants support for Businesses had been provided and it was hoped that this would continue in the future with further funding.
- Work had been undertaken with Visit Lincolnshire to assist with attracting visitors to Spalding.
- The recent Pumpkin Festival had been well received along with other events throughout the year and it was hoped that this would be built upon for the upcoming Christmas events.

Some strategic work had also taken place:

- Formed a stronger partnership with businesses and looked at the feasibility of a Business Improvement District.
- National Lottery Heritage funding of £250,000 had been sought to set up a wayfinding trail for visitors and also a Riverside Trail to make use of the River Welland as a town centre asset.
- A relationship had started to build between the Council and the National Lottery Heritage Fund to enable the Council access to larger funds in the future.
- An Arts Council bid had been submitted for Ayscoughfee Hall which would hopefully bring £1m into Spalding over 3 years to deliver cultural activity which in turn would help to increase footfall into the town centre.
- A Levelling Up fund bid of £20m had been submitted for the regeneration of the Castle Sports site with a focus on Health and Wellbeing. The bid was underpinned by the idea that the investment would diversify and strengthen the town's offer and would also include funds to support cycling and foot connectivity into the town centre.

Members raised the following points:

- There was a degree of frustration among residents that there did not appear to be a great deal of activity on the ground. It was key that residents understood what actions were taking place.

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- In regard to Abbey Passage, consideration should be given to whether it would be appropriate to gate the passage overnight as any improvements done could be quickly destroyed.
- It was pleasing that inward investment was occurring in the town centre. Was there any progress in regard to businesses opening at later times and on Sundays?
 - Officers confirmed that the idea had been discussed at the business sub-group. There were more businesses within the town centre that were opening for further hours at the weekend, but other businesses needed to have confidence that they would be able to generate footfall if opening for extra hours.
- Were there any plans to improve the safety of people in the town centre, such as enforcing the TRO?
 - Officers confirmed that a report was scheduled to go to the next meeting of Cabinet to set up a group to look at access issues within the town centre. A lot of background work with the County Council had already taken place around how the group may work however, it was unlikely that there would be any immediate solutions around issues such as the TRO.
 - It was noted that concerns around safety were being raised by officers at the Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership.
- The last meeting of the Town Centre Steering Group had taken place in May and it was felt that another meeting needed to be set up in the near future.
 - Officers responded that the full steering group tended to meet every four months so agreed that another meeting was due. It was confirmed that a full meeting of the steering group would be set up in due course.
 - It was noted that there were various sub-groups of the steering group whose work had taken place throughout August and September.
- When would the public notice a visual difference in the town centre?
 - Officers confirmed that activities were planned to visually improve four areas of public realm within the town centre: Hall Place, Riverside, Red Lion Street

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- and the area in front of Longstaffs.
- It was difficult to confirm the costs of the projects and when they would be delivered due to material constraints and contractor availability.
- The regeneration of the bus station was a positive project, but it had been noted that Stagecoach had recently announced that the Spalding to Peterborough bus service was to be reduced from a 1 hourly service to a 2 hourly service. Could the Chairman of the Forum write to Stagecoach to express the Forum's concern about this as the bus service was a lifeline to many residents?
 - The Chairman responded to say that he would first contact the County Council to ascertain the numbers of users of the bus service before contacting Stagecoach.

16. NEW SPALDING CCTV CAMERAS

The Community Safety and Enforcement Manager and the CCTV Manager attended the meeting to give an overview of the new CCTV cameras that had been installed in Spalding and the benefits of the new cameras, which highlighted the following key points:

- The South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership worked with the Police and Crime Commissioners office to secure funding through round 4 of the Government's Safer Street Fund which had a primary focus on the protection of women and girls from violence, and feelings of safety.
- The bid came after the PCC Youth Commission engaged with 1000 young people who had identified sexual harassment and street harassment as the biggest threats to their safety.
- Street harassment and stalking were also raised as issues at public engagement events undertaken by the Safer Together team.
- The funding has enabled the creation of 'Safe Zones' as routes that had blanket CCTV coverage from nightclubs and public houses to all recognised ranks, bus stops and pick up points.
- The new cameras were in the same or very similar positions as the previous cameras and each location had one roving camera and four static cameras.
- Work was still being completed and signage updated to reflect the new Safe Zones.
- The funding would also provide for the installation of new Artificial Intelligence servers to enable police officers to

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search footage quickly using details such as clothing descriptions and vehicle type.

- The cameras were still being used in the same manner as the previous cameras until new uses had been approved by the Data Protection Officer.

Members raised the following points:

- The cameras would lead to crime reduction and prevention and while it would be difficult to put figures to this, they would help people to feel safer and also assist with the evening economy.
- Could the cameras be used to assist with traffic enforcement?
 - Officers explained that it was possible to use the new features for that purpose in the long-term.
 - The server could recognise a vehicle number plate, but it was not connected to a Police ANPR database so would not be able to identify the owner of the vehicle. That process would need to be handed over to the Police.
- Did the cameras have communication capabilities?
 - Officers confirmed that this function was not enabled.
- It was disappointing that the communication capability had not been enabled as a CCTV operator would be able to communicate directly with a person at risk
 - Officers responded to say that was a very different role to what the cameras currently performed, and a wider discussion with the Data Protection Officer would need to take place for that capability to be enabled.
- Had the safe spaces for young women been advertised?
 - Officers explained that the installation was an eighteen-month long project across different areas within the Partnership and that Spalding had been the first area of the 3 councils within the S&ELCP where new cameras had been installed.
 - New signage would be installed, in addition to current signage, to label areas as 'Safe Zones' and to detail who monitored the cameras.
 - Work was still ongoing to test areas that may not be covered by the CCTV, and this needed to be transparent on any signage installed.

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- Could an app be developed where people could see if they are in a safe zone and could alert the CCTV operator if they felt unsafe near a camera
 - Officers responded that a similar method had been tried in Lincoln so that a person could directly contact the control room to look at a particular camera, but it would be difficult to offer this service due to staff resources.
- Posters advertising the 'Safe Zones' could be displayed in pubs.
- Did the locations of the cameras appear as icons on Mapping Systems?
 - Officers advised that Lincolnshire Police had looked at various ways to develop those types of icons, but they depended on a person having the app on their phone before the incident occurred.
- Would Abbey Passage be covered by CCTV?
 - Officers confirmed that the new cameras were in the same position as before, so Abbey Passage was not covered.
- If a CCTV operator noticed a person collapse, what was the procedure to get help to them?
 - Officers explained that they would always try to get someone on the ground to assess the situation. The person on the ground would then be responsible for calling an ambulance if medical assistance was required.
- Could the cameras pick up facial features that could identify someone?
 - Officers confirmed that the new cameras were of a higher resolution so could better pick up facial features and that evidence could then be used to prosecute someone

17. SPALDING FLOWER PARADE FLOAT UPDATE

The Chairman of the Forum provided an update on the Spalding Flower Parade Float which highlighted the following points:

- The date of the parade had been moved to Saturday 13th May 2023 due to a clash with His Majesty King Charles III's coronation to be held on Saturday 6th May.
- He had received a quote from Stephen Timewell, the

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parade organiser, to build a float on Spalding Town Forum's behalf but the Chairman had gone back to Stephen to confirm a few further details of the quote before this figure could be discussed.

- A trailer had been offered for use by Councillor Henry Bingham.
- Following conversations with Stephen Timewell it was envisaged that the Forum would be funding the South Holland Ambassadors float.
- He asked Councillor Cronin to take a lead on working with Stephen Timewell on moving the project forward financially which Councillor Cronin agreed to do.

Members raised the following points:

- Was one of the original floats not being used?
 - The Chairman explained that a frame was needed to attach the knitted flowers to, and the float would also use a previous float's Crown structure to include tributes to Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the late Councillor Newton.

18. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

The Chairman had two items to discuss with the Forum:

- He had received a lovely email from a representative of the Spalding Lithuanian Community who had asked if they could decorate the town's Christmas Tree.
 - He had responded to them to say that it was a brilliant idea, and that they were more than welcome to do so with the assistance of the Council's Communities Team.
- He had also received a call regarding setting up a Community Speed Watch group in Spalding
 - The Chairman explained that as Spalding did not have a town council it would be difficult to set up a Community Speed Watch group due to the Forum not having its own budget to purchase the devices or the ability to store the devices.
- Members enquired as to whether there was the intention to work with the Police to enable a group to be set up in Spalding via a different process.
 - The Chairman explained that the difficulty would relate to who would store the devices once purchased.
 - He added that Members were welcome to look further into the issue and report back to the Forum

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at their next meeting.

(The meeting ended at 8.27 pm)

(End of minutes)