

Minutes of a meeting of the **SPALDING TOWN FORUM** held in the Meeting Room 1, Council Offices, Priory Road., on Thursday, 9 March 2023 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

R Gambba-Jones (Chairman)

R A Gibson (Vice-Chairman)
M Hasan
C J Lawton

J D McLean
G P Scalese
G J Taylor

S Timewell

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors A C Cronin and G A Porter.

In Attendance: J Bland (Civic Society), D Jones (Pedals) and Pastor K Taylor (Churches Together in Spalding and District), the Assistant Director – Finance, the Democratic Services Team Leader and the Democratic Services Assistant.

Action By

27. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on: 31 January 2023

AGREED:

That the minutes be signed as a correct record.

28. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

There were none.

29. Q3 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 2022/23 Quarter 3 Forecast Outturn.

The Chairman introduced the Assistant Director – Finance, who would be able to answer any questions on the Q3 Spalding Special Expenses Forecast Outturn 2022/23.

The Assistant Director of Finance advised:

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 9 March 2023

- That the Forum had been presented with the Q3 Spalding Special Expenses Financial Forecast as of 31 December, with information based on the actual income expenditure. The team and managers would look at what they believed the likely forecast would be by the 31 March 2023.
- That the current information was based up to the end of December 2022.
- That the Forum had forecast a slight underspend of £9000 based on the current budget and that was due to increased income in service areas.
- That the final outturn position reported would produce part of the year end accounts process, any surplus monies or any underspends against the budget would be transferred to the Forums Reserve balance, to be used at a later date, as and when decided.

The Chairman enquired about the budget and numbers regarding the Christmas decorations.

- The Assistant Director - Finance explained that when the figures were first looked at, it appeared as an overspend, but was actually an incorrect forecast, that report has since been rectified, as it was an error.
- The report outlined to the Forum, is in fact the correct forecast.
- The invoice for the December 2022 decorations is in compliance with the forecasted budget.

Members were satisfied with the information provided and thanked the Assistant director – Finance for the update.

30. ENVIRO-CRIME CONTRACT

The Head of Public Protection was in attendance to give a verbal update on the new Enviro-Crime Contract.

The Chairman welcomed the Group Manager for Public Protection and Assistant Director – Regulatory to present a verbal update on the new Enviro-Crime Contract.

The Assistant Director- Regulatory presented the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership Annual Delivery Plan Objective.

Kingdom Local Authority Support had been awarded the Partnership contract for the Enviro-Crime Contract, based on 10 objectives, with two parts to the contract;

- Patrols and enforcement; and
- Surveillance camera capability at hot spots.

The Assistant Director-Regulatory updated the forum on what the

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 9 March 2023

benefits were for the short term and long term and how the enforcement of public behaviours would be implemented.

The contract was tendered out and was awarded to Kingdom who have already been successful at reducing Enviro-Crime in Boston, and authorities nationally.

The policy had been adopted by the South and East Lincolnshire partnership.

- SHDC have three officers based at Priory Road., The officers would be uniformed, and body video cameras worn, all officers would receive full training on skills, ethics, and customer care from accredited training courses.
- Kingdom pays a real living wage to their employees, without incentivisation schemes for enforcement.
- The company provide data protection and security, with regular contract meetings.
- Four national companies put in bids for the tender process, Kingdom were chosen for their all-round professionalism and the training of staff in customer care, with an already proven track record.
- The contract was awarded in February, and presence would be seen across the town centre and hotspots from this week now that the recruitment of staff had been a success.

The Group Manager for Public Protection added that staff received excellent training provided by Kingdom, and uniformed staff would be deployed to the town hot spots this week.

- Kingdom offers payment by instalment packages for those fined, who due to hardship may need longer to pay.
- Kingdom would provide educational packages to schools.
- Kingdom offered flexible working days and hours to their employees.

The Assistant Director - Regulatory informed the group that placing cameras in Enviro- Crime hotspots would be considered.

The Council would be remunerated with a percentage of the income generated from paid fines.

- The Enviro-Crime team would be headed by an experienced Enviro- Crime Officer and would be based in the offices at Priory Road.
- That local press would release details of the Enviro-Crime Contract alongside additional presence on social media.

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 9 March 2023

Councillor Casson noted that fly tipping was a huge problem not only in the town centre but in neighbouring towns and villages.

The Officers invited questions from the group on the Enviro-Crime Contract.

A question was asked whether the Enviro-Crime contractors would have authority to remove roadway/diversion signs that are discarded by Lincolnshire County Council Highways.

- The office responded that Lincolnshire County Council Highways would be alerted to any signs left discarded.

The Forum welcomed the presentation, as Enviro-Crime had continued to prove troublesome over the years, with various approaches tried and failed.

The Forum welcomed the education and engagement that Kingdom provided to turnaround public behaviours surrounding fly tipping.

- It was noted that many residents left goods outside their properties for sale or free rather than take the items to the tip.

The Assistant Director-Regulatory, responded that Kingdom would be building on the work of the community wardens enabling them to be more effective and performance would be monitored with data information on how successful the Enviro-Crime Officers were.

A question was raised regarding items dumped and chemical spills on private land, would the Enviro Crime Officers be able to remove these.

- The Officer responded that fly tipping on private land would be the responsibility of the landowners to remove the debris, but would encourage all landowners to report any issues

The Group Manager for Public Protection listed what the Enviro-Crime Officers can enforce including;

- dog fouling
- public space protection order offenses
- managing behaviours from offenders.

A group member enquired how fly tipping on railway land and foot bridges would be managed.

- The Public Protection Group Manager reiterated that residents were encouraged to report all fly tipping, and

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 9 March 2023

Kingdom would have more capacity to support private landowners.

The question was raised on the staffing levels, would three officers on the ground be sufficient and had the problematic issue of fly tipping been underestimated.

- The Chairman responded, explaining that officers had scrutinized the current model deployed at Boston Council, and considered three officers on patrol would be an ideal starting point, these levels could be altered if deemed inadequate when the model was reviewed. Additional officers may be recruited if required.

The group enquired how the public report fly tipping.

- The Public Protection Group Manager responded, informing the group of the press release surrounding the new Enviro-Crime Contract to encourage all public to report any Enviro-Crime using the SHDC website, the aforementioned being the quickest and optimum method of reporting Enviro-Crime.

The Chairman enquired what presence from the Enviro-Crime Officers would be visual to Spalding residents.

The Assistant Director-Regulatory responded that the Enviro-Crime Officers would patrol in pairs principally while initial training was completed. The patrolled area would be based on intelligence as to the known hotspots, and officers should be deployed to problematic areas. When calls were received by the Enviro-Crime team from members of the public, they must deploy to the area of concern.

- It was noted that one of the Enviro-Crime Officers had excellent knowledge of the town centre and surrounding areas of the district, which would be an advantage to the team.

The Chairman asked what vehicles the Enviro-Crime Officers would be driving.

- The team responded that they had their own vehicles that were well marked and visible, hence enabling residents to recognise where they were from, offering the public confidence that issues should be dealt with efficiently and effectively.
- The Enviro-Crime officers should have a presence and would be approachable to help with any enquiries that the public may have.

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 9 March 2023

The question was raised surrounding rough sleepers and would their personal belongings be removed.

- The Officer responded that these issues should be dealt with consideration and understanding.

The Officers further informed the forum that the Enviro-Crime team would be wearing body cameras for safeguarding. If offenders of Enviro-Crime forged complaints against the officers, the cameras could be viewed independently by SHDC to ascertain the nature of the complaint.

The Spalding Town Forum welcomed the new Enviro-Crime Contract and anticipated plenty of positive results.

31. KING CHARLES III CORONATION

The Chairman introduced the Vice-Chairman to provide a verbal update on utilising Spalding Special Expense reserves towards a King Charles III Coronation event.

- That Spalding Town Forum would organise an event on the 6 May 2023, the day of King Charles III Coronation, with a subsequent event held at Ayscoughfee on the 7 May organised by the Community's team. Working together this would give the public two days of events which families could participate in and enjoy commemorating the historic occasion.
- That Spalding Town Forum are engaging local businesses and shops in the events.
- Ten thousand pounds had been secured from the Spalding Special Expenses reserves, to fund the proceedings.

The Vice-Chairman shared his ideas and details of the equipment/entertainment he had secured for the occasion and requested feedback from the group.

- The Vice-Chairman's idea would be to provide lots of colour in Spalding town centre with bunting and banners and had arranged for seasonal flowers to be planted in the planters and hanging baskets to provide vibrant spring colour.
- The Vice-Chairman has been negotiating hiring a lorry sporting a tv screen on the side to broadcast the

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 9 March 2023

Coronation live in the marketplace area of the town centre. This would be an ideal spot for the public to view the Coronation whilst enjoying the activities.

-
- The Vice-Chairman showed the group pictures of themed thrones available to order, along with a red carpet and back drop.
- The group agreed this was an excellent choice of activity as the children would be able to sit on the throne wearing a crown and have a picture taken, it was suggested to have this activity under a marquee, weather permitting.
- At the previous STF meeting the idea of a keepsake had been recommended, the Vice-Chairman, showed the group a Coronation pin that could be customized with a phrase/wording to commemorate this historic event, these would be suitable for children and adults alike and a reasonable cost price when placing an order of 1000 or more units.
- A royal snow globe to be secured with stilt walkers dressed as union flags, this should be great fun for the children and a good photo opportunity, alongside balloon blowing street entertainment. The Vice-Chairman explained that the market traders had been approached to be included in the celebration, and events would be co-ordinated to accommodate the market traders alongside the entertainment in the town centre.

The Chairman acknowledged that the traders needed to be on board and may need to adjust their normal pitch place in order to accommodate the street entertainment. It was important to communicate and announce the upcoming events in advance in order to attract as many visitors as possible into the town centre, to engage with shops and businesses to become involved in creating window displays linking to the Coronation.

The Chairman also suggested that some music and staging may be required for the event. The Chairman informed the group that Communities had arranged a 'Hunt-The-Crown' competition with market traders participating. Communities had offered guidance to the forum regarding risk assessments and insurance.

The group was united that the event should be special and memorable.

It was suggested that children be involved with singing in certain areas of the town.

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 9 March 2023

- The Chairman responded that due to costs attached, roads would not be closed, therefore safeguarding children would be a health and safety risk. The Chairman asked the Vice-Chairman to circulate an update itemising the planned schedule of events to the forum.

The Forum was happy with the selection of activities and in agreement for the Vice-Chairman to move forward with securing these items.

32. SPALDING FLOWER PARADE FLOAT

The Chairman to provide an update on the building of a float on behalf of Spalding residents for the upcoming Spalding Flower Parade.

The Chairman explained that due to apologies from Councillor Cronin, he was unable to give a financial report to update the forum with expenses to date for the upcoming Flower Parade.

- The Chairman informed the forum that Councillor Cronin was working closely with Transported, and the theme of the float would be bees, which had been proposed at the previous Spalding Town Forum Meeting.
- The layout for the Spalding Town Forum float, was Bee themed, comprising of a puppet format, operated by puppeteers, and would include involvement from local children, who attend Spalding Schools, with inclusion of mobility scooters. The float would be brimming with colour and vibrancy.
- An area where the float would be constructed had been acquired and Transported were doing a great job.

33. SPALDING PUBLIC ACCESS WORKING GROUP

The Vice-Chairman to provide an update on the progress of the Spalding Public Access Working Group.

The Chairman noted that the Spalding Town Centre TRO (Traffic Restriction Order) is additional to the wider piece of work that the Vice-Chairman is undertaking for the Public Access Working group.

The Chairman explained to the forum his concern regarding the gentleman that was struck by a vehicle in the town centre, whilst two Police Officers were present to witness the occurrence as it happened.

- It was not understood if the Police Officers were PCSO, or

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 9 March 2023

fully warranted Police Officers.

- Information had been received by a forum member that one of the Police Officers was in training.

The Chairman explained that one of the officers would have been a fully warranted Police Officer. Upon witnessing the incident, the officer had a duty to respond.

- The Chairman voiced his concern that a member of the public had been harmed, and the Police Officer's response was to do nothing in the situation.
- The Chairman's understanding was that the response to do nothing was based on the verbal/written directive from the chain of command.
- The Chairman would like clarification from that particular chain of command as to why the instruction had been given.
- Had the traffic regulation sign at the entrance to the pedestrian area been adhered to, the incident would not have occurred. In turn this was giving our residents a false sense of security when walking through a pedestrian area.
- Presently the road only had a barrier restricting traffic flow on Tuesday and Saturday for the Spalding Market.

Although the Chairman was in full support of the police and the difficult position they were in, the Chairman asked for the full endorsement from the Forum to write to the local inspector, to enquire who authorised this approach.

- When the question was raised why the police patrolling the town centre were not ticketing cars parked in the pedestrianised area, the Police responded that they had received verbal abuse from members of the public so ceased to give out tickets.
- Actions were needed as the public had lost confidence in the restriction of deterring cars from entering the pedestrian area during the prohibited times.
- It was suggested that the Police Commissioner should be called upon to advise why these restrictions are not maintained. The MP had been informed of the continuing occurrence.
- Councillor Timewell had personally experienced abuse from drivers, driving through the restricted area, with no respect for the time conditions. A solution to this recurring problem needed to be found quickly before a more serious

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 9 March 2023

accident occurred. Any incident would revert back to the council, hence why the TRO should be enforced.

It was proposed to invite an officer from the local Police force to answer the forums questions on this important issue. It was noted that other towns are experiencing similar problems enforcing their Traffic Restriction Orders, can something be applied at County level to fix these issues.

- It was noted that support would be required to enforce the TRO that was currently in place.
- Suggestions to secure the backing of local businesses as it was often their customers who were breaking the TRO to frequent the shops. On market days a barrier was erected early to prevent traffic passing through.
- On market days it was noted that traffic and lorries making deliveries could enter the marketplace if the barrier has not been erected early enough in the morning.

The Chairman made 2 specific points:

- That he would write to the inspector to gain clarity that allegedly officers are instructed not to enforce the TRO in its current format.

The incident where a member of the public was struck by a moving vehicle in the town centre, where two Police Officers were present and no report on the incident was taken was not acceptable. It was alleged that as the driver verbally apologised no further action would be taken.

- Secondly, the Spalding Town Forum had authorised a wider piece of work, titled the Spalding Public Access Working Group which Officers had kindly written a report to go to Cabinet. Members of the various groups could come together to examine public access to the town centre, not just the TRO but all aspects of it. Do we need something different from a TRO? Do we need to retain the pedestrianisation of the town centre? It had been suggested that some groups would like to see buses travelling through the town, some would like a different version of the TRO.
- Lots of different views and opinions to be collected.

The Vice-Chairman was collecting all this information for the Town Forum as all views needed to be heard, considered, and given weight, before any conclusions are reached.

- The Chairman reiterated that the issue needs dealing with

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 9 March 2023

as a priority, the public perception was that the town centre was pedestrianised.

- Any vehicle that had been authorised to enter the pedestrianised area should be moving at walking pace, as depicted by the highway code.
- The current problem is that LCC put in the TRO, and at present the police enforce it.

Question was asked if it was expensive to have a camera installed.

- The Chairman responded that in previous enquiries, many issues existed with installing a camera, although presently in the north of Lincolnshire, and other areas, cameras had been adopted as routine outside schools.

A question was asked whether a camera could be instated to detect number plates and the speed of vehicles; this would then alleviate the need for policing the traffic in the town centre.

- The Vice-Chairman acknowledged this was something that could be considered as an alternative, noting that in Sainsburys car park number plates entering and leaving are registered, potentially this could be an option for the town centre.
- The Vice-Chairman of the forum announced that the Public Access Working Group would survey market traders, businesses, cyclists, and individuals to gain an insight as to what the public would welcome in the town centre.
- The Vice Chairman wishes to proceed at speed to conclude what was the best way forward. The draft report had been prepared.

The question was raised if this would be a tick box style survey.

- The Vice-Chairman explained that the working group would be engaging with numerous people to get as much perspective as possible, giving the Public Access Working Group an indication of what the public, businesses and market traders wanted, therefore finding a solution to the challenge presented.
- The report would be presented back to Cabinet to find a way forward.
- The Forum concluded that the group are harmonious that the TRO in place was not fit for purpose.

The question was raised that as SHDC licence the taxis would

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 9 March 2023

they act against the licensed taxis if they break the TRO by entering the town centre.

- The Chairman responded that adhering to the TRO was not part of the Licence.

AGREED;

That the Chairman contact the Police Inspector to acquire clarification that the directive of not applying the TRO had been given to the warranted Police and PCSO officers, who operated within the town centre.

34. SPALDING TOWN CENTRE TRO

35. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

The Chairman asked if there were any other items that the group wished to discuss.

- The Forum recognised that May would be a very busy month, celebrating King Charles III Coronation, 6 May, the homecoming Spalding Flower Parade, 13 May, and the return of the Spalding Festival, 26 May.
- A representative from Churches Together reminded the group a Good Friday Service would be held in the town centre on 7 April.

The Chairman thanked the Forum for the continued support and acknowledged the contributions made from the external organisations and hope they continued to endorse the Spalding Town Forum.

The Chairman asked for the actions from the meeting to be attached to the next agenda.

(The meeting ended at 8.00pm)

(End of minutes)