

Minutes of a meeting of the **SPALDING TOWN FORUM** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 11 June 2024 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

R A Gibson (Chairman)

G P Scalese  
D Ashby  
S Chauhan

M Hasan  
J Le Sage  
M Le Sage

I Sheard  
A Spencer  
J Whitbourn (Vice-Chairman)

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors G J Taylor, together with John Bland (Civic Society)

In Attendance: D Jones (Pedals), Pastor K Taylor (Churches Together in Spalding and District), The Press , V Browning (Community Mind Matters) , C Lawton (League of Friends of the Johnson Community Hospital) and Pastor C Sandhu (Lighthouse Church),

49. **MINUTES**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2024.

**Agreed:**

That the minutes be signed as a correct record.

50. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were none.

51. **SPALDING SPECIAL EXPENSES Q4 REPORT 2023-24**

Consideration was given to the report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Development and S151) which considered the Spalding Special Expenses Q4 report 2023-24.

The Strategic Finance Manager stated that the report detailed the final outturn for 2023-24.

- A budget of £241,375 had been approved by Council in March 2023, the outturn position on the 31 March 2024 was £206,248, concluding that a surplus of £34,876, had been transferred to Spalding Special Expense Reserves for future use.
- Section 2 of the report broke down the variances by type of

**Action By**

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spend, with premises costs being the main driver of the surplus, achieving an underspend of £30,000. The majority of this was on account of utility budgets being in excess of requirement. When the budget had been initially agreed, utility rates were increasing sharply. Assets also encountered that the same level of maintenance on selected sites were not required for 2023-24. Further sites reported reduced usage, therefore less wear and tear, resulting in lower maintenance expenditure.

The Strategic Finance Manager asked the forum to view item 3 of the report, which provided a detailed breakdown of the budget and spend by cost centre.

- Each individual cost centre had a certain amount of underspend.
- Section 4 of the report detailed the reserve position, thus with the inclusion of the 2023-24 surplus, a closing balance of £138,187 was outlined. These reserves were essentially funds for emergencies or a one-off investment for future years and could balance any overspend if in a deficit position.

The recommendation was for the forum to note the outturn position.

The Strategic Finance Manager enquired if the Forum had any questions with regard to the report.

- No questions were raised.

The Chairman thanked the Strategic Finance Manager for presenting the report.

The Chairman informed the Forum that to utilize any of the reserve funds for future Spalding Town Forum Events, it would be mandatory for a report to be submitted to Cabinet for approval.

**Agreed:**

That the report be noted.

**52. TOWN CENTRE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS AND DECORATIONS**

- The Chairman had asked the Portfolio Holder for Community Development for an update on the condition of the present Town Centre Christmas lights and decorations, and to provide quotations to estimate the expenditure required to renew the existing lights.

**53. SPALDING TOWN FORUM SUMMER EVENTS**

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Councillor Mark Le Sage delivered an update on the Spalding Town Forum Summer Event which would be held in Ayscoughfee Gardens.

Councillor Mark Le Sage announced that the music bands had now been selected and booked, and in conjunction with Ayscoughfee, the event would shortly be publicised on social media.

- The event would commence at 12pm on Saturday 27 July 2024 and would finish at 8pm.
- The event would be free to everyone and provide activities for families including old style fairground rides, a face painter, and an abundance of musical entertainment.
- Provisions had been made for additional refreshments and food choices to be available.
- Any donations received would be donated to the Royal British Legion.

### **54. SPALDING TOWN FORUM CHRISTMAS EVENTS**

The Chairman announced that the Spalding Town Forum would be hosting two Christmas events.

- **Spalding Crescent late night shopping event –**
  - Friday 6 December 2024 from 5-8pm, a chance for the public to shop in the bespoke area of The Crescent, with a Santa's Grotto for children, Christmas themed music and refreshments.
  - The event would involve all shop traders in The Crescent, with a proposed road closure to make this a safe family shopping experience.
- **Ayscoughfreeze –**
  - Saturday 21 December 2024 from 5-8pm
  - This would be a family event with a festive feel, including Christmas themed music, featuring a Brass Band, seasonal food and drink, carols, and Christmas lighting.
  - Further details would be provided and confirmed in due course.

### **55. RIVER WELLAND UPDATE**

The Chairman invited Councillor James Le Sage to present a verbal update on the potential opening up of the river Welland.

Councillor James Le Sage informed the Forum that the Spalding Water Taxi which carried guests to and from Springfields Outlet

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Shopping Centre and Festival Gardens, had not been able to use the waterways this year due to a breach in the bank of the River Welland.

- Councillor James Le Sage had approached the manager of the Water Taxi, to ask for assistance and advice on the best way forward to potentially open up the River Welland for public use.
- Councillor James Le Sage had contacted the Town Board to discuss the possibility of the River Welland waterway allowing the use of kayaks, paddleboards and canoes, alongside private boat hire.
- Councillor James Le Sage would be attending a meeting to identify who to “bring on board”, collating contact details to take the next steps forward, and to develop what ideas could be realised.
- The banks of the River Welland were presently waiting to be repaired.
- The Communities Team at South Holland District Council had been contacted regarding reinstating the raft race on the River Welland. Summer 2026 was being considered, and various other outside bodies who had experience of hosting raft race events had offered their support.

The Chairman requested that Councillor James Le Sage should keep the Forum updated on any developments and legalities.

**56. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Traffic Restriction Order**

The Chairman updated the Forum providing some background information on the Traffic Restriction Order (TRO)

- The previous Spalding Town Forum Chairman had started the discussion involving cars parking in the town centre.
- The current Chairman along with Councillor Elizabeth Sneath continued to lead on the said issue.
- A public consultation had now been completed and the outcome was that the public wanted the town centre closed to cars during the times of 10am - 4pm, seven days a week.

The Chairman informed the Forum that the TRO was with Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) to be rewritten to make it clearer and easier to enforce.

- Additional disabled parking would be implemented on the edges of the core of the Town Centre.
- The next stage would be to consult with town centre businesses, to ensure their deliveries could be maintained.

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LCC would be liaising with the local businesses, once this consultation was completed the TRO would be signed off.

- The town centre would then be closed off to cars entering the town centre during the restricted period of 10am – 4pm, Monday to Sunday.

The Chairman suggested collaborating with the Chain Bridge Forge, to produce a bespoke gate for the entrance to the town centre.

The Chairman showed a selection of slides with several ideas of how the proposed gate would look and asked the Forum for any feedback and questions.

- The gate would be connected to the posts that were outside Prezzo.
- A bi-fold gate was being considered, which would fold in the middle and back out towards Prezzo where it would be secured to a new post.
- Three options were presented to the Forum, showing a variety of decorative designs.

Members raised the following points:

- The tulip design was an apt design, but the issue was raised that the gate should be functional in the first instance and vandal proof.
  - The Chairman responded that the gate would be the entrance to our town centre, the design would need to be practical and functional, as well as an attractive feature.
- How would the gate be opened and closed at the start and end of the day? Who would be responsible for this?
  - The logistics had not been confirmed, but the Forum would be updated at a future meeting.
- When the new post for the gate was erected, would there be enough room for prams and mobility scooters to access the town centre on the pavement?
  - The pavement was wide enough to accommodate the above.
- Members raised concerns about the gate becoming damaged by motorists, could the CCTV be positioned to capture any vandalism.
  - It was suggested having a “monitored by CCTV” sign on the gate to deter vandals.
  - It was suggested that some traffic cones be placed in front of the gate to alert motorists that there was no through road.

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- Initially some drivers may be disgruntled but would soon become used to the new arrangement.
- It was noted that many of the cars parked were not necessarily shoppers' cars but perhaps public parking to go to work or catching a train.
  
- Would drivers be able to access the town centre from the opposite direction.
  - If any vehicle was to enter the town from the opposite direction, they would be breaking the law and the highway code, which would be dealt with by the Police.
  
- Had the safety aspect and risk assessment been considered for the proposed gate.
  - The Chairman would liaise with the Chain Bridge Forge to design the gate to be child friendly, without sharp edges. As with all council property it would be covered by indemnity insurance should anyone be injured.

The Chairman mentioned that LCC had visited the town centre to review the current signage, and would be investing in bigger, clearer No Entry signs and No Entry road markings.

The Chairman concluded that all points would be considered and taken on board.

### Grammar School students - update

The Chairman noted that they would like to invite the Grammar School students back to the Spalding Town Forum so members could update the students on developments since their presentation to the Forum on 27 March 2024.

- The Chairman put the idea forward to the Forum that he would like to set up a Youth Council, which could be a member of the Town Board. This would enable the students to express and present their ideas and be a part of the decision-making process.
- The Chairman asked for the setting up of a Youth Council to be added as an agenda item for the next meeting.
- The Chairman informed the Forum that since the students' presentation an open cinema event had been organised in conjunction with Spalding Round Table and the Chairman of SHDC.

### St George's Day celebrations

Councillor James Le Sage mentioned that he had been

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approached by some local residents to enquire if the Town Centre could do more to celebrate St George's Day.

- The Chairman responded that he would be happy to discuss celebrating St George Day for 2025.

**Planters in Spalding town centre**

Councillor James Le Sage enquired when the new planters would be installed in the Town Centre and requested that an update be provided by the Portfolio Holder for Community Development at the next Spalding Town Forum meeting.

**CCTV data update**

Councillor I Sheard requested that a CCTV data update be added as an agenda item for the next meeting. Councillor Sheard added;

- Graffiti was an ever-increasing blight on the town.
- Could the CCTV be viewed and to enable those responsible for the graffiti to be identified and held accountable.
- What Benefits was the current CCTV providing.

The Chairman responded he would request a data update from the Portfolio Holder for Community Development.

**Summer Fair in memory of the late Councillor Angela Newton**

Christine Lawton from the Johnson Hospital League of Friends informed the Forum of a Summer Fair event, in memory of the late Councillor Angela Newton, at the Johnson Hospital on 13 July 2024 at 2pm.

**57. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next scheduled meeting was to be held on 1 October 2024 at 6.30pm with a special meeting to be arranged in September 2024 to discuss town centre Christmas lights and decorations – details to be confirmed in due course.

(The meeting ended at 7.30pm)

(End of minutes)

