

Minutes of a meeting of the **SPALDING TOWN FORUM** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 18 March 2025 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

R A Gibson (Chairman)

J Le Sage
D Ashby

G P Scalese

G J Taylor

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors S Chauhan, M Hasan, M Le Sage, I Sheard and J Whitbourn.

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

89. MINUTES

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

Agreed;

That the minutes be signed as a correct record.

90. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

There was none.

91. ACTIONS

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

The following points were considered.

A15. The Head of Finance would report back to the Spalding Town Forum with reference to the collection of a payment made to a service provider regarding the cutting of Yew trees that had not been carried out.

- The Head of Finance had taken up the action with the

Action By

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 18 March 2025

service, the spend was currently showing in the account, this would be pursued, enabling the funds to be recouped.

A.16 The Community Safety and Enforcement Officer – to provide dates for the members of the Spalding Town Forum to visit the CCTV Hub in Boston.

- The Community Safety and Enforcement Officer had provided two dates, which had been circulated to the members.

A.17 Future Spalding Town Forum agenda items.

The members made recommendations with regard to future Spalding Town Forum agenda items.

- Following the recommendations, The Portfolio Holder – Community Development would be providing a verbal update on the Work of the Public Realm and Street Scene, the other suggested agenda items could be added to a future Spalding Town Forum meeting.

92. SPALDING SPECIAL EXPENSES AND QUARTER 3 FORECAST 2024-25

The Chairman introduced the Head of Finance to present the Spalding Special Expenses and Quarter 3 Forecast 2024-25 report.

The Head of Finance provided a summary of the Spalding Special Expenses and Quarter 3 Forecast 2024/25 report.

Succeeding the Quarter 2 Forecast which had predicted an overall underspend of £38,000, Quarter 3 Forecast prediction had decreased to an underspend of £21,500.

- The movements of the variation of those underspends were set out in the report, based on actual spend and actual income. These figures would be extrapolated into the forecast for the full year.
- The key movements since the Quarter 2 Forecast, included Ayscoughfee Leisure, which, due to criminal damage, showed a capital spend entry of £23,000 for replacement, maintenance and repair works to the soft play area within Ayscoughfee grounds. Owing to the nature of the surface of the soft play area, this was not covered by insurance, hence South Holland District Council bore the cost of any repairs.
- The Cemetery prognostic had shown an uplift of £15,000 since the Quarter 2 Forecast, which had been positively received.
- Halley Stewart had provided a significant saving, as previously communicated.

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 18 March 2025

- Monkshouse Lane incurred an unexpected spend exceeding £9000. This was for an external contract, for tree maintenance costs, part of this expenditure had been offset by an underspend on utilities.
- The bottom line of the overall underspend was £21.588, once approved by cabinet, the funds would be transferred to the Spalding Special Expense Reserves.

The Head of Finance explained that notwithstanding the unexpected costs, the Spalding Special Expenses were still in a positive position. Included within the report was a table which set out the Spalding Special Expenses Reserves position.

- The Spalding Special Reserves position as of 20 April 2024 was £138,000.
- Funds derived from the Lawn Tennis Association had been transferred into the reserves and had been subsequently utilised during the financial year.
- The predicted forecast of £21.588 would be transposed to the Spalding Special Expense Reserves to accumulate an estimated balance at financial year end of £158,965.
- The Section 151 Officer recommended the balance of the reserves would to be set at £75,000, it was understood that the Spalding Special Expense Reserves were in excess of the recommended amount, showing the reserves to be in an excellent financial position.

The Head of Finance enquired if the members had any questions.

- As the Section 151 Officer had delegated authority to approve the drawdown of the Spalding Special Expense Reserves, would the Spalding Town Forum be advised before any expenditure was made?
 - The Head of Finance conveyed that the Spalding Town Forum could make recommendations on how the funds could be utilised working alongside officers, however, ultimately any decision would be directed though the Portfolio Holder and Cabinet.
 - The Head of Finance confirmed that following officer recommendations, a minimum of £75,000 would be maintained in the Spalding Special Expense Reserves as a contingency.
- Could the Section 151 Officer spend the £75,000 Spalding Special Reserves contingency.
 - The Head of Finance verified that under the discretion of the Section 151 Officer, Portfolio Holder and Cabinet, funds could be utilised to cover unexpected spends up to a discretionary amount. The Section 151 Officer could approve expenditure of up to £75,000, to exceed this amount would

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 18 March 2025

require approval from Cabinet.

- It was noted that if a Spalding Town Council was formed, Spalding Special Reserves would not automatically be transferred over to the Spalding Town Council, as this would be an entirely new entity. The legality of creating a Town Council was beyond the remit of the Portfolio Holder – Strategic Planning and Assets.

Agreed

That the report be noted.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Finance for presenting the Spalding Special Expenses and Quarter 3 Forecast 2024/25 report.

93. RIVER WELLAND UPDATE

The Chairman introduced Councillor James Le Sage to provide a progress update on the forthcoming Celebrate the River Day Event.

- Councillor James Le Sage confirmed that the Celebrate the River Welland Day Event was confirmed for the 8 June 2025.
- The Welland Yacht Club would be hosting and supporting the event, alongside Spalding Water Taxis, and local ward councillors.
- The public would be encouraged to partake and have a go at paddle boarding and canoeing.
- The Celebrate the River Day would be a free experience for all with refreshments provided for those participating at the Welland Yacht club.
- Watercraft would board the river Welland from the Welland Yacht Clubs landing pier, then as a flotilla would head down the river from midday onwards towards the Moorings Public House, where non-alcoholic drinks would be offered. The flotilla of craft would then travel back to the Welland Yacht Club to disembark, finalising their day at the Welland Yacht Club. This would be a great family day out and would present the public the chance to try something new. Life jackets would be provided by the Welland Yacht Club.

Councillor James Le Sage anticipated that the local press would assist in promoting the event and provide information on how entrants could register with Anglian water to licence their watercraft.

The Chairman asked the forum if they had any questions for

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 18 March 2025

Councillor James Le Sage.

- It was acknowledged that Spalding Town was known for its river Welland, 'a jewel in the crown', that runs through the centre of Spalding. The river Welland was an asset that required nurturing and development, Celebrate the River Day was a great concept, encouraging the public to participate in some water activity.
- Time invested and support from local businesses/organisations was greatly appreciated, with their help it had enabled this event to be brought to fruition.
- Based on the success of the event, would this be annualised each year as a permanent fixture in the Spalding diary?
 - Councillor James Le Sage responded that this first event coincided with the Welland Yacht Clubs annual open day. It was hoped that Celebrate the River Day could become a permanent annual fixture.

- It was noted that Spalding Water taxis would be returning this year to provide transport for guests wanting to travel by the river to Spalding and Springfield's, water taxis could also be hired out at an hourly rate.

The Chairman thanked Councillor James Le Sage for the update.

94. PUBLIC REALM AND STREET SCENE

The Chairman introduced the Portfolio Holder - Community Development to provide a verbal update on the Work of the Public Realm and Street Scene.

The Portfolio Holder – Community Development summarised that at a future Spalding Town Forum meeting he could provide a slide show presentation, depicting the work of the Public Realm and Street Scene, to show before and after pictures highlighting the visible improvements.

- The Portfolio Holder – Community Development provided a verbal update on the ongoing improvements; these enhancements had enriched the town centre and provided a greater lasting impression for visitors arriving in Spalding – with special thanks awarded to those community groups and volunteers who had helped to keep Spalding tidy and create a welcoming environment.
- The Spalding Reconnected Project had successfully concluded. The aim of the project was to develop the town centre and riverside from past, present and future, alongside building new relationships with the National

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 18 March 2025

Heritage Lottery fund, Heritage Lincolnshire, Rivers Trust, Transported and the Water Development Agency.

- Following on from this cohesion, investment in contemporary Way Finding Signage had been installed throughout the town in various locations.
- Numerous public art installations had been introduced along the riverside, creating a river arts trail.
- The partnership with the Civic Society had seen the unveiling of their art exhibitions in the town centre and Red Lion Street.
- An additional piece of commissioned work was the Plans for Neighbourhoods. This funding had been committed and confirmed, albeit due to a new government in place, the criteria had slightly changed. The Portfolio Holder – Community Development, recommended that Plans for Neighbourhoods could be added for a future agenda item, enabling the Spalding Town Forum to discuss the amended criteria.
- Town Centre Christmas lighting had already seen investment.
- Resources for safety and security would be a funding criterion for the town board to administer. Hot spot policing would be initiated in town centre locations for a trial period, and results would be monitored.
 - It was noted that any incident witnessed should be reported to the Police in the first instance, this would provide additional evidence showing that further and future funding was required.
 - It was noted that the assistance from South Holland District Council officers, along with collaborating partners had been instrumental in securing the funding.

Decision

To provide a slide show presentation on the town centre improvements and to address the new criteria for Plans for Neighbourhoods funding investment, as a future Spalding Town Forum agenda item.

The Portfolio Holder – Community Development asked if the members had any questions.

- The Civic Society representative noted that the seating and lighting area that had been installed on High Bridge, although very attractive, the lights in the evening were very bright and could potentially distract motorists. Could those lights be slightly dimmed?
 - The Portfolio Holder – Community Development responded that he would liaise with the Lincolnshire

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 18 March 2025

- Road Safety Partnership, to request their expert and professional opinion, on whether the lights were unsafe for approaching vehicles/cyclists.
- It was noted that zero complaints had been received from the public regarding the brightness of the lights, to date all feedback had been positive on the enhancements of that area of the riverside.
 - It was noted that the red tourist information signs that had been installed in various locations around the town centre, which were very attractive and provided a brief insight into the history of the area, had already been vandalised with graffiti. This was incredibly disappointing and would ultimately incur a cost to remove the graffiti.
 - The Portfolio Holder – Community Development responded that a tough stance would be taken regarding graffiti and perpetrators would be prosecuted. Funding had been invested to improve the area for our residents and visitors. It was disappointing that a minority of individuals chose to spoil the environment for others. The Reconnected Project had been involved with installing the history signs, along with the council, it was hoped that the graffiti could be easily removed.
 - The representative from the Friends of Johnson Hospital noted that our street scene in the public realm often had various types of street singers performing in the marketplace during the day, did these street performers require a licence?
 - It was discussed that no licence was required to be able to set up and perform in the town centre but would require further clarification from the relevant officer. Charity street collectors were required to have a street collecting licence.

Decision

The Chairman responded that he would enquire with the licensing team regarding town performers and would report back to the forum.

The Chairman thanked the Portfolio Holder – Community Development for the verbal update.

95. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The Chairman asked if the Forum had any suggestions for Spalding Town Forum future agenda items.

SPALDING TOWN FORUM - 18 March 2025

- Suggestions were to provide an update on the TRO (traffic regulation order), and the progress of the bespoke gates.
- The representative from the Spalding Civic Society enquired if the Town Forum could discuss and debate town centre assets ahead of the formation of a town council.
 - It had been previously noted that the legality of creating a Town Council was beyond the remit of the Spalding Town Forum and the Portfolio Holder – Strategic Planning and Assets. Legal interpretation would be required under the existing legislation across the country; therefore, the meeting of the Spalding Town Forum would not be the correct platform to discuss this as an agenda item.

The Chairman noted the request for those items to added on to a future town forum agenda.

96. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were none.

97. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

18 June 2025

(The meeting ended at 7.35pm)

(End of minutes)