

SPALDING & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

November 2023

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE that we have been awarded a grant of £43,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). This will go a long way to getting the next stage of our Market Art Project under way. (See page 2 for an overview of the project.) The grant will help to finance the next in a series of artworks forming the Mark-IT Trail. The first, on New Road near Longstaff's, will recall the cattle market that used to take place in New Road, whilst the second will recall the sheep market that took place in the Sheepmarket.

The last livestock market in the town was on Tuesday, 11 October 1938 – still just in living memory. The new market, on the site now occupied by Sainsbury's car park, opened on the following Friday. Work started almost immediately to remove the fixed pens for sheep and pigs in the Sheepmarket and was almost complete by the end of that week. Whilst we shall not be as quick in completing the art installations, we are required to complete the UKSPF-funded element of the project by March 2025, so things will move quite quickly. Do keep an eye out for announcements in the local press as the project develops and on our website and on our Facebook page. Will we be able to unveil the first artwork by the 86th anniversary of the last livestock markets in the town centre? We will try.

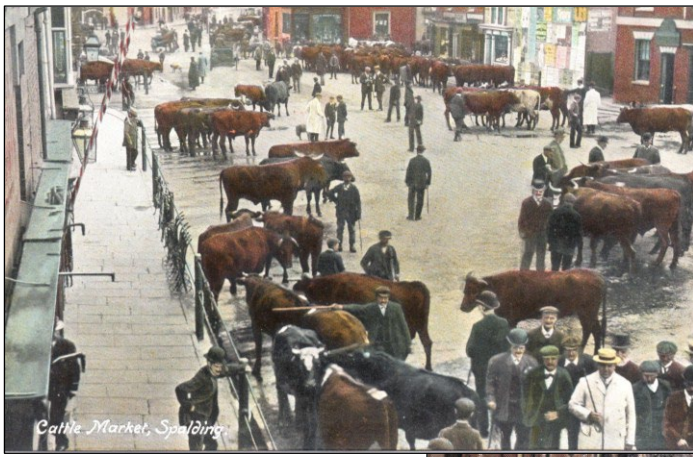
The funding awarded by the government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund is not the only funding boost the South Holland area is receiving. The Heritage Lottery Fund award of £250,000, being overseen by the Spalding Reconnected Project Advisory Board, will deliver improvements to the riverside and way-finding signage in the town centre within a year or so.

Further, the proposals of the Spalding Business Board, established earlier this year to seek to establish a Business Improvement District (BID) in the town centre (*see p.3*), will, if successful, also secure additional funding. Finally, the unexpected news that Spalding is to receive £20m over ten years because the town is recognised as being "left behind" will make a considerable difference. Of course, it is a bitter-sweet pill. The Society has been highlighting the shortcomings in how public spaces in the town have been managed and maintained for well over a decade. Perhaps, if we had been listened to and our suggestions acted upon, the town would not have been left behind.

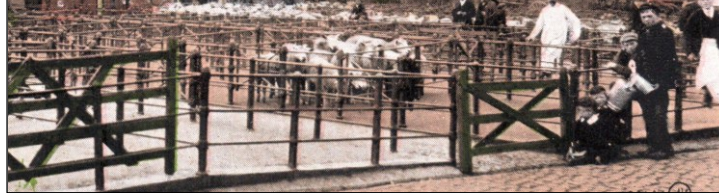
However, I do believe that things are now changing. There does seem to be a change in attitudes and better understanding of the cause and effect of longstanding problems. The Society has seats on the Spalding Business Board and the Spalding Reconnected Project Advisory Board and will almost certainly have a place in whatever body is established to oversee the spending of the £20m. We will use those places to make the arguments for the kind of investment that will ensure that Spalding not merely catches up but leaves other towns behind.

Elsewhere in this Newsletter (*page 4*) you will see our reasons for objecting to the planning application for building an 88-bedroom care home on the site of the Bull & Monk. Why is it that, once again, we are having to challenge a planning application that consists of a poorly designed building unsympathetic to its surroundings? At four storeys high the proposed building is simply too big for the site, very much too big. Surely this should be obvious to anyone?

John Bland



MARK-IT



Market pictures from Pat Wensor's postcard collection

THE £43,000 awarded to the Society got November off to a marvellous start. The grant from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, part of the government's Levelling-Up agenda, is for our Market Art Project. As it is a good while now since the Project was launched, we thought it would be useful to set out again what it is hoping to achieve.



The Project aims to celebrate Spalding's market in its livestock heyday (also the annual hiring fair) and South Holland's importance to the nation's food supply. The idea is to have a group of high quality sculptures, mosaics and murals in the town centre, sited where the animals were traditionally sold – thus, sheep in the Sheepmarket, cattle in New Road, pigs in Red Lion Street, and so on. All still just within living memory.



Originally it looked solely to the past, but the Project was extended to take in the present day, when most of Joseph Hillier's small bronzes (our first commission – *centre left*) turned out to figure people nearly all related in some way to the area's food production, and Addo Food's donation of *The Bakers* statue (*bottom left*) brought in food processing. The small bronzes can be found on various building's in the town centre and Laury Dizengremel's *The Hiring* (*top left*) in Hall Place. *The Bakers* is in storage at the moment.

The Project was launched in the Newsletter in 2009, but it remained a dream until the arrival of Transported Arts in 2013 made it a possibility. Transported was able to channel Arts Council funding into our first two commissions, to add to the generous donations from the Society's members and well-wishers.

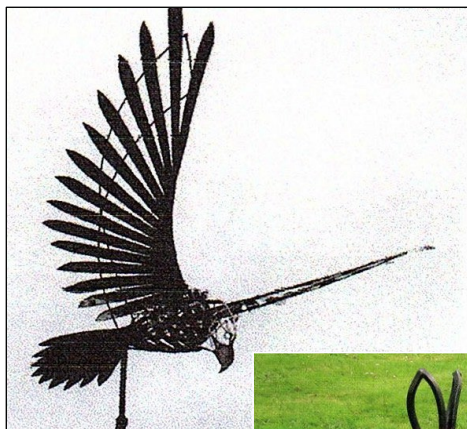
We have worked in close partnership with Transported ever since and are working more closely with the Council now as well.



Everyone the Project has been put to has liked it. Indeed, when the *Lincolnshire Free Press* ran a campaign a few years ago appealing for „Big Ideas“ for the regeneration of the town centre the Market Art Project was selected as the winner by the adjudicating panel.

If it has seemed to be in limbo these last few years, with nothing much happening, that's because we have been searching for a source of funding. [Page 3 ►





◀ Page 2] Now that our bid for government funding has been successful with a substantial sum, we can get going again, and indeed speedily, as the money has to be spent by March 2025. Our immediate sites are New Road (cattle) and the Sheepmarket (sheep). We hope to be able to



commission high quality art works as varied as the ones pictured here, so that besides enhancing the attractiveness of

the town centre for all who live and work here, the Project has the potential to become a visitor attraction and increase footfall in the town. It now goes by the snazzier title of „Mark-It“.

MAKING A BID

AT AN OPEN MEETING in early 2023, local businesses were asked to come forward to help form the Spalding Business Board, a business-led group that would be representative of the town by bringing together all the different parties working to improve the town. Over the last few months these individuals and organisations have freely given their time to look at ways of doing this.

A Feasibility Study, conducted on behalf of the Board, involved about 20% of local businesses and interest groups to obtain their views on the improvements needed both for their businesses and the town itself. As a result the Board drew up a list of objectives, including :-

- Building a **positive image and profile** for the town;
- Making it easier for people to **come into Spalding and get around**;
- Providing a **high-quality experience** for visitors by being welcoming, looking good and feeling safe;
- **Supporting businesses and fostering enterprise**;
- **Accessing grants and other funding** for improvements works.

Realising this ambitious vision for Spalding would need both commitment and a strong governance and structure, the Board considered examples of good practice in similar areas to Spalding, covering numerous alternative business models. These included a voluntary group, a fee-based membership and becoming a Grant Funded Organisation. After considerable consultation of the business community the Board decided to recommend the creation of a **Business Improvement District (BID)**.

In a BID businesses and/or property owners pay an additional levy to fund enhanced services in the area, with contribution mandatory for all stakeholders.

The numerous benefits of such a BID would include:-

- An independent, business led organization, representing the differing uses in the town;
- Providing sustainable and long-term funding to carry out projects for all;
- Opportunity to attract funding independently and to negotiate and enter contracts independently;
- Opportunity to influence and advocate.

To fund the BID the aim is to raise approximately £250,000 a year from the business community to enable it to deliver the myriad projects set out within the business plan and intentions of the Spalding Business Board. The Board also foresees the opportunity to raise up to another £250,000 from grants and sponsorship.

It is the feeling of the Spalding Business Board that, in order to effect real change for the town, control, accountability, responsibility and influence need placing in the hands of those directly affected, i.e. those providing much needed town-centre services and retail, within a vehicle that promotes and facilitates collaboration between all those interest groups involved in town centre projects, together with full support and involvement of the Council. Only then can cohesive, effective and long-term change be effected for the benefit of the town centre users, service providers and the town as a whole.

[Thanks to Craig Delaney for information]

See the website www.spaldingbid.co.uk for up to date developments

PLANNING MATTERS

SPALDING has been waiting for over a decade for the Bull & Monkie's owners to come up with proposals for the site. Suddenly one appeared towards the end of the summer. The Heritage Statement accompanying the planning application states there have been "*pre-application discussions with interested third parties, including presentations to Council Members and the local Church group.*" It is unfortunate that these discussions did not include the Society, or indeed English Heritage, as that might have resulted in a more agreeable proposal being put forward for public consideration. Indeed, if they consulted the Church group, did they listen? Judging by the comments of the Rev. John Bennett, Vicar of Spalding, perhaps not. "*I think it may be too big. It would be helpful to have some drawings that show the proposal in the context of the buildings around it*" ('Spalding Guardian', 14 September 2023). We agree with that sentiment. Indeed, there is not a single drawing or computer image that shows the building in relation to the Church.



Then there is the lack of parking provision. The 13 parking spaces are less than half the 30 spaces required by the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan for a development of this size. The applicant suggests that visitors should make use of pay-and-display parking around the town! This would simply add to the demand for parking and then require visitors to cross several busy roads. The South East Lincolnshire Local Plan requires that "*Parking for residents, employees and visitors should be integral to the design and form of all new development*", whilst the Care Quality Commission's interpretation of Regulation 15 (1)(f) Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014) is that "*When planning the location of premises, providers must take into account the anticipated needs of the people who will use the service .*" "*Facilities should be appropriately located to suit the accommodation that is being used. This includes..... sufficient car parking that is reasonably close, and good access to public transport.*"

The Church Gate elevation is intended to look like a "*large single Georgian detached house*" – except it doesn't. There are many examples of actual Georgian buildings in the town that feature the three main elements of Georgian design: symmetry (Welland Terrace), marked eaves lines, whether ornamental (Wisteria Lodge) or projecting (The Sycamores) or a parapet (centre of Welland Terrace), and a pediment. Holland House displays all three. Even Merchant's House (High Street), built in 1996, manages it correctly. The proposed care home's final insult to Georgian architecture is the unnecessary vehicle arch, which, out of all proportion, looks more like a Victorian railway tunnel. Lastly, whilst the developer asserts that the design echoes the historic context of Holyrood House, it

does nothing of the sort. Holyrood House (where the Social Services building now stands) was set further back from the road than even Ayscoughfee Hall. The proposed care home is directly on the roadside, and does not follow the building line of even the Bull & Monkie, which is set back from the road.

In the circumstances we have formally objected to the application. I have made this point before, and I make it again. The Local Government Association's guide for planning authorities *Probity in Planning* (2019) encourages pre-application discussions involving the council and local councillors. It highlights that some local planning authorities have public planning forums to explore major pre-application proposals, with the developer outlining their ideas and inviting speakers to represent differing interests and consultees. The Bull & Monkie application is a major proposal for the town, as it is in a prominent location close to the Church and other listed buildings. If we had been consulted and heard at an earlier stage before the application was lodged, then the resulting outcome may have been more desirable than the self-important monster of a building presented for consideration now.

The Council is required by law to publish its own Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) on its website, and to review the Statement every five years. The only Statement for South Holland that exists is a joint one published with Boston Borough Council as part of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan consultation process in 2012. Since 2017 there has been a requirement to review SCI's every five years. Within the Three Councils Partnership, East Lindsey District Council updated their SCI in 2020. Isn't it about time that South Holland followed suit? **John Bland**

PUMPKIN PEOPLE

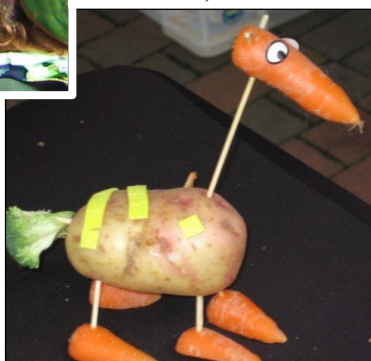
THE MIXTURE of funfair and village fête is clearly a winning recipe for a family day out. Witness the friendly crowds who flocked in to the third Spalding Pumpkin Festival. Funfair ingredients included the revolving teacup ride, bungee-trampoline and hook-a-duck. Village fête : stalls had homemade fudge, local gin and Moulton Mill marmalade.

Spoilt for choice. Patient queues for the face-painting, the autumn leaves bubble, the hot-dog van and pedal tractors. Flower Parade and Pantomime meet Pumpkin Festival in the roaring patchwork dragon with smoking nostrils and the *Beauty and the Beast* cast. The usual market fruit and veg. and fish stalls, charity stalls (*above left*) and Transported Arts. And here comes a stilt-walker and the morris dancers, be-ribboned and face-painted, with jingling knees and high hats of flowers (*below left*) – and just a bit scary.

Our expert pumpkin-carvers continue to come up with creations (*top right*) that show not just skill but wit and imagination as well. A couple of chicken-wire walkers pause for a chat with their pumpkins on a lead; white pumpkin pigs have yoghurt pots for snouts. The Council's Community Team have a crate of pumpkins so children can have a go – mostly faces – but it's the stall next door that brings out the imagination. It's surprising what you can make with new potatoes, cocktail sticks and a baby carrot or two (*below right*). Shop-window displays profusions of pumpkins and autumn leaves (The Shoppe), but



also the unexpected. Molsom's as always comes up with inventive ways to incorporate spectacle frames; Calthrop's overwhelms with superabundance; Hughes Electrical is more selective, and tells a



asleep, as no doubt he will soon be too.. Flowers „n“ Things, always impressive, added to its window displays with a straw bale and pumpkins in Red Lion Street heaped into a sort of throne for children to sit on and

be photographed by their parents In other words, there seems to be an imaginative surge released from people whose day-job may not afford much creative outlet.

Further, an essential of any fait, whatever its size, is to offer things that are special, unique, familiar objects put to unusual uses, things you won't find in your back garden or local park, or on supermarket shelves or television screens – even if only candy-floss or straw-bale seats.

Where else does a seven-year-old get the chance to sit turning the steering-wheel of a real police car or wear a real policeman's helmet and hi-viz jacket or see inside a real fire-engine? Or be lifted up to shake hands with a giant on stilts or ask Cinderella if a glass slipper hurts? Or get a sticky face from candyfloss or go home with a bendy-balloon crown and a glove-puppet?

Which leaves, for me, the day's one alien element: the music. Or rather, the tooth-rattling, ear-drum-damaging aural assault from the stage, volume turned up to 11, Spinal-Tap-wise. For a start, there's nothing special, unusual about it. Far from it, it's only too common – from arena sell-out to local gig, from ear plugs to open widow on a car at traffic lights. Nor is there any sense of togetherness between crowd and performer, although brought together by the fair, with the performer isolated behind their sound-barrier, the backing musicians invisible – electrical impulses in a flash-drive – the technology being in itself a further distancing factor, as virtually no-one at the fair will have the slightest inkling of the complex digital electronics involved. Everything else, however distant from your daily experience, can be understood. The teacup on the roundabout twirls round because the attendant gives it a push as it comes past him; your hook-a-duck rod is a cane like your Dad trains his runner beans up; you can follow at once the giant's [Page 6 ►

◀ Page 5] explanation of how he gets up on his stilts. The scale is human, the understanding subconsciously reassuring, making for a feel-good sense of togetherness, community.

Music? Yes, of course a fair needs music. But it needs to be human; a felt part of the day's community; the sound you can hear made by breath and busy fingers you can see; and yet one that is special to a fair and not the sort of music you're hearing every day. A couple of strolling accordion players, perhaps, a steel band, a ceilidh band, or If only one could track down the little South American combo that busked by the Pied Calf two or three

years pre-covid, sounds bubbling with rhythm and foot-tapping joy! And a wheezy fairground organ would be nice. . . .

It doesn't seem all that long ago that pumpkins meant little more than Cinderella's transport to the ball. That it now means the Spalding Pumpkin Festival, the South Lincolnshire must-go-to family event, is a marvellous achievement for the Council's Community Team. So congratulations and many thanks, and long may it continue – with something a little extra each year to keep it fresh.

John Charlesworth



John Bland

SPALDING AND DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

I enclose a cheque for:- [☐] £8 for individual membership; [☐] £12 for 2 persons in the same household;
 [☐] Free if in full-time education; [☐] Details of a standing order mandate
 Please send to Melvyn Price, 3 Morus Close, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 2QL

Name Address

Post Code Telephone Email



UNDER THE LIBRARY

SPALDING'S PRISON was enormous. There was no Victoria Street when the House of Correction was built on open land in 1824-6. Its huge boundary wall ran along what is now

the rear of the shops in both sections of Victoria Street and then along the present pavement edge of Station Street, and it glowered over the Sheepmarket. You could have fitted the Magistrates Court inside the actual prison building five times over.

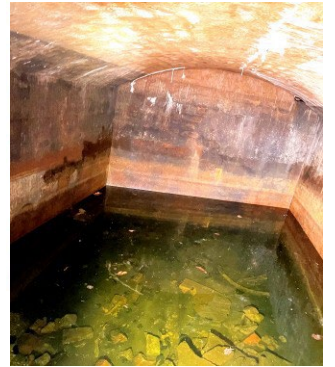
It was closed in 1884, but a tiny bit of it has been visible for several years now amongst the rubble and junk of the gap beside the Library (*top left*): the top of what looks like the arched entrance or roof to a cellar or underground structure of some sort, now c with soil deposits and rubbish. And it is the underground works of the prison that Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. have been investigating and recording recently, as the site is soon to be developed.

The major discovery was close to the rear of the Library: an oval manhole (*top right*) giving access to a large cistern below (*bottom right*). It measures 16 ft 2in long, 7ft 7in wide and 6ft 3in high, and extends a little way under the Library. "It would probably have been for fresh water," Project Manager Charlotte Matthews told us, "but in the end we're not absolutely sure."

The original specifications stipulate several wells and a (smaller) anonymous "tank". Unfortunately the original plans and drawings have not survived.

After the prison, there followed next door to it the Magistrates Court (1842-3) and the Police Station (1857), so that the top end of the Sheepmarket had become by then very much the law enforcement quarter of the town and district. Contrast today.

[Photographs: top left and bottom right courtesy Graham Boor; top right © Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd].



PODE HILL

in national news

THE CHINESE MITTEN CRAB is one of the world's most invasive alien species. Originating in south-east Asia, there are now millions in the Thames, for example, and huge populations in the Medway, the Dee, the Humber and the Ouse Washes. Females can spawn between 500,000 and a million eggs in one go.

They can grow to the size of a dinner plate and have distinctive furry claws, and prey on native local species, such as freshwater fish, bi-valve molluscs, snails, shrimps and salmon and trout eggs. "They are eating us out of house and home," says Dr. Paul Clark of the Natural History Museum.

It is hoped that their numbers can be drastically reduced by trapping them as they migrate downstream to mate. The trap has been devised by Mick Henfrey, a foreman at the Deeping and Welland Drainage Board, and Oscar Jones, an engineering graduate from Sheffield University. The Environment Agency has given permission for the trap to be set up at Pode Hole, where the trial is being run in conjunction with the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and the Drainage Board. If successful in depleting the numbers of these "voracious predators", traps could be set in other invaded rivers, resulting in "changes for the better in our environment," says Dr. Clark.

[Shortened version of report in *The Guardian*. Pode Hole is mentioned three times – though the paper's sub-editor seems to have been only half-awake – first time correctly, then "Pode Hall" and later "Pode Hill". *Editor*.]



Thirteen beautiful photographs of Spalding and round about, some expected ones – Ayscoughfee Gardens, The White Horse – but others unexpected. A pumpkin pyramid; a mid-summer winter. Interesting captions. The same larger format for appointments, birthdays and reminders as the 2023 calendar **and, new, a 2025 planner**. On sale to the public at Bookmark, Spalding News and Birchgrove Garden Centre, but **only direct from the Society** for the members' special discount price of £5.00. Free delivery locally. Otherwise add £2.50 per calendar for postage and packing. Would make ideal Christmas present.

Members' discount price

£5

includes envelope

Please send cheques to: Melvyn Price, 3 Morus Close, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 2QL.

*Please send me calendars at £5.00/£7.50 each. I enclose a cheque for £....., made out to
Spalding and District Civic Society.*

Name Address

.....

Tel. Email

Chairman: John Bland, 36 Park Avenue, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 1QX.
Secretary: Marian Boxall, 78A Edinburgh Drive, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 2RT. .
Treasurer: Melvyn Price, 3 Morus Close, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 2QL .
Newsletter: John Charlesworth, 37 Regent Street, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 2YN.
Registered Charity Number 259956

01775 762150
01775 725293
01775 722908
01775 768303

Website www.spaldingcivicsociety.org.uk

