

# SPALDING & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

February 2025

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

**L**ET'S BE POSITIVE ! That is my plea for 2025. Be positive.

Despite fears that the delay in the first instalment of the £20m award, expected for this year, would make it too late to save Spalding, there is actually a lot already making visible improvement in the town – with much more soon to come.

The Spalding Reconnected project, funded by the Heritage Lottery, has delivered improvements along the riverside, which will become more apparent in the next few weeks as Spring arrives. The yellow Flag Iris and Purple Loosestrife planted near to High Bridge by East Mercia Rivers Trust will provide colour from May to August. With spikes of up to 1.5m tall, the Loosestrife will also provide nectar for long-tongued insects such as brimstone butterflies, red-tailed bumblebees and elephant hawk-moths.

The living willow sculpture in the form of an eel trap on the river bank opposite Ayscoughfee Hall School, installed by Transported (*see p.2*), will soon begin to show shoots of colour. Together with the etched way- markers, it will add to the enjoyment of a walk along the river bank just a few minutes from the town centre. Meanwhile, the soon- to- be-installed new way-finding signs in the centre will make it easier for visitors to find their way about.

The unveiling of the sheep and cattle stone sculptures for our own MARK-IT Trail will provide the most visible enhancement to the town for years and will give another reason to visit the town. We have had a lot of enthusiastic interest shown in the project, not just locally, but also nationally, and with future commissions on the way this can only increase. Visitors to the Flower Parade on 10 May will hopefully be encouraged into the town centre and, no doubt impressed by what they see, talk about them.

The Spalding BID Company is now formed and they will soon have the resources to play a part in enhancing the town. I am sure that there will be some positive announcements made by the company before our next Newsletter and visible signs of the potential difference the BID Company can make.

Also, we are beginning to see an acceptance that our long-running concerns about the blanking out of shop windows by vinyls and other means needs to be taken seriously. It is a very positive development that it is the Council that has accepted the need for a shop front design guide, covered more fully in my planning notes (*p.6*). In addition, I note that the Mini-Poli store on Winsover Road have revealed a new shop front. A shop front that you can see through! This is definitely much appreciated.



Before



After – now isn't this better?

So there is much to be positive about. So, I say to everyone who cares about Spalding, whether they be councillors, residents or journalists. Be positive. The best way to sell our town and help it to thrive and even encourage new shops to open in the town is talk the town up, instead of talking the town down. Where there is need for improvement, then offer practical ideas for how things can be improved, instead of simply talking about the decline without offering solutions. Only by coming together can we make positive things happen.

**John Bland**



# WILLOW WALK



FEBRUARY 8th. Cold, rain not far off, a river mirroring the grey sky and a gathering of well-clad people. There to inaugurate a Welland awareness trail between Water Lane Footbridge and High Bridge.

The willow sculptures had been planted and woven for some weeks already; the songs were being given their first performance; the banners their first public display; and the seven or eight way-markers, like mini-milestones were waiting to be unveiled.

It was all part of Transported Arts contribution to the larger Spalding Reconnected Project, designed to raise awareness of the town's close heritage bond with its river.

One willow sculpture resembles an eel-trap, and will have a yearly trim to its shape. A song voiced the anger of the fenlanders at the theft of their fish and wildfowl by the Dutch engineers for fields of grass. In a kaleidoscope of colour the banners show the river needle-working its way through the town with its wild-life and work. The way-markers invite the visitor to pause and discover the points of interest, both natural and man-made, which will be mentioned in the leaflet that is being prepared.

The inaugural walk ended at Ayscoughfee Hall with music and refreshments. It was good to see the dance-patterns of the Morris dancers close-up and the intricacy of clacking sticks; to hear the blended voices of the Community Choir; and enjoy the tea and home-made cakes.

One of the points made by Nick Jones, programme director of Transported Arts, was the large number of people who had found themselves involved in the project, not all of them envisaged at the start. Starting with the market-day shoppers who filled in a form to say what they most valued about the river, to Liz Kelaher's High School girls chalking up the results into free-flowing shapes; to be refined into the banner designs for the needle-workers who painted, stitched and collaged them; to the

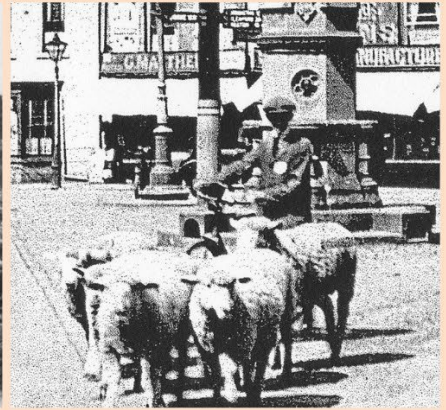
dancers and singers; and the team of ladies who baked the cakes. And the Civic Society, too, invited to contribute their expertise to the wording of the waymark leaflets.

ooo O ooo

What more can one say? a) First, that a permanent home must be found for the banners, where the skill of the workmanship may be seen close-to. b) Can the fenlanders' protest song be set in parts for choirs? c) Where will the visitors (and residents) pick up those leaflets? A tourist information point must be restored. d) And in all the attention being directed to the river heritage, why has there been no mention that it was once a flourishing little port, with ships, barges, cranes, wharfs and warehouses at High Bridge? Once essential to the area's trade. After all, it's said, every lump of coal burnt in Stamford passed through Spalding



J.C.



**Spalding & District Civic Society**

Registered Charity No 259956

[www.spaldingcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.spaldingcivicsociety.org.uk)



# SCULPTURE UNVEILING

Celebrate our town's heritage as sheep & cattle return to Spalding

**For the diary**

## SATURDAY 15 MARCH 2025

11am

Hall Place, Spalding

Entertainment, meet the sculptor, stalls & more as our sheep & cattle sculptures on Sheep Market and New Road are revealed.

The trail has been part funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.



**Funded by UK Government**



---

## I'VE GOT A LITTLE LIST

---

**M**OST LOCAL PEOPLE could name one or two listed buildings, without probably being sure what it means – Ascoughfee Hall, The Magistrates Court perhaps, the White Horse of course. So what *are* listed buildings?

They are individual buildings of “national architectural or historic merit, placed on a special list by the government.” Less obvious than the three above in Spalding are Elderkin’s, Lloyd’s Bank and the former Police Station.

Single buildings not particularly outstanding on their own can be listed as part of *a group*, such as the three shops to the right of the South Holland Centre.

An attempt by the Society to get the Johnson Hospital listed fifteen years ago was refused, largely because its crude first-floor extension, built post-war across the front elevation, was deemed to have harmed the architectural integrity of the building.

Besides the national list, there are also local lists, maintained by local authorities. They list buildings that may not meet the national criteria, but do make a significant architectural or historical contribution to the character and individuality of a town or village. Whilst not having the legal standing of a national listing, a local listing can give a building some protection against a threat from developers. Thus the Johnson Hospital might well be eligible for a local listing.

Councillor Elizabeth Sneath, SHDC portfolio holder for heritage, is seeking to strengthen and extend South Holland’s local list. “I want to raise awareness that we can and must protect our surroundings,” she said. “It recognises the importance we place on the historic environment.”

Accordingly, Councillor Sneath is asking for suggestions of further buildings to put on our local list. It is an opportunity not to be missed. A rare chance for the ordinary individual to maybe have a direct hand in preventing a valued bit of their town or village falling before a developer’s wrecking ball.

Proposed buildings don’t have to be old. Take the Savoy, the sole survivor of the three art deco cinemas built in Spalding in the inter-war years. A striking example of 1930s architecture and a very distinctive feature of the Westlode Street street scene.

Nor do they have to be large. Have a look at the little shop squeezed into the north side of Station Street when you’re passing.

Don’t hesitate. It doesn’t matter if your proposals are already on the national list. That can be sorted out. In the first instance, Councillor Sneath would like suggestions from the general public to be sent to their ward councillor. You may like to use the form printed at the end of this Newsletter. The contact details for Spalding ward councillors are below.

The title of this piece comes from *The Mikado*, the comic opera by Gilbert and Sullivan, and each verse ends with: *And they’ll none of ‘em be missed*.

On the contrary, those on South Holland’s list will be there precisely because they *would* be missed. Part of our cherished built environment that gives character and individuality to where we live. Our heritage. Not to be replaced by some off-the-peg structure no different to what might be being put up in Southend, Grantham, Bradford or Aberdeen. So for *us*, let’s make it: *I’ve got a little list,*

*And they’d all of ‘em be missed*

– if we don’t act.

---

**Castle** Gary Taylor (T) 01775 540014 (M) 07850 077117 [garytaylor@sholland.gov.uk](mailto:garytaylor@sholland.gov.uk)

**Monkshouse** Sam Chauhan 07404 405868 [Suresh.Chauhan@sholland.gov.uk](mailto:Suresh.Chauhan@sholland.gov.uk)  
Ingrid Sheard 07824 363901 [Ingrid.Sheard@sholland.gov.uk](mailto:Ingrid.Sheard@sholland.gov.uk)

**St.John’s** Manzur Hasan 07427 094415 [manzur.hasan@sholland.gov.uk](mailto:manzur.hasan@sholland.gov.uk)  
James Le Sage 07974 577530 [James.LeSage@sholland.gov.uk](mailto:James.LeSage@sholland.gov.uk)

**St.Mary’s** David Ashby 07415 079703 [David.Ashby@sholland.gov.uk](mailto:David.Ashby@sholland.gov.uk)  
Mark Le Sage [Mark.LeSage@sholland.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.LeSage@sholland.gov.uk)

**St.Paul’s** Robert Gibson 01775 729249 [robert.gibson@sholland.gov.uk](mailto:robert.gibson@sholland.gov.uk)  
Glynis Scalse 07906 641384 [Glynis.Scalse@sholland.gov.uk](mailto:Glynis.Scalse@sholland.gov.uk)

**Wygate** Aaron Spencer 07415 204344 [Aaron.Spencer@sholland.gov.uk](mailto:Aaron.Spencer@sholland.gov.uk)  
Jan Whitbourn 07779 895388 [Jan.Whitbourn@sholland.gov.uk](mailto:Jan.Whitbourn@sholland.gov.uk)

Postal address for  
a[[ councillors is:  
**SHDC,  
Council Offices,  
Priory Road,  
Spalding, Lincs.,  
PE11 2XE.**



## CATTLE TAKING SHAPE



The photos of the emerging heifer run from top to bottom left, then the same right, as the bull-to-be waits inscrutably for attention. Life-size, both sculptures are being modelled on individual animals from a herd of Lincoln Reds bred by Scott Thompson, who farms near Melton Mowbray.

The young heifer is 'La Mary Fontaine', and her statue will weigh in at about 5.5 tonnes.

The bull-to-be is 10-year-old 'Walmer Talent' – 6.1 tonnes of red sandstone. Game Mitchison, the sculptor, describes him as "an enormous, very handsome and muscular beast with an extremely striking physique. I will be looking to capture this look with the sculpture."



*All photographs @ Graham Mitcheson*

---

## PLANNING MATTERS

---

**A**T LAST we are beginning to see an acceptance of the need to take our long-running concerns about the blanking out of shop windows seriously. I was recently advised that a Council task group has recommended that the Council should prepare and provide a *South Holland Shop Front Design Guide*, enabling departments to work with shop owners and businesses in the district to offer a design guide of best practice and recommendations to improve their outward-facing shop windows, so that they are in keeping with the street scene. This is very welcome indeed.

It is key, however, that there is open and meaningful engagement with ourselves and the business community as equal partners on any proposed guide. It will need to be one that all parties are content with and ideally have contributed to. It needs to cover more than shop windows. It should also give clear guidance on what is acceptable for the whole business frontage. It should include relevant sections of national planning policy, as well as pictures of the good and the bad. This will then give businesses the clear guidance on planning regulations that they have called for. It will be a clear benefit to have it on the Council website, along with a commitment to review it every few years, and certainly after any major changes in planning legislation.

A well-written guide that is easy to understand will also help reduce the need for the Council's enforcement officers to intervene when planning regulations are breached by businesses through a lack of local guidance. That will save money for both the Council and the business community and speed up the planning process. It will also, over time, improve the appearance of the town.

Turning to recent planning applications, we are disappointed not to have been asked to provide our thoughts on the revised care home plans for the Bull & Monkie. When will the planning department actively encourage councillors to engage in *pre-application* discussions with ourselves on major developments, as suggested by the Local Government Association? Their booklet *Probity in Planning* states: "Some local planning authorities have, or encourage, public planning forums to explore major pre-application proposals, with the developer out-lining their ideas and inviting speakers to represent differing interests and consultees. As well as being transparent, these forums allow councillors and consultees to seek information and identify important issues for the proposal to address, although such discussions still need to avoid predetermination." (Section 8)

Similarly with the *National Planning Policy Framework*: "Local planning authorities have a key role to play in encouraging other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. They cannot require that a developer engages with them before submitting a planning application, but they should encourage take-up of any pre-application services they offer. They should also ..... encourage ..... applicants ..... to engage with the local community and, where relevant, with statutory and non-statutory consultees, before submitting their applications." (Paragraph 41)

Why don't the case officers in our planning department seem to want to play this key role?

We have contacted the developer of the Bull and Monkie and requested a meeting with them in the hope that we can secure further improvement in the design in a way that will prevent the scale of the building from dominating surrounding buildings and preserve the historic winter views of the Church from Vine Street and parts of London Road.

Of course, now that it is clear that there will be a Town Council, there opens up a potential sustainable alternative use for the site. I have always maintained that the Bull & Monkie building would, with renovation, make an ideal Town Hall. The building is of a similar size to Sleaford Town Hall and has sufficient on-site parking.

When the new regional super-council that will replace South Holland District Council is formed, it is very likely that it will not require premises of the same scale in Spalding. Therefore, why not plan for the future? Would not the vacant Barclays Bank premises provide sufficient to meet future requirements? Could the Council not buy those premises and relocate the Community Services to it, which would bring services such as the Job Centre and Citizens Advice Bureau into the town centre? When the new unitary council is formed, could not those Council services that would still need to be provided in Spalding be relocated to the Barclays Bank building? Could the existing Council Offices not be repurposed into a care home? The Council Offices are clearly going to be worth more than the Barclays Bank and Bull & Monkie sites combined. Would this not be a way of financing the cost of procuring premises for the new Town Council and that required for the inevitably reduced requirement for office space that the new authority will need in Spalding and make a profit that could be reinvested into the District?

Just a thought.

**John Bland**

# AGM

## SPALDING BAPTIST CHURCH

Swan Street, Spalding, PE11 1BT

**Tuesday, 8 April**

**7.30 pm**

Opportunity to ask questions,  
to suggest ideas, to join the committee.

plus

Guest Speaker  
**GRAHAM  
SOULT**



**REINVENTING  
SPALDING  
TOGETHER**

**For the diary**

Graham is a high-street champion.

He's appeared on BBC's *The One Show*, BBC News,  
Netflix and Channel 5.

He holds an MA in Architecture and Town & Regional Planning,  
and has been a Fellow of the Institute of Place Management  
since 2018. He is also a digital marketing expert,  
and has visited around 600 centres across the country  
over the last decade, picking up best practice  
at the same time as sharing his own advice and insights.

He is based in Gateshead, but knows Lincolnshire well.

"Spalding is a town that has a special personal resonance,  
as it's close to where my late grandmother lived most of her life,  
and I can remember being taken around

Hill's Department Store and Ayscoughfee Gardens.

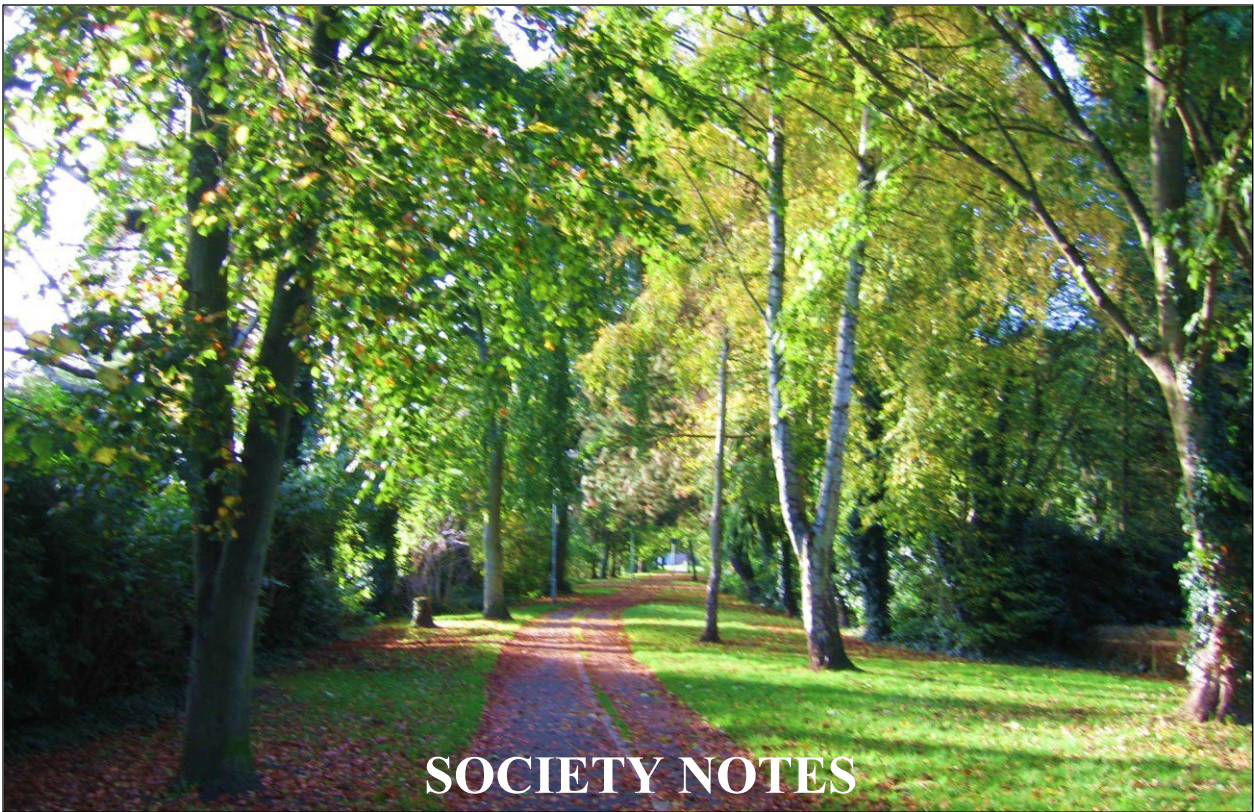
Today, the town centre can't compete with the Springfield's outlet  
down the road, but it can offer – and needs to keep offering –  
character and experiences that you can't get anywhere else."

And the way ahead? We look forward to his ideas for Spalding..

After all, as he's said, "No town has been improved  
by people saying how rubbish it is."

### E-SCOOTERS

HAVE YOU EVER been nearly injured by an e-scooter careering up behind you silently on the pavement? You shouldn't have been. It is illegal to ride an e-scooter on the pavement. Or nearly mown down by one ridden even faster on a road? You shouldn't have been. An e-scooter on the road is technically a vehicle and requires insurance against third-party risks. However – Catch 22 – it is not possible to buy insurance for a privately owned one. The only place, therefore, where a privately owned e-scooter can be legally ridden is on private land, with the owner's permission. The Department for Transport says: "We are carefully considering next steps on e-scooters, but in the meantime private ones remain illegal for use on public roads." The police can penalise infringement.



## SOCIETY NOTES

A WARM WELCOME to new members **Joseph Scorthorne** and **Charlotte Pooley**.

**Trees** – With one of the lowest levels of tree cover in the country, Lincolnshire County Council has adopted a strategy to plant three-quarters of a million trees across the county during the next decade – one for every resident. LCC will be working in partnership with a variety of organisations and businesses to both create and maintain woodland environments. Under the name Linc-Woods, the Council will work with residents and local authorities, *The Voice* reported, to offer free help and advice alongside funding and grant options.

The Society would welcome any members with a particular interest in trees to get in touch – see below – to initially explore more details about the County scheme.

**The Editor** would be delighted to welcome contributions from members to the Newsletter. Especially about features of a street scene noticed on holiday or visiting another town, things that make you wonder for a moment, „Now why couldn't we do something like that in Spalding?“ A well-designed new building, a group of older houses particularly well cared for in some way, street furniture useful without being obtrusive, green space, public space, public art ..... Nice if you took photographs. Contact details below.. Hard copy, memory sticks, discs welcome.

### 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 .....

#### Gift Aid

[  ] I am a tax payer and I wish to Gift Aid my annual subscription . Please send me the appropriate form.

**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](http://www.spaldingcivicsociety.org.uk)





Suggestions for  
**THE LOCAL LIST**

To Ward Member..... (See p.4)

**For the attention of Councillor Elizabeth Sneath**

Hard copy, memory stick, disc, e-mail all acceptable

**Please consider the following for inclusion in the Local List.**

Please identify each property clearly.

(Optional: a photograph and/or a brief reason for choice.)

Name..... Address .....

.....

Telephone ..... E-mail .....