



# SPALDING & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

June 2013

## HAVING A SAY

### The New Local Plan

THE FIRST DRAFT of the *South East Lincolnshire Local Plan* was published in May. It covers both Boston Borough and South Holland and describes how both districts will grow and change up to 2031. Planning applications will be determined according to the policies set out there. It is hugely important.

Would you agree, for example, that wind farms should have "no significant adverse impact on the surrounding landscape, skyline or built environment"? Or that up to 60 hectares should be earmarked for a rail freight interchange and huge industrial estate at Deeping St. Nicholas? Or that planning applications should be refused unless the design will improve "the character and quality of an area"?

Your committee will be making its comments shortly on behalf of the Society, but you may well wish to make your own personal comments, too, as a member of the public. These can be sent to [selp@boston.gov.uk](mailto:selp@boston.gov.uk) or South East Lincolnshire Local Plan, Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston, PE21 8QR.

There is a short version of the draft plan (*Preferred Options Summary* - 30 pages). Both this and the very much longer full version can be downloaded from [www.southeastlincslocalplan.org](http://www.southeastlincslocalplan.org), clicking on downloadable documents, or printed copies can be consulted at the Council Offices or the Library. The public consultation closes on 28 June.

(Not published yet are the site allocations - i.e. particular uses proposed for individual sites.)

£265,282

IT'S NOT OFTEN you get the chance to say how over £% million should be spent. This is the sum remaining from the Springfields SI06 money, and the Council is inviting suggestions for projects to improve the attractiveness of the town centre.

With a sum this size there is the opportunity to make a real impact. One might therefore have expected an overall framework to have been drawn up, which the public's suggestions would help to develop or modify or fill out with particular details. But that is not how the scheme has been set up.

Organisations or individuals are being invited to "bid" for a portion of the money to carry out their own particular project, each "bid" being scored against a demanding set of criteria. Successful "bidders" will then need to make arrangements to see that their project is carried through.

The danger of course is that the successful projects, however worthy each is as a separate entity, will be scattered and unco-ordinated and will not therefore in the end make much of a perceptible difference overall - unlike, say, the clear enhancement produced by the remodelling of Hall Place a few years back. We made this point strongly to the Chief Executive. At the cabinet meeting Councillor Taylor expressed the same view and Councillors Lawton and Chandler stressed the importance of people being able to see where the £!4 million had been spent. Nevertheless, the "bidding" scheme went through.

The Society and the Chamber of Commerce will be submitting a joint proposal based on the *Shared Vision* set out in the last Newsletter. Individuals can obtain an application form ('SI06 Funding Scheme: Expression of Interest Form') from Nigel Burch at [economicdevelopment@sholland.gov.uk](mailto:economicdevelopment@sholland.gov.uk) or the Council Offices. He can also offer advice on completing some of its sections. The closing date for applications is 30 June.



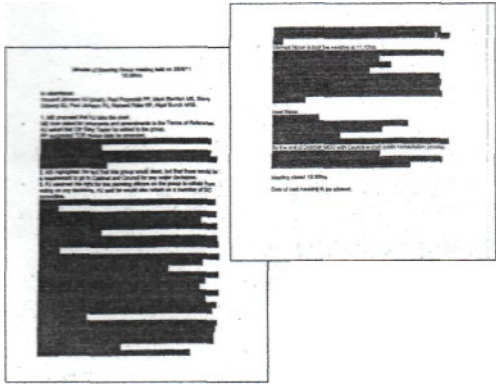
Unveiling of the plaque to

**NB-Now 12.30  
in Bridge Street  
Sir Peter Hendy,  
C.B.E.**

*Commissioner for  
Transport for London*

**Saturday, 15 June**

Halifax Building Society, Double Street, Spalding



THERE ARE STILL no concrete proposals for the

more imaginative interim use of the site or, failing that, a substantial landscaping of the new carpark as at the Council Offices, ("temporary" all too easily

## PLANNING MATTERS

redevelopment of **Holland Market**, although for at least a year retail

becoming permanent). Further, it would make possible the prohibition of parking along the riverside in front of Ayscoughfee Hall, given the 88 extra parking spaces to be provided. In vain.

developer Corbo have been saying they will submit a planning application "shortly". Recent indications are that, owing to the current "economic climate", they are scaling back their intentions - which may be good news for the Halley Stewart Field.

The "exclusivity agreement" between Corbo and the Council has not been renewed. However, our request for minutes of the Council's own Holland Market working group rather more informative than those previously supplied (*see above*) has been refused - now on grounds of "commercial sensitivity". This secrecy has gone on long enough.

- **Halley Stewart Field** - The Charity Commission has rejected the Council's lame defence of its present management of the Field, which gives Spalding United Football Club virtually exclusive use of it, and on 8 April invited it "to review the way in which the Playing Field is currently managed, with a view to re-establishing clear public benefit in the way it is operated". As of 23 May the Council was still working on a response. The Commission has also let us know the formidable hurdles that would have to be cleared for any sale to take place.

- **The Bull and Monkey** is a key Conservation Area site next to the Grade I listed Parish Church and Ayscoughfee Hall. Three years ago permission was granted for a gaunt, over-bearing 'Georgian' care home, and was recently renewed for a further three years. Meanwhile, the former pub has become an increasing eye-sore, boarded up and prey to rough sleepers, vandalism, fly posting and rubbish. Ordered to tidy the site up, the owners applied to demolish the pub, tip in a load of gravel and turn it into a "temporary" carpark - which will be scarcely less of an eyesore on this key site than its present state. Permission was granted. The Society pleaded for a

- The revived threat to the **Magistrates Court** shows short-term, blinkered bean-counting at its worst. Forget the damage done to communities when justice cannot be seen to be done or requires a round trip of maybe 60 miles by slow and expensive public transport ..... what sense does it make to spend many thousands on the refurbishment of a listed building and then on the restoration of its forecourt only to close it down two or three years later? What sense does it make to deprive a "regional centre" of the very social institutions needed to sustain that role? What sense to close it down when Spal-ding alone is already set to expand by a further 2500 households in Holland Park and yet another 6000 envisaged in the new local plan - defendants, witnesses, lawyers, all in their cars traipsing backwards and forwards to Grantham? Where's the sustainabil-ity? The new "localism"? The joined-up thinking? Do the powers-that-be never lift their eyes from their little heaps of beans?

- Councillor Angela Newton is right: it would be a huge benefit to shoppers and businesses alike to have an **Into Town bus-stop** right in the centre. The obvious place would seem to be the lay-by by the Pied Calf and the Prior's Oven, however, not the Hall Place taxi rank. We believe it is vital to preserve the centre's pedestrianisation unbroken, with its safety and freedom from anxiety. What is needed is further enhancement of the centre: more social spaces as well used and as clearly valued as the remodelled Hall Place.

**Planning Sub-Committee**

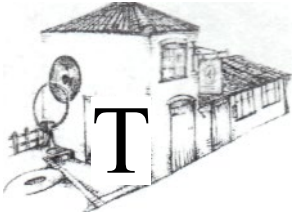
## FIELDS, FORESTS AND BACK GARDENS

**H**OUSING - THE NATIONAL Planning Policy Framework has now been in place for a little over a year. We know ... that it is having a terrible impact on the countryside. Local authorities are increasingly unable to resist inappropriate development on greenfield land, [rather than]

focus it on previously developed brownfield land. So much for localism....

Planning Minister Nick Boles says that for 30 years the planning system has failed to deliver enough houses. Not so! The planning system has allocated plenty of land for housing, but [Page 3^-

# LEICESTER IN SPALDING



THE VISIT of Leicester Civic Society on Saturday, 18 May, began with a conducted tour of the Pinchbeck Engine, which they found most interesting. They had little idea of the concept of land drainage and the flood defence of the Fens. The group of 20 then dispersed into town for lunch and reconvened at Ayscoughfee Hall at 2.00 for a conducted tour of the riverside and its maritime history and a visit to the Chain Bridge Forge, which again was most impressive. Many bought the hand-forged souvenirs.

Both the Engine and the Forge were opened up specially, as they wouldn't normally have been open.

The group then adjourned to Ayscoughfee Gardens for tea. Many had not been to Spalding before.

•^ Page 2] the industry has failed to deliver them, and in the past 30 years the state has more or less stopped building.

We do need many more new homes, but we need them in the right place, not sprawling into the countryside. The National Framework will not result in more houses being built in total - we will build as many as the market can support or the state is willing to subsidise - just more houses in the countryside.

Sha'un Spiers (Chief Executive of CPRE)

*From Countryside Voice, Spring 2013, by kind permission.*

WOODLAND - PUBLICLY OWNED FORESTS in England will not be sold off and a new body will be created to hold in trust the country's "national asset", the Government has announced in its response to recommendations in a report from the Independent Panel on Forestry. The panel was set up in March 2011 after a ministerial U-turn on plans to dispose of a chunk of the public forest estate, following widespread public criticism, and thousands of letters and e-mails.

We welcome the Government's confirmation that the public forest estate will be overseen by a publicly accountable body, and finally we have a woodland-expansion target for England: from 10% to 12% by 2060, though we believe it should be higher. There is to be no further loss of ancient woodland, and the Government is committed to a working partnership to create a new woodland culture in England.

There are some concerns, though. The Government has a rather limited view of what protection means. The restoration of planted ancient woodland sites is mentioned, but with no strategy to implement it. And perhaps most worrying of all is the uncertainty about the future of the rest of the Forestry Commission, which carries out important roles such as monitoring tree disease and providing private landowners with grants and advice.

What's needed now is strong leadership to make sure that trees and woods, and all the benefits they bring, stay



They were impressed by the Georgian buildings and the river and its connection with the town. They thought the town centre vibrant and busy, with few empty shops (unlike Leicester, which has been badly affected by out-of-town shopping malls). They liked the Double Street development alongside the river,

which blends old and new very skilfully.

A most successful visit!

**John Honnor**

[Editor: *And many thanks to John for conducting that visit.*]

high up the agenda.

Sue Holden (Chief Executive Woodland Trust)  
*Adapted from Broadleaf, Spring 2013.*

EXTENSIONS - THE GOVERNMENT'S home extensions free-for-all - whereby anyone could put up a rear extension without planning permission - ran into immediate and widespread opposition. Not least for its obvious potential to create bad blood between neighbours. The Lords proposed an amendment to allow councils to opt out of this scrapping of planning rules if they wished. Eric Pickles, the Communities Secretary, retreated into a compromise, and the new measure came into force on 30 May.

The compromise is as follows. Rear extensions can now be built without planning permission, but details must be supplied to the local authority first, who will then inform neighbours, who have the right to object. If they do, the decision will then rest with the Council (subject to a right of appeal).

These are not planning applications, however. Although the details will appear on the Council's website, proposals will not appear on the weekly list of applications, and it is only neighbours who can object, not third parties, parish councils or civic societies.

Once again things have not been thought through. The new rules will allow more than half of a back garden to be covered by an extension, as the 50% limit applies to the whole site on which a house stands, including driveways, side passages, etc. — in effect reversing one of Pickles's own first moves in office, to discourage so-called garden-grabbing! And, as one of the SFTDC planning officers has pointed out to us, you could get the following situation: two absolutely identical extensions proposed in the same road, one of which is refused (because the neighbours' objections were upheld by the Planning Department) and the other of which gets built (because no neighbour objected).

The Communities Secretary continues to live up to his name, it seems.

# TO E- OR NOT TO E-

*that is the question*



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## Newsletter

WOULD YOU LIKE your copy of the Newsletter to be e-mailed to you each time - along with other communications from the Society, such as notice of the AGM and the subscription renewal form?

It would help to save the Society photocopying and postage costs and reduce the demands on Roger Smith and his faithful cycle-delivery team.

Starting with the October issue, **members for whom we already have an e-mail address** should begin receiving their Newsletter electronically (unless you let us know otherwise).

**Other members, if happy to start receiving the Newsletter by e-mail**, please e-mail Marion Brass-ington with your e-mail address, telling her you would like to do this.

[philip.mar@virgin.net](mailto:philip.mar@virgin.net)

If, however, you would prefer to go on receiving your Newsletter in the usual way as a paper copy, then you do not need to do anything.

## Planning Applications

A NOTICE GOES UP on the lamp-post by the vacant plot along the road. Or you read in the *Free Press* about proposed alterations to a listed building

## SOCIETY NOTES

THIS YEAR'S AGM was held on 19 March, when the officers elected for the coming year were Robert West (Chairman), David Jones (Vice Chairman), Marion Brass-ington (Secretary), Melvyn Price (Treasurer), and Committee members Vivien Berry, John Charlesworth, Annette Faulkner, John Honnor, and Paul Walls.

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There followed a highly entertaining "virtual tour" of Grimsthorpe Castle by Gerry Burroughs, who is one of the guides there. The oldest part, King John's Tower, was built in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, but the Castle is a very much altered edifice and, as with Ayscoughfee Hall, it is round the back that you find the older, mainly Tudor parts (behind Sir John Vanbrugh's imposing 18<sup>th</sup> century front).

or developments in the Conservation Area. If you want to find out the details and look at the plans, then they can be found on the Council's web-site.

Enter [www.sholland.gov.uk](http://www.sholland.gov.uk) on the internet and click on search.

On the pictorial panel planning and building control click on view applications.

Type in the reference number of the planning application OR the site's post code.

If you don't know either, go to advanced search and follow the instructions.

(N.B. An application's *Design and Access Statement* often contains important information.)

The Society's planning team monitors all Spal-ding planning applications, and so you will also find there any comments they may have made. You can also add your own comments. Eventually the decision on the application will be posted there too, together with any conditions attached to an approval.

**Members not connected to the internet can follow the same procedures on the computers in the reception area of the Council Offices in Priory Road or at the Library.**

The talk was full of interesting little insights. For example, when Henry VIII announced that he would pay a visit, the Duke had a mere 18 months to transform his modest castle into "a house fit for the king", and so pillaged his materials from the nearby 'dissoluted' monastery. As a result, the buildings in this part of the castle have small stone blocks at their foot and big hefty ones at the top, instead of the other way round! (Think about it.)

Members are reminded that our membership of Civic Voice entitles them to free day passes to National Trust and English Heritage properties. For the National Trust, write to Gill Roxborough, Civic Voice, Unit 101, 82 Wood Street, The Tea Factory, Liverpool, LI 4DQ, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope and contact details and mentioning the Society. For English Heritage, visit <http://tinurl.com/civicenelishoffer> or write as above.

## **MUCH APPRECIATED**

- The Telephone Exchange for a long-needed smartening up.
- Classic News, Market Place for the restored shop-front and general face-lift of this listed building under the PSICA grant scheme.
- Hole-in-the-Wall Pub for putting clear glass back into its windows as part of its refurbishment and so providing evening surveillance of the Hole-in-the-Wall Passage. (A pity the removal of shrubs and climbers has left its previously attractive patio area draughty and exposed.)
- Surfleet Crematorium for giving priority to the planting of its 200 specimen trees and 1.2km of native hedging before any construction was started.

# THE SPALDONIAN WHO LAID THE FOUNDATIONS

for modern London

SPALDING is a little short of famous people, and even those born here and later reaching great heights have so far gained little or no public recognition.

It is surprising that it has taken so long to honour Frank Pick, who arguably did more to create modern-day London than any other individual. Frank Pick was described by Nickolaus Pevsner as "the greatest patron of the arts whom this century [the 20<sup>th</sup>] has so far produced in England, and indeed the ideal patron of our age." There are already memorials to him in London and York, and even a Frank Pick House, but nothing in the town of his birth until now.

Frank Pick was responsible for the enduring image of the London Underground, everything from its architecture to its distinctive type-face. In truth, he did more to create modern London than Sir Christopher Wren, Samuel Pepys and Elizabeth Fry put together.

And, yes, he was born in the centre of Spalding, just across the street from where Woolworth's, Brat-ley's and BerrilFs stores did their time.

The unveiling of the plaque in Double Street on 15 June will realise a long-held personal ambition of mine, and as the sponsor I am delighted that Spalding Civic Society has also embraced my close interest.

What is now called 'branding' has come to mean multi-coloured vinyl coverings plastered on the sides of buses, and sponsorship of footballers' shirts. No sooner devised than discarded.

Not Frank Pick. When, between the wars, he became the General Manager of a ragbag of failing cross-London underground and suburban railways, he devised a corporate image that still holds good almost a century later. The strict, uncorrupted adherence to the same badge and lettering has turned the Underground into an international symbol of organisation and quality.

On the 150 anniversary of the opening of the first Underground line from Paddington to Farring-don, and when understanding of the legacy of Frank

Pick has begun to emerge, historians have struggled to find out much about the personal life of a man held in such high esteem. How much of his background influenced him later on cannot be guessed. What we do know is that he was born on 23 November, 1878, the first of five children of local draper Francis Pick and his wife Fanny, and that his grandparents were farmers and blacksmiths.



Far more into reading and collecting than sport, Frank Pick won a scholarship to St.Peter's School, York, and seemed destined for a legal career. He qualified as a lawyer at the University of London in 1902, but for some reason chose a career on the railways instead. Quickly identified for his leadership skills and ability to get things done, he was promoted assistant to the General Manager of the North Eastern Railway. Upon moving to the capital, he also raced through the ranks of the Underground Electric Railways Company to become its Managing Director with thousands of employees under his control.

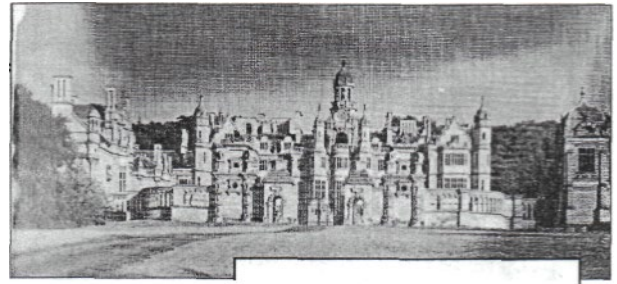
By 1933 it was recognised that for London to prosper as a leading world city, something had to be done to unify the bus, tram and railway system that had developed in piecemeal fashion following the curious Victorian decision not to allow the main-line termini to penetrate the centre of population and commerce.

The London Passenger Transport Board was created, and Frank Pick proved the perfect choice as its first Chief Executive. Despite having little money to work with, he created the much-needed 'family feel'. Services expanded rapidly, and some of the new lines he constructed into the suburbs with their distinctive art-deco stations created what Betjeman lovingly described as 'Metroland'.

Frank Pick's devotion to good, radical design remains his popular epitaph. The familiar London Underground route map with its different colours for different lines has been copied around the world, and familiar roundel signs at the top of Tube station entrance steps still offer a warm welcome for those unfortunate enough to become lost amongst the tall buildings of anonymous hostile streets.

Frank Pick was no nine-to-fiver, but a hard worker who led by example. Judging by his writings on the importance of quality urban plan- [Page 8 ^

This "monster house", with its "gargantuan gates", "crescendo of effects", "pyrotechnic display", "unbelievably luscious plasterwork", "panoply of theatrical effects", "operatic display"..... Almost never does Pevsner's dry academic prose burst out into such rapturous wonder as it does over Har-laxton Manor. It is "the wildest and most fanciful mansion of the 1830s".



"Unique." "It must be seen to be believed." Member Annette Faulkner writes: This pseudo stately home truly is an amazing building, looking, I always think, like a cross between something out of Disney and a wedding cake, and just as extraordinary inside as out, being a conglomeration of different styles all mixed up together. (Pevsner spends four pages picking out the various stately homes copied from.) It is owned by the University of Evansville, Indiana, and the American students and staff come over for the autumn and spring 'semesters'. The house is open to the public for only one day a year and

tickets are snapped up immediately. **The Society has been able to arrange a private visit: Sunday, 28 July, 2.00 pm.**

**For the diary**

Numbers are strictly limited. Book your place (£9 including refreshments) with Marion Brassington. Contact details below. Cheque with booking, please, by 20 June, made out to Spalding & District Civic Society. Own transport. Harlaxton is just south of Grantham on the A607.

**An opportunity not to be missed.**

### The Spaldonian Who Laid the Foundations ...

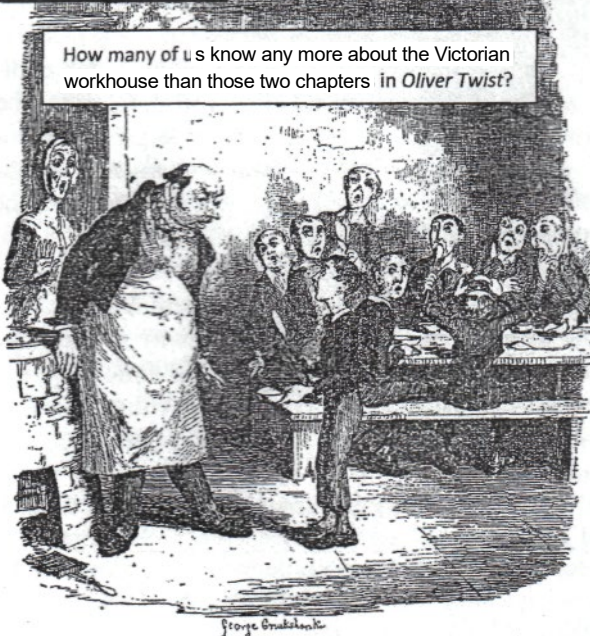
•<sup>^</sup> Page 7] —ning and the evidence of lectures to anyone who would listen, he was a visionary motivator. While the Second World War was too late for him (he died at his home in Golders Green on 7 November 1941 - there were no children), even his final days with illness debilitating him were spent masterminding a plan to evacuate millions of citizens to safety by whatever means possible, which by this time also included canals and seaways. **Howard Johnston**

[Howard Johnston, who lives near Huntingdon and in Norfolk, is Chairman of Mainspring, a publishing and events company he founded to specialise in public transport. Born locally, he was a pupil at Spalding Grammar School in the 1960s, and spent his early training years with the Lincolnshire Free Press and Spalding Guardian. He was a provincial newspaper editor 1979-88, and has also worked in Fleet Street. A fellow of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport, he remains a prolific writer in his few spare moments and owns a main-line railway diesel locomotive that was christened Spalding Town in a ceremony at the station in 2002.

"My lifelong interest in transport," he says, "may well have been stimulated by browsing visits to Ashwell's bookshop and newsagent's, coincidentally only a couple of yards away from Frank Pick's birthplace on the same side of Bridge Street. It's now 40 years since I lived and worked in Spalding, but I'm still rather proud of the sound start it gave me, and I have never completely lost touch. Sponsoring the Frank Pick plaque is my way of giving something back. "]

### For the diary

How many of us know any more about the Victorian workhouse than those two chapters in *Oliver Twist*?



### THE PETERBOROUGH WORKHOUSES

an illustrated talk by  
**STEPHEN PERRY**

Thurs. 17 October, 7.30, Grammar School Business Centre

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**CIVIC**  
voice