

# SPALDING & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

October 2019

## THE BAKERS

**T**HE MARKET ART PROJECT has taken an unexpected leap forward in the last few weeks. The sculpture that stood on a mound in front of the Spalding Bakery (Fulney Avenue) has been donated to the project by the Addo Food Group.

A picture of the empty mound in the local press, prompted us to enquire what had become of the statue. The speed and generosity of the response more than matched our hopes. The warmest of thanks therefore to Addo's CEO Deborah Bolton and to Sean Stewart, Eric Parker and Sharon Thompson at the Bakery, who have eased our way, introduced us to the sculptures and given us information.

With our partner Transported Arts and SHDC officers we are working to identify a suitable town centre site and then to decide on the kind of plinth that will be appropriate for the chosen location. *[More on p.3.]*

One of the country's more unusual examples of recycling?



## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

**W**E ARE LIVING through interesting times. Whilst one issue seems to dominate the news these days and looks set to continue, it is all too easy to overlook other developments that will I hope lead to some positive changes in our town eventually.

It's welcome news that part of the government's £1bn Future High Streets fund will find its way to our neighbours in Holbeach, Grantham, Lincoln and King's Lynn, and I wish them well in using the money to make a real difference to their town centres. Perhaps when people see the visual results and the resulting boost to local economies, they will conclude that similar investment in Spalding is not only desirable, but essential.

Little things of course can be done to help make our town centre more attractive. Sometimes oppor-

tunities arise unexpectedly. As can be seen with Neal French's statue *[above]*, which Spalding Bakery have donated to the Market Art Project following the planned closure of the factory. We are very grateful for this gift and are looking at possible sites in the town, so that in years to come the business and those who have worked in it will be remembered.

It is also pleasing to hear of an increasing desire to restore the Johnson Memorial Drinking Fountain to the town centre. The ongoing campaign to reduce plastic waste makes this something that we must surely set out to achieve next year. There's a blueprint right on our doorstep in Sleaford, where the restored Bristol Drinking Fountain was unveiled a year ago, a project driven by Sleaford Civic Society and largely funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Whilst we don't know how much *[Page 8]* ►

---

## BLUE PLAQUE 6

---

**O**UR LATEST PLAQUE – to George Shepherd, First Baron Spalding (1881-1954) – was unveiled on Saturday, 22 July, by his great-grandson, the Hon. Patrick Shepherd, who was briefly in this country with his wife and family from their home in Hong Kong.

In his words of welcome Society Chairman John Bland outlined the history of commemorative blue plaques and reminded us of the Society's five other blue plaques to notable residents and visitors to the town, thanking all those involved in the organisation of the new one, particularly Judy and Mike Chapman.

County Councillor and SHDC Deputy Leader Nick Worth spoke warmly of the Society's contribution to the enhancement of the town centre. He found George Shepherd an inspiring example of the way someone from humble beginnings – his father a tailor who lived above his New Road shop – could rise through his own efforts and sustained application to a position of great political influence and eventually a seat in the House of Lords. Coun. Worth added that South Holland was fortunate at the present moment to have two members in the Upper House, Lord Porter of Spalding and Lord Taylor of Holbeach.

Mark Popple, Vice-Chair South Holland and Deepings Labour Party, spoke of George Shepherd's key rôle in negotiating the terms of the wartime coalition between the Conservative and Labour parties and, post war, behind the scenes in the Attlee government's transformation of British society, culminating in the creation of the National Health Service.

Finally it was Patrick Shepherd's turn. His emphasis was on George Shepherd's lifelong efforts

through the trades union movement to better the lot and working conditions of ordinary working people, the wartime collaboration between the two main parties that his great-grandfather had done so much to bring about, and the social achievements of the post-war government. He was proud, he said, that he and his father were following in their forebear's footsteps by continuing to be involved in the Labour Movement.

And so to the unveiling – sort of, as the breezy morning had earlier foiled efforts to hang the 'veil'.

Many thanks to the Hon. Patrick Shepherd for performing the ceremony, to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Baron for his generous donations to the Society, to Judy and Mike Chapman, and to Marian Boxall and the ladies of the Baptist Church for organising the refreshments which followed.

The plaque reads:

**GEORGE SHEPHERD (1881-1954)**  
**First Baron Shepherd of Spalding 1946**  
**Labour Party National Agent 1929-1946**  
**Government Chief Whip and Privy Councillor**  
**grew up here.**



From left: Mark Popple, Patrick Shepherd, John Bland, Nick Worth

---

## SOCIETY NOTES

---

**A** WARM WELCOME to new members Heather Violett and Martin Blake.

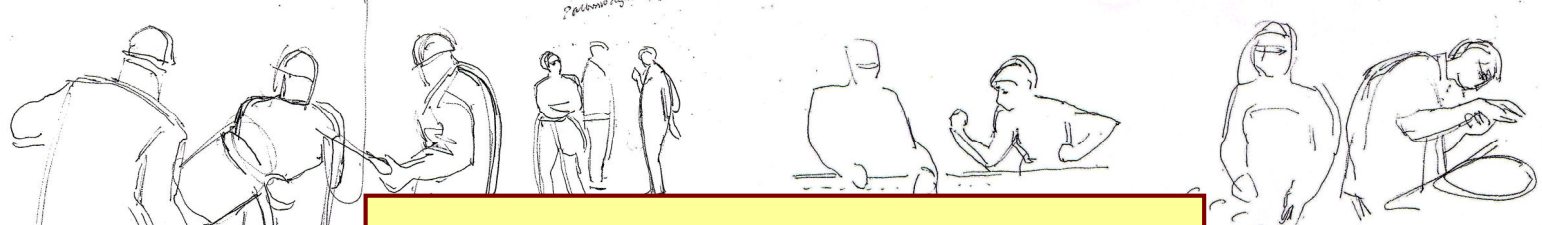
And a welcome back to the committee to Marion Brassington. It is good to have her extensive knowledge of Spalding's history in play again.

A big thank-you next to John Honnor, who for several years now has been our invaluable postman, cycling round town to deliver the Newsletter to members who receive paper copies, and who is now standing down. What shall we do without him? One thing might be for more hard-copy members to take up the option of receiving the Newsletter online – contact Marian Boxall, details back page. Another of course would be to take on the postman rôle, perhaps for just a small area roundabout where you live – i.e. several post-men or –women. Contact

David Jones, details on page 4. We should be very grateful, and it would help to keep down costs.

We hope you like the calendar. If we decide to do another for 2021, we shall of course need photographs, so please take your camera or smart phone with you when you're out and about locally and keep your eye open for particularly photogenic scenes.

Finally, something we can all do with the greatest of ease. Whenever you see a shop window with a striking or attractive display – Geo. Adams butcher's or Molsom's optician's at the moment, for example – just pop in and say how nice it is. You'll be rewarded with the broadest of surprised and delighted smiles. Or if you see a cyclist wheeling his or her bike through the pedestrianised area – as with a group of four teenage lads one market day recently – why not go up and thank them? They'll be surprised, too. Reinforce the good; challenge the bad.



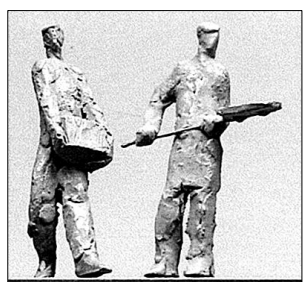
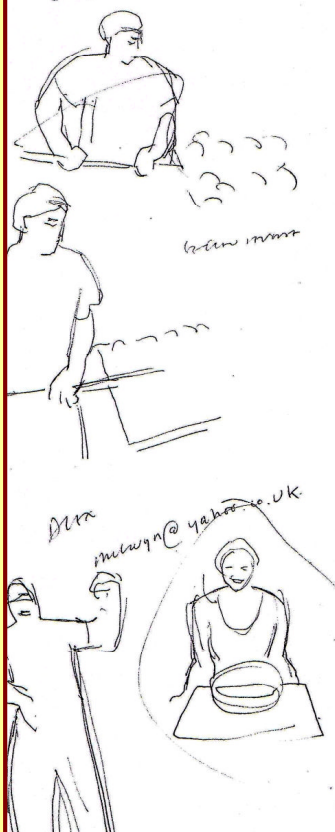
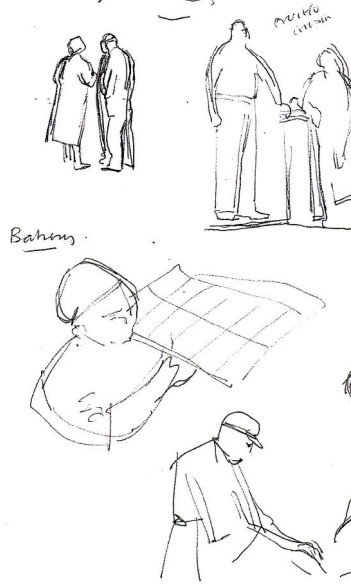
## THE BAKERS

THE SCULPTURE was formerly known simply as *Spalding Figures*. It was commissioned and installed in the early 2000s for the pork foods bakery in Fulney Lane and stood on a grassy mound that could be seen from the Springfields roundabout.

The two aluminium resin figures are a little over life-size. The sculptor made dozens of sketches on the factory shop-floor and then a dozen or so maquettes, from which two were finally chosen “to represent the men and women workers of the bakery, and to show their energy and pride in their work”. This can be most readily seen in the man, with his squared shoulders and head thrown back and the tray of products tilted towards you, as if to say: “There, all perfectly in line, and perfectly baked.”

The sculptor was Neal French, who is based in Dereham in Norfolk. The delightful family group in Saracen’s Head is also his work. Elected Fellow of the Royal British Society of Sculptors and Member of the Society of Portrait Sculptors in 2002, he works in ceramics and bronze as well as resin. “My work is figurative ... [but] is seldom literal. It usually derives from an image of a figure that seems entirely characteristic of that person, but which at the same time carries abstract sculptural qualities and possibilities. [My work’s all] about balancing the two elements.”

So how does *The Bakers* fit into the Market Art Project, designed as it is to celebrate Spalding’s historic market in its live-stock heyday? Quite well, really. Although not originally intended that way, Joseph Hillier’s fourteen small bronzes form a link between our market heritage and the area’s present-day importance in the country’s food production and processing, as nearly every figure is of someone involved in it in some way, from drainage engineer to farmers, and auction clerk to vegetable packagers, market traders and shopkeepers. The bakery sculpture will therefore complete the sequence as an emblem of the final processing of the food into pies and sausage rolls, frozen dishes and ready-meals, the last stage of the journey from soil to supermarket shelves.



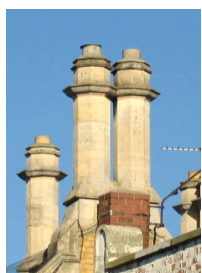
Sketches and maquettes



for *The Bakers*



Where are they ?



## QUIZ

For the diary

- Suitable for everyone ●
- However long or short you’ve been in Spalding ●
- No historical knowledge required ●
- Just good observation ●

Make up a team (4) with your friends or family or just come along and join in the fun anyway.

Refreshments

Tuesday, 4 February, 7.30

St.Norbert’s Church Hall

---

## PLANNING MATTERS

---

**S**OUTH WESTERN RELIEF ROAD – John Hayes’s efforts to get the decision ‘called in’ were unsuccessful, so this crazy scheme continues, with its ‘two roads to nowhere’, set to inflict increasing traffic congestion on the town centre indefinitely. Lord Hayes and the residents’ group are considering how best to pursue the matter further.

Few planning applications have stood out recently; the bulk of them as usual being for house extensions and tree works. There was an application for a catering trailer on the triangle of scruffy land in the Sheepmarket to the right of Hughes electrical store; we objected strongly, as did others, and it was refused. The site cries out for a little green enclave – grass, shrubs, a tree or two, benches – but the owner will of course want a return on his investment, so we shall have to wait – as we have been doing for over 60 years. Gone are the days when owners would donate land for public projects, as happened with the Grammar School and the old Johnson Hospital.

An application for a residential building on Abbey Path on the corner of the eyesore carpark is still undecided, and I would invite members to look

it up (ref. no. H16-0651-19) on the SHDC website and send me your thoughts.

A large dead tree has been felled in West Elloe Avenue. Indeed, quite a number of roadside trees have disappeared over the last few years, and I should be grateful if readers could help me compile a list of places where there used to be trees so that ideally they can be replaced – *contact details below*.

Our campaign against the vinyl blanking-out of shop windows continues. John Hayes has put it to the relevant minister, who agreed that the matter is “important” but said he can’t do anything about it (!). (What are government ministers for?) Please help by telling shop owners of your feelings about the depressing effect this vinyl blight has on our town centre.

Meanwhile, we are pleased to be able to report that quarterly meetings have now been set up with Council Officers Emily Spicer (Head of Place) and Phil Norman (Head of Planning) to discuss matters of mutual concern, both major and minor. The most recent one was particularly positive.

**David Jones**

---

## NEXT ON THE LIST ?

---

**B**EFORE BREXIT ARRIVED to fill the column-inches, one of the most frequent topics in the letter pages of the local press was the state of the town centre, with concerns ranging from litter and graffiti at one extreme to the proliferation of take-aways and charity shops at the other. An overall theme was that the centre looks shabby, run-down. Quite a number of these letters have come from people who have been left for some years and have then returned on a visit. Consultants have said likewise (e.g. *A Postcard from Spalding*).

With the adoption of the new *South East Lincolnshire Local Plan*, both Boston and Spalding are required to produce schemes for the regeneration of their respective centres within twelve months in order to ensure their “vitality and viability” (Policy 25). Holbeach is already in line for money from the government’s Future High Streets fund; and Councillor Nick Worth has indicated more than once that Spalding is next in line for attention..

One thing we should very much like to see as part of any action plan is a reactivation of the PSICA grants scheme, which ran successfully in South Holland several years ago. Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas (PSICA) worked as follows:-

“The SHDC Conservation Officer drew up a list of properties that would particularly benefit from the scheme, and a working group drawn from civic societies in the district selected a short-list. There was a 90% grant for the restoration or enhancement of frontages and 50% for internal modifications (such as adapting redundant first floor space above a shop as a flat). Owners were then made an offer. Some accepted; some not. Two Spalding properties that benefited, for example, were Kingston’s Corner (Crown Affair) and the Magistrates Court (restoration of railings), but the scheme was not confined to Spalding. It very much depended on the energy and enthusiasm of the Conservation Officer at the time, Liz Mayle.”

**John Honnor**

Opposite is a quick tour of Hall Place and the Market Place, looking at some of the buildings that could benefit from a PSICA grant or similar.

Please let us have your ideas, so that we can pass them on – **not maintenance** like litter or blocked street drains, but things that would make the centre physically more attractive. Ideas to David Jones (01775 766145 or [davidjones2da@hotmail.com](mailto:davidjones2da@hotmail.com)) or John Charlesworth (details on back page).

# BEAUTY & THE BEASTS

“On your imaginary forces work....”

SUPPOSE all the shops and offices and cafés in Hall Place and the Market Place were each given the kind of make-over the Thomas Cook building received a few years ago, what wonderful spaces they would be. Before, when it was Curry’s, it was all a flat monochrome wash, with the first-floor balconies removed to accommodate a bloated fascia board obliterating the lower part of the windows, and an incongruous modern shop-front. The principles are simple: restore original features, heighten the detailing, and bring back a traditional shop front in harmony with the host architecture. (The Red Lion is another example of this.)



The above restoration was carried out independently by the owner without PSICA grant

After seeing what *can* be done, a few suggestions follow, large and small, for what *might* be done in Hall Place and the Market Place helped by PSICA grants.

- **1&6** – Renovate as a whole. Scrap the bloated fascia boards, restore the full length of the first-floor windows, put in traditional shop fronts, repaint to reveal the detailing. (Mentally erase the ground-floor mess and there’s really quite a handsome building here, waiting to be reborn.)
- **2** – Well-maintained, but at present unidentified. Put ‘The White Hart’ (its postal address) back onto the upper black strip (see Red Lion), and the charity shop name to the right of the portico to match the Shanghai Garden. Corporate style needs to be adapted to suit listed buildings.
- **3&7** – A real gem, but its detailing is denied by the monochrome wash and bullied into insignificance by the garish, inflated fascia and incongruous shop front. Suggest a sensitive, detailed repaint and traditional shop front.
- **4** – A missed opportunity. Put shop name on fascia board, not plastic window-film. Restore attention to detail, as when the business moved in.
- **5** – Well-maintained above, but marred by the slovenly clutter of wire and junction boxes. Sort out. Restore the cut-off quoins to ground floor. Traditional shop front.
- **8** – Not a PSICA matter; but this blanking-out vinyl mess is unacceptable from a major company in our Conservation Area. “Beauty,” it says! They only need look at Wilko’s in Holland Market to see how to mount an attractive window display with minimal loss of floor space.



8



7



6



5



4



1



2



3



## MUCH APPRECIATED

- **SHDC** for the summer holidays programme of family events and youngsters' training sessions. The Circus Skills day in Ayscoughfee Gardens, for example, attracted over 1000 people enjoying themselves in perfect summer weather. A shining success.
- **SHDC street cleaning team** for their early morning clean-ups, with the machine out and about before 7 am on a Sunday morning, for example. Unsung because unseen.
- **The pumpkin artisits** at the main pumpkin stall in the Sheepmarket on Pumpkin Parade Day, for their imaginative and inventive designs and highly skilled carving.
- **Love Lane** for a general smartening up opposite Moose Hall.
- **Crowland Abbey** for the laminated visitor guide-sheets, both for the inside and the outside of the Abbey, some of the best the Editor has come across: clearly written and informative, without drowning the visitor in excessive detail or professional architectural or ecclesiastical terminology.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

**B**ARBER'S CUT ? Now where's that? Only recently named and signed, it is the most northerly of the six or so narrow alleyways – un-named until now – that cut through from Double Street to the riverbank. The one with the gents' hair-dresser's on the corner.

It is the first in the Riverside Improvement Forum's project to give each of the alleys a name, and this was one of several suggested by the Civic Society representative on the Forum.

Someone may object that there won't be a barber's shop there in a hundred years' time, or maybe even ten, but that rather misses the point. You've only to look around you in the town centre to see why.

There are no sheep sold in the Sheepmarket, although there once were; there is no priory in Priory Road; there is no lode (watercourse) flowing down Westlode Street ; there is no foundry in Foundry Lane; or town hall in Hall Place. And Hole-in-the-Wall Passage? What wall?

But as soon as someone asks, "Why's it called that?" – whether youngster growing up here, newcomer or visitor – it starts to push open a door into the history of the town, into what makes it distinct, makes Spalding Spalding and not March or Wisbech or Boston. Just as a person's character is partly the product of their history, so with a town. Older street names are its memories.

It's a pity, therefore, that so many modern estates have no real attachment to local features, topography or events, but are simply variations on a random theme – flowers, royal residences, explorers, and so on. It's strange that we haven't got a street-name memory *at some appropriate point* of the Tulip Parades.



### 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 .....

## WORLD WAR 2 HERITAGE



From left: Monkshouse Lane;  
Buttercup Close;  
Horseshoe Bridge Road



PROBABLY THE LAST THING an MP would expect in the post is a letter from a constituent about a WW2 pillbox. Yet that is what John Hayes received earlier in the year. Did he know anything about the one in Monkshouse Lane and was it ‘listed’ and what might be done to preserve it? Sir John passed the enquiry on to the Society and also to “a local history enthusiast”.

Knowing only that there were two other Spalding pillboxes, all ‘unlisted’, with a fourth (at the Woolram Wygate railway crossing) demolished in 2001, we passed the enquiry on to Ian Marshman (LCC Historic Environment Officer); and also to the Gentlemen’s Society.

Entries Ian sent from the LCC *Historic Environment Record* state briefly the location, form and construction of the three ‘boxes. Two (in Buttercup Close and off Horseshoe Bridge Road) are built to a standard hexagonal War Office pattern (Type 22), the first in brick, the second in concrete, while the Monkshouse Lane ‘box (square, concrete) conforms to no War Office pattern at all. A map shows the three of them are in a dead straight line.

Meanwhile, the local history enthusiast (Peter Darley) had just about given up a fruitless search when he came across *Defending Lincolnshire* by Dr. Mike Osborne, with whom he got in informative touch. (Dr. Osborne has also written the slim Lincolnshire volume in the *20<sup>th</sup> Century Defence in Britain* series, copy in the Spalding Library.) Putting Dr. Osborne’s material together, the following overall picture emerges.

“The entire Lincolnshire coast was regarded as a potential landing beach,” and after Dunkirk “The coast was fortified with the intention of delaying an invading force for as long as possible.” The Monkshouse Lane pillbox “stood to protect a nodal point – the main road to Bourne”. Built of timber surrounded by concrete 36 inches thick, it would have been “a formidable defence”. Several suggestions for its unorthodox design (“a DIY job”), include its being put up by local builders working to the drawings of “retired military men”, as it resembles German structures on the Western Front in

the Great War. In addition to the pillbox there would have been a road-block and barbed wire; and it would have been manned by the Home Guard.

Ian Marshman thinks the three ‘boxes were part of a defence network round Spalding, protecting the “wide open area between Vernatt’s Drain and the Welland”, not “a stop-line to halt an invasion force”, as – despite the ‘boxes’ cross-country line – stop-lines “usually utilise features like drains and rivers”.

By now, committee member Robert West had located floor-plans (Heritage Lincolnshire) and come across the cautionary tale below. The upshot is that Sir John has asked for all three pillboxes to be put on the SHDC Heritage Register.

Remarkable what a flurry of activity can result from a single letter. Many thanks to all involved, and any further information about Spalding’s pillboxes would be most welcome – and passed on.

□

ELSEWHERE in the county two pillboxes which had been put up to guard a narrow grass track inland from the lonely coastline were now just hindrances in the middle of a large field created post-war from earlier smaller ones. Following failure to demolish them with a JCB bucket, “The only thing to do was to move them intact,” said the farmer. So each pillbox was tipped over onto one of its eight sides and “rolled to the edge of the field”, where they now sit side by side “tucked away behind a house in the shade of a hedge”, guarding ..... what? A real puzzle for future local historians. (Abbreviated from *Lincolnshire Past and Present*, Autumn 1992.)

# SPALDING

and  
Crowland, Moulton, Pinchbeck,  
Surfleet Seas End

CALENDAR 2020



Members' discount price

**£5**

includes envelope

Thirteen beautiful photographs of Spalding and nearby villages, with well-loved views and one or two surprises. This time with spaces for appointments, birthdays and reminders. The A4 colour calendar is on sale at Bookmark, Spalding News, The Library and Ayscoughfee Museum, **but only direct from the Society** at 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. 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.**

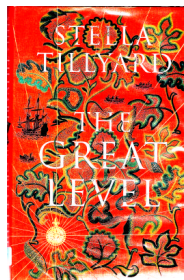
Name ..... Address .....

Tel. .... Email .....

◀ Page 1] it would cost to bring the Johnson Fountain back into the town centre, I'm tempted to say, if Sleaford can do it, why can't we?

Meanwhile, the Lincs About Town project will continue. This is an extensive urban survey by Historic England and Lincolnshire County Council to document a town's historical and archaeological background. Holbeach was the first town to be surveyed and the report is now available. Spalding and Crowland are to follow. If you have historic information about the town, why not dig it out in readiness? The website looks impressive with some good photographs. Do take a look at it :- <https://www.lincsabout.town/>

With our 2020 calendar now on sale, many thanks to member John Charlesworth for driving this forward. I hope it will be found in many homes in the district and beyond. Surely an ideal Christmas gift. **John Bland**



## The Great Level

by  
Stella Tillyard

Now in paperback at £8.99  
Bookmark discount at £6.99  
*Reviewed in last Newsletter*

### Old Robin Harmstone's Curious Facts connected with The History and Antiquities of Spalding

1846  
Bookmark £3.99 – proceeds to charity  
*Review in next Newsletter*

**Chairman:** John Bland, 36 Park Avenue, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 1QX. 01775 762150  
**Secretary:** Marian Boxall, 78A Edinburgh Drive, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 2RT. 01775 725293  
**Treasurer:** Melvyn Price, 3 Morus Close, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 2QL. 01775 722908  
**Newsletter:** John Charlesworth, 37 Regent Street, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 2YN. 01775 768303  
 Registered Charity Number **259956** Website [www.spaldingcivicsociety.org](http://www.spaldingcivicsociety.org)

Affiliated to

