



# Spilsby Sessions House Phasing Study

APPENDIX 9

STAKEHOLDER  
CONSULTATION &  
SUPPORTING STATEMENTS



# Stakeholder consultation and supporting statements

## CONSULTATION FOCUS

Previous consultation work undertaken as part of the 2018 Viability Study had focused on the potential future use of the building. The work provided clear evidence of public support for use as an arts facility. 97% of respondents to a public survey stated they would like the building to continue being used as a theatre. Suggestions from the local community and stakeholder organisations in regard to use of the building's rooms and spaces were recorded and provided valuable insight for assessing options for future use.

Consultation during work on the phasing study therefore focused on several specific elements relevant to progressing the project:

- communicating to the public and stakeholders the reasons why the project needed to be phased
- communicating to the public and stakeholders the work required in creating a solution to phasing the project
- stimulating discussion on heritage activities planning
- involving the community in identifying potential outcomes and community benefits
- understanding how the project can support aims, plans and strategies for Spilsby and East Lindsey
- building on existing arts sector relationships and understanding potential future partnerships the project may be able to offer or stimulate

## CONSULTATION EVENTS

**Friends, 20th November 2019** - A presentation for members of "Friends of the Sessions House", including a Q&A, was held at Spilsby Sessions House. The event was attended by East Lindsey District Councillor David Mangion.

**ELDC event, 28th January 2020** - A public presentation including a Q&A was held at Spilsby's Franklin Hall as part of East Lindsey District Council's "Vital & Viable" market towns strategy. In 2019 ELDC commissioned the Institute of Place Management (IPM) to deliver 'Vital and Viable' workshops to stimulate businesses and the community to work together to support high street regeneration. IPM produced a 'Vital & Viable Spilsby' report that identified Spilsby's Sessions House as a key project for supporting Spilsby's sustainability:

*"The Sessions House is a significant opportunity to support the reinventing of Spilsby. The scheme being discussed would see a major new facility for the town that would provide an attractive offer to a wide community. If realised it could be of significant benefit to the town."*

The 28th January event was a continuation of ELDC's Vital & Viable consultation work and so it featured Spilsby's Sessions House project.

Both events were aimed at enabling community discussion and continuing the process of involving more people in the heritage project. Key feedback points from these events include:

- there is an abundance of community enthusiasm and passion for Spilsby's heritage
- the events helped to encourage greater understanding about the project and what 'making it happen' involves
- there is recognition and understanding of the project's potential to support local economic development
- the community is keen to explore the potential for Spilsby's Sessions House to present the breadth of local heritage through events and as an exhibition space
- the community is keen to explore the potential for Spilsby Sessions House to support town events, including market days, and encourage more visitors to Spilsby
- there is strong appreciation for development of the project so far and for the role SSH has played in enabling the Spilsby Light Night events

## STAKEHOLDER ORGANISATION CONSULTATION

During the later stages of phasing study work, stakeholder organisations were sent a consultation document including a summary of the phased project and a draft of activities ideas for phase one. A series of video conferencing discussions were then held with stakeholders. The following pages contain supporting statements from organisations involved.

### **Statement of Support: Spilsby Sessions House Development Project**

"Magna Vitae an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation based in East Lindsey, Lincolnshire is excited to be supporting the plans to regenerate & redevelop Spilsby Sessions House.

Spilsby Sessions House are an exciting and motivated organisation with a true commitment to partnership working in order to achieve outcomes that benefit the community they serve. We believe that through the connections, conversations and collaborations between artists, creatives and organisations that Spilsby Sessions House have and have developed as part of this regeneration project make this proposal not only ambitious and a driver for place change but achievable, realistic and driven to make a difference to their community.

We are excited to continue discussions with them of how our already close partnership can develop in order to support and deliver this fantastic project as we know that this project will provide inspiration for aspiring local talent, improve the profile of the local arts and creative sector and achieve a number of social-economic outcomes."

Matthew Archer  
Development & Partnerships Manager  
Magna Vitae Trust for Leisure & Culture  
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27/10/2020

Mr. David Start  
Spilsby Sessions House Ltd (SSH)  
Spilsby Theatre, Church Street,  
Spilsby, Lincolnshire,  
PE23 5DY

David,

East Lindsey District Council whole-heartedly support Spilsby Sessions House in their bid to secure funding for the repair and reuse of Spilsby Theatre. It is a grade II listed building of national significance, which is currently identified as at risk. Without significant investment, it will continue to deteriorate, not only causing damage to its significance but also leading to it becoming unsafe and incapable of use. At present, only around 1/5 of the buildings footprint is capable of use due to a number of issues, including water ingress through the roof, rot and pigeon infestation.

The building is an imposing classically styled former Sessions House, which is a prominent gateway feature to the town centre. It is located in the heart of the Spilsby conservation area. Spilsby conservation area is included on Historic England's national At Risk Register as:

Condition: Very Bad  
Vulnerability: High  
Trend: Deteriorating.

As a council, we are focused on strengthening our market towns to ensure they stand up against the national trend of the declining high street. In 2019 we commissioned the Institute of Place Management (IPM) to deliver their Vital and Viable workshops in each market towns in a bid to stimulate our communities and businesses working together to support high street regeneration. The IPM created a Vital and Viable report for Spilsby in which the repair and reuse of Sessions House is identified as a key focus. The report states the following:

*'We think there is a real opportunity offered by the Sessions House. We had a tour around and could appreciate what could be created. Such a development could make a significant contribution to the identity of the town, to diversifying the offer, and become a major attraction for the town that would have widespread appeal. If the ideas are realised it would go some way to engaging young people as well as serving the wider community. We recognise that the costs involved are considerable but we would hope that the spirit of endeavour we saw in the workshop would give this a fighting chance. We know from experience elsewhere the difference facilities of this kind can make to towns.'*

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The IMP comments also reflect the thoughts and feelings of the local community. As a council we have also committed to supporting the Sessions House initiative as a key project to deliver Vital and Viable outcomes in Spilsby.

Following on from the IMP Vital and Viable report for Spilsby we have created a Spilsby Action Plan with a number of aims to deliver high street regeneration. The development of the Sessions House project is highlighted as a long term aim and we have committed officer time and marketing support to this.

Spilsby stakeholders have identified culture and heritage as a key 'hook' for the town. The council is already working with The Sessions House to deliver Hope & Light, a Covid-safe arts project during winter 2020 and have previously supported the Spilsby Light Night, which brought thousands of people to Spilsby town centre to experience culture. The Sessions House project would not only put Spilsby on the map locally and have a huge benefit for the wider district of East Lindsey, but we believe it will also have regional appeal and draw visitors from further afield.

An opportunity to secure funding for the buildings reuse provides a chance to engage the community in the areas heritage and culture, creating a source of pride, which complements all of our other activities focused in and around Spilsby. Phase one of the project to deliver activities and make the building watertight will act as a catalyst for revitalising the town centre and the momentum achieved as a result will inform and sustain its further phases, enabling the building to reach its full potential.

Regards,

Emilie Wales BA (hons) MSc AssocIHBC

Historic Environment Officer



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### **Statement of Support: Spilsby Sessions House Development Project**

*“As a freelance producer based in Lincolnshire I am 100% behind the plans to regenerate & redevelop Spilsby Sessions House and believe strongly that the ideas that underpin the proposals are exciting and ambitious but also absolutely achievable, rooted as they are in community ownership & engagement.*”

*The recent Arts Council supported Spilsby Light Nights that happened in March 2019 & 2020 took place in Spilsby largely because of the Sessions House and the vision and openness of the organisation. I first became aware of the project when I was Director of Lincoln Drill Hall and was instantly won over by the enthusiasm, determination and creative vision behind it. I believe that with the support of the very wide range of local and regional partners the Sessions House project has begun engaging with, the venue stands every chance of becoming a creative beacon that could change how Spilsby & the surrounding area is perceived. I very much look forward to working closely on all kinds of projects to help the venue realise its goal.”*

**Simon Hollingworth**

**Freelance Producer and founder of the Different Light Collective.**

[www.different-light.co.uk](http://www.different-light.co.uk)

### **Statement of Support: Spilsby Sessions House Development Project**

*“I am the artistic director and producer of East Lindsey-based theatre company, Barmpot Theatre. We create theatre for family audiences, focussing on bringing high quality theatre to Lincolnshire and other rural areas, and showcasing untold Lincolnshire stories to audiences around the UK and beyond.*”

*Spilsby Sessions House supported and championed our work at a really critical stage, when we were starting out 6 years ago, and helped us make links with key organisations and funders in the area, (such as Spilsby Primary School, who we now collaborate with regularly). We are really excited by these proposals, especially their power to unite the community with local artists, to generate further art provision for local families and children, and to set up a hub for the arts and artists in the region, which at the moment we are lacking in East Lindsey. We are keen to play a part in this, particularly in creating work for the Young People’s Programme.”*

**Jane Crawshaw**

**Director of Barmpot Theatre**

[www.barmpottheatre.com](http://www.barmpottheatre.com)

# Spilsby Town Council

Mrs Bonny Smith  
Town Clerk  
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Office open;-  
Monday to Friday  
10am-12.30pm

Mr Bruce Knight  
Spilsby Theatre  
Church Street  
Spilsby Lincolnshire  
PE23 5DY

1<sup>st</sup> October 2020

Dear Mr Knight

## **SPILSBY SESSIONS HOUSE**

It is the pleasure of Spilsby Town Council to write a letter in support of the proposal to regenerate Spilsby Sessions House.

The Town Council are fully supportive of the project as it will revive one of the most iconic buildings in the area. The wealth of history of the building itself is something which should be maintained for future generations. It is also important as it will become a showcase for the history of Spilsby especially of Sir John Franklin and the rich history of the arts with Alfred Lord Tennyson and William Hill (organ maker). The refurbishment would also see the return of a theatre which has long been missed within the town. It will become the focal point in the area for arts and heritage and promote tourism which is something that the Town Council is keen to encourage. The Town Council will help to engage with the residents and can offer quarterly updates in the town magazine, the Spilsby Explorer, which will help to keep the project to the forefront of activities within the town.

In conclusion, Spilsby Town Council fully support the efforts of the Spilsby Sessions House as it seeks external funding to support the program designed to support arts and heritage with the Spilsby Area. Any project which can help residents and visitors to enjoy Spilsby as a vibrant community will benefit everyone it touches.

Kind regards

**Bonny Smith**

Bonny Smith  
Town Clerk  
On behalf of Spilsby Town Council

## **Statement of Support: Spilsby Sessions House Development Project**

*"I would like to formally submit an expression of interest in working with the Spilsby Sessions house during its re-generation phases and beyond. Having been involved with the creative sector for the past 30+ years I would like to offer my support in the delivery of the technical aspect of the performance related activities, as well as any other areas that my knowledge and expertise may be of use to you. Having been instrumental in the inauguration of the ever growing annual Spilsby Light Night event and subsequently part of the Different Light Collective, I have been inspired by the ambition of this project and having worked in the sector all my working life, I am confident that this project will be a much loved resource by the creative community that it will serve, as well as the local community of which it is such a huge part of."*

**Andy Johnson-Smith**

**CEO - Popcorn Media, Freelance Creative Technician and co-founder of the Different Light Collective**

[www.popcornmedia.co.uk](http://www.popcornmedia.co.uk)    [www.different-light.co.uk](http://www.different-light.co.uk)

## **Statement of Support: Spilsby Sessions House Development Project**

*"From the moment I stepped through the door of Spilsby Theatre in July 2015 when my arts organisation Grubby Knees Ltd was just an idea, I received nothing but support; from room hire, to connections to build partnerships with other arts organisations, from volunteer opportunities to technical support.*

*Grubby Knees Ltd aims to create and present a diverse and high quality programme of community arts education, and entertainment, To use a holistic approach to providing creative and innovative workshops which focus on the improvement of public wellbeing and to provide a platform for local arts practice, encouraging, and facilitating participation in the arts locally as audience and active practitioners. The Sessions House is the home of our Youth theatre, which is attended by children and young people aged 7 - 18 local to Spilsby and surrounding areas. The children and young people love the theatre, they see it as a safe space where they feel truly comfortable to create, play and thrive. The refurbishment and restoration of the Sessions House would provide endless opportunities for these young people who access our youth theatre, allowing more young people to take part in our sessions and the potential to develop a wider youth program.*

*As well as significantly benefiting the young people who access the workshops facilitated by Grubby Knees Ltd, the proposed restoration would create enormous creative opportunities, acting as a hub for local creatives like myself and the local community, something which is lacking in our area of East Lindsey. The Sessions house already has the heart, enthusiasm and ambition to succeed, it just needs a fully functioning building to reach its full potential."*

**Elizabeth Atkin**

**Director, Grubby Knees Ltd**

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