

= Sleaford =

Sleaford is a market town and civil parish in the North Kesteven district of Lincolnshire , a non @-@ metropolitan county in the east of England . It is on the edge of the fertile Fenlands , about 11 miles (18 km) north @-@ east of Grantham , 16 miles (26 km) west of Boston , and 17 miles (27 km) south of the city and county town of Lincoln . With an estimated resident population of 17 @, @ 671 at the time of the 2011 Census , the town is the largest settlement in North Kesteven , and makes up roughly 15 % of its total population . Bypassed by the A17 and the A15 , it is connected to Lincoln , Newark , Peterborough and King 's Lynn . Sleaford railway station is on the Nottingham to Skegness (via Grantham) and Peterborough to Lincoln Lines .

The first settlement formed during the Iron Age where a prehistoric track crossed the River Sleas . It was a tribal centre and home to a mint for the Corieltauvi during the 1st centuries BC and AD . Evidence of Roman and Anglo @-@ Saxon settlement has been uncovered , and by the late Saxon period the town was an economic and jurisdictional centre with a court and market . During the medieval period , records differentiate between Old and New Sleaford , the latter emerging in the areas around the present day market place and St Denys ' Church . Sleaford Castle was constructed in the 12th century for the Bishops of Lincoln , who owned the manor . Granted the right to hold a market in the mid @-@ 12th century , New Sleaford developed into a market town and became locally important in the wool trade , while Old Sleaford declined .

From the 16th century , the landowners were the Carre family , who operated tight control over the town , and it grew little in the early modern period . The manor passed from the Carre family to the Hervey family by the marriage of Isabella Carre to John Hervey , 1st Earl of Bristol , in 1688 . The town 's common land and fields were legally enclosed by 1794 , giving ownership mostly to the Hervey family ; this coincided with making the Sleas into a canal , and heralded the first steps towards modern industry . The Sleaford Navigation brought economic growth until it was superseded by the railways in the mid @-@ 1850s . In the 20th century , the sale of farmland around Sleaford by Bristol Estates led to the development of large housing estates . The subsequent availability of affordable housing combined with the town 's educational facilities and low crime rates made it an attractive destination for home @-@ buyers . As a result , the town 's population underwent the fastest growth of any town in the county during the 1990s .

Sleaford was primarily an agricultural town until the 20th century , supporting a cattle market , with seed companies , such as Hubbard and Phillips , and Sharpes International Seeds , being established in the late 19th century . The arrival of the railway made the town favourable for malting . Industry has declined , and in 2011 the most common occupations are in wholesale and retail trade , health and social care , public administration and defence and manufacturing . Regeneration of the town centre has led to the redevelopment of the old industrial areas , including the construction of the National Centre for Craft & Design on an old wharf .

= = History = =

= = = Etymology = = =

The earliest records of the place @-@ name Sleaford are found in a charter of 852 as Slioford and in the Anglo @-@ Saxon Chronicle as Sliowaford . In the Domesday Book (1086) , it is recorded as Eslaforde and in the early 13th century as Sliforde . In the 13th century Book of Fees the name appears as Lafford . The name is formed from the Old English words sliow and ford , which together mean ' ford over a muddy or slimy river ' .

= = = Early = = =

Archaeological material from the Bronze Age and earlier has been recovered and excavations have shown that there was unsustained late @-@ Neolithic and Bronze Age human activity in the vicinity

. The earliest known permanent settlement dates from the Iron Age and began where a track running northwards from Bourne crossed the River Slea . Although only sparse pottery evidence has been found for the middle Iron Age period , 4 @,@ 290 pellet mould fragments , likely used for minting and dated to 50 BC ? AD 50 , have been uncovered south east of the modern town centre , south of a crossing of the River Slea and near Mareham Lane in Old Sleaford . The largest of its kind in Europe , the deposit has led archaeologists to consider that the site in Old Sleaford was probably one of the largest Corieltauvian settlements during this period and may have been a tribal centre .

During the Roman occupation of Britain (AD 43 ? 409) , the settlement was " extensive and of considerable importance . " Its location along the fen @-@ edge may have made it economically and administratively significant as a centre for managers and owners of fenland estates . There is evidence to suggest that a road connected Old Sleaford to Heckington (about 4 @.@ 5 miles (7 @.@ 2 km) east) , where Roman tile kilns have been uncovered and may imply the presence of a market at Sleaford . When the first roads were constructed by the Romans , Sleaford was bypassed due to it being " less conveniently located " and more " geared to native needs " . A smaller road , Mareham Lane , which the Romans renewed , ran through Old Sleaford , and southwards along the fen edge , towards Bourne . Where it passed through Old Sleaford , excavations have revealed a large stone @-@ built domestic residence , associated farm buildings , corn @-@ driers , ovens and field systems , all from the Roman period , and a number of burials . Other Roman remains , including a burial , have been excavated in the town .

= = = Middle Ages = = =

There is little evidence of continuous settlement between the late Roman and Anglo @-@ Saxon periods but the Saxons did establish themselves eventually . South of the modern town , a 6th ? 7th century cemetery has been uncovered containing an estimated 600 burials , many showing signs of pagan burial rites . It is possible that the Anglo @-@ Saxon inhabitants were foederati first brought over by the Romano @-@ Britons to defend settlements from other Saxon invaders . The now ruined Church of St Giles / All Saints at Old Sleaford has been discovered and excavations of the Market Place in 1979 uncovered Anglo @-@ Saxon remains from the 8th ? 9th centuries , indicating some form of enclosure with domestic features . The earliest documentary reference to Sleaford is in a charter from the 9th century , when it was owned by Medehamstede Abbey in Peterborough , a Mercian royal foundation . There is little evidence of estate structure until the late Saxon period , but there may have been a market and court in pre @-@ Conquest Sleaford and it was probably an economic and jurisdictional centre for surrounding settlements . The Slea played an important role in the town 's economy : it never ran dry nor froze , and by the 11th century a dozen watermills lined its banks . The mills and others in nearby Quarrington and the lost hamlet of Millsthorpe , constituted the " most important mill cluster in Lincolnshire " .

Later in the Middle Ages , the Romano @-@ British settlement became known as " Old Sleaford " , while " New Sleaford " was used to describe the settlement centred on St Denys ' Church and the Market Place . The Domesday Book (1086) has two entries under Eslaforde (Sleaford) recording land held by Ramsey Abbey and the Bishop of Lincoln . The location of the manors recorded in Domesday is not made clear in the text . One theory endorsed by Maurice Beresford is that they focused on the settlement at Old Sleaford because of evidence that New Sleaford was planted in the 12th century by the bishop to increase his income , which was associated with the construction of Sleaford Castle between 1123 and 1139 . Beresford 's theory has been criticised by the local historians Christine Mahany and David Roffe who have reinterpreted the Domesday material and argued that by 1086 the Bishop 's manor included a church and associated settlement in what became New Sleaford .

The right to hold a fair on the feast day of St Denis was granted by a charter of King Stephen to Alexander , Bishop of Lincoln , in 1136 ? 40 . Between 1154 and 1165 , Henry II granted the bishop of Lincoln the right to hold a market at Sleaford ; bishop Oliver Sutton argued in 1281 that his right to hold a market and fair had existed since time immemorial . In 1329 , Edward III confirmed the

market and , in 1401 , Henry IV granted the bishop fairs on the feast days of St Denis and St Peter 's Chains . A survey of 1258 is the first to mention burgage tenure ; tenants in the nearby hamlet of Holdingham held tofts with other land , while those in New Sleaford held only tofts , indicating that demesne farming centred on the hamlet . The town later had at least two guilds comparable to those found in developed towns . However , there was no formal charter outlining the town 's freedoms ; it was not a centre of trade and tight control by the bishops meant the economy was primarily geared to serve them . Hence , it retained a strong tradition of demesne farming well into the 14th century . As the economic initiative fell more to the burgesses and middlemen who formed connections with nearby towns , such as Boston , evidence suggests that Sleaford developed a locally important role in the wool trade . In the Lay Subsidy of 1334 , New Sleaford was the wealthiest settlement in the Flaxwell wapentake , with a value of £ 16 0s . 81 / 4d . Meanwhile , Old Sleaford , an " insignificant " place since the end of the Roman period , declined and may have been deserted by the 16th century .

= = = Early modern = = =

During the late 15th and early 16th centuries , the Hussey family owned the manor of Old Sleaford . John Hussey , 1st Baron Hussey of Sleaford was executed for treason for his part in the Lincolnshire Rising . The manor and his residence at Old Place reverted to the Crown and were later sold to Robert Carre . George Carre or Carr from Northumberland had settled in Sleaford by 1522 when he was described as a wool merchant . His son Robert bought Hussey 's land and the castle and manor of New Sleaford from Edward Clinton , 1st Earl of Lincoln . His eldest surviving son Robert , founded Carre 's Grammar School in 1604 , and his youngest son Edward was created a baronet ; his son founded Sleaford Hospital in 1636 . The last male descendent died in 1683 and the heiress , Isabella Carre , married John Hervey , Earl of Bristol , in whose family the estates remained until the 1970s . The Carres and Herveys had a strong influence : in addition to extracting dues from their tenants , they took leading tradesmen to the Exchequer Court to gain legal force behind their monopoly on charging tolls on market and cattle traders and for driving animals through the town .

Industry was slow to take hold , and by the second half of the 18th century , Cogglesford Mill was the only working corn mill in the town . An old mill at the junction of Westgate and Castle Causeway supplied hemp to the growing rope @-@ making business of the Foster and Hill families . As local historian Simon Pawley wrote , " in many respects , things had changed little [by 1783] since the survey of 1692 " , with few of the buildings or infrastructure being improved . Major changes to agriculture and industry took place in the last decade of that century . From the Middle Ages , Sleaford was surrounded by three open fields : North , West and Sleaford Fields . At the enclosure of the open fields in 1794 more than 90 % of the 1 @,@ 096 acres of open land was owned by Lord Bristol . Despite the costs of fencing and re @-@ organising the fields , the system was easier to farm , and cottages were built closer to fields , while the landowner could charge more rent owing to the increased profitability of the land ; those who lost out were the cottagers , who could no longer keep a few animals grazing on the common land at no cost . The process allowed the land boundaries and pathways to be tidied up ; Drove Lane , which ran to Rauceby , was shifted north and straightened .

= = = Industrial = = =

Canalisation of the River Slea began in the 1790s . Canals in England were constructed from the 1760s to make inland trade easier ; Sleaford 's businessmen were keen to benefit from the improved communication they allowed . The Sleaford Navigation opened in 1794 . It facilitated the export of agricultural produce to the Midlands , and the import of coal and oil . Mills along the Slea benefited and wharves were constructed around Carre Street . Between 1829 and 1836 the navigation 's toll rights increased in value by 27 times . The railways emerged in the 19th century as an alternative to canals and arrived at the town in 1857 , when a line from Grantham to Sleaford opened . It made agricultural trade easier and improved communication , but led to the decline of the Navigation

Company . Income from tolls decreased by 80 % between 1858 and 1868 ; it made its first loss in 1873 and was abandoned in 1878 . The town 's rural location and transport links meant that the late 19th century saw the rise of two local seed merchants : Hubbard and Phillips , and Charles Sharpe ; the former took over the Navigation Wharves , and the latter was trading in the US and Europe by the 1880s . The railway , Sleaford 's rural location and its artesian wells , were key factors in the development of the 13 @-@ acre Bass & Co maltings complex at Mareham Lane (1892 ? 1905) .

In the first half of the 19th century , Sleaford 's population more than doubled from 1 @,@ 596 in 1801 to 3 @,@ 539 in 1851 . Coinciding with this is the construction or extension of public buildings , often by the local contractors Charles Kirk and Thomas Parry . The gasworks opened in 1839 to provide gas lighting in the town . Sleaford 's Poor Law Union was formed in 1836 to cater for the town and the surrounding 54 parishes . The workhouse was constructed by 1838 and could house 181 inmates . Despite these advances , the slums around Westgate were over @-@ crowded , lacking sanitation and disease @-@ ridden ; the local administration failed to deal with the matter until 1850 , when a report on the town 's public health by the General Board of Health heavily criticised the situation and set up a Local Board of Health to undertake public works . By the 1880s , Lord Bristol had allowed clean water to be pumped into the town , but engineering problems and a reluctance to sell land to house the turbines had delayed the introduction of sewers .

= = = Post @-@ industrial = = =

Although largely undamaged in the First and Second World Wars , Sleaford has close links with the Royal Air Force due to its proximity to several RAF bases , including RAF Cranwell and RAF Waddington . Lincolnshire 's topography ? flat and open countryside ? and its location on the east of the country made it ideal for the development of Britain 's airfields , constructed in the First World War . Work began on Cranwell in late 1915 ; it was designated an RAF base in 1918 and the RAF College opened in 1920 as the world 's first air academy . The Cranwell branch railway linking Sleaford station to the RAF base opened in 1917 and closed in 1956 . During the Second World War , Lincolnshire was " the most significant location for bomber command " and Rauceby Hospital , south @-@ west of Sleaford , was requisitioned by the RAF as a specialist burns unit which plastic surgeon Archibald McIndoe regularly visited .

In the inter @-@ war period , Sleaford 's population remained static , but the Great Depression in the 1930s caused unemployment to rise . Council @-@ housing developments along Drove Lane proved insufficient to house low @-@ income families after the Westgate slums were cleared in the 1930s so Jubilee Grove opened in that decade to meet the demand . In the post @-@ war period , there were new housing developments at St Giles Avenue , the Hoplands , Russell Crescent , Jubilee Grove , and Grantham Road . Parts of the town were redeveloped : in 1958 , the Bristol Arms Arcade opened , the Corn Exchange was demolished in the 1960s , and the Waterside Shopping Precinct opened in 1973 , as did Flaxwell House , designed to house a department store , though later becoming the national headquarters for Interflora .

By 1979 , the major landowner , Victor Hervey , 6th Marquess of Bristol , heavily in debt , had sold most of his estates in Sleaford and Quarrington and the estate 's office closed in 1989 . Much of the land was sold to property developers and in the following decades saw the construction of residential buildings and a considerable population increase . According to a council report , " the quality of life , low crime rates , relatively low house prices and good @-@ quality education " attracted people to the town . From 1981 to 2011 , Sleaford 's population rose from 8 @,@ 000 to 18 @,@ 000 ; the growth rate from 1991 to 2001 was the fastest of any town in the county . Its infrastructure struggled to cope , especially with increased traffic congestion ; two bypasses around the town and a one @-@ way system were introduced , a process which Simon Pawley argues accelerated the decline of the High Street . In the early 2000s , the Single Regeneration Budget of £ 15 million granted to Sleaford improved the town centre and funded development of the Hub (since 2011 , the National Centre for Craft & Design) in the old Navigation wharves area .

= = Geography = =

== Topography ==

Sleaford is the principal market town in the North Kesteven district of Lincolnshire . The civil parish includes the hamlet of Holdingham to the north east and the village of Quarrington to the south east , both of which merge with the town . The County Council 's State of the Environment Report (1994) found that roughly three @-@ quarters of Lincolnshire is low @-@ lying , with much of it near sea @-@ level ; Sleaford lies approximately 43 feet (13 m) above sea level close to Lincoln Cliff , a Limestone scarp running north ? south through Lindsey and Kesteven . The bedrock under the western half of the town belongs to the Great Oolite Group of Jurassic Sandstone , Limestone and Argillaceous rocks formed 168 ? 165 million years ago ; Kellaways and Oxford Clay formations , dated to 165 ? 156 million years ago , underlie the eastern half . Alluvium deposits are found along the Sleas course , and Fen sand and gravel are found to the east and south . The county 's agricultural land is generally of " very good " quality ; as a result , intensive arable and vegetable farming is predominant and pastoral farming declined over the course of the 20th century . Sleaford is on the edge of the Fens , a low @-@ lying region of the East of England which , before drainage from the 17th to the 20th centuries , were marshy and liable to flooding . Draining has revealed nutrient @-@ rich soils and enabled 88 % of the land to be cultivated , especially for arable farming , and most of it is graded amongst the most productive farmland in the country .

== Climate ==

According to the Köppen classification , the British Isles experience a maritime climate characterised by relatively cool summers and mild winters . Lincolnshire 's position on the east of the Isles allows for a sunnier and warmer climate relative to the national average , and it is one of the driest counties in the United Kingdom . Although it may vary depending on altitude and proximity to the coast , the mean average temperature for the East of England is approximately 9 ° C to 10 @.@ 5 ° C ; the highest temperature recorded in the region was 37 @.@ 3 ° C at Cavendish on 10 August 2003 . On average , the region experiences 30 days of rainfall in winter and 25 in summer , with 15 days of thunder and 6 ? 8 days of hail per year ; on 25 August 2001 , hail the size of golf balls were reported in Sleaford and other parts of central Lincolnshire . Wind tends to affect the north and west of the country more than the East , and Lincolnshire tends to receive no more than 2 days of gale per year (where gale is a gust of wind at > 34 knots , sustained for at least 10 minutes) . Despite this , tornadoes form more often in the East of England than elsewhere in the country ; Sleaford experienced tornadoes in 2006 and 2012 , both of which caused damage to property .

== Governance ==

== Politics ==

Before 1832 , Sleaford was in the Lincolnshire parliamentary constituency , which encompassed all of the county except for four boroughs . In the 1818 election , 49 of the 2 @,@ 000 people living in New and Old Sleaford and Quarrington qualified to vote . In 1832 , the Reform Act widened the franchise and divided Lincolnshire . Sleaford was in the South Lincolnshire constituency that elected two members to parliament . Following the 1867 reforms , the South Lincolnshire constituency 's borders were redrawn , but Sleaford remained within it . The franchise was widened by the reforms so that roughly 15 % (202) of males in Sleaford and Quarrington could vote in 1868 . The constituency was abolished in 1885 and the Sleaford constituency was formed . It merged with the Grantham seat in 1918 . In 1997 , Sleaford was reorganised into Sleaford and North Hykeham .

The member returned in 2010 for Sleaford and North Hykeham was the Conservative candidate Stephen Phillips , who replaced Douglas Hogg . Lincolnshire elected a Member of the European

Parliament from 1974 until 1994 , and then became part of the Lincolnshire and Humberside South constituency until 1999 ; since then , it has elected members as part of the East Midlands constituency ; from 1999 , there were six members for the East Midlands , but the number was reduced to five in 2009 .

= = = Local government = = =

From the early medieval period , New Sleaford was in the Flaxwell Wapentake and Old Sleaford in the Ashwardhurn Wapentake . Sleaford Poor Law Union , overseen by a Board of Guardians , was established in 1836 . A Local Board of Health was formed in 1851 . Public health was reorganised by the Public Health Act 1872 , which established Urban and Rural Sanitary Districts (USD or RSD) ; Sleaford USD covered New and Old Sleaford , Holdingham and Quarrington , while the Sleaford RSD included all other parishes in the Poor Law Union . The Local Government Act 1894 converted the Board of Health and USD into the Sleaford Urban District Council and , in 1899 , the town became the administrative base of Kesteven County Council . A rural district formed in 1894 was abolished in 1931 . In 1973 , Sleaford Urban District merged with the North and East Kesteven districts to form North Kesteven , a district of Lincolnshire ; by statutory instrument , Sleaford civil parish became the urban district 's successor , thus merging Quarrington , New Sleaford , Old Sleaford and Holdingham civil parishes .

Sleaford Town Council , the parish @-@ level local government body beneath the district council is composed of 18 councillors from six wards : Castle , Holdingham , Mareham , Navigation , Quarrington , and Westholme . The Chairman of the Town Council is also the Mayor of Sleaford ; Cllr Keith Dolby is Mayor for 2014 ? 15 . The six wards are also represented on North Kesteven District Council , although Mareham and Quarrington are merged into a single ward . Sleaford sends one councillor to Lincolnshire County Council . Sleaford Town Council has offices on Carre Street and the District Council offices are in the Lafford Terrace building on Eastgate , which was purchased by the council in 1934 .

Sleaford Urban District Council was granted a coat of arms on 26 October 1950 and after it was abolished the arms were used by its successor , Sleaford Town Council . The arms are blazoned : Gules on a Chevron Or three Estoiles Sable on a Chief Argent as many Trefoils slipped Vert . The trefoils in the chief are from the arms of the Marquess of Bristol , while the lower portion of the shield is the arms of the Carre family . Its crest is blazoned : On a Wreath of the Colours an Eagle wings extended and head downwards and to the sinister proper holding in the beak an Ear of Wheat stalked and leaved Or , the eagle symbolises Sleaford 's links with the Royal Air Force and the ear of wheat represents agriculture .

= = Public services = =

Policing is provided by the Lincolnshire Police , and fire @-@ fighting by the Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service . The police station is on Boston Road , although older premises on Kesteven Street were erected in 1845 and reconstructed in 1912 . The fire station is on Church Lane although plans to move it to East Road by 2016 were approved in 2014 . East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) operates from Kesteven Street . The United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust provides services at three hospitals , Pilgrim Hospital in Boston , Grantham and District Hospital , and Lincoln County Hospital , all of which have 24 @-@ hour accident and emergency departments as of January 2015 .

Mains water and sewerage services are provided by Anglian Water , a former nationalised industry and natural monopoly , privatised in 1989 and regulated by the Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT) . In 1879 , an Act of Parliament was passed to set up a water company for the town ; pumping machinery was installed and works constructed in 1880 to provide a clean water supply to the town . In 1948 , the council took over the company and in 1962 its operation was handed to the Kesteven Water Board , which was absorbed by the Anglian Water Authority in 1973 .

Lincolnshire County Council promoted a Bill to Parliament to build an electricity generating station

which passed in 1900 . It was built at the cost of £ 6 @, @ 700 in 1901 on Castle Causeway and remained there until nationalisation in 1948 . Following nationalisation , electricity was provided by the East Midlands Electricity Board until it was privatised in 1990 ; in 1998 , East Midlands Electricity , the privately owned predecessor company , was purchased by PowerGen . A " virtually carbon neutral " straw @-@ burning power @-@ station at Sleaford opened in 2013 ; capable of supplying electricity to 65 @, @ 000 homes , it is powered by straw bales from farms within a 50 @-@ mile radius . Most electricity generated is fed into the National Grid and the facility provides free heat to public buildings in the town .

Natural Gas was supplied by British Gas , which was privatised in 1986 . Distribution of gas and electricity is the responsibility of the National Grid . The energy markets are regulated by the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM) . The Sleaford Gas Light Company was formed in 1838 and the following year , gas lighting was provided and a gasworks was constructed on Eastgate . In 1866 , the company was incorporated ; in 1895 ? 96 , the works were rebuilt and lit the town until the company was nationalised in 1948 . Gas ceased to be made here in the 1960s and the original buildings were retained although later extensions were demolished from 1966 to 1968 .

Sleaford Library houses a local and family history section and microfiche machine . It was refurbished in 2010 , but , as of 2014 , was listed by the county council as " undersized " .

= = Economy = =

= = = Employment = = =

Sleaford served the surrounding agricultural communities and the town maintained a weekly market throughout the 19th century and a livestock market on Northgate from 1874 until 1984 . According to a 2010 council report , the public sector was the town 's main employer , along with agriculture and manufacturing . Unemployment was lower than the national average as were wages reflecting pay in the food processing and agricultural industries . At the 2011 Census , the largest group of working @-@ age persons by economic activity are those in full @-@ time employment , who make up 43 @. @ 8 % of this section of the population , while 15 % are part @-@ time employees and 7 @. @ 7 % are self @-@ employed ; 15 % of the working @-@ age population are retired . 4 @. @ 2 % were unemployed , with 40 % of those in long @-@ term unemployment and roughly one third were aged 16 to 24 . The largest socio @-@ economic grouping is those working in lower @-@ tier managerial or administrative roles (21 @. @ 9 %) , followed by semi @-@ routine (17 @. @ 8 %) , routine (15 %) and intermediate (12 @. @ 5 %) occupations ; no other group comprised 10 % or more . In terms of industry , the most common , based on those working in the sector , are wholesale and retail trade (including automotive repairs) at 16 @. @ 9 % , health and social care (13 @. @ 4 %) , public administration and defence (13 @. @ 3 %) and manufacturing (10 @. @ 9 %) , with no other groups representing 10 % or more . An unemployment survey of Lincolnshire in 2014 found that the county experienced a decline in unemployment (based on Jobseekers Allowance claimants) by 29 % over the preceding 12 months , while the county 's unemployment rate was marginally below the national average .

= = = Regeneration = = =

In 2011 North Kesteven District Council produced a 25 @-@ year strategy to regenerate the town because its rapid growth since the 1990s had outgrown improvements to its infrastructure . It plans future residential developments and outlines ways of improving the town centre . It suggests developing more parking around the centre and reverting parts the one @-@ way system , developing southern Southgate and turning Money 's Yard into an attraction to link with the National Centre for Craft and Design . North Kesteven District Council granted planning permission for a £ 56 m project to redevelop the derelict Bass Maltings site by converting it into residential and retail space and creating about 500 permanent jobs . The development including a supermarket was

delayed when the town council opposed a link road through part of the recreation ground . Tesco , who had pledged to invest in a £ 20 million store in the development withdrew in January 2015 following financial set @-@ backs .

= = Transport = =

The A17 road from Newark @-@ on @-@ Trent to King 's Lynn bypasses Sleaford from Holdingham Roundabout to Kirkby la Thorpe . It ran through the town until the bypass opened in 1975 . The Holdingham roundabout connects the A17 to the A15 road from Peterborough to Scawby . It also passed through Sleaford until 1993 , when its bypass was completed . Three roads meet at Sleaford 's market place : Northgate (B1518) , Southgate and Eastgate (B1517) . A one @-@ way system set up in 1994 creates a circuit around the town centre .

The railways arrived in the 19th century . Early proposals to bring a line to Sleaford failed , but in 1852 plans were made to build the Boston , Sleaford and Midland Counties Railway and its Act of Parliament passed in 1853 . The line from Grantham opened in 1857 ; Boston was connected in 1859 , Bourne in 1871 and Ruskington on Great Northern and Great Eastern Joint Railway in 1882 .

Sleaford is a stop on the Peterborough to Lincoln Line and the Poacher Line , from Grantham to Skegness . Grantham , roughly 14 @.@ 8 miles (23 @.@ 8 km) away by road and two stops on the Poacher Line , is a major stop on the East Coast Main Line . Trains from Grantham to London King 's Cross take approximately 1 hour 15 minutes .

The River Slea through the town was converted into use as a canal for much of the 19th century . Plans to canalise it were drawn up in 1773 , but faced opposition from land @-@ owners who feared it might affect the drainage of fens . Plans were approved in 1791 with the support of Brownlow Bertie , 5th Duke of Ancaster and Kesteven who owned estates and quarries that he hoped would benefit . An Act of Parliament passed in 1792 , establishing the Sleaford Navigation , which opened two years later . After falling revenues due to competition from the railways , the navigation company closed in 1878 . The river , although no longer navigable , passes under Carre Street and Southgate . The Nine Foot Drain , also unnavigable , meets the Slea just before Southgate .

= = Demography = =

The resident population at the 2011 Census was 17 @,@ 671 , which accounts for roughly 15 % of the population of the North Kesteven District ; the urban area contained 8 @,@ 690 houses . The town 's population grew by 39 % between 1991 and 2001 , the fastest growth rate of any town in Lincolnshire . The district population is predicted to rise by 29 % between 2008 and 2033 , compared with a national average of 18 % ; in 2013 , county councillors approved plans to build 4 @,@ 500 new homes . A joint planning strategy report found that " This growth has largely been the result of people moving to the area attracted by the quality of life , low crime rates , relatively low house prices and good @-@ quality education . "

The 2011 Census revealed that approximately 93 @.@ 6 % of the town 's resident population were White British ; the second largest ethnic group was White Irish at approximately 3 @.@ 4 % , followed by Asian (including Asian British) at 1 @.@ 09 % ; no other ethnic group represented 1 % or more of the population . 88 @.@ 5 % of residents were born in England and 4 @.@ 41 % in other parts of the United Kingdom ; 4 @.@ 3 % were from EU countries , with 2 @.@ 5 % coming from EU member states which joined after 2001 .

Between December 2013 and November 2014 , 1 @,@ 289 criminal acts were reported , of which 43 @.@ 9 % were classed as anti @-@ social behaviour , making it the largest portion of reported crimes . In 2010 , recorded crime levels were amongst the lowest in the country and , for the year ending June 2014 , the crime rate in the North Kesteven district is the lowest in Lincolnshire at 24 @.@ 38 crimes per thousand residents .

= = Religion = =

== Population ==

Most people in the town identify as Christian , although the proportion has declined between the last two censuses . At the 2011 Census , 70 % of residents identified as Christian , while 21 % reported no religion , and 6 % did not state a religion ; no other religious group comprised 1 % or more of the population . The 2001 Census recorded that 81 % of Sleaford residents identified as Christian , nearly ten percentage points higher than the national figure (71 %) ; 11 % of the town 's residents had no religion and 6 % did not disclose a religion .

In the Compton Census (1676) , New Sleaford had a Conformist population of 576 people , no " Papists " , and 6 Non-conformists . In the 19th century , it had a sizeable Non-conformist population and a large Anglican congregation ; at the 1851 Census of Religious Worship , an estimated 2,000 people attended Non-conformist places of worship , while an estimated 600 ? 700 people attended Anglican services in the parish . The Wesleyans met in Westgate in the early 19th century ; by 1848 , the congregation had set up in Northgate , an area known for its taverns and poor tenements .

== Ecclesiastical history ==

New Sleaford had a church and priest by the time of the Domesday Book (1086) and the vicarage was founded in 1274 . During the Commonwealth (1649 ? 1660) , the vicar was expelled and replaced by Puritan ministers , the last of whom was removed following the Restoration in 1660 and replaced with an Anglican clergyman . In 1616 , the vicarage was valued at £ 8 and in 1872 at £ 180 . As of 2015 , the ecclesiastical parish of St Denys , Sleaford , encloses the town of Sleaford and hamlet of Holdingham north of the railway line and does not include Quarrington . It falls within the Lafford Deanery , the Lincoln Archdeaconry and the Diocese of Lincoln . The patron is the Bishop of Lincoln and the incumbent vicar is the Rev. Philip Anthony Johnson , who was instituted in 2013 .

Old Sleaford was in the possession of Ramsey Abbey at the time of Domesday and later Haverholme Priory , and was eventually served by a vicar ; the church was dedicated either to St Giles or to All Saints . At the Dissolution of the Monasteries (1536 ? 1541) , the king took over collection of the tithes , eventually leasing them to Thomas Horseman and then selling them to Robert Carre . In the 17th century , the rectory of Quarrington and the vicarage were combined to form the parish of Quarrington with Old Sleaford ; the current rector of Quarrington is the Rev. Sandra Benham . The parish boundaries of New Sleaford and Quarrington with Old Sleaford were last altered in 1928 .

The prebendary of New Sleaford or Lafford had a seat in the Lincoln Cathedral ; it existed before 1274 and was in the patronage of the bishop . Sleaford 's tithes paid to the prebendary were valued at £ 11 19s . 7d . (£ 11 98) in 1616 . After the enclosure of Sleaford 's fields , a farm at Holdingham Anna was allotted to the prebendary in place of the tithes . The Prebendal Court of Sleaford had jurisdiction over New and Old Sleaford and Holdingham to grant administration and probate . The parishes of New and Old Sleaford were in the peculiar jurisdiction of the prebendary until 1846 , when they became part of Aswardhurn and Lafford Rural Deanery . In 1866 they were placed in Aswardhurn and Lafford No. 2 Rural Deanery , from 1884 in the Lafford No. 2 Rural Deanery , the Lafford South Rural Deanery from 1910 , and since 1968 , in the Lafford Rural Deanery .

== Places of worship ==

The Anglican parish church is dedicated to St. Denys . The oldest parts date to the late 12th century and the broach spire , built around 1220 , is one of the oldest in England . Regular Sunday services are held at the parish church .

Non @-@ conformist meetings took place on Hen Lane (later Jermyn Street) from about 1776 . The Congregationalists who met there constructed a chapel on Southgate in 1867 ? 68 ; in 1972 , it became Sleaford Reformed Church . Wesleyans first met in the 1790s at the house of Thomas Fawcett on Westgate . They built a chapel nearby in 1802 , which was replaced in 1823 ; it housed the congregation until 1848 when a larger one was built on North Street . It was demolished and replaced by another on the same site in 1972 . A Baptist chapel was built in Old Sleaford in 1811 to house a congregation of 250 , it served the Strict Baptists until possibly the mid @-@ 20th century . The premises have been converted into a house . A Wesleyan Reform Methodist chapel opened in West Banks in 1864 , but since 1896 has been occupied by the Salvation Army .

The Fens were increasingly cultivated after the Napoleonic Wars , prompting migrant Catholic Irish farm @-@ workers to move to the area . By 1879 a Roman Catholic missionary , Father Hermann Sabela , was conducting services in the town . A Catholic school and chapel were built in 1881 on land in Jermyn Street and in 1888 , Our Lady of Good Counsel Roman Catholic Church , opened beside it . The incumbent priest is Father Michael John Bell , who was appointed in 2001 . Mass is held on Sundays and throughout the week .

The Sleaford Muslim Community Association has met in St Deny 's Church Hall since the early 2000s . Plans to build a prayer hall on Station Road were approved in November 2013 . Protests were planned by the English Defence League , but were cancelled .

Sleaford Spiritualist Church opened in about 1956 on Westgate .

= = Education = =

= = = Primary = = =

Sleaford has four primary schools . In 1726 William Alvey bequeathed land to fund teaching children in Sleaford . The school and master 's house for Alvey 's Endowed School , a national school , was built in 1851 . New buildings for the infants ' school were constructed in 1888 . William Alvey Church of England School is housed in the same buildings . It became an academy in 2012 . St Botolph 's School is a Church of England Primary School , which opened at its current site in 2002 . Church Lane School is housed in buildings constructed in 2002 , when the original school house was demolished ; in 2013 , it had c . 201 children on roll . Our Lady of Good Counsel Roman Catholic School had 155 pupils on roll in 2011 .

In 1835 , there were eight day schools and three Sunday schools in New Sleaford and two daily schools in Old Sleaford . An infant school in the old playhouse on Westgate opened in 1855 ; Wesleyan schools attached to the chapel on North Street accommodated up to 200 pupils . In addition to private girls ' schools , short @-@ lived private schools for boys were established by Mr Herring and Charles Boyer in 1851 , Henry Carruthers , and Edwin Reginald Dibben in 1870 in competition with the grammar school . Charles Kirk built a school and chapel at Quarrington in 1867 . It became St Botolph 's Primary School and in 2002 moved to a new site . In 1879 , an art school was established in Duke Street in connection with the Science and Art Department ; by 1896 , two Wesleyan schools and a Catholic school were also in operation .

= = = Secondary = = =

The town has three secondary schools with sixth forms : Carre 's Grammar School , a boys ' grammar school , Kesteven and Sleaford High School , a selective academy girls ' grammar school , and St George 's Academy , formerly St George 's College of Technology , and before that Sleaford (County) Secondary Modern School (mixed non @-@ selective secondary school) . The grammar schools are selective and pupils are required to pass the Eleven plus exam . St George 's is not selective . The co @-@ educational Joint Sixth Form consortium between Carre 's and St George 's allows pupils to choose subjects taught at either school .

Carre 's Grammar School was founded in 1604 by a bequest of Robert Carre of Aswarby . It has

received Specialist Sports and Science statuses , became an academy in 2011 and was judged to be " good " by Ofsted in 2013 , at which time it had 817 pupils , including the co @-@ educational sixth form . Sleaford and Kesteven High School for Girls was established in 1902 . It has specialist art status , became an academy in 2011 and was judged to be " good " by Ofsted in 2013 , at which time there were 825 pupils on roll , including those in the co @-@ educational sixth form . St George 's opened in 1908 as Sleaford Council School . It has received specialist technology college status , converted to an academy in 2010 and operates a satellite school at Ruskington . St George 's had 2 @,@ 247 pupils on roll in 2012 , across both sites and including the sixth form ; when assessed by Ofsted in that year , was judged to be " good " .

= = Culture = =

The National Centre for Craft & Design opened as The Hub in 2003 with support from a Single Regeneration Budget grant . It attracts 90 @,@ 000 visitors on average each year and houses exhibitions of applied and contemporary art . The Playhouse theatre on Westgate was constructed in 1825 , and sold in 1856 to be converted into an infants school and later a library and offices . In 1994 , Sleaford Little Theatre bought and restored it and in 2000 it opened to the public . The Sleaford Picturedrome opened in 1920 ; the cinema closed in 2000 and the building became a snooker hall and then a nightclub that closed in 2008 .

Sleaford Museum Trust was formed in the 1970s to collect and preserve historical artefacts from the town 's history . A Heritage Lottery Fund grant of more than £ 94 @,@ 000 in December 2013 allowed the trust to establish a museum on Southgate , which opened in April 2015 . Sleaford and District Civic Trust was founded in 1972 to " preserve the best features " of the town .

There is a volunteer twinning association , the Sleaford and District Town Twinning Association , which was founded in 1999 . The association has created and maintains links and annual visits with Marquette @-@ lez @-@ Lille in France since 1999 , and with Fredersdorf @-@ Vogelsdorf in Germany since 2009 .

= = = Sport = = =

Sleaford Town F.C. played in the United Counties League Premier Division for the 2014 ? 15 season . Formed as Sleaford Amateurs F.C. in 1920 , the club was renamed Sleaford Town in 1968 . In 2007 it moved to its present grounds at Eslaforde Park . Sleaford Rugby FC 's clubhouse opened in 1999 off the A153 . Sleaford Golf Club was founded in 1905 and had roughly 100 members the following year , which increased to 193 in 1911 . The original golf course has been altered . In 2014 , the club had roughly 600 members . Sleaford Cricket Club has grounds at London Road ; the earliest record of the club is in 1803 . The town is also home to Bristol Bowls Club , an all @-@ discipline gymnastics club founded in 1996 . An outdoor lido opened in 1872 on riverside land owned by the Bristol estate but handed over to the community as public baths . Indoor facilities were built in the 20th century and the old lido became Sleaford Leisure Centre . In 2011 Kesteven District Council received a grant of £ 2 @.@ 85 million , to fund reconstruction of the centre and its gym .

= = = Local media = = =

The main radio stations for the county are BBC Radio Lincolnshire , broadcasting on 94 @.@ 9 FM and 104 @.@ 7 FM frequencies , and the commercial station Lincs FM , on 102 @.@ 2 , 96 @.@ 7 and 97 @.@ 6 FM . The town 's local newspapers are the Sleaford Standard (founded in 1924) , the Sleaford Advertiser (founded in 1980) and the Sleaford Target (founded in 1984) . Historically , the Sleaford Gazette operated between 1854 and 1960 ; the Sleaford Journal from at least 1884 until it was incorporated into the Gazette in December 1929 , the Sleaford Telegraph ran from 1888 to 1889 and the Sleaford Guardian was in print for a year from 1945 to 1946 .

= = Landmarks = =

A small number of medieval buildings remain standing in the town . St Denys ' Church and St Botolph 's in Quarrington date to the 12th and 13th centuries respectively , while Sleaford 's half @-@ timbered vicarage is 15th century . St Denys ' Church is noted for its tracery and its stone broach spire is one of the oldest in England . Cogglesford Mill is the only remaining watermill in town and is a testament to the economic importance of the River Slea from the late @-@ Saxon period onwards . The Bishops of Lincoln used the medieval town as a base , constructing the now @-@ ruined Sleaford Castle , and as a means of extracting produce and wealth through demesne farming and by granting a market and limited freedoms to the town . As a result , the oldest areas are the market place and the four roads which meet there : Northgate , Southgate , Eastgate and Westgate ; many 18th and 19th century buildings are found in this area .

Buildings dating from these centuries include William Alvey 's baroque house on Northgate , the Manor House on Northgate inset with medieval masonry , and Sessions House on the Market Place . The Carre family founded the grammar school which was rebuilt in 1834 , the hospital , rebuilt in 1830 , and the almshouses , rebuilt 1857 , while the Victorian builders Charles Kirk and Thomas Parry constructed or added to numerous public buildings and private residences , including Lafford Terrace and their own houses on Southgate and at Westholme .

During the Industrial Revolution , the Slea was canalised in 1794 and the Sleaford Navigation Company constructed offices and wharves along Carre Street . The canal brought trade , while the Gothic @-@ fronted gasworks on Eastgate lit the town from 1839 . Benjamin Handley and Anthony Peacock financed and benefited from the navigation and founded the bank that took over Alvey 's House on Northgate and later added a Baroque extension ; Henry Handley , a Member of Parliament , is commemorated by the Handley Memorial on Southgate , a Gothic monument in the style of an Eleanor Cross . During the 1850s , the railways arrived and the station was built in a Gothic style . Sleaford 's agricultural location and its new transport links encouraged seed trading and malting in the late 19th century : the seed merchant Charles Sharpe 's house , The Pines , is on Boston Road . The massive Bass and Company maltings complex , constructed in brick off Mareham Lane between 1892 and 1905 , is grade II * listed and has a frontage more than 1 @,@ 000 feet long .

= = Sleafordians = =

The Handley family were well @-@ connected with business ; Benjamin Handley was a lawyer , prominent in the Navigation Company and partner in the local bank Peacock , Handley and Kirton . His son , Henry was M.P. for South Lincolnshire ; after his death , the residents erected a monument to him on Southgate . Robert Armstrong Yerburch the son of Rev Richard Yerburch , vicar of New Sleaford was twice M.P. for Chester . Sir Thomas Meres , politician was educated at the grammar school . Sir Robert Pattinson was also educated at the grammar was M.P. for Grantham and Sleaford .

The religious controversialist Henry Pickworth was born in New Sleaford and challenged the opponent of Quakerism Francis Bugg to an open debate at Sleaford . John Austin , a religious writer , was educated at the grammar school . William Scoffin served as the town 's Presbyterian minister and preached there for more than forty years , while Benjamin Fawcett , Presbyterian minister , was born and educated at Sleaford . Andrew Kippis , the Presbyterian minister , biographer and Fellow of the Royal Society , attended the Grammar School .

Richard Banister , the oculist , practised for 14 years in Sleaford where he trained in couching cataracts . Henry Andrews astronomer and astrologer , worked in Sleaford during his youth .

The royalist poet Thomas Shipman was educated at Carre 's Grammar School , as was novelist Henry Jackson ; Joseph Smedley , the actor and comedian , built the theatre in 1824 , before settling in the town in 1842 , establishing a printing business and dying in North Street ; and Charles Haslewood Shannon , the artist , was born in the town . The actress and comedian Jennifer Saunders was born in Sleaford . In popular culture , the singer Lois Wilkinson of the Caravelles was born in the town ; glamour model Abi Titmuss grew up in Ruskington and was educated at Kesteven

and Sleaford High School ; and Bernie Taupin , Elton John 's songwriter , was born in the town . Eric Thompson who narrated The Magic Roundabout television series , was born in a house on Jermyn Street . In sport , the professional footballer Mark Wallington who played for Leicester City , Derby County and Lincoln City , grew up in Sleaford and , after retiring taught Physical Education at St George 's Academy .