

MARCH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of March Town Council held on
2 June 2025 held in The Skoulding Suite at March Town Hall
commencing at 7.15pm.

Present	Councillor	A Woollard	Town Mayor
		N Spencer	Deputy Town Mayor
	Councillors	S Court	G Christy
		M Field	J French
		K French	J Lawler
		H Orbell	M Purser
		R Skoulding	T Taylor
	Cambridgeshire County Councillor		C Galbraith
		Town Clerk	S Lemmon
		Assistant Town Clerk	S Farmer
		Public	0
		Press	1

39 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cambridgeshire County Councillor S Fisher.

40 Police Update

Cllr Christy to share police contact details with Cllr Woollard going forward, as the Mayor is the dedicated council official to liaise with the police on behalf of the Town Council.

Cllr Christy updated members on this occasion; there was a drugs raid in March today. Parking tickets have been issued in Broad Street and around the schools. A project designed to tackle youth ASB ("The Junction Youth Project") is starting next week.

Cllr K French requested that the police resume providing a report/data for circulation to councillors. This has not been done for a while.

41 Planning Applications

Because of her position on the Fenland District Council Planning and Development Committee and her commitment to Paragraph 28 of the Fenland District Council Code of Conduct, Councillor J French declares a permanent personal interest and takes no part in discussions relating to planning matters.

Cllr M Purser also declared a personal interest and took no part in any planning matters since he is acting as a sub on the Fenland District Council Planning Committee this week.

Application

Name and address of applicant, details of application, Number and recommendation of March Town Council

Two (2) additional planning applications would be discussed at tonight's meeting.

F/YR25/0323/TRCA

Applicant unknown, Agent: Ben Jupp
Fell 3 x Ash Trees within a conservation area at 17 Wherry Close, March.

Revised Proposals

Received: 12 May 2025

Reply by: 26 May 2025 (not possible)

Recommendation: As per previous comments on 28.4.25, the information provided is unsatisfactory. What is the justification for felling rather than removing the ivy and pollarding? Agreeable subject to Tree Officer's comments, but would expect to see compelling reasons submitted in any application relating to tree *removal*.

F/YR25/0353/A

Miss Hanh Thi, London Nails Bar Ltd
Display 1 x non-illuminated sign and 1 x non-illuminated hanging sign at 25 High Street, March.

Revised Proposals; amended front elevation and layout plan

Received: 14 May 2025

Reply by: 28 May 2025 (not possible)

Recommendation: Approval

F/YR25/0378/O

Mr A Love

Erect up to 9 dwellings involving the demolition of existing agricultural buildings (outline application with all matters reserved) at Cherryholt Farm, Lewis Close, March.

Received: 15 May 2025

Reply by: 5 June 2025

Recommendation: Approval *subject to the provision of satisfactory water attenuation measures, retention and effective maintenance of the culvert and the conditioning of the use of the narrow access-way for construction traffic during demolition.*

F/YR25/0385/F

Wigwam Storage Management

Change of use of existing premises to a self-storage facility at 15 Hostmoor Avenue, March.

Received: 19 May 2025

Reply by: 9 June 2025

Recommendation: Approval

F/YR25/0391/F	<p>Mr Philips Sharpe, Infields Farm, Rings End. Erect a garage at Infields Farm, Goosetree Road, Rings End, Wisbech. Received: 20 May 2025 Reply by: 10 June 2025 Recommendation: Approval</p>
F/YR25/0393/F	<p>Mr and Mrs Moss, 2 West Fen Cottage Erect a single-storey extension to rear of existing dwelling and conversion of existing garage to form a 1-bed annexe ancillary to existing dwelling at 2 West Fen Cottage, Whitemoor Road, March. Received: 21 May 2025 Reply by: 11 June 2025 Recommendation; Approval</p>
F/YR25/0396/F	<p>Mr Eastol, 93 Dartford Road, March Erect 1 self-build/custom build dwelling including the demolition of existing garage at Land North East of 93 Dartford Road, March. Received: 23 May 2025 Reply by: 13 June 2025 Recommendation; Approval</p>
F/YR24/0858/F	<p>Mr Fauk Solak Change of Use of Bank to Restaurant and external alterations including remove signage and installation of extraction equipment (part retrospective) at 18 Broad Street, March. Revised Proposals: Amended description, drawings and design, access and heritage statement. Received; 28 May 2025 Reply by: 11 June 2025 Recommendation: With the exception of the change of use of the premises, all other proposals are objected to. The Conservation Officer's comments are wholly supported.</p>
F/YR25/0404/F	<p>Mr Nicholas Underwood, 6 Upton Close, Longthorpe Erect 1 self-build/custom dwelling with a 2m high boundary fence, involving the demolition of existing garages at River Drive, March. Received; 30 May 2025 Reply by: 20 June 2025 Recommendation; Approval</p>

42 Public Participation

Since nobody had given the requisite notice to the Clerk to enable them to address the meeting, no public participation took place.

43 Minutes of Meetings

The following Minutes were agreed and signed by the Town Mayor:

Annual Meeting – 12 May 2025

44 Matters Arising

None.

45 Freedom of the Town – Presentation

The Mayor presented Cllr Robert Skoulding with the Freedom of the Town in recognition of years of outstanding work, tirelessly fund-raising to provide defibrillators for the town (as well as servicing and maintaining them). These have saved countless lives over the years. Cllr Skoulding was thrilled to receive this honour and shared with councillors how a teenage girl's heart was re-started and her life thereby saved in March only last week thanks to an AED.

46 Financial Regulation for Adoption

New Model Financial Regulations had been issued by NALC in March 2025. These were circulated by the Clerk to all councillors on 19 May 2025 for consideration and duly adopted (proposed by Cllr J French, seconded by Cllr N Spencer).

47 MVAS

After a lengthy discussion, it was decided that whilst MVAS was possibly not the best option going forward to monitor speeding in local hot spots (cost, training, inconvenience, absence of any real results or enforcement by police).

However, it was considered by the majority that some form of speed monitoring was desirable, and that the police need to do so much more by way of enforcement.

The Mayor, assisted by Cllr Christy, would research alternatives to MVAS, such as the permanent speed cameras in Wimblington for example.

Cllr Spencer reminded councillors that our data over many years had continued to demonstrate that we fared much better than the national average in terms of speeding in March.

The Clerk advised that we did not have a current Attachments License to affix the signs to County owned street furniture. As such, as soon as the device is delivered that is used to test whether street columns are live, our MVAS will be removed pending a decision as to how we will monitor speeding in the future.

48 Office Hardware and Software Upgrade

The Clerk sought authorisation from councillors to obtain quotes for replacement computers and a desktop printer for the office. Our existing set-up is very old and decrepit and no longer fit for purpose.

Quotes would be obtained from our existing supplier/IT consultants who fully understand our needs and requirements, but further quotes would be sought from alternative suppliers in accordance with the Financial Regulations.

Councillors agreed this was essential expenditure.

49 The National Allotment Society – Membership

The Clerk advised that we had become a member of the above-mentioned society (£85.00 pa) as this provided access to valuable free advice and support.

More generally in relation to allotments, the Clerk advised that she had been pleased to receive from our solicitors an updated Office Copy Entry from HMLR evidencing March Town Council's upgraded title to the land (from possessory to absolute).

The Assistant Clerk updated councillors in relation to current lettings.

50 Band Concerts - Rota

Councillors were provided with the rota and any issues were to be resolved directly between councillors.

Cllrs Woollard and Purser have the electrical cabinet key for the Band Stand and will check tomorrow that they can secure access to that.

Full details of the concerts are on the council website.

A poster will also be displayed in the office window.

Laminated copies can be displayed on the bandstand and elsewhere.

The big banner will be displayed on the railing on the Market Place once again.

Councillors can post the link to our website on their Facebook pages.

Attendance at the concerts will be closely monitored this year. As costs have increased and attendance has declined markedly over the years, it is essential to monitor this year's attendance and review whether we continue to host the band concerts.

51 Grants and Donations

The Clerk confirmed that since this was the first quarter, the full amount £2,500 for the year was available for distribution.

MAGPAS 100 patients were attended to by MAGPAS in PE15 last year.

£500 awarded of the £1,000 requested.

Cllr J French proposed that MAGPAS receive £1,000 pa every year by way of a specific grant/donation.

However, it had been decided that the Specific Donations would be procedurally reviewed later this year prior to the preparation of the budget, and Cllr French's proposal would therefore be considered following said review.

Ely Food Bank £500 awarded (as over 1,000 March residents supported by the bank).

The Friendship Group The group was started by COPE who requested £250.00 to fund an outing for 20 people. Undoubtedly a good cause, it was unfortunate that the application had not been submitted by COPE, rather than the sub-group which has no bank account or constitution. However, as FACT was providing the transport for the outing in any event, FACT would invoice March Town Council directly who would in turn report on expenditure to March Town Council. This solution would allow for the trip to go ahead without requiring a new application to be submitted.

52 Cambridgeshire County Council Update

All email updates were being circulated by the Clerk as and when received.

Newly elected County Cllr Colin Galbraith was welcomed to the meeting and introduced himself to members. He expressed his passion for local issues and a particular interest in highways matters.

Cllr Skoulding explained how the road block on Upwell Road had resulted in an ambulance destined for Upwell Park being diverted 16 miles. This could have been a matter of life and death.

Could traffic lights be installed if only to allow emergency vehicle access to Upwell Park and its elderly residents?

Cllr Galbraith agreed to investigate this.

53 Fenland District Council Update

All email updates were being circulated by the Clerk as and when received.

Cllr J French advised that the Norwood Avenue LHI had still not been completed.

She had sent an email to the Highways and the CEO re Upwell Road.

With regard to Middle Level Commissioners (Cllr J French sits on 10 IDBs), the Commissioners are currently developing a policy for all IDB's.

Work on the new toilet block has commenced today. It is hoped to be completed within 2-3 months.

The generator in Broad Street should be removed shortly once CCC have installed the necessary meters.

Works to improve the area of public realm outside Iceland should be fully complete within 3 weeks.

The lease for Station Road Chapel is being worked on.

The Pump Track has been completed although there are few outstanding issues to be resolved with CCC.

CPE is back on track although it remains to be determined where the funding will come from.

There had been 14 reported cases of flytipping in March in May.

Cllr Skoulding asked whether the defibrillator on the old Barclays building could be repositioned on the new toilets. Cllr J French agreed that this should happen.

54 Payments List

The Payments List, as circulated, was agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8:35pm.

Councillor A Woollard.....7 July 2025
Mayor of March.