

MARCH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of March Town Council held on 3 March 2025 held in The Skoulding Suite at March Town Hall commencing at 7.15pm.

Present	Councillor	G Christy A Woollard	Town Mayor Deputy Town Mayor
	Councillors	S Court J French J Lawler R Skoulding	M Field T Taylor M Purser N Spencer
		Town Clerk Assistant Town Clerks	S Lemmon S Taylor & S Farmer
	Public		0
	Press		1

163 Apologies

Apologies were received from H Orbell, K French and Cambridgeshire County Councillor, John Gowing.

Robert Skoulding was welcomed back to March Town Council, having been elected as a councillor on 27 February 2025 for the March East Ward.

The Clerk shared the sad news of the passing of former March Town Councillor (and 3 times Mayor of March – 2002-2003, 2003-2004, 2011-2012), Bernard Keane on 2 March 2025, aged 93 years.

A two minutes silence was held in his honour.

164 Police Update

Cllr Christy advised that meetings will now take place on an ad hoc one-to-one basis (but hopefully still at least once a month). Cllr Christy is in regular contact with Chris Arnold from the Community Policy Team, who has recently been involved in Closure Orders, ASB and drug issues. 2 males have been arrested for arson in relation to a boat on West End and also a mobility scooter. 22 further arrests have been made in relation to recent hare coursing activity and officers have committed to tackling parking at All Saints School. In total, 50 additional hours of policing per month have been promised to tackle ASB and parking issues.

165 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.

<i>Application</i>	<i>Name and address of applicant, details of application, Number and recommendation of March Town Council</i>
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It was agreed that 4 additional planning applications would be discussed at tonight's meeting.

F/YR25/0118/TRTPO	Mrs Stella Green, Ely Diocesan Office, Witchford Fell 1 x Ash Tree covered by TPO 03/1967 at 177 Station Road, March. Received: 17 February 2025 Reply by: 10 March 2025 Recommendation: Cannot make recommendation at this stage. Application deemed incomplete (see Clerk's email of 18 February)
F/YR25/0131/TRTPO	Cameron Harris, 24 Laburnum Grove Works to 1 x London Plane tree covered by TPO16/1986 at Land East Of 24 Laburnum Grove March Cambridgeshire. Received: 19 February 2025 Reply by: 12 March 2025 Recommendation: Approval
F/YR25/0134/F	Mr & Mrs Walker 21 Knights End Road Erect a 2-storey side extension with integral garage, porch to front of dwelling and widening of access involving demolition of existing porch and changes to fenestration Received: 25 February 2025 Reply by: 18 March 2025 Recommendation: Approval
F/YR25/0136/TRCA	Cambridgeshire County Council – M Shafi Ahmad Fell a False Acacia tree within conservation area at False Acacia Tree High Street March Cambridgeshire Received: 24 February 2025 Reply by: 17 March 2025 Recommendation: Approval (can at least one of the replacement trees be a False Acacia?)
F/YR25/0144/F	Mr Constable Erect a fence (max 1.56m) at Land East Of 2 Prospect Road March Cambridgeshire Received: 27 February 2025 Reply by: 20 March 2025 Recommendation: Approval

F/YR25/0145/F	<p>Mr & Mrs S&T Rutterford & Hudson Agent: Morton & Hall Consulting Ltd. Erect 2 x self-build/custom build dwellings including formation of a new access at Land to The West Of 167 Gaul Road March Cambridgeshire. Received: 26 February 2025 Reply by: 19 March 2025 Recommendation: Approval</p>
F/YR25/0147/F	<p>Mr Stephen Tibble Formation of a dropped kerb to existing dwelling at 152 Creek Road, March Received: 28 February 2025 Reply by: 21 March 2025 Recommendation: Approval</p>
F/YR25/149/FDC	<p>Fenland District Council Demolition of existing building and erect a max 2.4m fence in a conservation area at 2 Broad Street, March. Received: 28 February 2025 Reply by: 21 March 2025 Recommendation: Approval</p>

166 Public Participation

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

167 Minutes of Meetings

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

Main Meeting – 3 February 2025
Planning Meeting – 17 February 2025
Christmas Lights – 17 February 2025

168 Matters Arising

Main Meeting 3 February 2025 - Minute 155: Zurich have confirmed that there is no issue with using the trailer on the Market Place as a stage at switch-on. Dan Fortuna and Alan Simpson will be undertaking G39 and NRSWA “signing and guarding” training so that the Clerk can apply for a Christmas Lights Attachment License once the street columns in Broad Street have been adopted by CCC.

Minute 156: On VE Day bench was ordered. It is due to be delivered in the next few weeks and be stored by Octavius pending installation. The bench will be installed outside the Town Hall and there will be an official unveiling ceremony.

169 Grants & Donations

March Bowls Club (Conservative Club). The requested sum of £500 was awarded. It is hoped that the Club will secure insurance going forward.

March Library – Summer Reading Challenge. The requested sum of £500 was granted.

170 Christmas Lighting

Further to discussions in this matter at the January meeting, the Clerk prepared a report for all councillors (circulated on 24 January 2025) regarding the anticipated cost of the 2024 Christmas lighting activities.

A local contractor was unable to provide a comparative, let alone competitive quote, for the installation and dismantling of the Christmas lights.

The Clerk reported that Dan and Alan had agreed to undertake the necessary NRSWA and G39 qualifications. This would provide a lifeline for the Christmas Lights and keep costs down to an acceptable level. The Clerk would ensure that both were booked onto the relevant courses at the earliest opportunity so that the Attachments License could be applied for by the Clerk.

The Christmas Lighting Committee is working hard to find ways to bring down the costs of the event and increase fund-raising activities. Going forward, however, it may be that the town could still have lighting, but possibly without an actual “switch-on” event given the ever-escalating costs.

The Clerk had not received any further invoices relating to the Christmas Lights, but her projected expenditure for 2024 looked to be accurate.

171 Allotment Update

The Clerk will circulate an email to councillors with a detailed update.

However, the waiting list for allotments is now the highest it has even been, at 63.

172 Cambridgeshire County Council Update

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

Cllr J French had taken a motion to CCC re Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE), which received strong support. CCC will liaise with FDC accordingly as part of the Fenland Inspire Project.

The George Campbell swimming pool re-opened last week.

Progress is being made in relation to the 3G pitches across the District and Cllr J French has a meeting with the Estover Committee next week.

Works should be completed next week on the 10 additional parking spaces on the City Road Car Park.

173 Fenland District Council Update

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

Cllr J French provided an update in relation to the toilets. A delay had been caused by information requested by MLC, but it is hoped that the works can start in May 2025.

174 Payments List

The Payments List, as circulated, was agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8:15pm.

Councillor G Christy7 April 2025
Mayor of March.