

MARCH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of March Town Council held on 3 November 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	G Christy	S Court
	M Field	J French
	K French	
	M Purser	
	R Skoulding	T Taylor

Cambridgeshire County Councillors	S Fisher
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Town Clerk	S Lemmon
Assistant Town Clerk	S Farmer

Public	0
Press	0

114 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Lawler and Orbell and County Councillor C Galbraith.

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Mayor drew councillors' attention to the email he had circulated earlier in the day reminding councillors about adherence to the Standing Orders during meetings and decorum at meetings in general.

115 Police Update

The Mayor reported that there is a new Neighbourhood Community Sargeant in post and a meeting will be arranged shortly.

Cllr Christy advised that homeless individual previously discussed could not be named in meetings.

Cllr Skoulding welcomed the informative police social media posts regarding fireworks.

116 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 Purser also declared an interest in all applications and took no part in discussions.

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

F/YR25/0762/F	<p>S & L Humphrey</p> <p>Erect a single-storey extension to side/rear of existing dwelling involving demolition of attached garage at 20 Laburnum Grove, March.</p> <p>Received: 16 October 2025</p> <p>Reply by: 6 November 2025</p> <p>Recommendation: Approval</p>
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F/YR25/0776/PIP	<p>Mr & Mrs Giddens, 131 Back Road, Murrow</p> <p>Permission in Principle for up to 9 dwellings at Land North of 386 Wisbech Road, March.</p> <p>Received: 21 October 2025</p> <p>Reply by: 4 November 2025</p> <p>Recommendation; Approval</p>
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F/YR25/0779/TRCA	<p>Tony Sparkes, Sanctuary Housing</p> <p>Fell 3 x Elder Trees and 1 x Sycamore within a Conservation Area at 1 Jubilee Court, Elwyn Road, March.</p> <p>Received: 21 October 2025</p> <p>Reply by: 11 November 2025</p> <p>Recommendation; Cannot make a recommendation based on lack of information [no tree report, no reasons stated to justify felling of trees]</p>
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F/YR25/0782/A	<p>B Solak, Majestic</p> <p>Display of 1 internally illuminated fascia sign (retrospective) at 18 Broad Street, March.</p> <p>Received: 23 October 2025</p> <p>Reply by: 13 November 2025</p> <p>Recommendation: Approval</p>
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F/YR25/0784/F	<p>Mr S Bushell</p> <p>Erect 1 dwelling and 1 agricultural building and the retention of existing agricultural building at Land at School Grounds Farm School Grounds March.</p> <p>Received: 23 October 2025</p> <p>Reply by: 13 November 2025</p> <p>Recommendation; Approval</p>
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F/YR25/0788/F	<p>Middle Level Commissioners</p> <p>Installation of 6 new windows to front and 2 new windows to side elevations and internal alterations to existing building at Workshop, Middle Level Commissioners, 85 Whittlesey Road, March</p> <p>Received 23 October 2025</p>
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Reply by: 13 November 2025

Recommendation; Approval

F/YR24/0396/O

Richborough Estates

Erect up to 230 dwellings (outline application with matters committed in respect of access) at Land North and South of Cherryholt Farm, Burrowmoor Road.

Received: 29 October 2025

Reply by: 12 November 2025

Recommendation: Approval

F/YR25/0810/FDL

Mr G Wright

Installation of 14 angling platforms at River Nene South Bank North of Skate Park City Road March

Received: 30 October 2025

Reply by: 20 November 2025

Recommendation; Approval. Cllr Skoulding commented that he hoped to see more life buoys installed along the bank.

F/YR25/0820/TRTPO

Mr Clint

Works to 1 Lime Tree and 1 Sycamore Tree covered by TPO M/2/465/17 at Wendreda House Wimblington Road.

Received: 31 October 2025

Reply by: 21 November 2025

Recommendation; Approval

117 Public Participation

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

118 Minutes of Meetings

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

Planning Meeting – 20 October 2025

119 Matters Arising

Main Meeting - These minutes were not signed by the Mayor as Cllr Christy had raised a number of points once again in relation to Christmas Lights that the Mayor requested he submit written representations in order for these to be considered.

Cllr Christy discussed GDPR and the Council's GDPR policy and advised he was submitting an FOI request to hear the recording of the [September] meeting.

Christmas Lights – Going forward minutes of the Christmas Lights Committee will only be submitted to Town Council for information purposes and will be signed off by the Chairman of that Committee.

120 IT Policy Approval/Adoption

The new draft Information Technology (IT) Policy previously circulated to Councillors on 29 October was approved by Councillors for adoption.

(Proposed by Cllr Jan French, seconded by Cllr Kim French).

Cllr Christy asked the Clerk whether the Microsoft license is E3 or E6.
The Clerk will ask the IT consultant.

121 Budget

The Clerk presented the proposals for the 2026/2027 budget to councillors, the draft budget and precept having been circulated to all councillors on 29 October.

Key points to note;

- The budgeted precept ought to allow March Town Council to build reserves during 2026/27.
- The budget is not usually prepared until after the November meeting, once the FDC Council Tax Base is known. The Clerk has therefore had to estimate what the base will be for the purposes of calculating the precept. The correct figure will be known prior to the December meeting and the figures will be recalculated accordingly. It is not anticipated that the figures are likely to vary significantly than those provided in the documentation circulated to councillors for the purposes of this meeting. There still remains the possibility of the FDC tax base estimate changing prior to January, hence it will only be possible to approve the budget in principle at this stage and either amend or ratify it in January.
- All councillors with interests in/connections with grantees declared said interests and took no part in discussing the relevant allocations to their respective connected organisations.
- The Town Council continues to support March Town FC Estover CIC, CCTV (although Cllr J French was concerned about the regularity of outages and issues with monitoring this year), March Museum, March Street Pride, March Events and Christmas Lights.
- Details of the confirmation from NALC of the agreement reached regarding the Local Government Pay Claim for 2025/2026 and the rates of pay payable from April 2025 were approved by Councillors in August and became payable from September 2025 (backdated to April 2025)
- March in Bloom/Street Pride made a request for a 4% increase in their grant, to increase the annual grant from £7,700 to £8008 to cover costs.
- March Events requested on 31 October that their contribution increase to £12,500 based on their need to continue to provide 2 quality events annually in town – St George's Fayre and the Christmas Market.
- Requests were received this year from Estafest, The March Summer Festival and CAB for Annual/Specific Grants. Cllr J French confirmed that CAB had received a grant of £6,000 from Burnt House and it was therefore agreed that they would only receive £895.00 and not £6,895.00 applied for.
- Support would continue to be given to Defibrillators for March and FACT.

- Applications had been invited from East Anglian Air Ambulance and Fenvision, but applications had not been received.
- Cllr Christy queried the necessity to pay for payroll administration which had been recommended as good practise and subsequently approved by Personnel and Admin Committee in 2022

It was proposed by Cllr J French and seconded by Cllr Taylor that the budget and precept, subject to the forgoing amendments, be accepted, with all councillors voting unanimously in favour (subject to any amendment required to reflect a change in the FDC council tax base). The budget would be brought back to council in December and again in January for ratification.

122 MVAS/Road Safety

Cllr Christy made a presentation in favour of extending the use of MVAS using contractors to move the signs in a bid to reduce speeding in town. Councillors, having considered the motion circulated to them prior to the meeting, rejected the motion, the Mayor having exercised his casting vote. The Mayor suggested that the existing sign which had not been moved for many months be used and data collected before the council would commit to purchasing further units. The matter would be revisited in future.

The Clerk requested that Cllrs Christy/Field/Orbell share a list with her *this week* of the precise locations of the posts used so that she could apply for a new Attachments License and stated that the current sign must be removed as it was currently unlicensed (this had been requested in the Summer).

123 Christmas Lights

Cllr Field updated councillors on arrangements for the switch-on event. There was concern and confusion about the closure of Grays Lane (an emergency access for the switch-on event)

He had written to SAG about the fencing and toilets and invited councillor support at the Tesco collection and stewards' meeting. Fundraising activities had been successful, but there were issues with the timers in town and the Clerk confirmed the position in relation to Broad Street and licensing (absence of accrual of the 12 columns) and the removal of the parcel light prior to Remembrance Day.

124 Cambridgeshire County Council Update

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

Cllr Fisher advised that the Future of Spending Survey had gone out to residents. The Town Council will help to promote this on the website.

In relation to the local government reorganisation, the County Council had voted in favour of Option A (Fenland, Peterborough and Huntingdon).

Cllr Christy reported the flooded zebra crossing outside Neale-Wade.

Cllr J French complained about the tardy delivery of LHI schemes – Norwood Avenue from 2023/2024 had still not been completed and double yellow lining from 2024/2025 was outstanding. Cllr Fisher will chase for progress on these schemes. Cllr J French also mentioned the crossing on Station Road that was dangerously obscured by parked vehicles.

125 Fenland District Council Update

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

FDC will be discussing the local government reorganisation at Cabinet on Friday.

The new toilets had not been completed due to issues with the doors and a problem with the sewerage connection. Accordingly, the contractors have now left the site whilst the demolition of the old Barclays Bank is demolished. Cllr Field asked who the contractors are because toilets are needed for the switch-on event.

Cllr J French confirmed there was no access to Grays Lane and confirmed that the defibrillator that was located on the old toilets will be repositioned, but was not sure that that was achievable prior to Remembrance on Sunday.

Cllr J French advised that some funding was available from Burnt House that we could distribute to small organisations. More details to follow.

Cllr Christy advised that the Junction Youth Project had been moved to the Market Place on a Wednesday evening.

126 Payments List

The Payments List, as circulated, was agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:25pm.

Councillor A Woollard.....1 December 2025
Mayor of March.