**MARCH TOWN COUNCIL.**

Minutes of the Meeting of March Town Council held on 4th December 2017 in The Skoulding Suite at March Town Hall commencing at 7.15pm.

**Present** Councillor K French Town Mayor

 J French Deputy Town Mayor

 Councillors SR Court AR Donnelly

 MEC Field ML George

 JW Gowing CC Owen

 A Pugh MW Purser

 RF Skoulding

 Town Clerk C Lemmon

 Asst Town Clerk GSD Wilkinson

 Public Nil

**117 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Harris.

**118**  **Police Update**

No police were in attendance but a written report from PCSO Thomas Horwood had been circulated to all Councillors earlier in the day.

**119 Planning Applications**

Because of his position on the Fenland District Council Planning and Development Committee and his commitment to Paragraph 28 of the Fenland District Council Code of Conduct, Councillor Court declared a personal interest and took no part in the discussions relating to planning matters.

It was also noted that, due to their involvement in the building industry, Councillors Purser and Skoulding declared personal interests and stated that they would not take part in any discussions relating to planning issues.

Councillors Court, Purser and Skoulding all left the debating table for the entirety of this agenda item.

It was agreed that four additional planning applications would be discussed.

*Application Name and address of applicant, details of application,*

*Number and recommendation of March Town Council*

F/YR17/1090/F Mr & Mrs T Godfrey, 9 Oxbow Crescent, March.

Erection of 2 x single-storey rear extensions and formation of pitched roof to garage of existing dwelling at 12 St Wendredas Drive, March.

 Received: 21 November 2017.

 Reply by: 12 December 2017.

 Recommend approval.

F/YR17/1102/F Mrs Lynsey Hunter, 1 Hawthorne Grove, March.

Erection of a 2-storey side extension with Juliet balcony to rear of 1 Hawthorne Grove, March.

 Received: 28 November 2017.

 Reply by: 19 December 2017.

 Recommend approval.

F/YR17/1104/F Mr & Mrs Michael Tunley, 32 Maple Grove, March.

Erection of a single-storey side / rear extension to existing dwelling involving demolition of existing rear extension at 32 Maple Grove, March.

 Received: 23 November 2017.

 Reply by: 14 December 2017.

 Recommend approval.

F/YR17/1114/O Mr & Mrs JC & MA Martin, Grandford House Farm, Wisbech Road, Westry, March.

 Erection of up to 8 x dwellings, (Outline application with all matters reserved) at Land South East of 433 Wisbech Road, Westry, March.

 Received: 1 December 2017.

 Reply by: 22 December 2017.

Recommend approval.

F/YR17/1127/O Mr T Knowles, Knowles Transport Ltd, Blue Lane, Wimblington.

Erection of up to 118 x dwellings (Outline application with matters committed in respect of access) involving demolition of 147a Wisbech Road at Land North of The Green and North of 145-159 Wisbech Road, March.

Received: 30 November 2017.

 Reply by: 21 December 2017.

 Recommend approval.

F/YR17/1132/F Mr J McGarvie, Halfpenny Toll Stables, Hook Road, March.

 Erection of a single-storey buildingnfor B1 office use involving the formation of a new access at Land South of 2 Boarding House Farm, Knights End Road, March.

 Received: 1 December 2017.

 Reply by: 22 December 2017.

 Recommend approval.

F/YR17/1135/TRTPO Maxey Grounds, 42 High Street, March.

 Works to 2 x Silver Maple trees, 3 x Lime trees, 1 x Hornbeam tree and 2 x Yew trees covered by TPO 04/1992 at Norfolk Court, Station Road, March.

 Received: 4 December 2017.

 Reply by: 25 December 2017.

 Recommend approval.

**120 Public Participation**

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

**121 Minutes of Meetings**

The following Minutes were agreed and signed by the Mayor:

Main Council Meeting of 6th November 2017.

Planning Sub-Committee Meeting of 20th November 2017.

Christmas Lights working Party Meeting of 20th November 2017.

**122 Matters Arising**

Re Main Council Meeting of 6th November 2017:

Minute 110: A proposed new contract relating to the City Road toilets was circulated to all Councillors and, subject to two amendments, approved. The amended contract is attached as Appendix 1.

Minute 111: An e-mail requesting an eastern bypass to be included within any future area traffic management plans was forwarded to James Palmer on 8th November 2017.

 A response received from his Personal Assistant (Susan Lee) on 13th November 2017 stated that “The Mayor has indicated that the way forward to this request is through the March Masterplan which will be funded in the near future”.

Re Planning Sub-Committee Meeting of 20th November 2017:

Minute 116: Councillor J French reported that, although the Planning Sub-Committee had approved it, she would be speaking against application number F/YR17/1067/O at the relevant Fenland District Council Planning Meeting in support of some local residents who had approached her.

Re Christmas Lights working Party Meeting of 20th November 2017:

Committee members and volunteers were congratulated on yet another extremely successful

“switch-on” night.

**123 Grants and Donations**

Only one application for funding had been received as follows:

Name: Citizens Advice Rural Cambs.

Amount: £5,500.00p.

Purpose: Training and provision of volunteer advisers.

The Clerk advised that this application did not meet the necessary criteria for the following

reasons:

1. A £500.00 specific grant was paid to Citizens Advice Rural Cambs in April 2017.
2. A further £1,000.00p additional grant was also paid to them in April 2017.
3. Both the above grants were made in the current financial year.
4. Their March office had closed despite March Town Council providing additional funding.

Following discussions, it was agreed that this application should be rejected.

**124 Local Highway Improvements 2018 / 2019**

In accordance with the e-mail forwarded to all Councillors on 20th November 2017, the Clerk

reminded them that the 2018 / 2019 proposed Highway Improvement Schemes were undergoing

feasibility studies prior to being presented to the member panel.

In consequence, amendments may need to be made to the applications both in terms of design

and cost, although not all schemes will be effected in this manner.

These amendments will need to be agreed with applicant Councils by 5th January 2018. Since

there is no further meeting prior to that date, it was requested that the Mayor and Clerk be given

such delegated authority as is necessary to allow the schemes to progress to the next stage.

Following discussions, this request was unanimously approved.

**125 Budget 2018 / 2019**

The Clerk presented the proposals for the 2018 / 2019 budget and precept.

The Clerk also informed Councillors of the following:

1. At this point in time, Towns and Parishes did not have to work under the same Government constraints that Districts and Counties were bound by i.e. a restricted rise in Council Tax charges.
2. Towns and Parishes could, in the future, be requested to undertake more additional functions that Districts and Counties currently undertook but may decide to cut back due to budget constraints.
3. The budget presented took account of the economic climate and likely changes to future precept rules. It had been set to maintain the services and support currently provided whilst ensuring adequate reserves.
4. Due to the possibility of the FDC estimates changing, it would be necessary to approve the budget and precept in principle at this meeting and then ratify or amend the figures accordingly at the 8th January 2018 meeting.

In particular, the Clerk highlighted the following points within the budget:

1. An increased grant for March Museum, the first increase in funding for five years.
2. An increase in contingencies, due to the unpredictable nature of local politics in providing unexpected support.
3. Continued support for the City Road public toilets and CCTV.
4. Continued support for Estover Playing Field 2015 CIC. It has been reconfirmed by Fenland District Council that it will provide £100,000 towards the provision of a multi-use games area (MUGA) at this site.

Following discussions, it was unanimously agreed that the budget and precept be accepted without amendment (Proposer Councillor Skoulding, Seconder Councillor J French).

The figures accepted equated to a budget of £280,070 and a “total precept” requirement of £275,621.

It was agreed that these figures would be ratified (following amendment if necessary) at the 8th January 2018 meeting.

Full details relating to the budget and precept will be included as an appendix to the 8th January 2018 minutes, at which time all outstanding items will have been finalised.

**126** **Cambridgeshire County Council Update**

It was noted that all information received from Cambridgeshire County Council had been circulated to Councillors by e-mail as and when received.

In addition, Councillor J French reported that a consultation was underway regarding improvements to Adult Services and Councillor J Gowing reported that, despite union concerns, the Fire Authority had agreed to continue to provide first-responder first-aid cover in this area.

**127 Fenland District Council Update**

Councillor Owen reported the following:

1. In addition to his FDC role, Councillor J Clark had been appointed as the Combined Authority’s spokesman for Highways and Transport.
2. An FDC Comprehensive Spending Review was currently underway.

**128 Schedule of Accounts**

The Schedule of Accounts, as circulated, was agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.20pm

Councillor K French ……………………………………………….. 8th January 2018.

Mayor of March.