

MARCH TOWN COUNCIL.

Minutes of the Meeting of March Town Council held on 4th July 2022 held in The Skoulding Suite at March Town Hall commencing at 7.15pm.

Present	Councillor	K French	Town Mayor
	Councillors	DW Connor AR Donnelly J French MW Purser G Tustin	SR Court CK Elkin R Johnson RF Skoulding RW White
	County Councillor		J W Gowing
	Town Clerk		C Lemmon
	Town Clerk Elect		SL Lemmon
	Asst. Town Clerk		SA Taylor

48 Apologies

No apologies were received.

49 Police Update

Police updates were circulated on 8th and 30th June 2022. The date of the next liaison meeting is yet to be arranged.

50 Planning Applications

Because of their position on the Fenland District Council Planning and Development Committee and their commitment to Paragraph 28 of the Fenland District Council Code of Conduct, Councillors Connor, J French and Purser declare a permanent personal interest and take no part in discussions relating to planning matters.

It is also noted that, due to his involvement in the building industry, Councillor Skoulding does not take part in any discussions relating to planning issues.

It was agreed that 3 additional planning applications would be discussed.

*Application
Number*

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

F/YR22/0691/F

Mr John Pink, The Old Coach House, Thicket Road, Houghton, PE28 2BQ.

Erect an external cavity wall to side, and external insulation and render to side and rear of existing dwelling at 76 Creek Road, March.

Received: 21 June 2022

Reply by: 12 July 2022

Recommend Approval

- F/YR22/0705/RM Mr Dan Clarke, c/o Peter Humphrey Associates, 2 Chapel Road, Wisbech.
Reserved Matters application relating to detailed matters of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale pursuant to outline planning permission F/YR20/1138/O to erect 6 x dwellings (2 x 2-storey, 5-bed and 4 x 2-storey, 4-bed) to include garages at Land South of 85-89 Upwell Road, March.
Received: 21 June 2022
Reply by: 12 July 2022
Recommend Approval
- F/YR22/0717/F Mr G Mills, 1 Mills Garden, March.
Erect a single-storey rear outbuilding at 1Mills Garden, March.
Received: 21 June 2022
Reply by: 12 July 2022
Recommend Approval
- F/YR22/0723/F Mr McCullough, Highfield House, Elm Road, March.
Erect a single-storey extension to side/rear of existing dwelling at Highfield House, Elm Road, March.
Received: 21 June 2022
Reply by: 12 July 2022
Recommend Approval
- F/YR22/0726/TE1 Mr Gallivan, CK Hutchison Networks (UK) Ltd, Great Bingham's Mead, Vastern Road, Reading.
5G Telecoms installation: Erect H3G 18 metre street pole and the installation of 3 x ground-based equipment cabinets at Land North of 73 High Street, March.
Received: 20 June 2022
Reply by: 11 July 2022
Recommend Approval
- F/YR22/0734/TRTPO Mrs Ellen Champion, 3 Magnolia Close, March.
Works to a silver birch tree covered by TPO 03/2014 at 3 Magnolia Close, March.
Received: 23 June 2022
Reply by: 14 July 2022
Recommend Approval
- F/YR22/0736/F Mrs Jo Henson, 86 Elm Road, March.
Erect a 2-storey rear extension to existing dwelling at 86 Elm Road, March.
Received: 27 June 2022
Reply by: 18 July 2022
Recommend Approval

- F/YR22/0741/F Mr & Mrs Fox, 115 Elliott Road, March.
Erect 1 x dwelling (single-storey 3-bed) and detached garage at Land North of 115 Elliott Road, March.
Received: 1 July 2022
Reply by: 22 July 2022
Recommend Approval
- F/YR22/0761/TRTPO Cath Causer, The Old Rectory, The Walnuts, March.
Fell 1 x Ash Tree covered by TPO 5/1975 at The Old Rectory, The Walnuts, March.
Received: 29th June 2022
Reply by: 20 July 2022
Recommend Approval
- F/YR22/0775/F Mr & Mrs Gilbert, 27 Hereward Street, March.
Erect a two-storey side and rear extension to existing dwelling at 27 Hereward Street, March.
Received: 1 July 2022
Reply by: 22 July 2022
Recommend Approval

51 Public Participation

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

52 Minutes of Meetings

The following Minutes were agreed:

6th June 2022 – Main Council Meeting
29th June 2022 – Meeting of the Planning Sub-Committee

53 Matters Arising

Re Main Council Meeting of 6th June 2022:

Minute 40/Platinum Jubilee: The Mayor reported that she had purchased the four bottles of port as agreed and distributed them as necessary.

Minute 41: The Clerk reported that he had emailed a copy of this minute to Paul Medd and others on 7th June 2022. A copy of such email was circulated to all Councillors to keep them fully informed of progress to date. A response from Phil Hughes dated 9 June 2022 together with all subsequent email communications between March Town Council and Fenland District

Council has been circulated to Councillors as and when sent/received.

It has been agreed that FDC will attend the Main Meeting of March Town Council to be held on 1st August 2022.

Minute 42:

The Clerk reported that he had emailed all Councillors on 7th June 2022 to confirm the dates that they were required to supervise the band concerts and their responsibilities in relation thereto.

54 Internal Audit Review – year ending 31 March 2022 and re-appointment of Internal Auditors

Letter from Whittings LLP dated 8th June 2022 stated that they had now completed the Internal Audit Review of the Annual Return for year ending 31 March 2022.

They confirmed that based on their tests there are no material items in relation to which they need to report.

It also noted that in the prior year the Mayoral expenses for 2020/21 were not expended due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions and that these would be expended during the year 2021/22. From their review, it was noted that the Mayoral expenses had been carried forward and expended within the year as previously agreed.

Following the proposition of Councillor Purser, seconded by Councillor Skoulding, it was unanimously agreed to accept the Internal Audit Review.

Following the proposition of Councillor Purser, seconded by Councillor Skoulding, it was unanimously agreed that Whittings LLP would be re-appointed as Internal Auditor for March Town Council for the year ending 31 March 2023.

55 Broad Street and Market Place Proposals/Update

The update provided by Fenland District Council was circulated to Councillors on Tuesday 28th June and discussed in detail.

Comments raised were as follows:

- i) Although Matt Wright's email of 23rd June 2022 stated that all shop visits had been completed, serious concern was expressed whether this constituted full consultation. Certain business owners had alluded that the visit was cursory rather than meaningful. To alleviate Councillor's concerns, Fenland District Council would be requested to provide details of the responses received from each shop. If this request was refused, March Town Council would distribute its own consultation document to each shop to verify precisely their individual views and comments.
- ii) The Broad Street preliminary design has three zebra crossings located within the immediate vicinity of the proposed roundabout (one in Broad Street itself, one in

Station Road and one in Dartford Road). There is a fourth zebra crossing located further along Broad Street. Currently, pedestrians are only allowed to cross the various zebra crossings in accordance with the operation of traffic lights. Under the proposed scheme, traffic lights will be removed and, therefore, pedestrians will take priority over motorists and will be entitled to cross at all times without restriction. This is likely to slow the flow of traffic rather than improve it. Without doubt, the “Broad Street Traffic Modelling Video” posted on the FDC website appears to take too little account of physical pedestrian zebra crossing usage. Anyone familiar with March would know the extensive usage that these crossings generate.

- iii) The Broad Street preliminary design still appears to exaggerate the width of Grays Lane. Indeed, it is shown as the same width as the new Broad Street layout which is far from the case as anyone who has travelled along it would agree.
- iv) Because of budget concerns, and without a guarantee of the project being financially underwritten, there was no confidence that it could be delivered to anywhere near the extent of the proposals suggested.
- v) Councillors were disappointed with the lack of real progress achieved since the initial meeting held with Phil Hughes and Matt Wright on 25th April 2022. Still no final plans have been produced. Although initially promised for July 2022, this date has now apparently slipped to “Autumn” 2022. Obviously, without proper plans there can be no proper costings and this is a huge obstacle in a market where material costs have, and are continuing, to rise dramatically.
- vi) No planning applications have yet been submitted for the Market Place modifications or the re-siting of the public toilets. It is possible that the Market Place will not need a planning application but the toilets definitely will and, without doubt, many objections are likely to be received in respect thereof.
- vii) It still appears that FDC Officers are deliberately slowing the whole process down so that timescales are exhausted with a view to bulldoze the whole scheme through whilst ignoring the will of the electorate. This would then equate to a willingness to spend grant money foolishly rather than lose it. This could leave the town centre in an unfinished state with no budget to complete it and in a worse state than before works started. People who live, work and socialise in March are best equipped to know what the town needs.
- viii) Serious concerns remain about the level of parking provision within town particularly taking into account:
 - a) The lack of public transport within the area.
 - b) The failure to recognize the importance of the “Collingwood site” at an early stage of the plan’s development.
- ix) A regular update of Fenland District Council’s responses from the Thursday consultation exercises at March Library should be forwarded to March Town Council on a weekly basis by the following Monday latest.

Following these discussions, the following points were unanimously agreed:

- i) A copy of this minute should be forwarded to Paul Medd, Phil Hughes, Matt Wright and others so they are kept fully informed of March Town Council's continuing concerns.
- ii) In the event that March Town Council's requests did not receive a satisfactory response, it would produce its own press release and undertake its own consultation exercise in association with the press itself.

56 Cambridgeshire County Council Update

The Clerk reported that all email updates are being circulated on a daily basis. Councillors J French and Gowing then reported as follows:

- i) Concerns were expressed about the recent increase in the number of serious RTI's and fatalities on the A141 between Mill Hill roundabout and Chatteris. Investigations are underway.
- ii) Anglian Water are due to start works at Sycamore Close to help to alleviate flooding issues.
- iii) Work has started on Norwood Road traffic-calming measures.

57 Fenland District Council Update

Councillor J French reported that she would approach Simon Bell regarding the neglected condition of the Bandstand in West End Park.

58 Schedule of Accounts

The Schedule of Accounts, as circulated, was agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8:20 pm.

Councillor K French1st August 2022.
Mayor of March.