

MARCH TOWN COUNCIL.

Minutes of the Meeting of March Town Council held on 6th July 2020 held via “Zoom” commencing at 7.15pm.

Present	Councillor	K French R Jack	Town Mayor Deputy Town Mayor
	Councillors	AR Donnelly J French MW Purser G Tustin	CK Elkin R Johnson RF Skoulding RW White
	County Councillor		J Gowing
	Town Clerk		C Lemmon

Public / Press No members of the public or press (although it was offered within the agenda notice) had requested permission to access the MTC “Zoom” group to witness proceedings.

To allow the meeting to take place via “Zoom”, and as agreed at the 6th April 2020 Main Council Meeting, Standing Orders are suspended until such time as the coronavirus epidemic abates.

49 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Court.

50 Police Update

No police were in attendance but a written report had been circulated on 1st July 2020.

51 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 Connor declares a permanent personal interest and takes no part in discussions relating to planning matters.

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

The afore-mentioned Councillors remained visible during this agenda item but all other members observed that their microphones were muted for the entire time.

It was agreed that one additional planning application would be discussed.

<i>Application Number</i>	<i>Name and address of applicant, details of application, and recommendation of March Town Council</i>
F/YR20/0493/TRTPO	Mr Morris, Melbourn Avenue, March. Works to 1 x Sycamore, 1 x Ash and 1 x Cherry covered by TPO 15/1986 at 1-5 High School Close, March. Received: 15 June 2020. Reply by: 6 July 2020. Recommend approval.
F/YR20/0522/RM	Mr Alex Redhead, 3 Great Northern Close, March. Reserved Matters application relating to detailed matters of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale pursuant to outline permission F/YR18/1020/O to erect a single-storey 3-bed dwelling at Land North of 80 Upwell Road, March. Received: 25 June 2020. Reply by: 16 July 2020. Recommend approval.
F/YR20/0530/F	Mr Tom Goakes, T Goakes Building and Groundworks, 1 Lower Botany Bay Cottage, March. Erect a storage building for use in connection with building/groundworks business at Land West of 40 Hostmoor Avenue, March. Received: 30 June 2020. Reply by: 21 July 2020. Because he is a friend of the applicant, Councillor Elkin declared a personal interest and took no part in the discussions relating to this application. Recommend approval.
F/YR20/0556/F	Mrs Keen, 17 Church Street, March. Erect a single-storey rear extension (due to fire damage); rendering and boarding, replacement windows and rebuilding of chimney to existing dwelling at 17 Church Street, March. Received: 3 July 2020. Reply by: 24 July 2020. Recommend approval.

52 Public Participation

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

53 Minutes of Meetings

The following Minutes were agreed:

Main Council Meeting of 1st June 2020.

Planning Sub-Committee Meeting of 15th June 2020.

Unlike the procedure normally adopted whereby the Mayor immediately endorses the minutes, it was agreed that the Clerk should sign the minutes on her behalf.

54 Matters Arising

Re Main Council Meeting of 1st June 2020:

Minute 41 / General: A replacement Deputy Mayors Chain has been ordered and, whilst things are still relatively quiet, the Mayors Chain has been sent away for repair.

Minute 42: A bench in memory of former Mayor Kit Owen has been ordered along with a suitably inscribed brass plaque. Once received, it will be installed in a suitable location at Estover Playing Field.

55 Matched Funding for West End Skate Park

Councillor J French reported that Fenland District Council had applied for Cambridgeshire Community Foundation funding to support the following project on West End Park:

- a) Improved "Park Run" pathways.
- b) Fencing around the new skate park.
- c) Provide a footpath to the bandstand.

The total project would cost £80,000 and a contribution of £2,500 towards the matched funding was requested from March Town Council.

Following discussions, it was unanimously agreed to contribute the amount requested. It was also agreed that the Clerk should notify Fenland District Council (Phil Hughes) accordingly.

56 Christmas Events

Councillors discussed the Christmas events that normally take place in late November and early December each year as follows:

- a) Christmas Lights "Switch-on" of Friday 27th November 2020.
- b) Senior Citizens Concert of Thursday 3rd December 2020.

The following points were unanimously agreed:

- a) The coronavirus epidemic is still prevalent and great care needs to be taken when considering the health and safety risks involved in arranging any event where large numbers of people are congregating within limited areas of space.
- b) The Christmas lights would be erected throughout the town as normal but the actual "switch-on" event should be cancelled.
- c) The Senior Citizens Concert should be cancelled, particularly taking into account the vulnerability of this particular age group.
- d) Enquiries should be made as to whether the Christmas Market organized by the March Community Events team will also be cancelled.

- e) A press statement should be made in the short term to notify the public of decisions taken. Such press statement could be made purely by March Town Council or in conjunction with Fenland District Council.

It was also agreed that Councillors Elkin, Tustin and Purser should discuss the feasibility of holding a social media event on the evening of 27th November 2020.

57 New Computer System

The Clerk reported that March Town Council's computer system was in need of a complete overhaul and replacement. It was noted that it was still operating on Windows 7 and Microsoft Office 2013.

The original system had been installed in 2004, with further updates in 2014. Since 2004, the Council supplier and maintenance engineers had been MOECS Limited and, without doubt, this company had provided a first-class service.

A maximum figure (dependant on the extent of changes made) of £3,000 has been quoted for the supply and installation of the necessary hardware, Windows 10 operating system, Microsoft Office 2019, transfer of all information from the old to the new equipment and sufficient capability to go forward for a minimum of the next five years.

Following discussions, it was unanimously agreed that the Clerk should proceed with the replacement in accordance with the quotation received.

58 Cambridgeshire County Council Update

The Clerk reported that all email updates are being circulated on a daily basis.

Councillor J French then reported as follows:

- a) Several local organisations have been successful in securing funding from the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation.

Councillor Gowing then advised that:

- a) At this point in time, there will be no amalgamation between the Fire Authority and the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner.
- b) Preparations for the Remembrance Day Parade and Service are currently in abeyance until further information is received. It appears likely though that this year's event will be necessarily low-key.

59 Fenland District Council Update

Councillor J French reported that:

- a) The Leader and Chief Executive have been working every day since lockdown to ensure that funding has been distributed in a speedy manner and that businesses have been kept fully informed of national and local initiatives.
- b) Many staff have been working from home but with modern communication equipment it has been "business as usual".
- c) Councillor Skoulding was congratulated on being appointed Vice-Chairman of Fenland District Council.

60 Schedule of Accounts

The Schedule of Accounts, as circulated, was agreed.

The Clerk stated that he would speak to the CGM Group to request that grass cutting in the vicinity of St Mary's Church be improved.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.54pm

Councillor K French 3rd August 2020.
Mayor of March.