**MARCH TOWN COUNCIL.**

Minutes of the Meeting of March Town Council held on 7th December 2015 in The Skoulding Suite at March Town Hall commencing at 7.15pm.

**Present** Councillor RF Skoulding Town Mayor

AR Donnelly Deputy Town Mayor

 Councillors S Court MEC Field

 J French K French

 ML George NJ Harris

 CC Owen A Pugh

 MW Purser

 Town Clerk C Lemmon

 Assistant Town Clerk GSD Wilkinson

 Public None

**129 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Gowing.

**130 Police Update**

Since no police were in attendance, a report had been circulated to all Councillors earlier in the day.

**131 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 Owen 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 would not take part in any discussions relating to planning issues.

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

There were no additional planning applications to discuss.

Councillor J French took the Chair for this one agenda item only.

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

*Number and recommendation of March Town Council*

F/YR15/1008/F Mr R Tunley, 81 Burrowmoor Road, March.

Alterations to existing dwelling to include: erection of a single-storey rear extension involving the demolition of existing extension, installation of external wall insulation to side elevations, insertion of a bay window to front and the widening of existing access.

S/a.

Received: 18 November 2015.

Reply By: 7 December 2015.

 Recommend approval.

F/YR15/1016/F March Town Bowling Club, The Causeway, March.

Erection of single-storey extension and alterations to existing pavilion and siting of water tank.

S/a.

Received: 20 November 2015.

Reply By: 9 December 2015.

Recommend approval.

F/YR15/1022/F Mr & Mrs P Revell, 48 Henson Road, March.

Erection of a single-storey rear extension to existing dwelling.

S/a.

Received: 23 November 2015.

Reply By: 9 December 2015.

 Recommend approval.

F/YR15/1037/F Mr & Mrs O’Connor, 75 Fleetwood Close, March.

Erection of a single-storey front extension to existing dwelling.

S/a.

Received: 23 November 2015.

Reply By: 11 December 2015.

 Recommend approval.

F/YR15/0784/F Withdrawn.

Erection of as 2-storey block of 5 shops and single-storey extension to rear of existing restaurant at 25 Broad Street, March.

Withdrawal noted.

**132 Public Participation**

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

**133 Minutes of Meetings**

The following Minutes were agreed and signed by the Mayor:

Main Council Meeting of 2nd November 2015.

Planning Sub-Committee Meeting of 16th November 2015.

Christmas Lights Working Party Meeting of 16th November 2015.

**134 Matters Arising**

Re Main Council Meeting of 2nd November 2015:

Minute 120 / 102: The Clerk reported that he had e-mailed Rob Bridge regarding the former “Mike Ogden Office” on 3rd November 2015. A response from Graham Nourse dated 4th November 2015 stated that our concerns were noted and that FDC will continue to liaise with the owner to discuss future plans for this building and the site as a whole.

 It was agreed that a further e-mail should be forwarded to Graham Nourse to establish whether any progress has been made regarding our concerns.

Minute 120 / 106 / 87 / 73 / 59 / 43 / 35: The Town Clerk reported that:

1. The lease from Cambs County Council was finally signed on 11th November 2015.
2. A public meeting was held on 2nd December 2015 with a further one arranged for 27th January 2016.

Minute 120 / 106 / 87 / 73 / 59 / General: The illumination of Britannia had now been completed, but it was noted that the lights were not on this evening. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact Balfour Beatty to notify them.

Minute 120 / 106 / 87 / 73 / 64: We are still awaiting budget figures from Matt Pickering in respect of the Wimblington Road replacement streetlights. It was agreed that a further reminder should be forwarded in December 2015.

Minute 120 / 107: No further action has yet been taken by the Clerk in respect of the proposed twinning with Zawiercie. However, enquiries have been made about a suitable time (possibly spring) for an initial exploratory visit.

Minute 121: It was reported that the Mayor had taken delivery of the first six defibrillators in early November 2015, with another two already on order.

**135 2016 / 2017 Budget**

The Clerk presented the proposals for the 2016 / 2017 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 additional functions that Districts and Counties currently undertook but may be cutting 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 4th January 2016 meeting.

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

The figures presented equated to a budget of £265,770 and a “total precept” requirement of £282,202.

It was agreed that these figures would be ratified (following amendment if necessary) at the 4th January 2016 meeting.

Full details relating to the budget and precept will be included as an appendix to the 4th January 2016 minutes, at which time all outstanding items will have been finalised.

**136 Grants and Donations**

Prior to discussions commencing, the Clerk reported that there was £500 currently available for distribution under this budget heading

One application for funding had been received as follows:

Applicant Eddie’s Fenland.

Amount Requested £200.

Purpose To provide monthly social activities for adults with a learning disability.

Councillor Purser declared a prejudicial interest and left the room whilst this application was being discussed because a family business owns the property that Eddie’s Fenland occupy.

It was noted that this application met the necessary criteria, and unanimously agreed that the £200 be awarded as requested.

**137 Flooding Update**

Trevor Watson’s update was circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting, and its contents were noted.

**138 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.

**139 Fenland District Council Update**

Councillor Owen provided the following information:

1. A comprehensive spending review is currently being undertaken.

Queries were raised as to how this review could be regarded as comprehensive when all paperwork released to date indicated that it was an Officer-led “bottom-up” review as opposed to a “top-down” one which most members of the public deemed preferable and more sensible.

**140 Schedule of Accounts**

The Schedule of Accounts, as circulated, was agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.55pm

Councillor RF Skoulding ……………………………………….. 4th January 2016.

Mayor of March.