

MARCH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Christmas Lights Working Party Meeting held in The Skoulding Suite at March Town Hall on Monday 18th October 2021 at 7.45pm.

Present:	Chairman	RF Skoulding	
	Councillors	SR Court CK Elkin M Purser	AR Donnelly R Jack RW White
	Members	David Doe Rachel Burry Sue Beer	Stuart Rayner Colin Arnold
	Town Clerk	C Lemmon	

Apologies:

Apologies were received from Gary Tustin and Dan Fortuna.

Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th September 2021 were circulated and approved.

Review of 2020 “Switch-on”:

Due to coronavirus restrictions, the 2020 “switch-on” had been a low-key affair with no road closures, funfair or entertainment.

Progress & Tasks Already Undertaken in respect of 2021 Event:

1. “Switch-on” date unanimously confirmed as Friday 26th November 2021.
2. The road closure has been confirmed by Cambridgeshire County Council and Ringways have been notified of their involvement therein [REDACTED] notified by email 14th June 2021). The cost of the Ringways traffic management has been agreed at £1,818.00p.
3. [REDACTED] funfair [REDACTED] (MC duties [REDACTED] [REDACTED] entertainment [REDACTED] have all confirmed their attendance.
4. Ridgeons ([REDACTED] steps [REDACTED] (loan of lorry trailer [REDACTED] – confirmed for 6am on 26.11.21.) and Lions Club (Father Xmas / sleigh) have all confirmed their attendance.
5. Fenland District Council is aware that the Market Place needs to be closed and the public toilets kept open until 10pm [REDACTED] notified by email on 9th February 2021 and again on 18th October 2021).

6. Christmas tree ordered from Elveden Farms on 22nd March 2021 ([REDACTED]). Delivery arranged for Friday 19th November 2021 at 10am at a cost of £3,030 + VAT. To be removed on Monday 10th January 2022 (Ringways aware of all necessary dates). The cost of the Ringways involvement has been agreed at £786.00p.
7. Although Sainsbury's and Tesco's have both been approached about collection days, no decisions have yet been taken by either organisation.
(Sainsbury's – 653702 – Fiona Wallis)
(Tesco's – [REDACTED] – uk5657@tesco.com or marchhostmoor.community@tesco.com)
The most recent contact with each company was made on 13th September 2021, Sainsbury's by phone and Tesco's by email. It would appear highly unlikely that any bag-packing will be allowed at Sainsbury's and the response from Tesco's states that no update has been provided by their Head Office as of yet. [REDACTED] will be in touch as soon as any news is received.
8. Balfour Beatty have again agreed to supervise electrical works since this is the only practical way that the Committee can legally gain access to CCC street lighting columns.
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Contract agreed and signed on 29th March 2021.
9. March Town Council has committed £25,000 in its 2021/2022 budget for Christmas-related expenditure.
10. It has been agreed that a maximum of £7,500 be paid out to helpers for 2021. All payments made will be subject to recipients signing a receipt acknowledging that they are responsible for their own tax and national insurance if applicable.
11. All cross-street wires and wall bolts were tested during 2020. Tests are due bi-annually so will need testing again in 2022.
12. Gary and Nicola have agreed to perform the "switch-on" ceremony. This was confirmed on 1st March 2021.

All interested parties, with the exception of Gary and Nicola Christy, were contacted again by Clive Lemmon on 18th October 2021. Robert Skoulding to speak directly to these two.

Tasks Still to be Undertaken:

1. Discussions have been held with Clinton Elkin to ascertain how improvements can be made to the Christmas tree and "Nativity Scene" displays.
2. Robert Skoulding has had on-going discussions with Michelle regarding the SAG requirements and been involved in a "zoom meeting" with the actual SAG committee.
3. Geoff Wilkinson has booked St John Ambulance.

4. It was agreed that the following groups can have stalls etc at the event if they so wish:
 - a) Waterman's Club (on bridge).
 - b) Scouts (in vicinity of Iceland).
 - c) Churches Together (Nativity Scene in "old man's shelter).
5. It was previously agreed that it was necessary to appoint a Head Steward, and it was agreed that serious efforts must be made to recruit as many stewards as possible for 2021 onwards. However, it should be remembered that due diligence must be exercised prior to utilising new stewards or introducing new members to the Committee.
 It was agreed that Rachel Burry and Stuart Rayner would take on the joint roles of Head Steward. Stuart Rayner confirmed his willingness to jointly take on this role on the morning of 22nd June 2021 and Robert Skoulding agreed to provide whatever advice was needed.
 Clinton Elkin agreed to advertise the need for more stewards on Facebook.
6. Once again, a Christmas Shop Window Competition would be organised. The Clerk would produce letter to distribute around the shops in late October 2021. Judging will take place between 1st and 5th December 2021, with all results being forwarded to CL by 10am on Monday 6th December 2021. The list of judges will be collated at the 15th November 2021 meeting.
7. Robert Skoulding had again agreed to sponsor the "Best Decorated House" competition.
8. It is necessary to arrange refreshments for "switch-on" night. Mark Purser agreed to provide the refreshments and organise the serving thereof.
9. It was previously agreed that a grotto would not be a sensible idea for the current year but that, hopefully, it will be re-instated for 2022.
10. Several "set-pieces" are in need of repair and Sue Beer has agreed that she can refurbish all of them.
11. A lady called [REDACTED] who had suggestions about the Christmas tree had previously asked to join the Committee. It had been agreed that she should be invited to attend the August 2021 meeting. [REDACTED] was emailed on 22nd June 2021 but no response has been received. Normal "due diligence" procedures had confirmed that [REDACTED] was not on the Police database and, as such, would have been an approved person.
12. CL previously reported that he had applied for the Street Lighting License. This is a Cambs County Council annual license that is required before seasonal decorations are allowed to be attached to street lights. The application was approved on 13th July 2021.
13. Mark Purser has sourced the hire/purchase of "walkie-talkies" and loud hailers to assist with communications on "switch-on" night.
14. Clinton Elkin reported that Holland and Barrett should be arranging for the reinstatement of the Christmas lights socket.
15. It was noted that the sockets on the two "Iceland" lampposts are due to be fitted by the FDC lighting contractors this week according to an email received from [REDACTED] on 14th October 2021.

16. The Chairman previously reported that, because of his health issues, he would not be able to perform as many of the physical activities this year either in preparing for the event or the on-the-ground liaison duties on the night.
17. The Chairman reiterated the need for everyone to encourage as many stewards to come forward as possible (eg Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service off-duty personnel).
18. Stewards' meetings will be held prior to the event to ensure that everyone is aware of relevant information/documentation and to review all possible scenarios that could occur.
19. The lights will start to be erected on Sunday 24th October 2021 and continue every Sunday thereafter.
20. Mark Purser agreed to approach March Rotary Club to request assistance with stewarding.

Date of Next Meeting:

Monday 15th November 2021 at 7.45pm in The Skoulding Suite at March Town Hall.

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

Councillor K French 1st November 2021.
Mayor of March.