

MARCH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of March Town Council held on 3 July 2023 held in The Skoulding Suite at March Town Hall commencing at 7.15pm.

Present	Councillor	M Purser G Christy	Town Mayor Deputy Town Mayor
	Councillors	S Court J French S Harris N Spencer A Woollard	M Field K French J Lawler T Taylor
	Town Clerk		S Lemmon
	Assistant Town Clerk		S Taylor
	Public		0

54 Apologies

Apologies were received from H Orbell and County Councillor J Gowing.

55 Police Update

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 June were circulated to all councillors on 15 June. Details of future meetings will be circulated in due course. A CCTV liaison meeting was held last week; police had not been made aware of the theft of plants from the town bridge planters. Clerk authorised to liaise directly with the CCTV Control Centre Manager if notified of any further incidents.

56 Planning Applications

Because of her position on the Fenland District Council Planning and Development Committee and her commitment to Paragraph 28 of the Fenland District Council Code of Conduct, Councillor J French declares a permanent personal interest and takes no part in discussions relating to planning matters.

*Application
Number*

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

F/YR23/0499/F

Mr Guy Clandillon, Limetree Close, Westry, March.
Erect 2 x dwellings (2-storey, 4-bed) (part retrospective) at
Plots 1 and 3 at Land North of Woodville, Wisbech Road,
Westry.

Received; 27 June 2023

Reply by 18 July 2023

*Cllr K French declared an interest in this application and took
no part in any discussions.

Recommendation: Approval

F/YR23/0508/A

SME Group Middlesex – (KFC)

Display of 3 x internally illuminated signage fascia light boxes,
1 x internally illuminated lettering, 1 x internally illuminated
fascia logo box, 2 x internally illuminated double-sided totem
signs, 2 x non-illuminated double-sided totem signs and 3 x
vinyl signage at 305 Wisbech Road, Westry, March.

Received: 21 June 2023

Reply by: 12 July 2023

*Cllr K French declared an interest in this application and took
no part in discussions.

Recommendation: Approval

F/YR23/0509/F

Mr John Tufts, Snowmountain Enterprises Ltd, The Oliver
Cromwell Hotel, March.

Agent: Lee Bevans Architects Ltd

Change of use of first-floor communal space to 2 x 1-bed flats
and new internal staircase, including removal of existing lift
and external fire escape at Elliott Lodge, Elliott Road, March.

Received: 19 June 2023

Reply by: 10 July 2023

Recommendation; Approval

F/YR23/0514/RM

Mr P Allgood

Agent: Partners in Planning Architecture Ltd, St Ives.

Reserved Matters application relating to detailed matters of
appearance, landscaping, layout and scale pursuant to outline
permission F/YR21/1185/O to erect 9 x dwellings (3-storey, 3-
bed) at Land South West of Queen Street Close, March.

Received: 22 June 2023

Reply by: 13 July 2023

Recommendation; Approval

Councillors were advised of a forthcoming FDC planning training session on 19
July which had only 2 places available per town/parish council. In the meantime, Cllr J
French advised councillors to familiarise themselves with the 2014 Fenland Local Plan,
2017 March Local Plan, the Emerging Plan as well as other relevant national policies.

43 Public Participation

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

57 Minutes of Meetings

The following Minutes were agreed and signed by the Mayor:

Main Meeting – 5 June 2023

Planning Committee – 19 June 2023

Christmas Lights Working Party Committee – 19 June 2023

58 Matters Arising

Re; Annual Meeting – 5 June 2023

Minute 40; The Mayor had delivered the engraved plaques to George Campbell Leisure Centre staff.

59 March Summer Festival

A meeting of the Summer Festival Committee took place on Monday 26 June. A de-brief meeting following the event usually takes place in July, although an earlier meeting was called this year (ahead of tonight's meeting) given that the Event Manager together with other key members of the committee had resigned/retired this year. As such, the future of the Summer Festival event hangs in the balance pending the appointment of a new Event Manager and others to enable the event to be delivered in future years.

An Event Managers Time and Duties Plan/job description has been circulated for these unpaid roles, together with a copy of the Committee's Constitution.

The next AGM would be due to take place in October 2023 but is scheduled to take place on 11 September to see if new appointments can be made and additional officers secured.

This item will be discussed at the meeting of March Town Council on 2 October following the AGM.

60 Accounts – Continued use of Whitings Chartered Accountants LLP

Once again this year, Whitings LLP had acted as Internal Auditors to the Town Council and had completed the Internal Audit Review to enable the Clerk to submit the AGAR to the external auditors. It was proposed by Cllr J French that the Town Council continues to engage the services of Whitings LLP and this was seconded by Cllr K French. The Clerk would make contact with Whitings LLP accordingly to invite them to act on behalf of the Town Council for 2023/2024.

61 Allotments

Cllr T Taylor, accompanied by Cllr J French, had visited the town's allotments and reported his findings to the Town Council. A serious issue had been identified at Grandford which was in a most disappointing state, but, crucially, was plagued with ragwort. As such, the plot needs to begin an expensive cycle of professional spraying and ploughing to eradicate the weed which is harmful to all ruminants. Cllr Christy proposed that Cllr Taylor proceeds with the necessary action forthwith following the giving of notice to the tenant of the works. This was approved unanimously by all councillors.

Ragwort had also been discovered at Robingoodfellows allotments.

There were a number of large plots at Wimblington Road and the Assistant Clerk was tasked with communicating with plot holders to advise them of proposals to subdivide some of the plots to make them more manageable.

62 Planning Guidelines

Guidelines drafted by Cllr Christy had been circulated, but these would be reviewed in conjunction with officers and discussed/approved at the 7 August meeting of the Town Council.

63 Grants Policy, Procedures and Application Form

It had been determined that the Town Council's grants and donations policy and application form would need to be reviewed and updated. Cllr Christy had drafted new paperwork accordingly. This would be reviewed with officers and brought to March Town councillors on 7 August for adoption.

64 Grants/Donations deferred from May meeting – further information requested

Further information had now been received relating to an application submitted by the March Armed Forces Veterans Hub. Whilst a most worthy cause which had received assistance previously from both the Town Council and the Mayor's Charity fund, it was proposed by Cllr Christy and seconded by Cllr Harris that the application be unsuccessful on this occasion. Eight councillors supported this decision. The Assistant Clerk would notify the applicant and advise that future applications would be welcomed.

65 Cambridgeshire County Council Update

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

Cllr J French reported concerns about the timing of the traffic lights on the bridge. A MATS meeting will take place on 12 July and the timings may be tweaked if deemed safe to do so. The new contractors in Broad Street had changed the settings of the lights which were causing significant tail backs from High Street and beyond for motorists travelling north-bound.

The Market Square bicycle racks had apparently been lost by Milestone. New ones are being made and are likely to be installed within 2 weeks.

Three bus routes were being cut by Stagecoach. CCC was working hard to try to save these routes which would impact particularly on those wishing to travel to March from surrounding villages and further restrict already limited public transport provision serving the town of March. Cllr J French is attending a meeting with the Highways on 4 July to seek to retain the routes.

66 Fenland District Council Update

Cllr K French reported that the CCTV control room had been given notice to vacate their offices in Peterborough which had served as their base since December 2019. A new site had been secured and all councillors will be invited to visit the control room in August/September.

Cllr K French proposed that when LHI was next discussed that consideration be given to the installation of new cameras at Mill View (Sainsbury), the lorry park (City Road) and Badgeney Bridge/South Drive.

Cllr J French advised that she was attending a Fenland Community Safety Partnership next week and will request 3 additional cameras be provided at these locations.

Cllr J French is the portfolio holder for the Anglia Revenues Partnership. Action is being taken to tackle a high level of fraudulent claims, predominantly by claimants fraudulently claiming they are single parents.

67 Payments List

The Payments List, as circulated, was agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.00pm.

Councillor M Purser7 August 2023
Mayor of March.