

MARCH TOWN COUNCIL.

Minutes of the Meeting of March Town Council held on 4th January 2021 held via “Zoom” commencing at 7.15pm.

Present	Councillor	K French R Jack	Town Mayor Deputy Town Mayor
	Councillors	DW Connor AR Donnelly J French MW Purser G Tustin	SR Court CK Elkin R Johnson RF Skoulding RW White
	Town Clerk		C Lemmon
	Asst. Town Clerk		GSD Wilkinson

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.

128 Apologies

Apologies were received from County Councillor John Gowing.

129 Police Update

No police were in attendance and no written report had been circulated.

130 Planning Applications

Because of their positions 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 and J French declare a permanent personal interest and take 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 no additional planning applications would be discussed.

*Application
Number*

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

F/YR20/1234/F

Mrs Williams, 39 Regent Avenue, March.
Erect a single-storey rear extension to existing dwelling at 39
Regent Avenue, March.
Received: 21 December 2020.
Reply by: 11 January 2021.
Recommend approval.

F/YR20/1242/F

Ms Lee, 2 Stevens Way, March.
Erect a single-storey extension to side and rear of existing
dwelling involving installation of flue and demolition of
existing conservatory at 2 Stevens Way, March.
Received: 22 December 2020.
Reply by: 12 January 2021.
Recommend approval.

131 Public Participation

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

132 Minutes of Meetings

The following Minutes were agreed:

Main Council Meeting of 7th December 2020.

Planning Sub-Committee Meeting of 21st December 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.

133 Matters Arising

Re Main Council Meeting of 7th December 2020:

Minute 121: The Clerk reported that he had spoken to Lt Col Nigel Spence on 8th December 2020 to confirm his appointment as Remembrance Events Organiser, with Mark Wilding as his Deputy, with effect from 1st January 2021. Both such posts were willingly accepted. Councillor Jack had also arranged to present the bottles of port in recognition of past efforts.

Minute 122: It was noted that on 8th December 2020 the Clerk had instructed Fraser Dawbarns (Wisbech branch) to execute a 21 years extension for the lease that March Museum holds with March Town Council.

134 Affirmation of Budget 2021 / 2022

The Town Clerk confirmed all details regarding the proposed budget and precept documents for 2020 / 2021.

The figures presented were confirmed as follows:

Budget figure	£292,120.
Total funding required	£291,884.
Support Grant payable by FDC	£ NIL.
Net Council Tax Base	6,591.
Amount obtained by precept	£320,000.
Charge per property	£48.55p.

Following a short discussion, the above figures were all unanimously ratified (proposer Councillor J French, seconder Councillor Jack).

Full details relating to the budgets and precept are attached as appendices 1, 2 and 3.

135 Flooding

Councillor Skoulding highlighted the situation regarding flooding issues within town over the Christmas period.

Although these matters were not the responsibility of March Town Council, concern was expressed that necessary maintenance was not being carried out as effectively as possible by other authorities. These duties included the regular clearing of storm drains and gullies and the cutting back and rubbish removal from dykes and waterways. Where certain responsibilities vested in individual home and land owners, the various authorities should ensure strict adherence to the rules. Without the above actions being implemented forthwith, these problems would re-occur each and every time exceptional rainfall took place.

It was noted that Cambridgeshire County Council had now agreed to take the lead role in coordinating the efforts of all the relevant authorities to ensure that positive remedial action is taken without further delay.

136 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) As stated above, Cambridgeshire County Council is taking the lead role in flooding discussions between the various associated authorities. In the short term, sand bags are being provided at strategic locations within the town.
- b) Following a further recent road traffic accident in Estover Road / Creek Road, attempts are being made to bring forward the March Town Council Local Highway Improvement Scheme for this area into the current financial year.

137 Fenland District Council Update

Councillor J French reported as follows:

- a) The basement of the Fenland District Council offices in County Road was flooded during the recent storms and staff had to be evacuated.
- b) All Officers are busy and maintaining full services.
- c) Additional Government Grant Funding is anticipated to support businesses affected by the latest Covid lockdown.

- d) Following a successful bid, March has been awarded £6.4 million from the Government to help implement a “once in a generation” transformation of the town centre. A total of £2 million on top of the Government money will be spent in March, including £900,000 committed from the March Growing Fenland Masterplan Project (part of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority Market Towns Programme). The investment will help deliver ambitious plans to revitalise the Broad Street, Market Place and Acre Road areas, reimagine the picturesque riverside areas and reduce town centre traffic. A short discussion ensued regarding the public perception of a project such as this.

138 Schedule of Accounts

The Schedule of Accounts, as circulated, was agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.00pm

Councillor K French
Mayor of March.

1st February 2021.