

MARCH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of March Town Council held on 6 November 2023 held in The Skoulding Suite at March Town Hall commencing at 7.15pm.

Present	Councillor	K French G Christy	Town Mayor Deputy Town Mayor
	Councillors	S Court J French H Orbell T Taylor	M Field J Lawler N Spencer
	Town Clerk Assistant Town Clerk		S Lemmon S Taylor
	County Councillor		J Gowing
	Public		0

113 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Harris, Woollard and Purser.

114 Police Update

Minutes of the 9 October 2023 Police Liaison meeting were circulated to all councillors by the Clerk on 23 October 2023. The next meeting will be held on 5 December 2023.

115 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

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

It was agreed that no additional planning application would be discussed at tonight's meeting.

- F/YR23/0659/F Catherine Stephenson, Relax Inn – Station Road Ltd.
Change of use of existing dwelling to a hotel (12-bed) involving alterations to existing vehicular access at 42 Station Road, March.
Revised Proposals; Access and parking revised and further information provided including in relation to how the hotel is proposed to function. Plans have been updated accordingly.
Received: 25 October 2023
Reply by: 8 November 2023
Recommendation: Approval
- F/YR23/0806/TRTPO Mrs Pauline Waddelow, 51 High School Close, March.
Works to 2 x Lime Trees covered by TPO 15/1986 at 51 High School Close, March.
Received: 19 October 2023
Reply by: 9 November 2023
Recommendation: Approval
- F/YR23/0835/F Mr Richard Smith, Elm Tree Farm, March.
Erect a single-storey rear extension to existing dwelling and the insertion of a first-floor side window at Elm Street Farm, Elm Road, March.
Received: 27 October 2023
Reply by: 17 November
Recommendation: Approval

116 Public Participation

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

117 Minutes of Meetings

The following Minutes were agreed and signed by the Mayor:

Main Meeting – 2 October 2023
Personnel and Admin Meeting – 2 October 2023
Planning Committee – 16 October 2023
Christmas Lights – 16 October 2023

118 Matters Arising

Personnel & Admin Meeting – councillors ratified the decision of the sub-committee to increase the Clerk's working hours.

119 Allotment – Update

The Assistant Clerk proposed the establishment of an Allotment group comprising the allotment overseers to deal with the day-to-day allotment issues. The group/forum would be an ideal way to share information, ideas and documentation and Sally would produce a “work-in-progress” spreadsheet for members. Major issues or unusual expenditure would continue to be brought to the full council, however.

Cllr K French suggested that Teams be used rather than email, and she would explore the best options for the group to communicate.

120 Summer Festival Update

The Clerk advised that all the vacant roles on the Summer Festival Committee were now filled and the committee hoped to deliver an “Extravaganza” in 2025, providing smaller events throughout 2024 in order [it was hoped] to secure Arts Council Funding.

The Committee still needed to provide March Town Council with finalised accounts.

Cllr J French reminded those present that the council had resolved that £10,000 of monies that it had paid to the Committee [for an event that was not delivered] was required to be returned to March Town Council forthwith.

The Town Council was prepared to make provision in its budget to ringfence that money for the future.

Cllr J French informed councillors about issues regarding the allocation of Arts Council monies.

The next meeting of the Summer Festival Committee will be held on Monday 15 January 2024.

121 Cambridgeshire County Council Update

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

Cllr J French confirmed that the County Council’s decision to stop weedkilling in the County (introduced without consultation) had finally been reversed on account of the damage caused by weeds to roads etc and their impact on flooding and drainage.

Recent high rainfall events had caused flooding once again in Ellingham Avenue, Gaul Road and Sycamore Close. Anglia Water must accept a good deal of responsibility for this unfortunate state-of-affairs which has continued for too long.

Thanks to the involvement of Cllr J French, works that should have started in April 2023 to try to resolve the issues in these flooding hotspots will commence in April 2024.

122 Fenland District Council Update

Cllr J French advised that the appeal against the District Council’s refusal to grant permission under planning application reference F/YR22/0062/O would be heard on 13 December 2023.

The Town Council had recommended refusal of the application for 110 dwellings on Upwell Road due to over-development, flooding and highway safety. The Town Council's comments were not uploaded to the District Council's planning portal, however.

The Clerk had since submitted its comments and signed minutes directly to the Planning Inspectorate.

Cllr Christy would be attending the hearing in place of Cllr J French and it was hoped that as many of those who had objected to the application would likewise attend to support and voice their concerns.

County Councillor John Gowing would be attending a meeting regarding the new reservoir on Tuesday 7 November.

Cllr Taylor had been advised that the reservoir would require 3 emergency pump-outs per year. This was very concerning seeing that this would be onto already saturated/flooded land?

Once again, Anglian Water had failed to object to this application and was refusing to upgrade sub-standard infrastructure across the District, thereby further increasing the risk of flooding and associated damage within the District/County.

123 Payments List

The Payments List, as circulated, was agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8:15pm.

Councillor K French4 December 2023
Mayor of March.