

# MARCH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of March Town Council held on 7 October 2024 held in The Skoulding Suite at March Town Hall commencing at 7.15pm.

<b>Present</b>	Councillor	G Christy	Town Mayor
	Councillors	S Court J Lawler M Purser	M Field H Orbell N Spencer
	Cambridgeshire County Councillor	J Gowing	
	Town Clerk	S Lemmon	
	Assistant Town Clerk	S Taylor	
	Press	1	

## 86 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs K French, J French, S Harris and A Woollard.

## 87 Police Update

Presentation/Minutes of the 12 September 2024 meeting were circulated by the Clerk on 17 September 2024.

## 88 Planning Applications

<i>Application</i>	<i>Name and address of applicant, details of application, Number and recommendation of March Town Council</i>
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It was agreed that two (2) additional planning applications would be discussed at tonight's meeting.

F/YR24/0725/A	Tesco Stores plc, Hostmoor Avenue. Display of 5 x non-illuminated window vinyl and 3 x pole-mounted promotional banner signs at Tesco Stores plc, 10 Hostmoor Avenue, March. Received: 16 September 2024 Reply by: 7 October 2024 <b>Recommendation; Approval</b>
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- F/YR24/0727/F Mrs R Wright, 81 Elwyn Road, March  
Erect a single-storey rear extension to existing dwelling, involving demolition of existing dwelling at 81 Elwyn Road, March.  
Received: 16 September 2024  
Reply by: 7 October 2024  
**Recommendation; Approval**
- F/YR24/0739/FDC Fenland District Council  
Construction of a BMX pump track within existing public park on FDC-owned land north of Riverbank Close, March.  
Received: 17 September 2024  
Reply by: 8 October 2024  
\*Cllr Purser declared an interest in this item and did not participate or vote on this application.  
**Recommendation; Approval**
- F/YR24/0755/TRCA Mr M Carter, 38 West End, March.  
Works to 1 x Elder Tree within a conservation area at 38 West End, March.  
Received: 20 September 2024  
Reply by: 11 October 2024  
**Recommendation; Approval**
- F/YR24/0768/F Mr Nicholas Underwood, 6 Upton Close, Peterborough.  
Erect 1 x self-build/custom dwelling (2-storey, 3-bed) with a 2.0m high boundary fence involving the demolition of existing garages at River Drive, March.  
Received: 30 September 2024  
Reply by: 21 October 2024  
**Recommendation; Approval**
- F/YR24/0774/TRTPO Mrs Lindsay Murphy-Brown  
Fell 1 x Cypress Tree and 1 x Birch Tree covered by TPO 07/1985 at 45 Westwood Avenue, March.  
Received: 30 September 2024  
Reply by: 21 October 2024  
**Recommendation; Approval, subject to receipt of a further report/evidence justifying removal of the cedar tree.**
- F/YR24/0788/TRCA Dawn Rees, 27 West End, March.  
Works to 1 x Acacia Tree and 1 x Sycamore within a Conservation Area at 27 West End, March.  
Received: 1 October 2024  
Reply by: 22 October 2024  
**Recommendation; Approval**

F/YR24/0662/F Erect 9 single-storey dwellings (3 x 1-bed and 6 x 2-bed) at Site of Former Gas Distribution Centre, Gas Road, March.  
**Revised Proposals:** revised site plan to address highways comments.  
Received: 4 October 2024  
Reply by: 18 October 2024  
**Recommendation; Approval**

F/YR24/0790/VOC Mr R Smith & Mr M Groves, Coleseed Business Complex  
Details reserved by Condition 05 (list of approved plans) of planning permission F/YR23/0083/F (Erect Industrial Building involving demolition of existing buildings) – relating to roof line at Coleseed Business Complex, Upwell Road, March.  
Received: 2 October 2024  
Reply by: 23 October 2024  
**Recommendation; Approval**

## **89 Public Participation**

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

## **90 Minutes of Meetings**

The following Minutes were agreed and signed by the Mayor:

Main Meeting – 2 September 2024  
Planning Meeting – 16 September 2024  
Christmas Lights – 16 September 2024

## **91 Matters Arising**

None.

## **92 Grants and Donations**

Applications for Grants and Donations are discussed quarterly and were discussed at the main meeting of March Town Council on 2 September 2024.

The March Lions had submitted an application within time, which, due to technical issues, had not been received by the Clerk. The application and supporting documents had gone into an infected items mail box.

As a gesture of good will, March Town Council has, most unusually, and *not to set a future precedent*, agreed to consider the application soonest, rather than to wait until December, so as not to prejudice the applicant.

Applicant; March Lions  
Amount Requested; £500  
Reason for Expenditure; Repair/Restore Santa's Sleigh

Cllrs Christy and Purser declared interests in this application and left the room for the duration of the discussion.

Councillors all voted in favour of awarding the March Lions for the sum requested (£500).

### **93 MVAS/DTSA (Mobile Vehicle Activated Signs/Delivering Transport Strategy Aims)**

Cllr J French was unwell and was not able to attend tonight's meeting. This was the first Town Council meeting she had missed in over 30 years.

In her absence, the Clerk shared an update from Cllr J French.

Cllr J French had obtained information and quotes from CCC for new MVAS's (both battery and solar-powered).

The solar-enabled units require wide-based posts to be installed to accommodate the extra weight of those units (posts at additional cost).

Whilst possible to secure via the LHI scheme, we would have to wait until 2026 for delivery. It would therefore be more expeditious to purchase new units outright and take delivery in early 2025 when CCC place orders for the rest of the County. Cllr French had recommended that 3 units be purchased by the Town Council.

The MVAS signs are essential tools used to gather the information needed to make successful LHI applications.

Without data being downloaded and submitted to CCC/police on a monthly basis, we cannot provide the evidence required in support of future LHI applications.

Data has not been uploaded in over a year and monthly reports need to once again be submitted, Cllr J French had urged.

Cllrs Orbell and Field advised that they would change the battery on the MVAS on Knights End Road.

Cllr J French had requested that the unit and accessories be returned to her soonest so that she could gather information needed to investigate recent complaints and to support future LHI's.

The Clerk has to complete an expression of interest form\* for LHI's for 2025/2026.

Councillors have been emailed twice about this and the Clerk reminded all present to submit their thoughts to her this week to meet the 11 October deadline\*.

Cllr J French had suggested a speed reduction (to 40 mph) on Elm Road through to Chain Bridge, with double yellow-lines suggested for Creek Road, St Johns Road and Wigstones Road due to issues with bad parking.

Complaints had been received from residents in Gaul Road, Burrowmoor Road, Knights End Road and Westwood Avenue also (all relating to speeding).

Councillors discussed the issue of speeding, MVAS and LHI's and decided to defer making a final decision until the November meeting when Cllr J French would be in attendance.

## **94 VE Day 80 – 8 May 2025**

Cllr Spencer along with some of the MAFF team will be organising a beacon lighting for VE Day on 8 May 2025 which will be an event similar to that held on 6 June 2024 to mark 80 years since DD day and the beginning of the liberation of Western Europe. The Town Council is delighted to support this important celebration/commemoration.

## **95 Burial Grounds/Cemetery**

The Clerk advised that she had been contacted by the Diocese of Ely in relation to the closed churchyard at St Wendredas Church. Local residents had recently made complaints about over-hanging trees. The Diocese was trying to establish who was the Burial Authority for the area and therefore who had responsibility for getting the trees cut back.

The churchyard was closed by Order in 1855.

By virtue of the Burial Act of 1855 and The Local Government Act of 1894, responsibility for the maintenance of a closed churchyard passed automatically to Parish Councils (essentially all duties and responsibilities hitherto that of the Church Wardens).

There has never been any involvement with or maintenance of the churchyard by March Town Council since it was created in 1974 and a lot of town and parish councils have been recently shocked to discover that they were responsible for closed churchyards in their area, for which they had little or no budget.

The Clerk had been in communication with Fenland District Council who had indicated that we could possibly find a way forward on this jointly. The Clerk would follow this up this week.

There would be budgetary implications of course, although it would be difficult to quantify the exposure with any degree of certainty. The Clerk would be preparing the draft budget in readiness for the November meeting and would need to make provision for the churchyard maintenance.

The Clerk would also need to consider additional insurance and would make the necessary enquiries with Zurich.

## **96 Cambridgeshire County Council Update**

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

Cllr J French's update regarding LHI had been shared via the Clerk and mostly covered under minute number 93 (above).

There had been a meeting of the Highways and Transport Committee last week and the results of the 2024/2025 LHI's had been determined. Norwood Avenue was approved as a complex scheme.

CCC are running a 20mph scheme across the county. Cllr J French recommended that March Town Council considers implementing the scheme when funds became available. More information to follow.

County Councillor J Gowing discussed recruitment and retention in relation to Manea Fire Station. A report was expected to be issue in February and the station was continuing to operate in the meantime.

**97 Fenland District Council Update**

Broad Street is nearing completion. The Fountain is set to be re-installed in Broad Street w/c 21 October 2024.

There are over 100 stalls already booked for the Christmas Market on 1 December 2024. Funding had been secured for replacement stall covers and a new gazebo for Father Christmas.

**98 Payments List**

The Payments List, as circulated, was agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8:25pm.

Councillor G Christy .....4 November 2024  
Mayor of March.