

MARCH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of March Town Council held on 8 January 2024 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 J Lawler M Purser T Taylor	M Field A Woollard H Orbell N Spencer
	Town Clerk		S Lemmon
	Assistant Town Clerk		S Taylor
	County Councillor		J Gowing
	Fenland District Council		M Wright, P Hughes
	Public		1

140 Apologies

No apologies were received.

141 Broad Street and Christmas Lights Presentation by Fenland District Council

Matt Wright and Phil Hughes of FDC attended the meeting to update councillors on progress with the Broad Street regeneration project and present the options available for the new Christmas Lights. Owing to the Broad Street regeneration and the new road layout, many of the Town Council's Christmas lights (such as the catenary lights) are no longer fit for purpose. FDC had budgeted to replace the lights hitherto used in Broad Street. Atkins had been contracted to prepare design options for the Town Council to consider. Councillors resolved for FDC to instruct Atkins to deliver the lights package. Realistically, the lights would need to be ordered by March for November 2024 delivery and installation. FDC and Atkins representatives to attend the January or February meeting of the Christmas Lights Working Party Committee.

142 Police Update

Minutes of the 5 December 2023 would be circulated shortly. The next meeting is to be confirmed.

143 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.

<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 no additional planning applications would be discussed at tonight's meeting.

F/YR23/1047/F	Mr R Fisher, RFGM Ltd, Badgeney Road, March. Erect a workshop and garage for B2 (General Industry) use with associated hardstanding at Land North of 35-37 Thorby Avenue, March. Received: 2 January 2024 Reply by: 23 January 2024 Recommendation; Approval
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F/YR23/1058/F	Mr John Collins, Land adjacent to Hampton House, Middle Road. Change of use of land to gypsy and traveller residential use including the siting of 1 mobile home, 1 touring caravan and to erect a single-storey dayroom including 2.4 m high (max) gates at Land North West of Hampton House, Middle Road, March. Received: 2 January 2024 Reply by: 23 January 2024 Recommendation; Approval
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Cllr Taylor as an aside advised councillors that he was part of a much -needed and newly formed drainage advisory committee in partnership with FDC. More details to follow shortly.

144 Public Participation

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

145 Minutes of Meetings

The following Minutes were agreed and signed by the Mayor:

Main Meeting – 4 December 2023
Planning Committee – 18 December 2023

146 Budget Ratification

There had been a small change to the Council Tax Base (which had increased from 6,830 to 6,841 in December 2023). Accordingly, the precept calculations had been adjusted slightly (from £52.71 to £52.62 per property for 2024/2025).

No changes had been made to the budget.

The budget and precept were duly ratified (proposer M Purser, seconder G Christy, all voted in favour apart from M Field (abstention)).

147 Local Highways Improvements

The deadline for submission of applications was 12 January 2024.

Since there were 2 County Council divisions and 3 County Councillors, it was possible to apply for 2 schemes for 2024/25.

Cllr J French proposed the following locations for Double Yellow Lines;

Princes Walk, Riverbank Close (off Gaul Road), Elm Road near the BRASA/Railway Station, Gaul Road (bypass end), Wisbech Road (Harradines offices), Hillside Road near the Post Office.

Cllr Field recommended lining at the junction of Wigstones and St Johns Road.

The second scheme, proposed by Cllr J French, involved the installation of a chicane or other speed reduction measures on Norwood Avenue.

Cllrs voted unanimously in favour of the 2 schemes.

Clerk to complete and submit the application.

148 “March as a Transition Town”

Cllr Field presented a motion to councillors. Councillors voted against the motion 6:4.

149 Cambridgeshire County Council Update

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

Civil Parking Enforcement was progressing in spite of a £500,000 short fall.

Flooding has been a major issue locally and nationally. Sadly, there had been a very poor response from the relevant agencies for flood victims.

However, Cllr Taylor was thanked for his valuable support and assistance to flood victims across the town and the new flooding/drainage committee was welcomed and would play a vital role in the planning process going forward.

County Councillor J Gowing advised that there were proposals to close Manea, Sutton and Kimbolton Fire Stations. This would affect March in so far as March station would cover the

Manea area and there was a need for more volunteers to the service, especially volunteers available in the day time.

150 Fenland District Council Update

FD looked set to announce a 0% increase in Council Tax for 2024/25.

151 Payments List

The Payments List, as circulated, was agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:00pm.

Councillor K French5 February 2024
Mayor of March.

148. Motion to March Town Council

March as a Transition Town

This council observes that, like so many towns in the UK, the combined effects of economics, social change and new technology have had a big impact on the business in the town and there is a widespread feeling in the community that March is in decline and that something should be done about it.

We note that despite the frequent calls for action that there are not always reciprocal amounts of members of the public coming forward to volunteer to put things right. However, there are a number of very dedicated people who give up considerable amounts of their time to work towards trying to make small improvements in the town and to benefit the community.

This council would like to be involved in spearheading the regeneration of March and at the same time re-energise the community to get involved in taking positive action to transform our community and environment and put March on the path to increasing prosperity, and happiness.

We understand that Transition Towns is a movement that has been growing since 2005. Community-led Transition groups are working for a low-carbon, socially just future with resilient communities, more active participation in society, and caring culture focused on supporting each other.

This council will :

- I. organise a public meeting for the purpose of introducing the concept of March as a Transition Town.
- II. fund the cost of the venue and promotion of the meeting.
- III. encourage the progress of the development of our Transition Town according to the wishes of the public meeting.
- IV. register a Transition Hub with the Transition Network and facilitate the work of the Transition organisation within the town.