

MARCH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of March Town Council held on 5th September 2022 held in The Skoulding Suite at March Town Hall commencing at 7.15pm.

Present	Councillor	K French MW Purser	Town Mayor Deputy Town Mayor
	Councillors	DW Connor AR Donnelly J French RF Skoulding	SR Court C Elkin R Johnson G Tustin
	Invited Guest		Lt Col. Nigel Spencer MBE
	Town Clerk Town Clerk Elect Assistant Town Clerk		C Lemmon SL Lemmon S Taylor
	Public		3

75 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Jack and White and County Councillor Gowing.

76 Police Update

Minutes of the Police Liaison meeting of 3rd August were circulated to Councillors on 12th August. The date of the next liaison meeting is Thursday 8th September 2022.

77 Presentation of “Freedom of the Town”

In accordance with Minute 60 of the meeting of March Town Council dated 4th July 2022, the Mayor, Councillor Kim French, presented Lieutenant Colonel Nigel Spencer MBE with a framed Freedom of the Town of March scroll in recognition of his services to the Town. The award is only the fourth such honour bestowed by the March Town Council. Previously, the Freedom of the Town had been awarded to The Air Cadets (1996), Army Cadets (2001) and Louise Hazel (2010). The Mayor thanked Lieutenant Colonel Spencer for his past efforts and he gave a brief acceptance speech in reply.

Lieutenant Colonel Spencer left the meeting at 7:30pm.

Because of their position 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, J French and Purser declare a permanent personal interest and take no part in discussions relating to planning matters.

It is also noted that, due to his involvement in the building industry, Councillor Skoulding does not take part in any discussions relating to planning issues.

It was agreed that 2 additional planning application would be discussed.

<i>Application Number</i>	<i>Name and address of applicant, details of application, and recommendation of March Town Council</i>
F/YR22/0913/F	<p>Messrs Siggee and Sanderson, Cherryholt Farm, Burrowmoor Road, March. Erect 1 x dwelling (2-storey, 4-bed) with 2.0m high boundary brick walls at Plot 2, Land at Cherryholt Farm, Burrowmoor Road, March. Received: 16 August 2022 Reply by: 6 September 2022 Recommendation: Approval</p>
F/YR22/0919/O	<p>Mr and Mrs J White c/o Swann Edwards Architecture Ltd (agent). Erect up to 2 x dwellings (outline application with all matters reserved) at Land South of 733 Whittlesey Road, March. Received: 15 August 2022 Reply by: 5 September 2022 Recommendation: Approval</p>
F/YR22/0922/F	<p>Mr T Goakes, 9 Orchard Road, March. Erect a first-floor extension to front, a 2-storey extension to front/side and a single-storey extension to rear of existing dwelling at 9 Orchard Road, March. Received: 17 August 2022 Reply by: 7 September 2022 C Elkin declared a personal interest in this application as he is a friend of the Applicant. As such, he took no part in discussions relating to this Application. Recommendation: Approval</p>
F/YR22/0936/F	<p>Mr & Mrs Mark Pocklington, Linwood Lodge, Linwood Lane, March. Erect 1 x dwelling (2-storey 4-bed) with attached car port and garage at Land South West of Caswell House, Mill Hill Lane, March. Received: 17 August 2022 Reply by: 7 September 2022 Recommendation: Approval</p>

- F/YR22/0943/FDC Fenland District Council, Fenland Hall, County Road, March.
Erect up to 6 x dwellings (outline application with matters committed in respect of access) at Land West of 53-69 Grounds Avenue, March.
[A Reg 3 application for planning permission where FDC is the applicant].
Received: 18 August 2022
Reply by: 8 September 2022
Recommendation: Approval
- F/YR22/0944/FDL Mr Gareth Roberts, GAP Country Homes Limited, 2 Aquila Way, Langtoft, Peterborough.
Reserved Matters application relating to detailed matters of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale pursuant to outline planning permission F/YR20/1022/FDL to erect 8 x dwellings (1 x single-storey 3-bed, 1 x 2-storey 3-bed and 6 x 2-storey 4-bed) at Land South of Brewin Oaks, City Road, March.
[A Reg 4 application for planning permission where land is owned by FDC but FDC is not the applicant].
Received: 18 August 2022
Reply by: 8 September 2022
Recommendation: Approval
- F/YR22/0950/F Mr & Mrs Cherry, Causeway House, Grandford Drove, March.
Erect a detached 2-storey double garage to existing dwelling at Causeway House, Grandford Drove, March.
Received: 17 August 2022
Reply by: 7 September 2022
Recommendation: Approval
- F/YR22/0962/F Mr Newton, The Stable Block, Knights End Road, March.
Erect a single-storey 2-bed annexe ancillary to existing dwelling and single-storey carport with log store involving the removal of the existing mobile home and change of use to garden land at The Stable Block, Knights End Road, March.
Received: 22 August 2022
Reply by: 12 September 2022
Recommendation: Approval
- F/YR22/0974/F Mr A Chokshi, ASNC Enterprise Limited, 167 Cambridge Road, Great Shelford.
Change of use of existing dentist surgery to form 3 x flats (1 x 2-bed and 2 x 1-bed), involving the partial demolition of a rear extension and the formation of a balcony at 21 Darthill Road, March.
Received: 22 August 2022
Reply by: 12 September 2022
Recommendation: Approval

- F/YR22/0981/F Mr & Mrs Wade, 13 Fishermans Drive, March.
Erect a single-storey extension to rear including conversion of a garage for residential use and demolition of conservatory of existing dwelling at 13 Fishermans Drive, March.
Received: 23 August 2022
Reply by: 13 September 2022
Recommendation: Approval
- F/YR22/0988/O Mrs B Perman, 121 West End, March.
Erect 1 x dwelling involving the removal of existing shed (outline application with all matters reserved) at Land West of 121 West End, March.
Received: 26 August 2022
Reply by: 16 September 2022
Recommendation: Approval
- F/YR22/0989/F Mrs Ellen Champion, 3 Magnolia Close, March.
Erect an infill extension to front of dwelling to enable garage conversion, solar panels to front roof and car port/storage to rear of existing dwelling at 3 Magnolia Close, March.
Received: 26 August 2022
Reply by 16 September 2022
Recommendation: Approval
- F/YR22/0994/O Mr P Gumbley c/o Swann Architecture, Black Barn, Fen Road, March.
Erect 1 x dwelling (outline application with matters committed in respect of access) at Land North of 125A West End, March.
Received: 31 August 2022
Reply by: 21 September 2022
Recommendation: Approval
- F/YR22/0997/O Mr H V Aveling, Badgeney Lodge, Badgeney End, March.
Erect 1 x dwelling (outline application with all matters reserved) at Land North of Byways, 1 Badgeney End, March.
Received: 1 September 2022
Reply by: 22 September 2022
Recommendation: Approval *subject to retention of adequate drainage.*

79 Public Participation

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

80 Minutes of Meetings

The following Minutes were agreed and signed by the Mayor:

1st August 2022 – Main Council Meeting
8th August 2022 – Personnel & Admin Sub Committee
15th August 2022 – Planning Sub Committee

81 Matters Arising

Re Main Council Meeting of 1st August 2022:

Minute 64 The Mayor, Councillors and The Clerk collectively drafted a “Statement of Concern” representing their views and concerns which was unanimously approved by Councillors and presented by The Clerk at the Broad Street Steering Group meeting at Fenland Hall on Thursday 4th August 2022.

A further Steering Group Meeting will be held on Tuesday 6th September at Fenland Hall to discuss how the project is progressing.

The Broad Street Project is included as a separate agenda item later in this meeting.

82 Amend Standing Orders

Councillors reviewed a revised [draft] version of the March Town Council’s Standing Orders which had been amended by The Clerk in line with the NALC model standing orders of 2020 and circulated to Councillors on 9th August 2022.

It was proposed by M Purser and seconded by R Skoulding to approve the revised Standing Orders as drawn.

The Clerk informed Councillors that the revised version would be circulated within 48 hours.

83 External Audit Report year-ending 31 March 2022

The Clerk informed Councillors that the external auditor (PKF Littlejohn LLP) had issued its annual report on 12th August 2022.

It stated:

“On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.”

There were no other matters that the auditors deemed necessary to bring to the attention of Councillors.

84 Social Media Representation

Councillor Johnson suggested that March Town Council should adopt a social media presence. Following discussions, it was agreed that information provided on the website, both legally and advisory, was previously deemed more than adequate for the Council's needs. Social media often creates an environment of hostility that is to no-ones' advantage. However, it was agreed that this discussion should be revisited after the elections in May 2023.

As regards band concerts, a poster which included the Town Council crest, could be produced on an annual basis which any individual Councillor could post onto their personal Facebook page.

85 Grants and Donations

Prior to discussions commencing, The Clerk advised Councillors that £2,500 of funding had been provided under this heading within the current year's budget.

This could be regarded as £625 per quarter, or split on whatever other basis Councillors decreed.

No grants have yet been awarded in this financial year.

Three (3) applications for funding have been received as follows;

Name: 1st March Scout Group
Amount requested: £500
Purpose of Grant: Contribution towards cost of Summer Camp

Name: RKA Kickboxing Academy
Amount requested: Unspecified
Purpose of Grant: Contribution towards costs of team members representing England in the Kickboxing World Championships

Name: March Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Club
Amount requested: £250
Purpose of Grant: Contribution towards cost of new parade standard

Since he is an officer in the 1st March Scouts Group, Councillor Elkin declared a personal interest, left the room, and took no part in discussions relating to grants and donations. Similarly, since she is a close friend of the Secretary of the RKA Kickboxing Academy, Councillor Johnson declared a personal interest, left the room, and took no part in discussions relating to grants and donations.

It was noted that all applicants met the necessary criteria.

Following lengthy discussions, it was agreed that the applications should be awarded as follows;

1st March Scout Group - £300

RKA Kickboxing Academy - £500

March Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Club - £250

86 Broad Street Project

It was agreed that the public should be excluded from this agenda item due to the confidential nature of the information to be discussed. It was proposed by the Mayor and adopted that “Under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public is excluded from the meeting for item number 86 on the grounds that the item involves the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1-15 of Part 1 of schedule 12A of the Act”.

As such, this agenda item was discussed at the end of the meeting following “Schedule of Accounts”.

During initial discussions, the following comments were raised:

Since the last meeting of the Member Steering Group on 4th August 2022, individual members had not been invited to jointly inspect the various sites that FDC Officers were recommending as the suitable locations for the proposed public toilets. Although the minutes of that meeting were slightly ambiguous, the transcript was clear that all members should be invited and not just the Project Group.

Also, it was believed that the total Broad Street Project was open to legal challenge, and possible judicial review, because of the lack of meaningful consultation in the early stages of the scheme.

These comments became obsolete however when March Town Council members unanimously agreed that they would publicly oppose the project in its entirety, with a view to getting the scheme aborted, unless and until written confirmation was received from Fenland District Council that the following conditions would be met:

- a) That the “Collingwoods” site is purchased and the buildings thereon demolished. This site is critical for many reasons and, in particular, to compensate for loss of car parking and to future-proof the town for the additional 3,000+ homes that are planned to be built over the next 20 years.
- b) That the “Collingwoods” site is not redeveloped with residential or commercial premises, but retained as open space and car park. 74 spaces should be retained for immediate continued usage, with increased usage programmed in as and when needed.
- c) That the proposed replacement public toilets be situated on the “Collingwoods” site so that they are clearly visible and accessible to all visitors to the town.
- d) That the Fountain be relocated to the south-east corner of the “Collingwoods” site, within a “pocket park”, so that it can be seen in a more prominent and favourable position to the north of Broad Street.

It was unanimously agreed that a failure to satisfy any of these conditions would result in March Town Council withdrawing its support and putting the whole project at risk. The written confirmation from Fenland District Council that MTC’s conditions would be met needed to be

made at the earliest opportunity since the minutes from this evening’s meeting, once approved on 3rd October 2022, would become public documents available for all to see on the MTC website.

87 Cambridgeshire County Council Update

The Clerk reported that all email updates are being circulated on a daily basis. Councillor J French updated Councillors as follows; An email from the March Area Transport Strategy (MATS) leader, John Stanley, had been circulated confirming that CCC would be hosting 2 public events to raise public awareness about various initiatives including the Northern Link Road. Councillors commented that it would be desirable to see late afternoon/evening sessions included so that those who worked could attend.

88 Fenland District Council Update

Councillor J French updated Councillors as follows; Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) had hit a stumbling block as CCC had decided to implement in South Cambs before Fenland and had now insisted upon completion of a feasibility study. The Cambridgeshire Greater Partnership will fund the study, but the study could delay commencement.

89 Schedule of Accounts

The Schedule of Accounts, as circulated, was agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8:35pm.

Councillor K French3rd October 2022.
Mayor of March.