

MARCH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Christmas Lights Working Party Meeting held in The Skoulding Suite at March Town Hall on Monday 18th July 2022 at 7.15pm.

Present:	Chairman	Stuart Rayner	
	Councillors	SR Court MW Purser	CK Elkin
	Members	David Doe Dan Fortuna Sue Beer	Alan Stimpson Ryan Kidger
	Town Clerk	C Lemmon	
	Town Clerk Elect	SL Lemmon	

Apologies:

Apologies were received from R Burry, R Skoulding, G Tustin and RW White.

Ryan Kidger from the Royal Air Force Air Cadets was welcomed as a new member of the Committee, to replace Colin Arnold as a representative of the organisation.

Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd May 2022 were circulated and approved.

Matters Arising & Tasks To Be/Already Undertaken in respect of 2022 Event:

1. "Switch-on" date unanimously confirmed as Friday 25th November 2022.
2. The road closure has been confirmed by Cambridgeshire County Council and Ringways have been notified of their involvement therein.
3. The following interested parties were notified of the above date on 23rd February 2022. A further reminder will be forwarded later in the year.
 - a) Lisa Hedges re fair rides ([REDACTED]). *Confirmed as OK.*
 - b) John Whitehead re MC duties ([REDACTED]). *Confirmed as OK.*
 - c) Duncan Partington re entertainment ([REDACTED]). *Confirmed as OK.*
 - d) Ridgeons re loan of steps (662000). *Confirmed as OK.*
 - e) John Thomas re loan of lorry trailer ([REDACTED]). *Confirmed as OK.*
 - f) Lions Club re provision Father Christmas and sleigh including transport thereof. *Confirmed as OK by Derek Rutter.*
 - g) FDC re ensuring that the Market Place car park will be closed all day and that the Broad Street toilets will be open until 10pm (Isabel & Layna). *Email sent*

- 23rd February 2022. No acknowledgement received so a further email to be forwarded on 24th May 2022. Confirmed as OK later that day.*
- h) Order a Christmas tree from Elveden Farms. *Quotation requested, received and accepted on 23rd February 2022. Price of £3,030 is unchanged from last year.*
 - i) Ascertain whether Sainsbury's and Tesco's will allow bag-packing or collection:
 - a. *No response yet received from Sainsbury's. Further letter sent on 18th May 2022. Still no response received.*
 - b. *In a response from Tesco (Kelly Riddell) dated 8th March 2022, we have provisionally been booked in for collection dates on 19th and 20th November 2022 and collection times of 10am to 4pm. The Clerk reported that the advertising banners used when collecting were currently housed in the Town Council offices. Mark Purser stated that an advertising poster could be displayed within store prior to the event.*
 - j) Approach Balfour Beatty to ascertain whether they will again supervise electrical works since this is the only practical way the Committee can legally access CCC street lighting columns. Quote requested on 23rd February 2022. Quote received on 25th March 2022 (accepted 29th March 2022) for £690.44p. This is a rise of only £7.35p on the previous year. Brian Crabb rang to say that Balfour Beatty would also check to see which sockets / connections / time switches were in need of replacement. A report will be provided, with costings, in the not-too-distant future. *Chased again on 6th July 2022.*
 - k) Assistant Town Clerk to be requested to book St John Ambulance.
 - l) Decide upon a suitable person to switch on the lights. *Although this was previously discussed in detail, a final decision will be made at the September meeting.*
 - m) Apply for CCC Street Lighting License. *Application approved on 21st March 2022.*
4. March Town Council has committed £25,000 in its 2022/2023 budget for Christmas-related expenditure.
5. In previous years a maximum of £7,500 has been paid out to helpers. All payments were subject to recipients signing a receipt acknowledging that they were responsible for their own tax and national insurance if applicable. Discussions need to be held regarding the best way to proceed in 2022 since Clinton and Dean Elkin have both stated that they no longer wish to assist with the erection and dismantling duties.
6. All cross-street wires and wall bolts need testing during 2022. Tests are due bi-annually so will need testing again in 2024. *Glomac was contacted on 23rd February 2022. A quote of £1,895.00 + VAT was received on 23rd May 2022. The work and the hire of a cherry-picker has been arranged for Sunday 7th August 2022.*
7. More complaints than normal were received for the 2021 season regarding light outages and the failure to remedy faults. Better communication and management are needed for this coming year. The following points need resolving:
- a) Is the cherry-picker being used in the correct manner?
 - b) Do some street light sockets need replacing? *See 3 j) above.*

- c) An arrangement has been agreed with TD Services that is beneficial to all parties. Alan Stimpson has been updated in this respect.

Tasks Still to be Undertaken:

1. Discussions are needed to ascertain how improvements can be made to the Christmas tree and “Nativity Scene” displays. It was suggested that the Christmas tree could be moved to Broad Street if all the proposed town centre regeneration came to fruition.
2. SAG paperwork needs to be completed at the earliest opportunity. *Rob Skoulding to be reminded to speak to Nigel Spencer to ascertain whether he would assist.*
3. It was previously agreed that the following groups can have stalls etc at the event if they so wish:
 - a) Waterman’s Club (on bridge).
 - b) Scouts (in vicinity of Iceland).
 - c) Churches Together (Nativity Scene in “old man’s shelter”).
4. It was confirmed that Rachel Burry and Stuart Rayner would remain in the joint roles of Head Steward.
5. The need to recruit more stewards was essential. *Clinton Elkin agreed to advertise on Facebook in an attempt to get more volunteers.*
6. A Christmas Shop Window competition will be arranged in due course. *Town Clerk to produce a letter for distribution around the shops in late October 2022.*
7. Robert Skoulding again agreed to sponsor the “Best Decorated House” competition.
8. It was agreed that the grotto should not be re-instated for 2022, although this decision could be reviewed for future years depending upon the number of available volunteers.
9. Several “set-pieces” are in need of repair. Robert Skoulding has suggested that all stock should be checked by May 2022 and we should consider how best they could be repaired. Sue Beer has done an excellent job over the years but this cannot continue forever. Robert S is certainly keen to learn how Sue B does repair them and would like to receive some lessons. *Because of the amount of work involved, it has been necessary to forward all 27 faulty set-pieces back to the suppliers for repair. Costs will be in excess of £12,000 once haulage is taken into account.*
10. Mark Purser has obtained more 2-way radios with associated ear-pieces since the previous ones had proven to work very well. *Sets of radio and ear-pieces will be individually packed and itemised for future events for convenience.*
11. Refreshments will be discussed in due course.
12. Mark Purser will investigate whether a sponsorship scheme is feasible to raise funds for additional lighting / on-going maintenance.
13. The Air Cadets were previously thanked for their past efforts and, although not directly involved any more, Colin Arnold thought their help would be forthcoming again for 2022.
14. At the February 2022 meeting Robert Skoulding stated that, although he would remain as a Committee member, he would be stepping down from the Chairman’s role [REDACTED]. He requested that a replacement be found and elected at the next meeting. He was thanked for all his past efforts. At the March 2022 meeting, Stuart Rayner was duly appointed as the new Chairman.

15. Mark Purser has invited Nigel Spencer to join the Committee. Although busy at the present time, he will join in 2023.
16. Further discussions ensued regarding the positioning of barriers within town on the night of the actual “switch-on”.
17. Having previously contacted Clinton Elkin, Peter Miles from Atkins spoke to the Clerk on 29th April 2022 to discuss the Broad Street refurbishment plans. Very little information was gained since no final decisions have yet been taken on the positioning or height of replacement street lights.
18. Erecting of the lights will commence in October 2022.

Dates of Next Meeting:

Monday 19th September 2022 at 7.45pm in The Skoulding Suite at March Town Hall.

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

Councillor K French 1st August 2022.
Mayor of March.