

## MARCH TOWN COUNCIL

### Minutes of a Christmas Lights Working Party Meeting held in The Skoulding Suite at March Town Hall on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021 at 7.45pm.

|                 |             |                          |                               |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Present:</b> | Chairman    | RF Skoulding             |                               |
|                 | Councillors | SR Court<br>M Purser     | CK Elkin<br>RW White          |
|                 | Members     | David Doe<br>Dan Fortuna | Stuart Rayner<br>Rachel Burry |
|                 | Town Clerk  | C Lemmon                 |                               |

#### Apologies:

Apologies were received from Martin Field.

#### Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2021 were circulated and approved.

#### Review of 2020 “Switch-on”:

Due to coronavirus restrictions, the 2020 “switch-on” had been a low-key affair with no road closures, funfair or entertainment.

#### Progress & Tasks Already Undertaken in respect of 2021 Event:

1. “Switch-on” date unanimously confirmed as Friday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021.
2. The road closure has been confirmed by Cambridgeshire County Council and Ringways have been notified of their involvement therein
3. [REDACTED] notified by email 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021).  
[REDACTED] (funfair [REDACTED]) (MC duties [REDACTED])  
and [REDACTED] (entertainment [REDACTED]) have all indicated their availability and willingness to attend.
4. Ridgeons (steps [REDACTED]), [REDACTED] (loan of lorry trailer [REDACTED]) and Lions Club (Father Xmas / sleigh) all have the date booked in their respective diaries.
5. Fenland District Council is aware that the Market Place needs to be closed and the public toilets kept open until 10pm ([REDACTED]) by email on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021).
6. Christmas tree ordered from Elveden Farms on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 ([REDACTED]) ([REDACTED]). Delivery arranged for Friday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 10am at a

cost of £3,030 + VAT. To be removed on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 (Ringways aware of all necessary dates).

7. Although Sainsbury's and Tesco's have both been approached about collection days, no decisions have yet been taken by either organisation.

[REDACTED]

The most recent contact with each company was made on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021, Sainsbury's by phone and Tesco's by email. It would appear highly unlikely that any bag-packing will be allowed at Sainsbury's and the response from Tesco's states that no update has been provided by their Head Office as of yet. [REDACTED] will be in touch as soon as any news is received.

8. Balfour Beatty have again agreed to supervise electrical works since this is the only practical way that the Committee can legally gain access to CCC street lighting columns.

[REDACTED]

Contract agreed and signed on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

9. March Town Council has committed £25,000 in its 2021/2022 budget for Christmas-related expenditure.
10. It has been agreed that a maximum of £7,500 be paid out to helpers for 2021. All payments made will be subject to recipients signing a receipt acknowledging that they are responsible for their own tax and national insurance if applicable.
11. All cross-street wires and wall bolts were tested during 2020. Tests are due bi-annually so will need testing again in 2022.
12. [REDACTED] have agreed to perform the "switch-on" ceremony. This was confirmed on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

All interested parties will be contacted again in early to mid-October 2021.

### **Tasks Still to be Undertaken:**

1. Discussions have been held with Clinton Elkin to ascertain how improvements can be made to the Christmas tree and "Nativity Scene" displays.
2. Robert Skoulding will be having discussions with [REDACTED] regarding the SAG requirements on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021.
3. Geoff Wilkinson has booked St John Ambulance.
4. It was 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).
5. It was agreed that it was necessary to appoint a Head Steward, and it was agreed that serious efforts must be made to recruit as many stewards as possible for 2021

- onwards. However, it should be remembered that due diligence must be exercised prior to utilising new stewards or introducing new members to the Committee. It was agreed that Rachel Burry and Stuart Rayner would take on the joint roles of Head Steward. Stuart Rayner confirmed his willingness to jointly take on this role on the morning of 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021 and Robert Skoulding agreed to provide whatever advice was needed.
- Clinton Elkin agreed to advertise the need for more stewards on Facebook.
6. Once again, a Christmas Shop Window Competition would be organised. The Clerk would produce letter to distribute around the shops in late October 2021.
  7. Robert Skoulding had again agreed to sponsor the “Best Decorated House” competition.
  8. It is necessary to arrange refreshments for “switch-on” night. Mark Purser agreed to provide the refreshments and has organised for a third party to perform the serving thereof.
  9. It was previously agreed that a grotto would not be a sensible idea for the current year but that, hopefully, it will be re-instated for 2022.
  10. Several “set-pieces” are in need of repair and [REDACTED] has agreed that she can refurbish all of them.
  11. A lady called [REDACTED] who had suggestions about the Christmas tree had previously asked to join the Committee. It had been agreed that she should be invited to attend the August 2021 meeting. [REDACTED] was emailed on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021 but no response has been received. Normal “due diligence” procedures had confirmed that [REDACTED] was not on the Police database and, as such, would have been an approved person.
  12. CL reported that he had applied for the Street Lighting License. This is a Cambs County Council annual license that is required before seasonal decorations are allowed to be attached to street lights. The application was approved on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2021.
  13. It was agreed that Robert Skoulding and Mark Purser should enquire about the hire/purchase of “walkie-talkies” and loud hailers to assist with communications on “switch-on” night.
  14. Clinton Elkin reported that Holland and Barrett should be arranging for the reinstatement of the Christmas lights socket.
  15. It was noted that the sockets on the two “Iceland” lampposts had still not been fitted by the FDC lighting contractors. CL agreed to ring [REDACTED] at FDC to ascertain what progress was being made. He was contacted on both 17<sup>th</sup> August and 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021.
  16. The Chairman reported that, because of his health issues, he would not be able to perform as many of the physical activities this year either in preparing for the event or the on-the-ground liaison duties on the night.
  17. The Chairman reiterated the need for everyone to encourage as many stewards to come forward as possible (eg Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service off-duty personnel).
  18. Stewards meetings will be held prior to the event to ensure that everyone is aware of relevant information/documentation and to review all possible scenarios that could occur.

**Date of Next Meeting:**

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at 7.45pm in The Skoulding Suite at March Town Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.35pm.

Councillor K French ..... 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021.  
Mayor of March.