

# MARCH TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes of a Christmas Lights Working Party Meeting held in The Skoulding Suite at March Town Hall on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019 at 7.45pm.

<b>Present:</b>	Chairman	RF Skoulding	
	Councillors	SR Court G Tustin	M Purser R White
	Members	David Doe Sue Beer Clinton Elkin Andrew Pugh	Eddie Osgathorp Colin Arnold Kit Owen Martin Field
	Town Clerk	C Lemmon	

### Apologies:

Apologies were received from Michelle Bishop and Rachel Burry.

### Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019 were reviewed and approved.

### Review of 2018 “Switch-on”:

1. Everyone who helped on the evening were thanked for their efforts.
2. Several items appear to have gone astray and need to be traced without further delay. These items include the stewards’ yellow jackets. *These have since been located and are now stored in the MTC office.*
3. Andrew Pugh recounted minor incidents that had occurred on the evening, but no feedback has yet been received from the SAG Committee.
4. Mark Purser agreed to review the collection methods that we utilise to ascertain whether it would be possible and viable to accept “contactless” card donations. *In abeyance.*
5. It was noted that the Stewards’ “WhatsApp” group worked well.
6. Questions were raised as to whether the Xmas tree needed to have more lights on it, although no conclusions were initially reached. *It was later agreed that more coloured bulbs should be purchased for this purpose, since we have sufficient cable already in stock.*
7. An improved Santa’s Grotto needs to be acquired for 2019 because problems had been encountered with the Scout Marquee. *It has been ascertained that Jan French will be able to loan one to us.*

8. It was agreed that Lisa Hedges should be invited to attend one of the future meetings. *CL spoke to her on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2019 and she wants to attend the October or November 2019 meeting when plans are being finalised.*

### **Matters Arising & Tasks to be Undertaken:**

1. Date agreed for 2019 “switch-on” to be Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2019.
2. CL reported that all interested parties were informed of the above date as follows:  
These persons are as follows:
  - a) CCC / Ringways re road closure and erection & removal of Xmas tree. Road closure applied for on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019. *This was approved on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019 and all information notices are now in our possession.* Erection and removal of Xmas tree. *Delivery arranged for 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2019 and removal arranged for 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020.* *It was agreed that CL should notify Elveden of the maximum trunk size that can be accommodated once Clinton notifies him of the size of the retaining aperture.*
  - b) Lisa Hedges re fair rides (07860 962077). *Rang 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2019 (confirmed).*
  - c) John Whitehead re MC duties (07789 555590). *Rang 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2019 and left message on ansafone. Gary Tustin volunteered to undertake these duties if John Whitehead was unavailable.*
  - d) Duncan Partington re music (01945 880097). *Rang 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2019 (confirmed).*
  - e) Ridgeons re loan of steps (662000). *Rang Andy on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2019 (confirmed, but we are asked to ensure that the steps are stored inside overnight).*
  - f) Oliver Cromwell Hotel re use of hotel for Father Christmas’ departure (Robert Skoulding 07733 008448). *Confirmed as OK by our Chairman.*
  - g) John Thomas re loan of lorry (01945 450555). *Rang 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2019 (confirmed, with agreement for a delivery time of 6am on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2019).*
  - h) Lions Club (re provision of sleigh, including transport thereof). *Lions already aware of the date.*
  - i) Gavin Philpott re Scout Marquee to act as Santa’s Grotto if no better option is available. *It would appear that Jan French will have a more suitable marquee for us to borrow.*
  - j) 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. *E-mail forwarded to FDC on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2019.*

*All the above will be contacted again nearer to the time.*
3. It was noted that collection days for 2019 have been arranged as follows:
  - A. Bag-packing at Sainsbury’s.  
Booked for 12<sup>th</sup> October 2019 – agreed with Dianne on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018.

(JS contact details 653702 – Dianne or Emma).

B. Tin collection at Tesco's.

Provisionally booked for 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019 – must be confirmed with Kelly in August or September 2019.

(Contact details: Kelly Riddell 07933 670242)

4. It was agreed that a maximum of £7,500 be paid out to helpers for 2019.
5. CL previously reported that for 2011 and onwards, Whiting and Partners have advised that all persons receiving payments should sign a receipt acknowledging that they are responsible for their own tax and national insurance if applicable.
6. Reminders for coming year: obtaining PRS License, ordering Christmas tree, refurbishing / replacing certain electrical fittings, obtaining barriers, arranging for someone to switch on the lights, organising Shop Window Competition etc.
7. It was previously agreed that the Christmas tree should be ordered at the earliest possible date. *This was ordered from Elveden Farms on 23<sup>rd</sup> January at a cost of £2,025 + VAT. This is a 48% increase on 2018 due to a shortage of big trees, with some having to be imported from Denmark (Contact details: Laura – 01842 890423).*
8. It was reported that, in general, all meetings would continue to be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month. Initially this would be bi-monthly, rising to monthly later in the year.
9. It was also reported that March Town Council had committed £20,000 in its 2019/2020 budget for Christmas-related expenditure.
10. It was agreed that the Waterman's Club should be allowed to have a stall at the 2019 event if they so wished.
11. It was agreed that Michelle Bishop (FDC Licensing Manager) should be invited to attend all future meetings if she so required.
12. It was agreed that the SAG / FDC requirements and paperwork should be dealt with by Andrew Pugh and forwarded to Michelle Bishop as soon as possible. New documentation is in place for 2019, although Michelle Bishop has offered help in the production thereof. *CL agreed to arrange a meeting (once AP had advised availability) between Andrew and Michelle in the near future. It was also agreed that Kit Owen would "shadow" Andrew's duties so that he could immediately take over in the event that Andrew moved abroad.*
13. Andrew Pugh was appointed as Head Steward. It was agreed that serious efforts must be made to recruit as many stewards as possible for 2019 onwards since the importance of their presence increases year on year. However, it should be remembered that due diligence must be exercised prior to utilising new stewards or introducing new members to the committee.
14. It was noted that Robert Skoulding had again agreed to sponsor the "Best Decorated House" competition for 2019. *The trophy is already in our possession.*
15. It was agreed that, once again, a Christmas Shop Window Competition would be organised. The Clerk would produce letters to distribute around the shops in late October 2019. *Robert Skoulding agreed to distribute these letters.*

16. Approximately 41 “Santa gifts” remain in stock from 2018 which will go a long way towards the 2019 requirements. *It was agreed that we should ask Jan French to obtain another 60 “gifts” when she places an order for the Christmas Market event.*
17. Sue Beer had received a request for a ‘LIONS’ decoration, possibly on the side of the White Hart building facing the river. It was agreed that she would explore the possibilities and discuss with Lion representatives prior to placing an order. *Agreement has now been reached and the order will be placed this week.*
18. Sue Beer was requested to purchase a new nativity scene at the earliest possible opportunity. *This has now been done.*
19. Following a successful 2018, it was agreed that Mark Purser would again arrange (either in person or via A.N.Other) the refreshments for “switch-on” night.
20. It was noted that electricity prices for 2019 would be 23.46% higher than for 2018.
21. John Devine has already accepted our invitation to turn on this year’s lights. *CL to make further contact with him later in the year.*
22. Churches Together (Barbara Taylor) were informed on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018 that they can repeat their Nativity Scene in the “old man’s shelter” every year.
23. Problems were encountered with the hoist, but all the 2018 decorations were removed before the middle of February 2019.
24. Clinton Elkin reported that some replacement bulbs needed ordering and one “set-piece” needed refurbishing. It was agreed that he would liaise with Sue Beer to make the necessary arrangements. Also, new protective clothing needed to be ordered for the helpers since the outfits currently being used are now worn out.
25. Colin Arnold reported that communications between stewards could be improved even further. Also, although he will be out of the country for the 2019 “switch-on” night, the cadets will be available under the control of another officer, the name of whom will be notified at a later date.
26. Robert Skoulding agreed to source an A3-sized town centre map from Fenland District Council for Andrew Pugh to satisfy certain SAG demands.
27. CL agreed to contact Ernie Lord to establish whether his high-lift vehicle would be available for hire for the current year.

**Date of Next Meeting:**

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at 7.45pm in The Skoulding Suite at March Town Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Councillor J French ..... 5<sup>th</sup> August 2019.  
 Mayor of March.