

# MARCH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of March Town Council held on 2 December 2024 held in The Skoulding Suite at March Town Hall commencing at 7.15pm.

<b>Present</b>	Councillor	G Christy	Town Mayor
	Councillors	S Court J French S Harris M Purser T Taylor	M Field K French J Lawler N Spencer
	Cambridgeshire County Councillor	J Gowing	
	Town Clerk	S Lemmon	
	Assistant Town Clerk	S Taylor	
	Public	1	
	Press	1	

## 114 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Woollard, Orbell and Harris.

## 115 Police Update

Presentation/Minutes of the 6 November 2024 meeting had not been received/circulated by the Clerk. The December meeting is being held this evening so there will be no MTC representation, but minutes will be circulated in due course.

## 116 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 one additional planning application would be discussed at tonight's meeting.

F/YR23/0550/F

Fink Developments.

Erect 18 dwellings (12 x 2-storey, 4-bed and 6 2-storey, 3-bed) with associated infrastructure and the formation of 2 balancing ponds and public open space at Phase B Land East of Berryfield, March.

**Revised Proposals: Updated views of the Town Council are sought following most recent response of 20 February 2024 and LLFA response and others made since that date.**

Received: 26 November 2024

Reply by: 3 December 2024

**Recommendation; Refusal. The Town Council stands by its recommendation of 19.2.24 to refuse this application due to flooding and draining issues at the location.**

F/YR24/0917/F

Mrs Steph Dickson, 46A The Causeway

Erect detached single storey ancillary building to front of existing dwelling (retrospective) at 46A The Causeway, March.

Received: 18 November 2024

Reply by: 9 December 2024

**Recommendation; Approval**

F/YR24/0928/F

Mrs Sally Batchelor, 6 Aspenwood Grove, March.

Change of use of existing business unit from class uses E(g), B2 and B8 to class use Sui Generis (retrospective) and installation of a fire escape at 8 Platinum Business Park, 59 Thorby Avenue, March.

Received: 22 November 2024

Reply by: 13 December 2024

**Recommendation; Approval**

F/YR24/0929/F

Mr A Jakeman, Fenland Swim Academy.

Change of use of existing industrial unit to Swimming Pool (Class F2(d) at 9 Century Way, March.

Received: 25 November 2024

Reply by; 16 December 2024

**Recommendation; Approval**

F/YR24/0938/F

Carl Wilson, 27 Newlands Avenue.

Erect a single-storey rear extension to existing dwelling at 27 Newlands Avenue.

Received: 25 November 2024

Reply by: 16 December 2024

**Recommendation; Approval**

F/YR24/0308/F

Inside Land Capital Ltd, Nottinghamshire.

Erect 15 dwellings (4 x 2-storey, 4-bed, 9 x 2-storey, 3-bed and 2 x 2-storey, 2-bed) with associated access, parking, landscaping and surface water attenuation at Land North of 147-159 Wisbech Road, March.

Received; 28 November 2024

Reply by: 12 December 2024

**Recommendation; Approval**

## **117 Public Participation**

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

## **118 Minutes of Meetings**

The following Minutes were agreed and signed by the Mayor:

Main Meeting – 4 November 2024

Planning Meeting – 18 November 2024

Christmas Lights – 18 November 2024

Personnel and Admin – 26 November 2024

## **119 Matters Arising**

Main Meeting; Minute 107 – MVAS; Councillor Field advised that the sign had been moved to Station Road. They were now able to download the information to send to CCC (for onward transmission to the police). Cllr K French hoped that the information would be properly processed. The new batteries had arrived and were ready for collection from the office.

Christmas Lights; Councillor Field thanked everyone involved for making the Christmas Lights-switch-on event a huge success. Cllr J French described travel disruption caused by the road closure, but it was agreed that there were other factors that contributed to the long delays (roadworks, an accident etc). The timing of the road closures for any switch-on event in 2025 would be discussed by the Christmas Lighting Committee next year.

## **120 Budget**

The Clerk presented the proposals for the 2025/2026 budget to councillors, the documents having been circulated to all councillors on 12 November 2024.

Key points to note;

- The budgeted precept ought to allow March Town Council to build reserves during 2025/26.
- Due to the possibility of the FDC tax base estimate changing, it will only be possible to approve the budget in principle at this stage and either amend or ratify it in January.
- The Town Council continues to support March Town FC Estover CIC, CCTV, March Museum, March Street Pride and March Events. There is *currently* no provision in the

budget for the March Summer Festival, although the Town Council is now aware that a date has been set for a 2025 Festival (see minute 122, post).

- Details of the confirmation from NALC of the agreement reached regarding the Local Government Pay Claim for 2024/2025 and the rates of pay payable from April 2024 were circulated to councillors on 31 October 2024.
- March in Bloom/Street Pride made a request on 29 October 2024 for a 10% increase in their grant, to increase the annual grant from £7,000 to £7,700 to cover costs.
- It would be necessary to thoroughly review Christmas Lighting expenditure in February/March

It was proposed by Cllr J French and seconded by Cllr K French that the budget be accepted, with all councillors voting unanimously in favour (subject to any amendment required to reflect a change in the FDC council tax base).

### **121 Grants and Donations**

One application had been received from CAMSAR (Cambridgeshire Search and Rescue) who had requested £500 for the purpose of purchasing an all-terrain vehicle. The application was declined on the basis that there were many funding streams available to CAMSAR and preference is, in any event, given to organisations principally supporting residents of March.

### **122 Summer Festival**

Due to no/inadequate notice having been given to the Clerk for a member of the public to speak at a meeting, Marcus Phillips was unable to make a presentation to Councillors about the March Summer Festival or to request funding from March Town Council.

To allow any dispensation would be a breach of the Council's Standing Orders and set a dangerous precedent.

Neither the Mayor or other councillors on the Summer Festival committee (a non-council committee) would be able to make a presentation either, as they have a conflict of interest. Mr Phillips would need to send his presentation to the Clerk together with a full set of accounts and details of any other funding secured or applied for by the Festival Committee for Councillors to consider before any bid for funding could be entertained.

If in January, Town Councillors were minded to provide any funding, even if the 2025/2026 budget has been ratified, there was contingency funding available.

### **123 Infrastructure Delivery Plan – Fenland District Council**

Councillors had been circulated with a copy of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which the District Council is working to update, alongside the emerging Local Plan.

Councils had been asked to provide an initial response as to their requirements in relation to various infrastructure and rate the urgency of such requirement using the categories Critical, Highest, Middle and Lower priority.

The Clerk would report March Town Council's requirements to FDC after the meeting.

**124 March Market - Location**

Councillors were asked their thoughts about FDC’s proposals to move the weekly market from the Market Place to Broad Street on a trial basis. This would free up parking spaces on the Market Places and traders were largely supportive of the proposals.

The majority of councillors voted in favour of the trial relocation, which had been in the pipeline since before Covid.

**125 Cambridgeshire County Council Update**

County Councillor Gowing advised of the reinstatement of the Chief Constable. He stated that, in terms of Environmental and Green Investment and waste, Fenland always performs poorly, possibly due to large numbers not subscribing to the brown bin service.

**126 Fenland District Council Update**

Cllr J French advised that, barring a few snags that were in hand, Broad Street was now completed.

The new toilet block was out for tender.

Due to the on-going problem of parking on the newly paved areas in Broad Street, 42 metal bollards would be installed.

Works outside Iceland would be starting soon and by the end of Spring, successful applicants for the shop-front funding would be finalised.

**127 Payments List**

The Payments List, as circulated, was agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:15pm.

Councillor G Christy .....6 January 2025  
Mayor of March.