

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

16 June 2023

Historic fountain to be carefully stored as Broad Street regeneration gets underway

Work to carefully dismantle March's Coronation Fountain will begin shortly, ready for the historic feature to be relocated once the town centre regeneration is complete.

Leading transport infrastructure provider Octavius has now started work in Broad Street and one of its first activities is to oversee a specialist heritage contractor to carefully dismantle, wrap and store the Grade II listed fountain.

The work is due to commence on Monday 26 June and will take around two weeks to complete.

The relocation of the fountain as part of the town's ongoing regeneration project was approved by Fenland District Council's planning committee in February, with support from Historic England.

It will be moved a few metres from its current position, at the top of the central reservation in Broad Street, to what will become a new pedestrianised, public realm area.

Its relocation will enable the new Broad Street road layout to be created, with a new roundabout replacing the existing traffic lights to reduce congestion and improve the flow of traffic, whilst also improving air quality in Broad Street.

Its new public realm location, no longer surrounded by traffic, will also allow greater appreciation and enjoyment of the historic structure, which was built to celebrate the Coronation of King George V in 1911.

After the structure is carefully dismantled, it will be safely transported for storage until being reinstated towards the end of the regeneration project in 2024.

In the meantime, Octavius has marked out the new location of the fountain on the road so its future location can be better visualised.

Cllr Steve Count, district and county ward member for March, member of Cambridgeshire County Council's March Area Transport Study (MATS) Group and member of the March Future High Streets steering group, said: "The fountain is 111 years old, and we know how important it is to the people of March that it is cared for whilst being dismantled and stored, ready to be reinstated in its new home.

"The steering group is aware of some concerns regarding the future location of the fountain so, at its last group meeting, we decided that its new location should be marked out on the road. This will help residents and members of the steering group to better visualise the location and gauge any concerns."

Cllr Chris Seaton, Fenland District Council's Portfolio Holder for Transport and lead member of the March Future High Streets steering group, said: "After many months of preparation and the completion of other town centre regeneration projects, including the March Market Place improvements and the essential gas and water main upgrades, I'm delighted to see the Broad Street scheme get underway.

"The relocation of the town's historic fountain is an important and necessary part of the works to allow the road transformation to take place and has been considered carefully with support and guidance from Historic England."

Cllr Jan French, Deputy Leader of Fenland District Council, town, district and county ward member for March, Chair of March Area Transport Study (MATS) Group and member of the March Future High Streets steering group, added: "We fully appreciate these works involve some disruption for our local businesses and residents, but they are essential to ensure the town we love adapts and thrives in future.

"Rather than sitting back and allowing our town centre to fall victim to the continued national decline of high streets, this is our opportunity to create a more purposeful town centre that meets the needs of our community. There'll be less congestion with the removal of traffic lights and a new mini roundabout, a greener pedestrianised area with seating for socialising, a new seating area overlooking the river and many more improvements.

"We will of course be working closely with Octavius and our highways partners at Cambridgeshire County Council to do what we can to keep disruption to a minimum as this exciting next stage of the project continues."

The Broad Street regeneration works are part of Cambridgeshire County Council's March Area Transport Study (MATS), a wider programme of transport interventions to address existing capacity and safety problems across March and mitigate for future growth.

The works are being delivered with £3.6million of funding from the Government's Future High Streets Fund, awarded to Fenland District Council, and over £6million from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority – £2million from the Combined Authority's Market Towns Programme, and a further £4.2million from the Combined Authority's major funding for March in the March Area Transport Study (MATS).

For more information on the regeneration works, visit: www.fenland.gov.uk/MFHSE

ENDS

Notes to Editors

For media enquiries, please contact the Fenland District Council press office on 01354 622226 or email: communications@fenland.gov.uk