

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

20 July 2023

Grants up to £25,000 available to help bring empty shops back into use

Owners of empty shops in March town centre are being reminded about a grant scheme that will help them to develop and refurbish premises – and bring them back into use.

Fenland District Council launched the Vacant Unit Activation Scheme last year as part of the town's ongoing regeneration project, to help reduce the number of empty shops in town.

The scheme offers grants of up to £25,000 to fund improvements to vacant premises and bring them up to a lettable standard. The grants can fund renovations such as replacement shop fronts, windows and doors, replacement signage and changes to internal layouts.

The scheme is being funded by the Council's Future High Streets Fund project, which has been made possible thanks to £6.4million from the Government's Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) and £2million from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

The project is one of a number of inter-related schemes to transform and improve the town centre, including the Broad Street road changes which are being delivered through Cambridgeshire County Council's March Area Transport Study (MATS).

Cllr Chris Seaton, Fenland District Council's Portfolio Holder for Transport, Heritage and Culture and lead member of the March Future High Streets steering group, said:

"The face of the high street has changed dramatically in recent years, with empty units and household name shops and banks closing across the country, and the pandemic accelerating the shift towards online purchasing even further.

"Thankfully, the work now underway in March will help to halt this decline. It will create a more resilient and revitalised town centre that not only provides residents and visitors with a better place to connect and socialise but helps businesses to thrive and stay agile too.

"This grant scheme is a fantastic part of the town's regeneration project as it will help to bring empty shops back into use and make them available to the community once again, while also further improving the look and feel of the town centre."

For more information about the grant see: www.fenland.gov.uk/article/16518/Vacant-Unit-Activation-Scheme-grant-scheme

Or, if you think you might qualify to apply, contact: Project Officer Matt Wright on: mwright@fenland.gov.uk

- For more information on the March regeneration project, visit: www.fenland.gov.uk/MFHSF

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Notes to Editors

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