

DISS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES

The Chairman wished everyone a Happy New Year. He also apologised for the late postponement of the December Full Council meeting, due to the late issue of the budget report and the poorly Responsible Finance Officer. He also confirmed that the next Council meeting would take place on 12th Jan at the Diss Youth & Community Centre and would be preceded by a Planning committee meeting. He acknowledged the work and contribution of former councillor Poulter who resigned before Christmas.

Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held **online via Zoom** on **Wednesday 5th January 2022** at **7.15pm**.

Present: Councillors S. Browne
M. Gingell
S. Kiddie
K. Murphy
S. Olander (ex-officio)
J. Robertson
E. Taylor (ex-officio)
C. Valori
S. Warren
J. Welch
J. Wooddissee

In attendance: S. Richards (Town Clerk)
S. French (Deputy Town Clerk)
A. Jamieson (RFO)
County / District Councillor Kiddie
District Councillor Minshull
1 member of the public

FC0122/01 TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received for this meeting, but councillors Collins and Kitchen were not present.

FC0122/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

FC0122/03 MINUTES

It was

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 10th November 2021 were approved as a true record and will be signed by the Town Mayor post meeting.

FC0122/04 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

County / District Councillor Kiddie advised that works near to Frenze Beck bridge to mitigate against flooding were due to start yesterday but a contractual change has necessitated a revised start date. The Vincas Road traffic light scheme is due to be discussed with interested parties next week and the pooling on Frenze Hall Lane is being dealt with by the County Highways Officer.

There was a question regarding the decision on the Churchill appeal. It was noted that the Planning Inspector found in favour of the development against the views of the Town Council, County and District councillors and the Local Planning Authority, which was deeply disappointing. Councillor Browne offered to assist with any discussions regarding a new leisure provision for Diss.

There was one member of the public present who spoke on the budget item. The RFO was tasked with reviewing the percentage increases in the table at the bottom of the report.

(Action: RFO; immediately)

FC0122/05 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

FC0122/06 FINANCE

- a) Members noted bank outgoings for November 2021.
- b) Members noted the summary of Income and Expenditure for November.
- c) Members noted Earmarked Reserves for November 2021.
- d) Members considered investing funds into the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund (report reference 48/2122 referred). It was noted that the account is targeted at Councils, is high security and liquidity (funds can be accessed instantly) but that members should consider that the investment would carry an element of risk as it would not be covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. The Town Council has already diversified £85k in a Nationwide account with the remaining funds in Barclays. If the bank(s) were to dissolve, up to £85k of the funds would be protected by the government.

Research has shown that it is difficult to identify savings accounts with an adequate level of interest that will accept public money as most are geared towards businesses to whom they can loan money. It was noted that there is no commitment to keep the funds in a particular account for a time period if the Council was to find an alternative.

There was a suggestion that further research into other options is undertaken before committing Council funds. The Council's auditor suggested that the Council consider the CCLA investment post their recommendation to diversify funds. It was noted that several options were previously found that are no longer available and that at least five other accounts are required to diversify all Council funds.

Given the legal requirement as laid out in the Local Government Act 1972 specifying that council meetings must take place in person at a single, specified, geographical location and being 'present' at such a meeting involves physical presence at that location, it was agreed that the following recommendation would be presented to the next Full Council meeting for approval.

'To research alternative options for investing Town Council funds and bring those back to a future meeting before diversifying further funds.'

(Action: RFO; by 06.01.22)

FC0122/07

BUDGET 2022-23

- a) Members considered the budget setting recommendations for all committees for approval by Full Council at its January precept setting meeting (report reference 49/2122 referred). The Vice-Chair of the Executive committee summarised that the budgeting process would require review prior to next year's budget setting, there was some confusion around the Earmarked Reserves allocations and that the role of the Budget Action Group is to propose recommendations to the Executive committee who in turn recommend to Full Council. The Chairman thought it was an easy-to-follow report.

There were comments regarding the potential impact of continued increases in the staff wages budget exceeding the desired 50% limit, that the annual impact on individual Band D householders of £2.74 should be clarified and the legislation to support the legal requirement to publish the budget on the Council's website should be quoted in the report. It was agreed that the following recommendations would be presented to the next Full Council meeting for approval.

1. To approve the request from precept of £49,629 for specified Earmarked Reserves projects as shown in Appendix A under RFO revision 2.
2. To approve the proposed Earmarked Reserves reallocation of £29,421 from the current EMR for the financial year 2022/23 as shown in Appendix A under BAG revision parts 1&2.
3. That members determine that the minimum level of general reserves being 6 months of expenditure is appropriate for the financial year 2022/23.
4. That members approve the proposed income and expenditure budgets shown in Appendix B for 2021/22, which reflects a 2.5% increase for Diss taxpayers on the current year.
5. To approve the precept demand to South Norfolk Council of £585,714 or £208.59 for Band D householders.

6. To give delegated authority to the Clerk to work with the Responsible Finance Officer and the Chair of the Executive Committee to publicise the budget outcomes.

(Action: RFO; by 06.01.22)

FC0122/08 **CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL BILL**

Councillors considered a revised motion to support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill. It was

RESOLVED: to support the revised motion to support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill.

(Action: Clerk; by 06.01.22)

FC0122/09 **PROGRESS REPORT**

Members noted progress on decisions made at the last meeting. There was discussion regarding the planned move of the portacabin from the Sports Ground site to the DYCC given the likely requirement for storage from SPG hirers and it was agreed that the move would be postponed in order for the discussions with SPG hirers to take place in January. It was noted that the storage requirements for the South Norfolk Youth Symphonic Band would be considered by the Facilities committee in February.

(Action: Clerk / DepTC; immediately / by 03.02.22)

FC0122/10 **MEMBER FORUM**

Members considered information or issues relevant to Council from members for brief discussion, action, or inclusion on a future agenda. Cllr Browne raised the idea of a community fridge in support of the initiative led by the Co-Op, and it was agreed that whether the Council could support this specifically by providing a venue to house the fridge would be an item on the next Council agenda. Cllr Wooddissee promoted the next litter pick taking place on Saturday 8th January and thanked members and staff for their encouraging responses to his request for volunteers.

(Action: Clerk / DepTC; / by 06.01.22)

FC0122/12 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members noted that the next meeting of Full Council is scheduled for Wednesday 12th January 2022 at the DYCC and is expected to start around 7.45pm following the planning committee at 7.15pm.

Meeting Closed: 8.15pm.

Councillor Taylor
TOWN MAYOR