

# DISS TOWN COUNCIL

## MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held online on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 8pm.

Present: Councillors S. Browne  
D. Collins  
M. Gingell  
S. Kiddie  
A. Kitchen  
J. Mason  
K. Murphy  
S. Olander (ex-officio)  
D. Poulter  
J. Robertson  
E. Taylor (ex-officio)  
S. Warren  
J. Welch  
J. Wooddissee

In attendance: Sarah Richards, Town Clerk  
Sonya French, Deputy Town Clerk  
Alex Jamieson, Responsible Finance Officer  
Robert Ludkin, Maintenance Manager  
District Councillor Minshull

### **F0521/01 ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/22**

Members considered the election of a Town Mayor for 2021-22. Two nominations were received for councillors Browne and Taylor. It was noted that councillor Browne has undertaken the role of Town Mayor for two years and championed the Town Council through a very challenging year and been successful in co-opting eight new councillors. Councillor Taylor has been a Council member for three years, an effective Chair of Planning with excellent presentation skills and an eye for detail. Councillors Browne and Taylor were placed in the waiting room after voting for themselves whilst the remaining councillors declared their votes on screen. With 7 votes to 6, it was

RESOLVED: to elect Councillor Taylor as Town Mayor for 2021-22 with the declaration of acceptance of office to be signed post meeting.

**(Action: ET / Clerk; immediately)**

### **FC0521/02 TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none.

### **FC0521/03 ELECTION OF COUNCIL LEADER**

Members considered the election of a Council Leader for 2021-22. One nomination was received for councillor Olander, who said he would strive to continue to do the best for Diss. It was

RESOLVED: to elect Councillor Olander as Council Leader for 2021-22.

### **FC0521/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

There were none.

### **FC0521/05 MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021 were approved as a true record and will be signed with the Clerk post meeting.

**(Action: ET / Clerk; by 16.06.21)**

### **FC 0521/06 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Members considered a resolution under Standing Orders 3d to 3h to suspend the meeting to receive reports from the County and District Councillors, on behalf of the Police, and to hear comments from members of the public on items to be discussed on the agenda.

County / District Councillor Kiddie and District Councillor Wilby sent their apologies given the period of purdah. District Councillor Minshull provided a verbal update congratulating councillor Taylor as the new Mayor of Diss and councillor Browne for taking the Council through two extraordinary years during lockdown. He attended several of her Mayoral events and found her a breath of fresh air. He has also stepped down as Chairman of South Norfolk Council after two years and a photo was taken of himself, councillor Browne and County Councillor Kiddie who have all held respective Chairman's roles for Diss at town, district, and county council levels.

It was noted that this was the last Town Council Zoom meeting prior to returning to face-to-face meetings and that the District Council has seen engagement increase since it started livestreaming its meetings via YouTube. Following a review by Sir Richard Dannatt, all parish councillors will receive training regarding flooding with an opportunity to become a First Responder from the Autumn.

There was a request that a meeting should be arranged with the new Diss Police Inspector and councillors.

**(Action: Clerk; by 16.06.21)**

**FC0521/07**      **ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There was one item of urgent business. The Clerk advised that the start date for use of the Diss Youth & Community Centre as a vaccination centre was the following Monday or Tuesday. It was noted that the shift in dates is due to the shortage of vaccine supplies. There was a discussion regarding the impact on revenue and it was agreed that Richard Bacon MP would be contacted to see if he could add some parliamentary weight.

**(Action: Clerk; immediately)**

**FC0521/08**      **FINANCE**

- a) It was noted that the bank outgoings for April 2021 would be circulated post meeting and apologies were provided by the RFO for not providing them in advance of the meeting.  
**(Action: RFO; immediately)**
- b) Members noted that the summary of Income, Expenditure & Earmarked Reserves for the month ending April 2021 will be received at the June meeting. Due to the bringing forward of this meeting and the year-end rolling scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> May, details would be circulated as soon as possible thereafter.  
**(Action: RFO; immediately)**
- c) Members received the fourth quarterly report up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and approved the transfer of funds from the General Reserves to Earmarked Reserves (report reference 01/2122 referred). The RFO was thanked for a well laid out report and for identifying steps to minimise the considerable electricity expenditure. It was

RESOLVED: To approve the transfer of £82,341.79 from the General Reserve to the newly restructured Earmarked Reserves.

**(Action: RFO; immediately)**

**FC0521/09**      **MEETING ADMINISTRATION**

- a) Members reviewed and the committee membership for 2021/22. It was noted that the basis for membership was the previous year's formulation together with the first and second councillor preferences based on the forms received and suggesting a consistent maximum membership of 8 per committee with 6 for Planning. Members are usually expected to sit on two committees alongside Full Council and the Planning committee has been treated as a committee rather than a sub-committee.

It was confirmed that ex-officio members (Town Mayor and Council Leader) sit on all committees and have voting rights and that councillors can attend any committees but only have voting rights for those of which they are a member. Several members requested membership of additional committees, which resulted in a membership of 11 for the Facilities committee, 9 for Executive and Infrastructure and 7 for Planning, also providing for a vote majority. It was

RESOLVED: to approve the committee membership for 2021/22 with the following amendments: Town Mayor councillor Taylor added as ex-officio member to all committees; the removal of ex-officio from councillor Browne, councillors Gingell and Welch added to the Facilities membership; councillor Kitchen added to the Infrastructure membership and councillor Poulter added to the Planning membership.

**(Action: Clerk; immediately)**

b) Members considered re-electing the existing committee Chairmen. It was

RESOLVED: to re-elect the existing committee Chairmen as follows - councillor Poulter for Executive, councillor Robertson for Facilities, councillor Olander for Infrastructure and councillor Taylor for Planning.

**FC0521/10**      **COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME**

Members considered a recommendation from the Grant Panel regarding an application from Norfolk Threads CIC (report reference 02/2122 referred). The organisation is newly formed, and the proposal focuses on the people of Diss and is very much community based. The Grant Panel consider this project can be funded for the first 12 weeks, which should leverage match funding from elsewhere. Once the concept is proven, Norfolk Threads can re-apply for funding in the following financial year to comply with the grant policy.

There was a discussion regarding the tutor costs, and it was agreed that the fees were commensurate with the time and effort required to make the programme work. Charging for the programme was considered a potential barrier to those who cannot afford it and it was also agreed that the proposal promotes wellbeing through walks, being in nature and the opportunity to be creative. With one abstention noted from councillor Welch, it was

RESOLVED: To award a grant of £4,000 to Norfolk Threads CIC from the 2021-22 grants budget to support a programme of community arts and wellbeing courses to the residents of Diss.

**(Action: Clerk / RFO; immediately)**

**FC0521/11**      **PROGRESS REPORT**

Members noted progress on decisions made at the last meeting of Council. It was noted that the consecration of additional Cemetery burial ground was scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> May and further details would be disseminated in due course.

**(Action: DepTC; by 20.05.21)**

The councillor litter picking activity has been postponed until the weather improves and that the equipment loaned from South Norfolk Council is located at the DYCC.

**(Action: JM; by 31.05.21)**

A risk assessment for the return to face-to-face meetings in the Council Chamber at The Corn Hall was being drafted and would be disseminated to members shortly. Post a site visit, it has been confirmed that the venue meets social distancing requirements for up to 14 councillors, 2 Officers and up to 3 members of the public and press. The technical requirements to allow for remote access by the public and press have also been met.

**(Action: MM / Clerk; by 31.05.21)**

**FC0521/12**      **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members noted that the next meeting of Full Council is scheduled for Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021 in the Council Chamber at The Corn Hall.

*The newly elected Town Mayor councillor Taylor thanked members for their support and promised to work hard in his new role.*

Meeting Closed: 9.28pm.

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Councillor Taylor  
TOWN MAYOR