

Diss Town Council

Minutes

Draft

Minutes of the meeting of the **Town Council** held in the **Council Chamber** at **Diss Corn Hall** on **Wednesday 18th March 2026** at **7.15pm**.

Present: Councillors: D. Craggs (Chair), C. Dente, S. Kiddie, A. Kitchen, T Knights, K. Murphy, R. Peaty, T Shava, L Sinfield & J. Welch

In attendance: Sarah Villafuerte-Richards (Town Clerk)
District Councillor Kiddie
3 members of the public

FC0326/01 Apologies

Councillor's Name	Apologies Received	Absent Without Apology	Reason / Approval
S. Browne	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
J. Robertson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ill health

FC0326/02 Declarations of Interest

Minute No.	Councillor's Name	Personal/Other Interest	Pecuniary Interest	Reason
FC0326/13	K. Murphy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	This councillor is a South Norfolk District Councillor
FC0326/14	A. Kitchen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The nominees are known to this councillor

FC0326/03 Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Full Council meeting on Wednesday 11th February 2026 and the Extraordinary Full Council Meeting on 4th March 2026. It was noted that two amendments had been made to minute reference EFC0326/04 following a request from a Diss Heritage Trust representative. It was confirmed that the first amendment (paragraph 2) related to an opinion and the second (para 9) was factual.

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meetings of the Full Council held on Wednesday 11th February 2026 and the Extraordinary Full Council on Wednesday 4th March 2026 with the two amendments as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

FC0326/04 Public Participation

Four members of the public were in attendance. District Councillor Minshull apologised for not attending given another Council commitment. District Councillor Kiddie reported that the pre-election period starts on 27th March and therefore they will not be represented at the April meeting. Following previous success of the post, South Norfolk Council has appointed two Ditch walkers. The Diss Leisure Centre is due for consideration by the Development Management Committee in April and should secure an additional £8.1 million investment in Diss. There was a request to remove the reference to the gym on the Swim Centre sign on the A1066 opposite the facility.

(Action: KK; by 14.04.26)

The District Councillor grants are due to start from April 2026 and he advised on new regulations requiring that all privately kept primates are registered and meet zoo-level welfare standards.

County Councillor Wilby submitted a written report for Members' information. The report confirmed that the Norfolk County Council elections will now proceed on 7th May following a late change in the Government's position, creating uncertainty for local authorities preparing for reorganisation and devolution. He reported that 99 new highway improvement schemes have been approved for 2026/27 through the Parish Partnership programme, including small highway works such as trods, signage, surfacing, village gateways, benches and 31 VAS/SAM2 installations to promote safer speeds.

Members were informed of a £250,000 support package launched for the county's hospitality sector as part of wider investment in high streets, offering training and business improvement grants for pubs, restaurants, hotels and independent retailers. Nominations have opened for the Norfolk Rural Business Awards 2026, celebrating rural enterprise, and residents are encouraged to sign up to Your Norfolk Extra, the County Council's monthly digital newsletter.

FC0326/05 Items of Urgent Business

There were none.

Members were asked to stand when they speak if they can.

FC0326/06 Finance

- a) Members authorised bank outgoings for February 2026 retrospectively. The Clerk confirmed she feels the IT supplier provides good value for money.
- b) Members noted the Income & Expenditure report for February 2026.
- c) Members noted the Earmarked Reserves report for February 2026.

FC0326/07 Committee Terms of Reference

Members reviewed the updated Committee Terms of Reference and Delegations. The amendments mainly reflected the proposal that the Events sub-committee reports to Full Council and removed from the Assets, Infrastructure & Events Committee. It was noted that sub should be dropped if not reporting to a committee and that as it involves volunteers, it could be considered a working party. It was

Resolved: That the revised Committee Terms of Reference and Delegations be approved subject to clarification of committee or working party given volunteer involvement.
(Action: Clerk/Admin; publish the updated Terms of Reference; immediately)

FC0326/08 Schedule of Meetings 2026/27

Members considered the proposed Schedule of Council and Committee Meetings (report 49/2526) for the 2026/27 municipal year. The schedule maintains the existing frequency of meetings, including monthly Full Council and Events Sub-Committee meetings, four meetings per year for both the Executive Committee and the Assets & Infrastructure Committee, and one Annual Town Meeting. Members noted that the schedule aligns with statutory requirements, avoids school holiday periods where possible, and ensures effective sequencing of committee and Full Council meetings to support timely decision-making. It was

Resolved: That the Schedule of Council and Committee Meetings for 2026/27 be approved.
(Action: Admin; implement the approved meeting schedule; immediately)

FC0326/09 Councillor Allowance Policy

Members considered a new Councillor Allowance Policy, which sets out the allowance structure, including the standard and special responsibility rates, and clarifies financial treatment and entitlement provisions. Members agreed that the policy accurately reflects the current scheme and incorporates the attendance requirement previously adopted. There was a request to consider adding an appeals process. It was

Resolved: That the new Councillor Allowance Policy be approved with the inclusion of an appeals process.
(Action: Clerk; by 14.04.26)

FC0326/10 Items for Noting

- a) Members noted the Clerk and Mayor updates (reports 50/2526 & 51/2526). The Clerk reported staffing pressures, progress on preparations for upcoming events including the Carnival, plans for mandatory General Data Protection Regulations training, and recent stakeholder engagement. The Mayor highlighted recent civic engagements, including judging the mayoral chain design competition, attending the Scouts pantomime, and a Park Radio interview covering local initiatives. The Clerk advised that following the Sustainability conference, Norfolk Wildlife Trust is being invited to do a review of Council sites to recommend cost-effective and quick win improvements for wildlife.
- b) Members noted the update from the Facilities & Buildings Manager (report 52/2526), including completion of various maintenance works around the town, progress on the skate

park upgrade and tree survey, installation of new planters and bins, and ongoing issues such as lighting repairs, mole activity at the Cemetery, and weather-related constraints.

- c) Members noted the progress on decisions made at the last Meeting of Council. Members were advised that native species have been planted in the muddy patches on the Park near the Mere. There was a request to consider the Nunnery wall area of the Park next and these initiatives will be added to a draft biodiversity plan to complement the Council's biodiversity policy.

(Action: Clerk; by 30.07.26)

Cllr Murphy reported that this meeting would be his last due to changing personal circumstances. He started on Diss Youth Council in 2017 & was co-opted to Diss Town Council in September 2020, one month after he turned 18. He has been Vice Chair of Planning and the Executive Committee & Mayor. He thanked colleagues, believes he is leaving a stronger Council than the one he joined & encouraged members to retain strong working relationships to ensure the best service can be delivered for Diss. Cllr Murphy was thanked on behalf of the Town Council for his service.

FC0326/11 Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the Full Council is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 22nd April 2026 at 7.15pm.

FC0326/12 Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings)

Members considered a resolution under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 and Standing Orders 3d to exclude members of the public and press in order to discuss the next items of business, which were properly considered to be of a confidential nature.

FC0326/13 CADAT Porta Cabin

Members considered confidential report 53/2526, which sets out information regarding the proposed community use of the former Citizens Advice porta cabin, associated financial implications, and the proposed lease arrangements with South Norfolk District. There was discussion regarding the toilet usage survey, it was noted that they tend to be more used by non-residents of Diss and paid for by Diss taxpayers and should be financially supported by the District Council. It was

Resolved:

- a) To approve the proposed Heads of Terms regarding the former CADAT porta cabin subject to negotiation with South Norfolk District Council
- b) To delegate authority to the Town Clerk to work with the Chair of the Executive Committee and Town Mayor to negotiate terms with the District Council
- c) To arrange for footfall counters to be installed on the three entrances to the Mere's Mouth toilets from June 2026 to capture demand data.

(Action: Clerk / RP / DC / FBM; by 31.05.26)

FC0326/14 Honoured Citizen Awards

Members considered three nominations received for the Honoured Citizen awards, which would be presented at the Annual Town Meeting on 29th April. All nominations were very worthy. It was noted that there would be a push to local youth groups from January 2027 to encourage nominations for the Junior Good Citizen award and the Mayors Cadets were appointed last year. The votes were counted and following the Mayor's casting vote due to a tie, it was

Resolved: To invite Iain Sturgeon to the Annual Town Meeting to receive his Honoured Citizen award.

(Action: Clerk; by 29.04.25)

Meeting closed: 20.13.

Councillor D. Craggs
Chair / Town Mayor