

DISS TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the **Town Council** held in the **Ceremony Room** at **Diss Council Offices** on **Wednesday 21st December 2022 at 7.15pm.**

Present: Councillors D. Collins
M. Gingell
S. Kiddie
A. Kitchen
S. Olander (ex-officio)
R. Peaty
L. Sinfield
E. Taylor (ex-officio)
G. Waterman
J. Welch
J. Wooddissee

In attendance: S. Richards (Town Clerk)
S. French (Deputy Town Clerk)
A. Jamieson (Responsible Finance Officer)
District Councillor Minshull

FC1222/01 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from councillors Browne (health) and Robertson (holiday).

FC1222/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

FC1222/03 MINUTES

There was a suggested amendment to the FC minutes – progress report – banking accounts. See report from RFO.

was

RESOLVED: 1. That the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 9th November 2022 with the amendment to item FC1222/10 regarding bank accounts were approved as a true record and were signed by the Town Mayor.

2. That £96,116 of EMR is transferred to Nationwide Savings account ...

(Action: RFO; immediately)

FC1222/04 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Councillors 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 passed on his apologies – is unwell. District councillor Minshull provided an update. Visit from XXXX pre-Covid. Looked over several sites – Mere St, Corn Hall. May – elections. First time everyone who votes in person will have to provide photo ID (driving licence / passport). Apply to SNC to get a photo ID. Register for proxy vote / online postal vote.

Octagon building gets more weekly visits than SNHouse in Long Stratton. Application for new Aldi store received. Will come forward for DTC comments in due course.

Swim pool – swap shop. Take excess food – tins / long life, collect anything.

County / District Councillor Kiddie presented a report on behalf of the County and District Councils. District Councillor Minshull sent his apologies as did District Councillor Wilby. Cllr Kiddie encouraged the Council to respond to the forthcoming public consultation regarding the 50-metre-high pylons that are proposed for installation through Roydon, Bressingham and the Heywood. The height of the pylons was compared to the 70ft tall Roydon church tower.

The Vinces Road junction scheme is complete, has been effective and positive feedback received. Emergency Anglian Water works to repair the leak outside the leisure centre is causing traffic issues all the same. The Sawmills Road flood mitigation works have been pushed back to the end of January with the A1066 resurfacing from the police station to the White Hart public house scheduled for March.

The South Norfolk Hub operating from the Octagon is proving to be popular with more visits daily than South Norfolk House.

The County Council is still working towards its objective of planting a million trees over 5 years. Both the Fair Green Neighbourhood Association and Parish Fields Friends have applied. The bin collections will be as normal tomorrow and a day later next week.

FC1222/05 **ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

It was noted that the Christmas lights on the top of the large tree at the end of Mere Street are out, members were advised that the lights in the Triangle are fed by various businesses who decide on the switch on-off times and that shopping trolleys can be collected from around the town by contacting the relevant supermarket.

(Action: Clerk; immediately)

FC1222/06 **FINANCE**

- a) The bank outgoings for November 2022 were noted.
- b) The Income & Expenditure reports for November 2022 were noted.
- c) The Earmarked Reserves for November 2022 were noted.

FC1222/07 **ELECTRICITY COSTS**

Councillors received a report reference 45/2223 referred regarding the impact of the estimated increases in electricity costs for Town Council sites. It was noted that the prices are currently below the cap of the energy bill release scheme but that this is being reviewed on 31st December and the RFO will monitor closely.

Tenants of Council facilities do pay a percentage towards electricity, but a review is underway to ensure it is reflective of increases. Although the changes won't come into effect until September 2023, it is helpful to consider the likely increases now for budgeting purposes and to give appropriate notice to hirers.

It was suggested that the Council considers minimising the impact of increases by reviewing electricity charges, which are based on actual usage. The difference between the park and Mere's Mouth toilets figures could be explained by the recent upgrade to the latter facility and that these figures are based on an average of months as the meter broke and had to be replaced. Century lighting which only comes on with movement and / or solar panels could be considered as well as replacing the Mere fountain with a more cost efficient and potentially solar powered option given predicted trebling of costs by 2024-25.

The charge at the Cemetery was queried and a detailed audit of costs should explain these costs. It was

RESOLVED:

1. To approve an additional £5K from the precept towards the cost of electricity ensuring a 0% rise in precept per household.

2. To approve virements of up to £10K towards electricity costs from unspent and available budgets where necessary at the end of the financial year.

3. To delegate authority to the Responsible Finance Officer with approval from the Chair of the Executive committee to appoint the best value electricity supplier on a (maximum of) 24-month contract before July 2023.

(Action: RFO / MG; 11.01.23 / 31.03.23 / 30.06.23)

FC1222/08 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

Councillors considered the Councils Annual Community Infrastructure Levy Declaration. It was

RESOLVED: to approve annual report from 1st April to 31st March 2022.

(Action: RFO; immediately)

FC1222/09 BUDGET

Councillors reviewed budget proposals for the financial year 2023-24 for approval at the January meeting of Full Council (report reference 46/2223 referred). It was noted that £1,300 has been proposed for allocation to the Floral Scheme. It was

RESOLVED:

1. To approve a precept request of £10K for specified Earmarked Reserves projects D&E and £19,027 from the anticipated year end surplus as shown in Appendix B.

2. That members determine that the minimum level of General Reserves of 6 months of expenditure is appropriate for the financial year 2023/24.

3. That members approve the proposed income and expenditure budgets shown in Appendix A for 2023/24, which reflects a 0% increase for Diss taxpayers on the current year.

4. To approve the precept demand to South Norfolk Council of £591,978 or £208.59 for Band D householders.

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

(Action: RFO; immediately)

FC1222/10 PROGRESS REPORT

Councillors noted progress on decisions made at the last meeting of Council. It was noted that the Council is no longer paying weekly scaffolding fees on the Cemetery chapel as the costs are included as part of the project.

There was discussion regarding bank accounts (minute ref FC0722/07). It was noted at the December meeting of the Executive committee, that some funds that are not going to be utilised by the Council in the short term should be transferred into a higher interest account. The Internal Controls councillor and RFO have since discussed options and recommend that further funds are transferred to the low-risk Nationwide savings account, which currently generates 2.4% interest. The RFO will also review 3–6-month accounts which are offering around 4% in interest.

The Council has approval from the Lord-Lieutenant's office to appoint a second Mayor's Cadet from the army and the appointment of such will be an item on a forthcoming agenda.

It was noted that the drains were flushed, and County / District councillor Kiddie will follow up on the positioning of a Civil Enforcement Officer in the Octagon.

(Action: RFO / Clerk; by 31.03.23)

FC1222/11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members noted that the next meeting of Full Council is scheduled for Wednesday 11th January 2023 at 7.15pm.

Meeting Closed 8.06pm.

Councillor Taylor
TOWN MAYOR

The meeting was followed with a report by recently co-opted councillor Waterman regarding his thoughts on his first four months at Diss Town Council and festive refreshments and nibbles.