

Diss Town Council

Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the **Town Council** held in the **Council Chamber** at **Diss Corn Hall** on **Wednesday 19th November 2025** at **7.15pm**.

Present: Councillors: D. Craggs (Chair), C. Dente, K. Murphy, J. Robertson (ex-officio), R. Peaty, L. Sinfield, J. Welch.

In attendance: Sarah Villafuerte-Richards (Town Clerk)
Susan Hurst (Responsible Finance Officer)
District Councillor Minshull
3 members of the public

FC1125/01 Apologies

Councillor's Name	Apologies Received	Absent Without Apology	Reason / Approval
S. Browne	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	III health
S. Kiddie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	III health
A. Kitchen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work commitment

FC1125/02 Declarations of Interest

Minute No.	Councillor's Name	Personal/Other Interest	Pecuniary Interest	Reason
FC1125/07b	K. Murphy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of South Norfolk District Council

FC1125/03 Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Full Council meeting on Wednesday 15th October 2025. It was

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on Wednesday 15th October 2025 as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

FC1125/04 Public Participation

District Councillor Minshull passed on County & District councillor Kiddie's apologies due to his wife's ill health. South Norfolk Council has instigated its wet weather protocol and supporting rough sleepers into sheltered accommodation & vulnerable residents. Homelessness in the District usually in single figures and most choose to sleep rough. If they choose to decline help, they are provided with a mobile phone to maintain regular contact. It was noted that someone appeared to be sleeping rough near the Desira garage / river and Cllr Minshull will investigate.

(Action: GM; immediately)

Amount of people using the Swim Centre has far exceeded targets & additional staff have been recruited to offer extra swimming lessons. There have been issues with the filtration system forcing several recent closures. June 2026 will see the introduction of the new food waste scheme collected once a week and not affecting other waste collections.

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment items are being collected for recycling. They've experienced two lorry fires due to lithium batteries being incorrectly disposed of and due to staff training, were able to save the vehicle. They have also launched a Christmas toy appeal with a collection point at the swimming pool.

It was noted that the site McDonalds is interested in developing, has had 3 applications for fast food / coffee shop outlets refused over around 12 years. Five refusal grounds would need to be met including traffic impact, flooding risk (one on stilts was previously accepted), environmental (it is close to a county wildlife site, noise and disturbance (De Lucy's House), and the sequential test as

it is outside development boundary. There is already approval for such a development on the Scole roundabout & the Roy Humphreys airfield site only miles away. Preference would be for a town centre location.

It was acknowledged that Diss is doing above average (compared to other market towns) in terms of empty properties. We have a good selection of independent traders and some churn is normal. They have worked with No. 8 Marketplace to introduce the extra hour free parking scheme and free Saturday parking should be available throughout December.

A question was raised regarding responsibility for dumped tyres. It was noted that the District Council would collect from the highway / public land only and ensure the legitimacy of waste carriers by asking them to provide their name and licence number.

There were 3 other members of the public in attendance, one interested in item 9 on the agenda and will speak at the time.

FC1125/05

Items of Urgent Business

Members were encouraged to speak to people about the councillor vacancy opportunity and encourage a broad range of interest. We have at least two candidates seriously interested currently with co-option scheduled for the February agenda.

(Action: All; immediately)

FC1125/06

Finance

- a) Members noted bank outgoings for October 2025.
- b) Members noted the Income & Expenditure report for October 2025.
- c) Members noted the Earmarked Reserves report for October 2025.
- d) Members noted the reconciliations of income and expenditure with the Council's bank account statements for September & October 2025.

FC1125/07

Budget 2026-27

- a) Members considered a recommendation following an income & pricing structure review (report 31/2526 referred) to inform the draft budget for 2026/27. It was

Resolved: To approve the income increases and the retention of existing prices as outlined in the report above.

(Action: RFO; immediately)

- b) Members considered recommendations relating to maintenance contracts (report 32/2526 referred) to inform the draft budget for 2026/27.

Given the Diss Community Woodland Project's proposal to maintain the heritage gardens, which will be considered by the Assets, Infrastructure & Events committee next week, members were asked to allow for some flexibility regarding the grass cutting recommendation for that site. The RFO summarised the report findings & recommendations and it was noted that the Facilities & Buildings Manager had calculated hours of work against the maintenance tasks and needs to review all sites and tasks with contractor before issue anyway.

(Action: Clerk/Office Administrator; by 26.11.25 / FBM; by 30.01.26)

The Town Council does not currently cover its cost when verge cutting. There were a few concerns regarding the impact of less regular cuts, and it was noted that the District Council is already in the town cutting other verges. It was agreed that signage would be installed on the disabled toilet explaining they are multi-use and the radar lock would be removed. It was

Resolved: 1. To agree to pass back the verges contract to South Norfolk Council, with a reduction in income of £3,983, but an increase in maintenance time for other works to be carried out and that this is monitored.

(Action: RFO; immediately / FBM; 30.09.26)

2. To agree to the annual grounds contract, specifically for Contractor A, which is for a longer period and less monies than in-house & subject to the Diss Community Woodland Project's proposal & not exceeding £14,100.

(Action: FBM; by 28.02.26)

3. To agree the partial closure of the Park Toilets allowing for the use of the disabled toilet only during the winter months 2026, to reduce some costs.

(Action: FBM; by 30.09.26)

FC1125/08

E-Vehicle

Members considered recommendations to purchase an e-vehicle to replace the Ford Ranger for maintaining the Council's sites (report 33/2526 referred). There was a request to consider petrol options following an article on the environmental benefits of e-vehicles and to confirm the battery life for using the pressure washer. It was

Resolved: To note the contents of the report and associated appendices and acquire further information for consideration at a future meeting.

(Action: FBM / Clerk; by 28.02.26)

FC1125/09

Skate Park

Members considered a recommendation to undertake the repairs to the Skate Park (report 34/2526 referred). Members agreed that more positive input from the users would be appreciated particularly regarding fundraising support and it was suggested that the user group would be asked to provide feedback on the draft grant application. It was suggested that the users may require support in forming a constituted group and it would be beneficial in requiring a level of responsibility for reporting between the two parties and providing access to more grants.

The recommended contractor is listed as having repaired / constructed the most Skate Parks on the UK Skatepark Builder Directory, has provided contacts for testimonials and have shown due diligence with response rates and information provided. It was noted that a pump track would attract smaller children and could be positioned in the corner of the Sports Ground next to the existing Park and would cost considerably less than the existing repair quote. It was

Resolved: 1. To appoint contractor providing quote C to undertake the repairs required to the Skate Park at a total cost of £38,664.
2. To submit a National Lottery Community Grant application to support the cost of repairs in liaison with the user group.
3. That the RFO processes a virement of up to £27,797 from the relevant Earmarked Reserves as stated at clause 10 above to Skate Park EMR subject to grant application.
4. That the total cost of the repairs (£38,664) is allocated to Earmarked Reserves Skate Park with the remainder to General Reserves subject to the grant application.
5. To allocate a Skate Park maintenance budget of a minimum of £1k to fund future repairs / maintenance from 2027-28 onwards.

(Action: FBM / RFO; immediately)

FC1125/10

Norwich to Tilbury Examination

Members considered registering for the Norwich to Tilbury Examination to make either a verbal or written representations about the Project. It was

Resolved: to register Diss Town Council for the Norwich to Tilbury Examination to make either a verbal or written representations about the Project.

(Action: Admin Officer; immediately)

FC1125/11

Clerk & Town Mayor Reports

Members received the Clerk & Town Mayor's updates on activities since their last reports. A few comments were received regarding the sound and volunteer feedback to inform the Remembrance event debrief on 24th November. It was noted that the Corn Hall is introducing a lottery as a fundraiser and Park Radio is offering a £500 advertising incentive for the winner of the Lights window dressing competition.

FC1125/12

Progress Report

Members noted progress on decisions made at the last meeting of Council. Replacement lights are being delivered for the Flock and a new method of installation is being trialed.

FC1125/13

Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the Full Council is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 17th December 2025 at 6pm.

Meeting closed:

Councillor D. Craggs
Chair / Town Mayor