

Diss Town Council

Minutes

A minute's silence was observed in memory of former Town Councillor John Robertson, who most recently served as Council Leader and formerly Chair of the Council's Facilities Committee. John sadly passed away earlier this month after many years of dedicated service to the community.

Minutes of the meeting of the **Town Council** held in the **Council Chamber** at **Diss Corn Hall** on **Wednesday 22nd April 2026** at **7.15pm**.

Present: Councillors: D. Craggs (Chair), S. Kiddie, T. Knights, R. Peaty, T Shava, L Sinfield & J. Welch

In attendance: S. Villafuerte-Richards (Town Clerk)
S. Hurst (Responsible Finance Officer)
District Councillors Kiddie & Minshull
4 members of the public

FC0426/01 Apologies

Councillor's Name	Apologies Received	Absent Without Apology	Reason / Approval
C. Dente	☒	☐	Work commitment
A. Kitchen	☒	☐	Centennial presentations / Work commitment

FC0426/02 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

FC0426/03 Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Full Council meeting on Wednesday 18th March 2026.

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meetings of the Full Council held on Wednesday 18th March 2026 as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

FC0426/04 Public Participation

Six members of the public were in attendance.

District Councillor Kiddie provided a verbal update on local government reorganisation (LGR) and circulated a map illustrating the proposed three-unitary model for Norfolk. He advised that East Norfolk is likely to be the poorest area nationally and reported that judicial reviews are considered highly likely. He also referred to emerging rumours regarding a possible Diss bypass and drew comparisons with the Long Stratton bypass, which at £47 million for a 2.9-mile single carriageway equates to approximately £16 million per mile.

District Councillor Minshull reported on the LGR process and election timetable. He advised that councils will have no powers to undertake capital projects from September 2026 and would effectively operate as caretaker councils until the new authorities take over. He explained that elections are expected to take place in May next year, followed by a shadow year, and that the new structure will not include a Mayor. He noted that although Government funding had been promised, mayoral elections were postponed and the associated funding was subsequently withdrawn.

He further reported that the Leisure & Community Centre application had been passed unanimously at the Development Management Committee and is expected to commence following the election period. He advised that Morrisons had declined to sell a parcel of their land for an enhanced bus station and that new designs would need to be produced before September. They will brief Diss Town Council in due course.

Updates were also provided on proposed park upgrades at Diss (Ensign Way) and Roydon (Appletree Lane), noting that the winning designs are available on the Council's website and are

expected to be implemented by the summer. He also confirmed that the details around the new street-cleaning equipment are being finalised.

A member of the public raised matters relating to budget allocations for the Diss Youth & Community Centre, the former Citizens Advice Bureau building, Mere drainage, and the Pavilion. It was noted that funds have been set aside for these projects and it is hoped external funding will cover the majority of costs associated with any Pavilion development linked to the new leisure & community centre. An invitation to the DYCC working group will be extended in due course.

(Action: Clerk; as appropriate)

Martin Wilby (Norfolk County Councillor) submitted a written report for Members' information. He highlighted the establishment of a Norfolk County Council crisis fund to support residents affected by rising heating oil costs, confirmed upcoming household hazardous waste days at recycling centres, and provided an update on consumer safety work relating to lithium-ion batteries and chargers. He also provided an update on the County Council's spring and summer road surface dressing programme.

FC0426/05 Items of Urgent Business

There were none.

FC0426/06 Finance

- a) Members authorised bank outgoings for March 2026 retrospectively.
- b) Members noted the Income & Expenditure report for March 2026.
- c) Members noted the Earmarked Reserves report for March 2026.
- d) Members noted the internal control councillor bank reconciliations for January, February and March 2026.
- e) Members noted the Annual Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) declaration for 2025/26 to be submitted to South Norfolk Council.
- f) Members noted that the Council has entered a three-year fixed-term contract with TUS Energy for water supplied by Waterplus, following a financial comparison review.

FC0426/07 Year End Proposed Transfers

Members considered the report on year-end proposed transfers from current year-end funds to Earmarked Reserves, including the transfer of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds to project-related Earmarked Reserves (report 06/2627).

Key elements highlighted included the proposed allocation of £70,000 towards the DYCC, funding to support replacement toddler play equipment at the Park, and provision for Mere drainage works. Members were advised that the proposals reflected planned future projects and priorities. It was confirmed that, following the proposed transfers, the level of General Reserves would remain sufficient and fully in line with the Council's reserves policy (5 months of precept). It was

Resolved: To approve the movement of funds from current year-end balances to Earmarked Reserves, as set out in the report.

(Action: RFO; Immediately)

FC0426/08 Quarterly Report

Members received and noted the fourth quarterly finance report (reference 07/2627). It was

Resolved: To agree the final balance of the General reserves for the year end transfers as £358,353.

FC0426/09 Virement

Members considered the report requesting approval for the movement by virement of budgeted funds from maintenance staffing to Council Office maintenance, to cover cleaning and garden works (report 08/2627). It was

Resolved: To approve the movement by virement of the budgeted amounts from maintenance staffing of £4,095 to Council Office maintenance for cleaning and £840 for Council Office Garden works.

(Action: RFO; Immediately)

FC0426/10 Shelfanger Road Street Naming

Members considered proposals relating to dedication signage for the Shelfanger Road development following consideration and deferral by the Assets & Infrastructure Committee (report 05/2627). Members discussed the background to the street naming and the potential implications of providing additional contextual signage. Having considered the information and costs outlined, it was

Resolved: Not to proceed with additional dedication signage at this time.

(Action: CW; immediately)

FC0426/11

Street Lighting – Shelfanger Road Development

Members considered a street lighting plan for the new development between Shelfanger Road and Heywood Road. The Clerk provided an update confirming that the developer is not prepared to contribute to ongoing capital replacement or maintenance costs. Members discussed the Council's approach to street lighting, pressures arising from ongoing housing developments, and decisions where street lighting had been declined at Nelson Road and the Prince William estate. It was noted that South Norfolk District Council does not generally adopt street lighting and that responsibility is transferred. Members discussed the preferred approach across the District, including consideration of lighting mounted on buildings to illuminate pedestrian routes.

A member of the public spoke in support of street lighting, raising concerns regarding areas of complete darkness along Shelfanger Road during winter months, traffic speeds, and pedestrian safety. Reference was made to the absence of lighting beyond the Roman Catholic Church, the 30mph limit, and the fact that Norfolk County Council would not be providing street lighting.

Members were advised that Roydon Parish Council will consider installing two lights in their 25% of the development including a re-positioned light nearer the entrance and lighting on Millway Green adjacent to Shelfanger Road. Issues relating to insurance, potential damage, and speed control measures were also discussed.

Following discussion, members agreed that a reduced number of streetlights would provide an appropriate balance between safety and policy considerations, with a focus on lighting routes used by pedestrians. It was

Resolved: To approve the installation of six streetlights for the Shelfanger Road development, with final positions to be agreed by the Clerk and councillors Craggs & Peaty and the streetlighting contractors, prioritising locations nearest footpaths with an update to the streetlighting policy accordingly.

(Action; Clerk & cllrs Craggs and Peaty; by 31.05.26)

FC0426/12

Boardwalk and Gardens

Members considered a proposed volunteer rota to enable longer weekend access to the boardwalk and gardens, following clarification of weekend closure times since the last Assets & Infrastructure Committee meeting. Councillors Craggs, Knights, Sinfield, and Welch confirmed their willingness to participate in the rota, and the signage will be updated accordingly. It was

Resolved: to lock the Council Offices gates at 5.30pm on weekends on a rotational basis.

(Action: CW to create rota / cllrs Craggs, Knights, Sinfield & Welch on initial rota / KJ to update signage; by 05.05.26)

FC0426/13

Member Allowance Policy

Members considered an updated Member Allowance Policy, incorporating an appeals process. It was

Resolved: To approve the updated Member Allowance Policy.

(Action; CW to remove amends & upload to website; immediately)

FC0426/14

Items for Noting

Members noted:

a) The Town Clerk and Town Mayor's updates on activities since their last reports (report 09/2627).

Updates included the successful reopening of the Skate Park, positive feedback on the materials used, user involvement in Carnival and the idea from the young people about arranging graffiti art at

the Skate Park. The Mayor also attended an event in Attleborough, participated in local litter-picking with home-schooled children alongside George, and other civic engagements.

b) The Facilities & Buildings Manager's update on maintenance works undertaken since the last meeting (report 10/2627). The Clerk advised on a possible solar light solution to avoid the issues with Flock lighting. Members also requested other options be considered including toilet block lighting or decorative lighting on the sculpture.

(Action: FBM; by 31.05.26)

c) The Corn Hall Political Hire Policy. It was noted that those politically campaigning on Council-owned land are asked to move.

d) The minutes of the Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring & Review Group meeting held on 25th March 2026, noting that review-related funding cannot currently be made available or ring-fenced.

e) The minutes of the Events Committee meeting held on 14th April 2026, including an update that the cake stall will now take place on 22nd May rather than at the car boot sale.

f) That the Annual Town Meeting will take place on Wednesday 29th April 2026, and that all councillors are expected to attend.

g) The progress report on decisions made at the previous meeting of Council.

FC0426/15

Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the Full Council is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 20th May 2026 at 7.15pm.

Meeting closed: 20.33.

Councillor D. Craggs
Chair / Town Mayor