

Diss Town Council

Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the **Town Council** held in the **Council Chamber** at **Diss Corn Hall** on **Wednesday 24th June 2026** at **7.15pm**.

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

In attendance: S. Villafuerte-Richards (Town Clerk)
District Councillor Kiddie
County Councillor Porteous
13 members of the public

FC0626/01 Apologies

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

FC0626/02 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

FC0626/03 Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Full Council meeting on Wednesday 20th May 2026.

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on Wednesday 20th May 2026 as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

FC0626/04 Public Participation

Thirteen members of the public were in attendance. Approximately half were present in relation to item 7, with the remainder attending for items 8 and 9.

Apologies were reported on behalf of District Councillor Minshull. It was noted that groundworks had commenced at the leisure centre. Members were advised that the county-wide Police and Crime Commissioner election would take place in July, with polling cards being distributed. Works to refurbish Shelfanger Road car park were ongoing, although progress had been impacted by weather conditions.

The Community Action Fund was now open, offering grants of up to £15,000 per project, with a deadline in mid-August. A secondary infrastructure grant was also referenced which may be applicable to the DYCC project. It was noted that the District Council had submitted objections in relation to proposals under the Government review across three areas, which were expected to delay proceedings.

The Clerk advised that apologies had also been received from District Councillor Murphy. County Councillor Porteous provided an update, noting that his report had been tabled and acknowledging his absence from the previous meeting. Updates were primarily in relation to highways matters, including concerns regarding road safety at Roydon (S-bends) and traffic issues at Sunnyside. Engagement had taken place with NCC Highways regarding the potential for a bus route through the new Shelfanger Road estate to alleviate traffic pressures.

Further updates included a proposed dropped kerb at Bombard Copse, subject to budget approval, scheduled road markings at Morrisons and Tesco (June), and at Park Hotel (September), and improvements at Diss Library.

It was noted that the River Waveney Trust had secured funding to raise awareness of water quality and sewage issues, and members of the public were encouraged to engage.

An update was also noted regarding ongoing highways discussions in relation to the Mere.

FC0626/05 Items of Urgent Business

There were none.

FC0626/06

Finance

- a) Members authorised bank outgoings for May 2026 retrospectively.
- b) Members noted the Income & Expenditure report for May 2026.
- c) Members noted the Earmarked Reserves report for May 2026.

FC0626/07

Diss Mere

Members considered report 16/2627 regarding proposals to improve water quality at Diss Mere.

A member of the public outlined the ecological and historical significance of the Mere, including evidence of long-term environmental change and the impact of nutrient loading, sewage runoff, and other pollutants. Members noted that these factors were contributing to blue-green algal blooms, reduced water clarity, and low dissolved oxygen levels.

It was reported that short-term measures, including the potential use of barley straw extract as a preventative treatment, could assist in reducing algal blooms if applied at an appropriate time. Members also noted the importance of establishing baseline data, including dissolved oxygen monitoring, to inform future interventions.

Discussion took place regarding the need for a long-term, ecological approach to restoration, including improved monitoring, water sampling, and consideration of reed beds and wider habitat recovery. It was noted that the River Waveney Trust may be able to support water sampling and ongoing awareness work.

Members considered a range of additional factors affecting the Mere, including drainage inputs, historic contamination within sediments, and current usage. Reference was made to the activities of Diss & District Angling Club and the potential impact of fishing practices and equipment use.

The potential establishment of a dedicated group to coordinate activity was discussed, including the benefits of a structured, longer-term approach to oversight, data management, and project delivery.

Members noted comparable long-term environmental projects and the extended timescales required to achieve meaningful ecological improvement.

- Resolved:**
- 1. To appoint a Mere Working Party comprising members, officers and volunteers. (a sign-up list was circulated).
 - 2. To approve a pilot trial of barley straw extract within the boardwalk area, with expenditure to be allocated from the Earmarked Reserve – Mere Fountain, subject to advice on appropriate timing and approval of costs by the Assets & Infrastructure Committee.
 - 3. To undertake a review of Diss & District Angling Club's use of, and fees for, the Mere.

(Action: Clerk / Office Admin; by 29.07.26)

FC0626/08

Diss Park – Sauna Proposals

Members considered proposals for the provision of a sauna facility within Diss Park or an alternative Council site. The proposals included a temporary, portable sauna operating on a limited basis and a permanent or semi-permanent wellbeing hub incorporating sauna and co-working facilities.

A tabled report was received outlining a potential siting option for a permanent facility on the footprint currently occupied by the pavilion adjacent to the Leisure and Community Centre. This location was noted for its central position, proximity to existing infrastructure, and alignment with health and wellbeing objectives. It was further noted that the proposal would be privately funded, with no capital cost to the Council, and could include wider public realm enhancements and community benefits.

Members discussed the need to engage with the Pavilion Working Group and South Norfolk Council, to consider future provision of pavilion-type facilities, and to undertake further feasibility work including site dimensions and design integration.

Comments raised included concerns regarding safety and environmental impact of temporary wood-fired saunas within the park setting, the potential carbon footprint, and the appropriateness of

allocating parkland for commercial use. Reference was made to previous leisure facilities in the town and the potential to generate income balanced against public use of the park. Consideration was also given to likely demand, the relationship with the forthcoming leisure facility, and the proposed lease terms.

Members acknowledged the potential social and community benefits of such a facility and noted that the Pavilion Working Group had considered options including income-generating uses. It was noted that some members considered the temporary pop-up proposal to be less appropriate for the park setting. It was

Resolved: To endorse further engagement with the permanent sauna provider, the pavilion working group and South Norfolk Council to explore feasibility, siting, design integration and next steps.
(Action: Clerk; to arrange meeting and progress discussions)

FC0626/09

Diss Youth & Community Centre

Members considered report 17/2627 regarding quotations received for architectural services to undertake RIBA Stages 0–2 for the Diss Youth & Community Centre project.

It was noted that two compliant submissions had been received, both offering a comparable scope covering feasibility development, concept design, and appraisal of procurement routes and construction methodologies. The key distinction between the submissions was cost, with Contractor 2 submitting a significantly lower fee whilst meeting the Council's requirements.

Members noted that the purpose of the appointment was to develop existing feasibility work into deliverable proposals to inform future decision-making.

Discussion included reference to the Council's previous decision to pursue demolition and re-building of the facility, with acknowledgement of earlier albeit relatively minimal consultation feedback which had indicated more support for refurbishment. Members considered the longer-term benefits of a new build in the context of asset consolidation and future service provision.

There was a query regarding the file formats provided and the Clerk will request this is included prior to approving the quote.

(Action: Clerk; immediately)

It was

Resolved: To appoint Contractor 2 to undertake RIBA Stages 0–2 for the Diss Youth & Community Centre project at a cost of £15,870, to be allocated from Earmarked Reserves (DYCC).
(Action: Clerk / G&PA; to confirm appointment and progress project work)

FC0626/10

Representatives on Outside Bodies

Members considered the appointment of a fourth representative to the Diss Parochial Charity. It was

Resolved: To appoint Doreen Collins as Diss Town Council's fourth representative on the Diss Parochial Charity.
(Action: CW to update membership on website / inform the DPC; immediately)

FC0626/11

Items for Noting

Members received the following updates and reports:

- a) The Town Clerk's update on activities since the last report (report 18/2627). It was noted that approximately £200 remains in the Floral Diss bank account, which can be transferred to the Town Council and then closed.
(Action: Clerk; immediately)
- b) The Town Mayor's update on activities since the last report (report 19/2627). Cllr Craggs recently attended an event to unveil the newly decorated Mayor's chains, which a 17-year-old student had designed using key Diss sites.
- c) The Facilities & Buildings Manager's update on activities since the last report (report 20/2627)
- d) Members also considered the appointment of two councillor representatives to join the Remembrance Committee. It was

Resolved: to appoint Cllrs Kiddie and Wilson to the Remembrance Committee along with Cllr Craggs.
(Action: CW; to update committee membership; immediately)

- e) The Greater Norwich Local Plan – Call for Sites.
- f) Progress on decisions made at the previous meeting of Council.

FC0626/12

Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the Full Council is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 29th July 2026 at 7.15pm.

Meeting closed: 20.55.

Councillor D. Craggs
Chair / Town Mayor