

Diss Town Council

Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the **Town Council** held in the **Council Chamber** at **Diss Corn Hall** on **Wednesday 20th May 2026** at **7.15pm**.

Present: Councillors: D. Craggs (Chair), C. Dente, S. Kiddie, A. Kitchen, 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 & Murphy
3 members of the public

Outgoing Mayor, Cllr Declan Craggs, opened the meeting and Cllr Dente took the Chair for the first item.

FC0526/01 Election of Town Mayor for the Municipal Year 2026/27

Members considered the election of Town Mayor for the Municipal Year 2026/27. One nomination was received. It was

Resolved: To elect Cllr Declan Craggs as Town Mayor for the Municipal Year 2026/27.

Cllr Craggs signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chairman and thereafter took the Chair.

FC0526/02 Apologies

There were none. It was noted that Cllr Kiddie would be a few minutes late arriving.

FC0526/03 Election of Council Leader for the Municipal Year 2026/27

Members considered the election of the Council Leader for the Municipal Year 2026/27. One nomination was received. It was

Resolved: to elect Cllr Craggs as Council Leader for 2026/27 for the Municipal Year 2026/27 with Cllr Peaty to substitute in Cllr Craggs absence.

FC0526/04 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

FC0526/05 Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Full Council meeting on Wednesday 22nd April 2026.

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meetings of the Full Council held on Wednesday 22nd April 2026 as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

FC0526/06 Public Participation

Five members of the public were in attendance.

A written report was received and circulated prior to the meeting from the newly elected County Councillor, who had sent apologies for being unable to attend. The report outlined the new political composition of Norfolk County Council following the recent elections and provided an initial update on local government reorganisation (LGR), noting that this remained a developing and complex matter. The County Councillor reported that he had begun engaging with County Council departments and officers and highlighted a number of local matters, including ongoing drainage concerns at Orbit House, the solar farm cable planning application affecting Fair Green and the surrounding area, and waste-related issues at St Nicholas Street. Reference was also made to early engagement with community projects within the town.

The Clerk to Diss Parochial Charity addressed Members in relation to Item 13, outlining the requirement for Diss Town Council to appoint elected Trustees on a four-year cycle. It was explained that two vacancies had arisen to serve until 1 August 2028, and that further information and the agenda for the forthcoming Annual General Meeting had been provided to the Clerk. Members were advised that the Charity managed almshouses and administered grants to residents in need, with limited meeting commitments each year.

A representative of the Diss Community Woodland Project addressed Members in relation to Item 16 and requested that the item be taken earlier in the agenda. The representative congratulated the Mayor / Council Leader on his election and encouraged members to focus on delivery of the Council's strategic objectives, particularly in the context of uncertainty arising from local government reorganisation.

Cllr Kiddie and District Cllr Kiddie arrived.

District councillors provided verbal updates on a range of matters, including publicity and grant opportunities via their new Chairman's focus on volunteering, delivery of new food waste bins from July, the availability of District Councillor grant funding and new planning regulations, restricting local authority powers on applications above 150 houses. The development of the former John Grose is expected to start early June and there is no update following the recent local elections regarding local government reorganisation, Apologies were noted from District Councillor Minshall due to a prior engagement.

Members asked for a follow up regarding the positioning of bins at the top of St Nicholas St and it was noted that the works in the B&M car park related to new cameras restricting use to 90 minutes.

FC0526/07 **Items of Urgent Business**
There were none.

- FC0526/08** **Finance**
- a) Members authorised bank outgoings for April 2026 retrospectively.
 - b) Members noted the Income & Expenditure report for April 2026.
 - c) Members noted the Earmarked Reserves report for April 2026.
 - d) Members noted that the six-month fixed-term investment of £500,000 had matured, generating £9,297 in interest, and that the sum had subsequently been reinvested for a further six-month term.
 - e) Members considered the appointment of additional Unity Trust Bank signatories, noting the requirements of the Financial Regulations. It was

Resolved: To appoint Councillors T. Shava and J. Welch as bank signatories on the Unity Trust Bank account.

(Action: RFO; immediately)

This item was brought forward to allow a member of the public to speak.

FC0526/09 **Bombard Copse**
Members considered the draft proposals for Bombard Copse submitted by the Diss Community Woodland Project, including proposals for dropped kerbs on Taylor Road and Denmark Lane to facilitate a more formal shared cycleway and footpath through the site. Members were advised that community engagement formed part of the funding requirements and that further fundraising activities were proposed. Discussion also included the potential requirement for planning permission in respect of the dropped kerbs. It was

Resolved: To support the proposals for Bombard Copse submitted by the Diss Community Woodland Project, including the proposals for dropped kerbs on Taylor Road and Denmark Lane to serve a more formal shared cycleway and footpath through the site.

(Action: CW to send minute to DCWP; immediately)

FC0526/10 **Annual Accounts 2025-26**
Members considered the report on the annual accounts for the financial year ending 31st March 2026. It was

Resolved: To approve the annual accounts for the financial year to 31 March 2026.

(Action: RFO; immediately)

FC0526/11 **Internal Auditor Report (Final 2025-26)**

Members received the Council's Final Internal Audit Report for the financial year ending 31 March 2026 (report reference 12/2627). Members noted the two comments raised by the Internal Auditor and the proposed actions in response. The requirements for Assertion 10 are being met with the whole staff and Councillor data protection training booked for June. It was

Resolved: To approve the proposed actions as appropriate responses to the comments in the Final Internal Audit Report 2025–26.

(Action: RFO; immediately)

FC0526/12

Annual Audit 2025-26

Members considered the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the financial year ending 31 March 2026. It was

Resolved:

- a) To approve the Annual Internal Audit Report of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.
- b) To approve Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (Annual Governance Statement).
- c) To approve Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (Accounting Statements).
- d) To approve the dates for the Notice of Public Rights and publication of the unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

(Action: RFO; immediately)

FC0526/13

Co-Option

Members considered an application for co-option to Diss Town Council. Cllr Shava proposed the applicant who has demonstrated a keenness to attend meetings, having attended Full Council meetings since the start of the year and volunteering as a member of the events committee and taking on tasks. It was

Resolved: To co-opt Paul Wilson as a Member of Diss Town Council.

(Action: PW to complete Register of Interest & Clerk to arrange induction; by 16.06.26)

FC0526/14

Meeting Administration

a) Committee Membership 2026/27 - members reviewed the proposed committee membership arrangements for the Municipal Year 2026/27. Due to the low membership of the Executive committee and overall Council membership, it was proposed that Executive items be referred to Full Council particularly given the next meeting is scheduled for the week after Carnival. Given most finance items have been recently covered and budgeting doesn't start until after the summer, it was

Resolved:

- a) That Councillors Shava & Knights would join the Executive committee.
- b) That Executive items would be deferred to the next Full Council meeting in June.
- c) To approve the committee membership for 2026/27 as presented.

(Action: CW to update membership on website & cancel June Executive meeting; immediately)

b) Delegations to Officers - members reviewed the current delegations to Officers. It was

Resolved: To approve the delegations to Officers as presented.

(Action: CW to update review date; immediately)

FC0526/15

Standing Orders

Members reviewed the Council's Standing Orders. The Clerk advised there have been no changes since last year's review. It was

Resolved: To approve and adopt the Standing Orders as presented.

(Action: CW to upload new version to website; immediately)

FC0526/16

Representatives on Outside Bodies

Members reviewed the appointment of Diss Town Council representatives on outside bodies for the Municipal Year 2026/27. Members noted that Council appointed Trustees to the Diss Parochial Charity don't have to be councillors and a former councillor has agreed to be one of the two. Cllr Welch agreed to consider being the second and a third would be required at a future meeting.

Cllrs Kitchen & Peaty agreed to be the representatives for the Royal British Legion & Museum respectively as they are already members. Cllr Sinfield offered to be the representative for Fair Green Neighbourhood Association and Cllr Dente stepped forwards as the High School representative. It was

Resolved: To update the representatives on outside bodies for 2026/27 accordingly.
(Action: CW to update document accordingly and advise outside bodies; by 31.05.26)

FC0526/17

Items for Noting

Members noted the following items:

- a) The Town Clerk's update on activities since the last report (report reference 13/2627).
- b) The Town Mayor's update on activities since the last report (report reference 14/2627). The update included reference to a recent visit to the community larder at the DYCC & the scheme's benefits of reducing food waste, financially supporting the community and providing a social aspect. He also visited the local Scouts group to help them achieve a badge.
- c) The Facilities & Buildings Manager's update on activities since the last report (report reference 15/2627). It was noted that the Flock lights are now working and that the FBM is exploring alternative lighting solutions including solar in light of the recurring failures.
(Action: FBM; by 30.06.26)
- d) The minutes of the Events Committee meeting held on 12 May 2026.
- e) Progress on decisions made at the previous meeting of Council. Cllr Shava volunteered to be added to gate closing rota.
(Action: CW to update rota; immediately)

FC0526/18

Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the Full Council is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 24th June 2026 at 7.15pm.

Meeting closed: 20.23.

Councillor D. Craggs
Chair / Town Mayor

Post meeting note – an award was presented to Keith Kiddie in recognition of over 15 years of dedicated public service across all three tiers of local government for Diss Town Council, South Norfolk & Broadland Council & Norfolk County Council.