

**DISS TOWN COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES**

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the **Town Council** held in the **Council Chamber** at **Diss Corn Hall** on **Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023** at **7.15pm.**

Present: Councillors D. Collins, S. Kiddie, A. Kitchen, K. Murphy (Chair), S. Olander (ex-officio), R. Peaty, J. Robertson, L. Sinfield, E. Taylor, G. Waterman, J. Welch & J. Wooddissee.

In attendance: Sarah Villafuerte-Richards (Town Clerk/Chief Executive Officer)  
Sonya French (Deputy Town Clerk / Chief Operations Officer)  
Robert Ludkin (Facilities & Buildings Manager)  
1 member of the public

**FC1023/01 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received and accepted from councillors Browne and Gingell.

**FC1023/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

Minute No.	Councillors Name	Personal/Other Interest	Pecuniary Interest	Reason
1023/06	R. Peaty	X		This councillor is the Treasurer and Trustee of Diss Museum.
1023/07	J. Robertson	X		This councillor knows the organiser of firework display.

**FC1023/03 MINUTES**

Members confirmed the minutes of the September meeting. It was

**RESOLVED:** To approve the minutes of the extraordinary meeting of Full Council held on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023 as a true record to be signed by the Town Mayor.

**(Action: Town Clerk; immediately)**

**FC1023/04 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was one member of the public who spoke on item 6. As the contractor who has repaired the paving several times, he explained that any further repair would be temporary given the last repair was less than a year ago. The marble has been dislodged at the front of the Museum due to the tree roots and there would be a reclaim value on the slabs.

**FC1023/05 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business that the Town Mayor or Town Clerk had previously been informed of at least 24 hours before the meeting.

**FC1023/06 MARKET PLACE TREES**

Members considered a recommendation (report reference 32/2324 referred) to remove of the two alder trees on Market Place and replace with a more suitable species for the site conditions. The trees have been in situ for many years but were not the right species of tree to plant on the site due to eventual height and canopy size. The roots have already impacted on the neighbouring Museum building with potential for damage and have caused significant trip hazards due to the lifting of the slabs.

It was confirmed that maintenance of the canopy would not affect root growth, in fact, it would be likely to encourage further root growth. Given the aesthetic value of the trees in this location and appreciation by the public, and commitment of the Council to its biodiversity policy, it was agreed it was essential to ensure that they would be replaced by

a more suitable species which would not cause safety issues and reduce the long-term cost of ongoing maintenance. It was also noted that more than 10 new trees have already been planted in Diss / Roydon as part of the Council's Green Corridors project.

The costs of resurfacing the area with asphalt & chippings were estimated at £11k following receipt of a quote and therefore a more cost-effective alternative would require consideration.

There were suggestions for alternative landscaping options, which would be further investigated given the access requirements and size of space. It was also noted that access to services and potential wayleaves for such should be considered. It was

RESOLVED: 1) To submit a planning application to the Planning Authority for the removal of the two alder trees on the Market Place with replacement of both trees with suitable alternatives at least one on the Market Place in a container and on another site to be agreed.

2) Reconsider re-surfacing / landscaping options given quote received.

**(Action: Town Clerk; immediately / by 31.03.23)**

#### **FC1023/07 FIREWORKS DISPLAY**

Members discussed report reference 33/2324 regarding the fireworks display on Rectory Meadow. It was noted that the event documentation provided by the event organiser is lacking in detail and does not currently provide the safety assurances required for the Town Council to permit the event on its land. It was noted that the Town Council has considerable experience of putting on large safely planned events and is keen to support such by other organisers in the town. Event organisers are moving away from firework displays due to risk, cost, and other factors such as impact on wildlife and pets and the public would have to travel further to see a display in the area.

It was suggested that the Council could consider an indemnity agreement with the event organiser to protect the Council against claims for injury. It was also noted that the lease with the Diss & District Cricket Club may require review. Councillor Waterman requested his vote against the motion was recorded. It was

RESOLVED: to approve the event subject to an indemnity agreement signed by the event organiser and legal costs covered by same.

**(Action: Town Clerk; immediately)**

*Post meeting note – it was confirmed that an indemnity agreement would not exempt the Town Council from its health & safety responsibilities.*

#### **FC1023/08 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Councillors noted that the next meeting of Full Council is scheduled for Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 7.15pm.

#### **FC1023/09 PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS)**

Members considered a resolution under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 and Standing Orders 3d to exclude members of the public and press in order to discuss the following item which is properly considered to be of a confidential nature.

#### **FC1023/10 STAFFING**

Councillors considered a report regarding the Town Council priorities (confidential report reference 34/2324 referred). There were discussions regarding reducing the staff administrative workload of the Carnival and it was agreed that there would be a call out for additional volunteers to join the sub-committee.

Given the national 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day on 6<sup>th</sup> June and the traditional date of Carnival being the following Sunday, it was agreed that alternative dates would be

considered by the sub-committee to provide a gap between both events. It was also agreed that the 6<sup>th</sup> June event would be low key to manage workloads of both events. The Carnival task list would be shared with the sub-committee to determine which tasks would be taken on by them.

There was also a discussion regarding temporary staffing to cover for long term staff sickness. It was agreed that the existing admin staff would be asked if they are prepared to work additional paid hours prior to hiring a temporary member of staff. It was

RESOLVED: 1. To appoint additional members to the Carnival sub-committee and review the task list to reduce the staff administrative workload.

2. To ask administrative staff if they would be prepared to do additional hours to cover some of the shortfall in hours and if not recruit temporary staff with experience.

**(Action: SK / DepTC / TC / immediately)**

Meeting Closed: 21:00 hours.

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Councillor Murphy  
TOWN MAYOR