

## DISS TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the **Town Council** held in the **Council Chamber** at **Diss Corn Hall** on **Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022** at **7.15pm**.

Present: Councillors S. Browne  
D. Collins  
M. Gingell  
A. Kitchen  
S. Kiddie  
K. Murphy  
S. Olander (ex-officio)  
J. Robertson  
E. Taylor (ex-officio)  
J. Welch  
J. Wooddissee

In attendance: S. Richards (Town Clerk)  
S. French (Deputy Town Clerk)  
County / District councillor Kiddie  
4 members of the public

#### **FC0922/01** **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received and accepted from councillor Peaty due to family commitments.

#### **FC0922/02** **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

There were no requests for dispensations.

#### **FC0922/03** **MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2022 were approved as a true record and were signed by the Town Mayor.

#### **FC0922/04** **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were 5 members of the public present. County / District councillor Kiddie spoke on behalf of both councils. Apologies were given on behalf of District councillors Minshull and Wilby. It is too early to pass on any information following the recent change in Prime Minister. The Vines Road scheme has started, which should have positive benefits to help alleviate traffic congestion albeit there have been considerable impacts on traffic through Diss. The energy crisis has led to a national shortage of tarmac and with the former scheme being prioritised, the resurfacing of the A1066 at Roydon has been postponed to the end of the year. Potholes will also take longer to fill. Traffic calming measures are being reviewed for the top of Denmark Hill, which will be financed through councillor Kiddie's member grant. The Diss beacon cycle trail signs have been installed but need reviewing to check they are correct.

**(Action: Clerk to follow up with CV & PC; by 03.11.22)**

The district hub will open in due course in the former Tourist Information Centre. A waste & recycling event will be held on 28<sup>th</sup> September at the DYCC. Unwanted electricals can be dropped off between 9am – 1pm. The County tree planting initiative is active and Fair Green has applied for some trees. There was a request for the drains in Mere Street to be flushed due to unpleasant smells and for one of the new Enforcement Officers to be stationed at the new hub in Diss dedicated to the Waveney Valley area.

**(Action: KK; by 03.11.22)**

There was a query regarding the decision to change the retail space of the former TIC to offices and it was explained that as the building is owned by the District Council, it avoids rental payments and followed leasing issues with the former tenant.

It was noted that there is very little advance warning signage regarding the Vines Road scheme outside of Diss and councillor Kiddie agreed to follow this up.

**(Action: KK; immediately)**

**FC0922/05**     **ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There were none.

**FC0922/06**     **FINANCE**

- a) Members noted bank outgoings for July 2022.
- b) Members received the first quarterly financial report (April – June 2022) including a revised format Income, Expenditure and Earmarked Reserves report (ref 19/2223). Comments were made regarding point 17 in the report regarding interest gained on the savings account and that the further diversification of funds would be prioritised after budgeting.
- c) Members noted the Income & Expenditure report for July 2022. It was noted that most of the Carnival sub-committee queries have been addressed and the final one is being resolved.
- d) Members noted Earmarked Reserved for July 2022.

**FC0922/07**     **CO-OPTION**

Members considered two applications for co-option to Diss Town Council. George Waterman, spoke of his 18 months in Diss, the welcoming vibe from the community and collective achievements namely the litter pick, fridge / freezer and composter projects. He is proud to be Diss' Honoured Citizen, is keen to learn more about how the town functions and coordinate projects born from people with ideas and enthusiasm.

Liz Sinfield has a long association with Diss with her husband's business based here and moved here 2.5 years ago. She also finds the community welcoming, feels the town has a positive vibe and is becoming increasingly prosperous. She wants to work with like-minded people to further improve the town.

The Chair explained that he and the Clerk met with Liz in advance of the meeting to provide more information about the role given she wasn't known to Council. It was

RESOLVED:                      To co-opt George Waterman and Liz Sinfield to Diss Town Council with the declarations of office signed in the presence of the Clerk.

**(Action: Clerk; immediately)**

**FC0922/08**     **CEMETERY BUNGALOW**

Members received report (ref 20/2223). There was a query regarding whether this item should be considered under the public session of the meeting, but it was agreed that it is in the public interest and there are no legal issues or quote comparisons.

There was a view that this property should be sold to raise funds for work on other Council properties particularly given the precept levels of the Town Council. It was noted that precept increases in the last 3 years have been 2.5%, 2% & 0% and that significant increases have been historical.

Members considered selling the plot size that gives best value. A steer from committee was required regarding the option to sell or rent prior to additional valuation quotes being sourced.

There was discussion regarding the lack of rental options in Diss but given the condition of the bungalow, expenditure of around £25k is anticipated on the upgrade and the ongoing costs of maintaining the property will not give a return. It was

RESOLVED: To approve Option 2 to sell the cemetery bungalow seeking comparative valuations with all monies received used to repair, upgrade and future proof existing Council facilities.

**(Action: DepTC; by 17.11.22)**

**FC0922/09**      **MAYOR'S CADETS**

Members considered the appointment of Mayor's Cadets. The Flying Officer for the Air Cadets spoke about the proposal. They now have 33 cadets who age out at 20, they parade Tuesdays & Thursdays and are all volunteers. They provide local children with a whole range of activities including flying, gliding, shooting and BTEC qualifications, which teaches them values.

The scheme would be aimed at the older cadet (16-18) who would apply to become a Mayor's cadet. They would accompany the Mayor to Diss major events such as the Remembrance parade and Christmas Lights Switch-on. It will provide them with an understanding of what the Council does, give them pride and additional responsibility in their role and get them out in the community. The Cadets would be presented with a special badge to denote their role. The Town Council would be able to select their Cadets from several options.

There was also a request for a representative of the Town Council to join their civilian committee where they consider fundraising opportunities, grants and welfare issues. They meet 4 times per year and would need to be DBS checked. It was

RESOLVED: to approve the appointment of Mayor's Cadets.

**(Action: Clerk; by 30.09.22)**

**FC0922/10**      **ITEMS FOR NOTING**

a) Pedestrianisation of Mere Street - members noted an update regarding the pedestrianisation of Mere Street project (report reference 21/2223 referred). The aspiration for the project is to improve the town centre for pedestrians and increased footfall to shops. The scheme was brought forward following the Covid pandemic to entice the public back to the high streets and funding was provided. The scheme aims to remove vehicles as much as possible, enable a café culture and create a more ambient town centre. It allows for deliveries until 11am with adequate loading and unloading bays for deliveries by foot thereafter and DDA compliant parking spaces.

There was discussion regarding the future use of the Kingshead Yard which is in private ownership following Wetherspoon's decision to halt on its development, the possible prescriptive right of way through the Yard to the rear access to properties on Mere St and thereby the opportunity for traders to negotiate same legal right and the rear access for Chapel St traders. It was noted that at the last Infrastructure committee meeting, it was agreed that a meeting would be held with stakeholders and an illustration of the scheme has been requested from the County Council to facilitate such.

**(Action: Clerk; immediately)**

b) Norwich Western Link - Members noted that the pre-planning application consultation regarding the Norwich Western Link project is underway. It was noted that this will complete the outer ring road around Norwich and stop the significant amount of rat running around the airport to the dual carriageway. It was agreed that councillor Olander would submit a response on behalf of the Town Council on the scheme.

**(Action: SO; by 05.10.22)**

- c) Progress report – Members noted the progress on decisions made at the last meeting of Council. It was reported that the item cllr Gingell is dealing with will be considered by the next Executive committee meeting (minute ref FC 0622 /15).

**(Action: MG; by 28.09.22)**

**FC0922/11**    **MEMBER FORUM**

Members considered information or issues relevant to Council from members for brief discussion, action, or inclusion on a future agenda. The environmental health concerns regarding pigeons in Mere St was raised. It was noted that hawk decoys have been successful in scaring the pigeons at the rear of a building in St Nicholas St. Sonar devices are being trialled in Mere St. This would be an item for consideration by the next Infrastructure committee.

**(Action: Clerk; by 20.10.22)**

**FC0922/12**    **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members noted that the next meeting of Full Council is scheduled for Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at 7.15pm

**FC0922/13**    **PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS)**

To consider 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.

**FC0922/14**    **IT INFRASTRUCTURE**

Members considered a confidential report (ref 18/2223) regarding a review of the Council's IT supplier. The retainer package would allow staff to ask for support whenever required rather than being charged each time. Given the increasing IT costs, it was agreed that a costs for same from similarly sized councils staffing / councillor wise would be helpful. A price would be sourced for changing to a Mac operating system rather than Microsoft which seem to have more issues. It was

RESOLVED: to investigate the costs of the Mac operating system, costs of IT support from similarly sized councils (staffing / cllr) and to purchase 14 new Ipad Minis (6<sup>th</sup>) at a total cost of up to £6,500 allocated to General Reserves.

**(Action: DepTC; immediately)**

Meeting Closed: 9.16pm.

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Councillor Taylor  
TOWN MAYOR