

DISS TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES

Before the start of the meeting, a minute's silence was held in memory of Brian Falk who passed away several weeks earlier. Brian was a good servant to the town with his input into planning matters and he was also a major influence in the design of the boardwalk. He will be sorely missed.

Minutes of the meeting of the **Town Council** held in the **Council Chamber** at **Diss Corn Hall** on **Wednesday 17th May 2023** at **7.15pm.**

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

In attendance: S. Villafuerte-Richards (Town Clerk)
S. French (Deputy Town Clerk)
County / District Councillor Kiddie
3 members of the public

FC0523/01 ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR FOR MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023/24

Members considered the election of a Town Mayor for 2023/24. Cllr Murphy spoke of his nomination and said it would be an honour to serve the residents of Diss and that he feels he can fulfil the role. Cllr Browne spoke in support of his nomination as his mentor, as a former Junior Good Citizen recipient and working alongside cllr Murphy on the Diss Youth Council. She spoke of her pride, his genuine candidacy through the district council elections and her belief that he would go to achieve many more things. He also supported cllr Browne at events and has chaired many meetings.

Members then heard from Cllr Taylor who intended to stand as Planning committee Chair only this year but wished to stand again as Town Mayor due to concerns that cllr Murphy was taking on too much as a newly elected District councillor.

The casting vote of the presiding Chairman was queried should the vote be split evenly. This materialised with a 7 / 7 split vote. The existing Town Mayor used his casting vote in favour of cllr Murphy being elected to break the dead lock and given the close result. It was

RESOLVED: to elect councillor Murphy as the Town Mayor for 2023-24 with a declaration of acceptance of office duly signed.

Cllr Murphy took the Chair.

FC0523/02 APOLOGIES
There were none.

FC0523/03 ELECTION OF COUNCIL LEADER

Members considered the election of the Council Leader for 2023-27. Cllr Gingell removed his nomination due to personal reasons and that he couldn't commit to a 4-year term. It was therefore

RESOLVED: to elect councillor Olander as Council Leader for 2023-2027.

FC0523/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Minute No.	Councillors Name	Personal/Other Interest	Pecuniary Interest	Reason
FC0523/09	D. Collins	X		This councillor is a member of the Diss Community Team and a member of the action group appointed to consider the feasibility of an indoor market.
	S. Kiddie			This councillor is a member of the action group appointed to consider the feasibility of an indoor market.
	J. Welch			This councillor is a member of the action group appointed to consider the feasibility of an indoor market.

FC0523/05 MINUTES

It was.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 19th April 2023 approved as a true record subject to a minor tweak to the wording of item FC0423/10 and were signed by the Town Mayor.

FC0523/06 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Councillors considered a resolution under Standing Orders 3d to 3h to suspend the meeting to receive reports from the County and District Councillors, and to hear comments from members of the public on items to be discussed on the agenda.

County / District councillor Kiddie congratulated cllr Murphy on being elected First Citizen of Diss as well as councillor Olander on being elected Council Leader and cllr Taylor for his exemplar action relating to item FC0523/01.

It was noted that district cllr Minshull is at the Roydon Parish Council's annual meeting this evening so cllr Kiddie would speak on behalf of District & County and he thanked everyone for their support through the elections.

The cabinet posts will be decided soon, and the district council moves up to the Horizon centre following the bank holiday weekend with their hub as the former tourist information office in Diss. All the major planned roadworks have been completed albeit utilities works will continue. The pothole repairs requested at Walcot Green due to the pressure on the A1066 will be finished today with the road calming measures at the top of Denmark Hill scheduled soon. He fully accepted there has been disruption but that funds have been spent on improving the infrastructure in Diss. County & District Councillor grants are now available to local groups and an interactive whiteboard was awarded to the Cadets last year.

An update was requested on the railway through road, and it has been reported via FixMyStreet that the drain grids are sinking into the road outside the Park hotel and opposite Diss High School on Walcot Road. Other matters raised included the use of the new hub in Diss to facilitate meetings, working together with the Town Council on highways schemes prior to authorisation to help ease traffic flow, roadside charging points and the availability of 5G as in other market towns.

(Action: KK; by 08.06.23)

FC0523/07 **ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

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

FC0523/08 **FINANCE**

Councillors noted:

- a) the bank outgoings for April 2023.
- b) the summary of Income & Expenditure for April 2023.
- c) the Earmarked Reserves for April 2023.
- d) Members received the fourth quarterly report up to the 31st March 2023 and considered a recommendation no to transfer funds from General Reserves to Earmarked Reserves (report reference 01/2324 referred). The COO was thanked for her efforts to reduce the deficit and increase the surplus following a review of the Sports Ground site. It was

RESOLVED:

- 1) To agree a nil transfer from the general reserve to Earmarked Reserves following the completion of the 2022-23 financial year.
- 2) To temporarily suspend financial regulations to allow transfer between Council bank accounts of more than the current limit of the precept and for the purpose of opening a new Lloyds bank account.
- 3) Not to permit the Facilities and Buildings Supervisor to authorise official orders in the Facilities and Buildings Manager's absence due to relatively short length of service.

Item 14 was brought forward to allow a member of the public to speak on it.

FC0523/09 **MARKET**

Councillors considered the feasibility of supporting the use of the former Beales building for an indoor market (report ref 02/2324 referred). One member of the public spoke regarding the poll undertaken at the Fair Green Fayre in favour of a Diss Community Hub. He helped to run the Farmer's market support group and would be keen to assist along with the Diss Community Team who originally proposed the initiative and a representative from DesignerMakers21. He also spoke of the likely interest in a repair café as part of a future offering in the former Beales building.

Cllr Waterman spoke of the community spirit shown at the fayre, which he helped to facilitate, the association made with the community fridge and the opportunity for smaller organisations who don't have the funds for premises to demonstrate what they can do. He doesn't believe the increased competition would negatively affect existing traders but encourage footfall.

A second member of the public spoke regarding the opportunity of a community hub concept to provide London commuters with desk space and social interaction with like-minded people since working from home has increased and to overcome isolation problems particularly amongst single people - in turn generating new customers for local businesses.

Operationally, it was felt that a new member of staff on 24 hours per week at a cost of approximately £26k would be required to facilitate the indoor market. Timing wise, it was deemed premature to the Council's strategic plan review, but members felt it could be looked at as a medium-long term project. It was noted that the proposed fee reflected an indoor premium price and there was a query regarding liability for rent beyond the initial six-month term. Members were updated on business rates relief suggesting that the annual fee may be as little as £1k prior to discussion on possible funding opportunities. In principle, councillors like the concept but have concerns around resources both staff and finances to deliver even in the short-term. It was

RESOLVED: To request that the Diss Community Team / Heritage Triangle Trust come forward with firmed up proposals / business case regarding the trialling of an indoor market including consideration of staffing resource requirements.

(Action: Clerk; immediately)

FC0523/10 MEETING ADMINISTRATION

a) Councillors reviewed the proposed committee membership for 2023/24. It was suggested that the committee membership sizes could be reduced as between 5 & 6 is seen as the optimum number for such. It was noted that all councillors can attend all meetings but only members have voting rights. Councillors were invited again to provide their preferences, resulting in all having their first and second choices. It was

RESOLVED: to adopt the new committee membership.

(Action: Clerk to distribute revised committee membership to all; immediately)

b) Members reviewed the minor amends to the committee terms of reference. It was noted that only one vote is available to the Town Council for the Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan sub-group. It was

RESOLVED: to adopt the committee terms of reference subject to minor amends.

(Action: Clerk; immediately)

c) Councillors reviewed the delegations to Officers without change. It was

RESOLVED: to approve the delegations to Officers without change.

FC0523/11 GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

Councillors considered the adoption of the General Power of Competence following the uncontested election and with a CiLCA qualified Clerk. It was

RESOLVED: to adopt the General Power of Competence.

(Action: Clerk; immediately)

FC0523/12 DISS & DISTRICT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Councillors considered continuing to appoint councillors Olander and Taylor as Diss Town Council's representatives on the Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and considered a third representative. It was

RESOLVED: to continue to appoint councillors Olander and Taylor as Diss Town Council's representatives on the Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group with cllr Peaty appointed as the substitute.

(Action: Clerk; immediately)

FC0523/13 REPRESENTATIVE ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillors considered Diss Town Council representatives on Outside Bodies. Cllr Waterman was willing to be appointed to the Fair Green Neighbourhood Association and it was noted that he doesn't have to attend every meeting and his support is appreciated by the FGNA representative in attendance. It was

RESOLVED: to approve the representatives on outside bodies as amended.

(Action: Clerk; immediately)

FC0523/14 AWARD SCHEMES

a) Councillors considered an application for Quality status to the Local Council Award Scheme. It was

RESOLVED: That the Clerk would apply for Quality status of the Local Council Award Scheme with a plan for the Gold status to follow.

(Action: Clerk; by 07.09.23)

- b) Members noted that the Green Flag award will be considered by the Action Group working on the Park Enhancement project and reported to the Facilities committee.
(Action: Park Enhancement Action Group; by 13.07.23)

FC0523/15 **PROGRESS REPORT**

Councillors noted the progress on decisions made at the last meeting of Council.

FC0523/16 **MEMBER FORUM**

Councillors considered information or issues relevant to Council from members for brief discussion, action, or inclusion on future agendas.

1. Cllr Waterman advised that only around half of his litter pickers were returned in working order following the Coronation event. It was noted that he had spoken to a representative of the army / air cadets who volunteered their services but it was not known what happened. It was agreed that additional replacement litter pickers should be purchased prior to the June litter pick.

(Action: GW / Clerk; immediately)

2. Cllr Waterman would provide dates to the Action Group on the Park enhancement project post Carnival event for a presentation on potential options for outside space design at his workplace.

(Action: GW; post 11.06.23)

3. Cllr Welch reported that he was disappointed at the number of councillors who did not attend the Coronation event without good reason.

4. Other items included contacting the office to resolve any IT issues, saving agenda packs to the IPad should the wifi not be available and ensuring that the St Georges flag is flying in 2024.

(Action: Buildings & Facilities Team; as per flag flying schedule)

FC0523/17 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Councillors noted that the next meeting of Town Council is scheduled for Wednesday 14th June 2023 at 7.15pm.

Meeting Closed 9.29pm.

Councillor Murphy
TOWN MAYOR