

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

Minutes of the meeting of the **Town Council** held in the **Council Chamber** at **Diss Corn Hall** on **Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022** at **7.15pm.**

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

In attendance: S. Richards (Town Clerk)  
S. French (Deputy Town Clerk)  
County / District Councillor Kiddie  
District Councillor Minshull  
1 member of the press

**FC1122/01 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Sinfield (vacation).

**FC1122/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

There were none.

*It was announced that the representative from the Diss Express had asked the Clerk to audio record the meeting, which is permissible under The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, allowing members of the public to film or record during a committee meeting.*

**FC1122/03 MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022 were approved as a true record and were signed by the Town Mayor.

**FC1122/04 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, on behalf of the Police, and to hear comments from members of the public on items to be discussed on the agenda.

There were three members of the public and press present.

County / District Councillor Kiddie updated members that the Vinces Road junction improvement scheme should now be completed by early December. This is primarily due to resurfacing challenges and weather conditions. This means that the works due to start to resolve the drainage issues on the A1066 will be postponed until the New Year to provide a break in the lead up to Christmas. The improvements to the Public Right of Way, Causeway, are scheduled for early December and the resurfacing of the A1066 in Roydon in March 2023 to get the funds spent before the end of the financial year.

Cllr Kiddie has provided small grants to support the Parish Fields walk by way of an oak tree planted from an acorn found on Delville wood, which was one of the sites in the battle of the Somme over 100 years ago and honeysuckle plants for the nature corridor and supported Roydon Parish Council in providing leaflets about footpath network.

He was on the selection panel at Diss High School for a new Headteacher and they now have a very good candidate due to replace the current incumbent at the end of the academic year. Diss Junior School has been recently graded good.

Cllr Kiddie has appraised MP Richard Bacon regarding the local views on the National Grid's consultation for The East Anglia Green Energy Enablement. It was noted that the proposed pylons would be twice as high as Roydon church.

The Boundary Commission has announced constituency changes, which would mean Diss would be part of the Waveney Valley CC and the first time a constituency stretches across county boundaries. It is not yet clear what the impacts will be, and Cllr Kiddie will be at a meeting regarding the proposal next week.

Questions to cllr Kiddie included addressing the planters along the Causeway during the scheduled project and regarding Norfolk County Council's lighting replacement plan. It was also noted that the traffic-controlled beacon outside Hughes on the A1066 would be replaced with a standard belisha beacon next time it comes up for renewal.

District Councillor Minshull spoke regarding the opening of the District Council's enquiry service at the Octagon. It was noted that more people are accessing this service compared to the previous enquiry office at Long Stratton. Members of the public can ask questions and make appointment to see specific Officers. South Norfolk House closed on Friday and will be made safe. The savings from this project will be passed on to District residents enabling a 0% precept increase to help with the cost-of-living crisis.

SNC has introduced a new waste app which notifies you which colour bin you should put out and when with a recycling game for younger people.

The Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan received very favourable comments when it was passed through with minor amendments at the District's Cabinet meeting. John Fuller complimented everyone that worked on a model complex plan which straddles two counties and incorporates 7 parishes.

Cllr Minshull has spent all his grant funding. The Fair Green Neighbourhood Association received £500 towards a petanque pitch, £2.5k has funded an electronic whiteboard for the army cadets and £300 towards a map of local independent town traders.

The district is home to the largest population of Ukrainian refugees with over 100 Ukrainian families in the Diss area, several of whom are performing opera at the Christmas Lights Switch-On event to thank the community for the support.

It was noted that there are now additional Civil Enforcement Officers employed by the Norfolk Parking Partnership who are undergoing training. They will be enforcing in Diss during evenings and weekends and will be taken a balanced approach coming at different times of the day. The illegal parking up Market Hill and St Nicholas St is particularly damaging to the pavements causing trip hazards and, in some cases, causing difficult driving conditions.

Mr Minshull also spoke about the requirement for Town and Parish Councils to support the provision of parish clocks. It was noted that St Mary's church had been asked to investigate costs and present to council for consideration.

*Post meeting note – Town and Parish Councils have a power to provide and maintain public clocks but not a duty.*

**FC1122/05**    **ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business discussed.

**FC1122/06**    **FINANCE**

- a) The bank outgoings for August – October 2022 were noted.
- b) The Income & Expenditure reports for August – October 2022 were noted.
- c) The Earmarked Reserves for August – October 2022 were noted.
- d) The reconciliations of income and expenditure with the Council's bank account statements for July – August 2022 were noted.
- e) It was noted that the credit card limit was increased to £6k temporarily for the sole purchase of the iPads with the permission of the Chair of the Executive committee as it required immediate payment.

**FC1122/07**    **INTERNAL AUDIT**

Councillors received the internal audit report and considered proposed actions relating to the auditor's recommendations (report reference 29/2223 referred). The Responsible Finance Officer was thanked for a clear and concise report with proposed actions to the 7 recommendations from the auditor. It was noted that the website had been updated but only 1 grant has been allocated this financial year so far. It was

RESOLVED:

1. To note the contents of the internal interim audit report 2022/23 (Appendix A).
2. To approve proposed actions as appropriate responses to the internal audit report's recommendations adding deadline dates where not stated.
3. To consider and note the annual audit letter (Appendix B).

**(Action: RFO; as per dates in report)**

**FC1122/08**    **STANDING ORDERS**

Councillors considered proposed amendments to the Council's Standing Orders as recommended by the Executive committee. There was discussion regarding the length of the public session for District and Town Councils. It was noted that the Community Governance course being undertaken by the Deputy Town Clerk recommended more public speaking and that the proposed increases better reflect the actual length of time the public are permitted to speak at meetings. It was

RESOLVED: to approve the proposed amendments to the Council's Standing Orders.

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

**FC1122/09**    **CIVILITY & RESPECT PLEDGE**

Councillors considered signing up to the Civility & Respect Pledge. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) are supporting the Pledge demonstrating its importance in the sector. There was discussion around the lack of powers Council has to enforce unwanted behaviours but that the new model Code of Conduct is a step forward in addressing this and NALC and SLCC are lobbying for change in legislation to support the Pledge including sanctions for elected members where appropriate.

It was also noted that the Council is already carrying out many of the recommendations in the statements and that the training offered could be undertaken by one member and shared with others to keep any costs down, albeit they are already offered at a reduced rate. It was agreed that this would be a helpful reminder of the standards particularly given bullying & harassment happens a lot in other councils. It was

RESOLVED: to sign up to the Civility & Respect Pledge.

**(Action: Clerk; immediately)**

**FC1122/10**    **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

Councillors considered the number of full council meetings for 2023/24 (report reference 30/2223 referred). It was noted that a new proposed meeting schedule would be prepared for consideration at the April meeting of Full Council and that the Infrastructure committee meetings would normally be spaced out more, but the current schedule reflected a postponement. It was

RESOLVED: To continue to schedule 9 Full Council meetings per Mayoral year.

**(Action: Clerk; by 30.04.22)**

**FC1122/11**    **INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS**

Councillors considered whether to continue with informal meetings of councillors and the format they should take. It was noted that full attendance would be unlikely and that these meetings are optional. The objective of the meetings was to provide an opportunity to get to know other councillors and / or Officers better and to share experiences and knowledge to benefit the Council. Members discussed the formality of the meetings including the requirement for an agenda and the venue. It was reinforced that any decisions for consideration would be discussed with the appropriate Chair / Clerk for inclusion on an appropriate agenda and that informally meeting is not considered unlawful. It was agreed that the meetings would be more productive in person and that they should be called when required. It was

RESOLVED: to continue with optional informal meetings of councillors and officers in person as and when needed to share ideas and explore opportunities.

**(Action: Clerk; when necessary)**

**FC1122/12**    **ITEMS FOR NOTING**

- a) Events – members noted that the Remembrance Day parade, wreath laying ceremony and church service will take place from 2pm on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2022 and a two-minute silence at 11am on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November. It was also noted that the Christmas Lights Switch-on event takes place on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2022 and that tickets for the Town Mayor’s carol concert on 13<sup>th</sup> December are available from the council offices – donations are welcome if you can’t attend.
- b) Progress Report – members noted progress on decisions made at the last meeting of Council.

**FC1122/13**    **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members noted that the next meeting of Full Council is scheduled for Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022 at 7.15pm.

*Post meeting note – this meeting will take place in the Ceremony room at the Council Offices due to the Council chamber being in use by the Corn Hall pantomime cast.*

**FC1122/14**    **PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS)**

Councillors 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.

**FC1122/15**    **STAFFING**

Councillors considered a confidential report (ref 31/2223 referred) proposing adjustments to the staffing restructure. A feasibility study has been undertaken regarding the requirement for the administrative apprentice. Given the significant time commitment needed to support this post, Council was advised to postpone consideration of the role. It was agreed that a similar role on the outdoor team should be considered during the annual review.

It was

RESOLVED:

1. To postpone consideration of the post of administrative apprentice and consider a Facilities & Buildings apprentice post as part of the 12-month review in September.
2. To increase the Deputy Town Clerk / COO hours from 30 to 34 hours with immediate effect.
3. To increase the Finance Assistant hours from 22 to 24 hours with immediate effect.

**(Action: Facilities & Buildings Manager / DepTC / RFO; Sept 2023 / immediately)**

Meeting Closed 8.46pm.

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Councillor Taylor  
TOWN MAYOR