

**DISS TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES**

Minutes of the meeting of the **Facilities Committee** held in the **Council Chamber** at **Diss Corn Hall** on **Wednesday 14th February 2024** at 7.15pm.

Present: Councillors: K. Murphy (Ex-officio)
S. Olander
J. Robertson (Chair)
L. Sinfield
J. Welch

In attendance: Cllr E Taylor
Sarah Villafuerte-Richards (Clerk / Chief Executive Officer)
Robert Ludkin (Facilities & Buildings Manager)
3 members of the public

F0224/01 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from cllrs Browne (unwell), Collins (visiting family) & Kiddie (unwell).

F0224/02 NOMINATION OF SUBSTITUTE REPRESENTATIVES

Councillor Taylor substituted for councillor Browne.

F0224/03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Minute No.	Councillors Name	Personal/Other Interest	Pecuniary Interest	Reason
F0224/09	J. Robertson	X		This councillor is a member of the Diss Parochial Charity alongside the wife of the late cllr Grace.
F0224/11	K. Murphy	X		This councillor is a member of the District's Development Management Committee.

F0224/04 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Councillors confirmed as a true record, the minutes of the Facilities Committee. It was

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Facilities Committee held on 22nd November 2023 were confirmed as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

F0224/05 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were 3 members of the public present. All members wished to speak during the relevant agenda items.

F0224/06 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

F0224/07 GREEN CORRIDOR RECTORY MEADOW

Members considered recommendations for improving the ecological connectivity of Rectory Meadow via the implementation of a 'Green Corridor'. It was noted that there is a triangular piece of land to the northeast of the site by the dog waste bin that is owned by the District Council and not Diss Town Council.

It was reiterated that fencing, hedging, and large trees were previously removed due to anti-social behaviour and that near the garages litter accumulates, and it is difficult to retrieve due to hedging.

There was discussion regarding the ongoing maintenance of the hedging which has primarily fallen to the Town Council to date particularly given the staff reduction on the outdoor team. It was suggested that a Friends of Rectory Meadow Group could be established in a similar way to the management of Quaker Wood and that the Veterans Association may wish to get involved.

Members also discussed the state of Skelton Road on its approach to the site which will be raised with Saffron Housing when the Chair of Infrastructure and Clerk meet with them next month.

It was also suggested that the proposal may be able to take advantage of the County Council's 1 million trees for Norfolk funding scheme given the extent of the proposed planting and quotation received.

The draft proposals were welcomed, and former councillor Waterman was thanked for his work to date.

It was agreed that another meeting of the Green Corridors Network Group would be scheduled alongside relevant stakeholders including District and County Councils. Saffron Housing and the Police to discuss the impact of the proposals and cost of ongoing maintenance.

It was noted that the Community Infrastructure Levy funds could assist with initial planting costs but not ongoing maintenance. It was

RESOLVED: That Councillor Taylor and the Clerk with join with the Green Corridors Network Group to liaise with stakeholders (NCC / SNC / Saffron / Police) regarding the proposals and to cost the ongoing maintenance.

(Action: ET / Clerk; by 31.03.24)

F0224/08 **DISS PARK**

Members received an update (report 50/2324 referred) regarding the beacon extension project and the 80th anniversary of D-Day event in Diss Park. Life size visuals of the beacon panels were shown alongside seat ends. It was

RESOLVED: To approve the plans for the beacon extension project and 80th anniversary of D-Day event in Diss Park.

(Action: Clerk; immediately)

F0224/09 **DISS CEMETERY**

Members considered a request for a plaque in the Cemetery Chapel to acknowledge considerable length of former councillor service (report 51/2324 referred). It was

RESOLVED: That Diss Town Council commission the installation of an individual plaque for the late and former councillor Grace to include an inscription with the Council's logo at a cost of £350 excluding VAT allocated to Cemetery Chapels R&R.

(Action: Clerk; immediately)

F0224/10 **EVENTS**

Members considered recommendations to financial support the infrastructure costs of the Carnival and Christmas Lights Switch-on events (report 52/2324 referred). It was felt that the Town Council should contribute more to help cover event infrastructure costs. It was noted that both events are well funded by sponsors and stallage income and that the events often retain a surplus at the end of the year to carry over to the next year. However, it was noted

that this does rely on sponsors supporting the event and doesn't take account of escalating infrastructure costs which typically cost around £4.5k.

There was discussion regarding the scale of the two events and differences with expenditure and income and looking at the possibility of increasing the annual budget in line with inflation.

It was agreed that a balance should be maintained between the requirement to secure external funding, and for the committees to know that in the event external funding reduces, the Town Council can financially support these key town events.

Members discussed setting up an events sub-committee to have oversight over all events and a funding mechanism where each event financially supports the other. It was

RESOLVED: 1. To allow an additional £1,500 in the budget for the Carnival event to cover the increased infrastructure costs with a view to a future funding request to be presented to the April Full Council should it be required.

2. To consider a funding request for the Christmas Lights Switch-on event in September should it be required.

(Action: RFO / sub-committees; immediately / April & September)

F0224/11 **MARKET PLACE**

Members considered a recommendation for replacing the trees and bench outside the Museum (report 53/2324 referred). Given that all alternatives have been considered including an independent quotation of £20k to root barrier protect the large tree and replanting elsewhere, discussion turned to a suitable replacement.

Members were in favour of the proposal to install a large, recycled plastic planter with integrated seating. The 1.25m² size is designed for trees due to its deeper base. There was discussion regarding a suitable tree which should be mature for instant impact, have seasonal interest all year around and a canopy creating shade above the seating but allowing flowers and plants to grow in the container beneath also.

A further suggestion was to take some cuttings from the alder tree for propagation and planting on another more suitable site.

Given the requirement to identify a tree to meet several criteria, it was agreed that a visit to a wholesaler would be helpful.

The paving would be re-set at a cost of approximately £1.5k post removal and the planter positioned as close to the original location as possible whilst avoiding any gradient and away from possible vehicular damage.

With one abstention from cllr Murphy, it was

RESOLVED: a) To purchase the 1.25m² recycled plastic planter with four seats to include a 7-day watering system at a cost of £2,235 excluding delivery allocated to Earmarked Reserves Community Infrastructure Levy.

b) To purchase a suitable mature shady tree for the planter along with a colourful floral display around it at a cost to be confirmed allocated to Earmarked Reserves Community Infrastructure Levy.

(Action: Clerk / FBM; by end June)

F0224/12 **PROGRESS REPORT**

Members noted progress on decisions made at the last meeting of this committee.

F0224/13 **MEMBERS FORUM**

Members considered information or issues relevant to this committee from members for brief discussion, action, or inclusion on a future agenda. It was suggested that the Facilities & Buildings Management team could be more simply described as the Asset Management Team like at the District Council and a stakeholder meeting regarding the Mere is being scheduled for March.

(Action: Clerk / FBM; by end Feb)

F0224/14 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Members noted that the next meeting of this committee is scheduled for 22nd May 2024.

Meeting closed at: 8.40pm.

Chairman: Councillor Robertson