

Diss Town Council

Minutes

Before the meeting commenced, the Town Mayor read a statement explaining that the meeting was being audio recorded and that approved transcription and artificial intelligence tools might be used to assist officers in preparing the draft minutes. It was confirmed that all resulting content would be checked by officers and would not replace Council decision-making.

Minutes of the meeting of the **Town Council** held in the **Council Chamber** at **Diss Corn Hall** on **Wednesday 23rd September 2026** at **7.15pm**.

Present: Councillors D. Craggs (Chair), S. Kiddie, A. Kitchen, T. Knights, R. Peaty, T. Shava, L. Sinfield, J. Welch, P. Wilson

In attendance: S. Villafuerte-Richards (Town Clerk)
County Councillor Porteous
District Councillors Kiddie, Minshull & Murphy
11 members of the public

FC0926/01 Apologies

Councillor's Name	Apologies Received	Absent Without Apology	Reason / Approval
C. Dente	☒	☐	Unwell

FC0926/02 Declarations of Interest

Minute No.	Councillor's Name	Personal/Other Interest	Pecuniary Interest	Reason
FC0926/12	L Sinfield A Kitchen	☒	☐	These members are linked to the Diss & District Rotary Club

FC0926/03 Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Full Council meeting on Wednesday 29th July 2026.

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on Wednesday 29th July 2026 as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

FC0926/04 Public Participation

Fourteen members of the public were in attendance.

Members received a written report from County Councillor Will Porteous. Updates included highways matters, drainage and flooding concerns, road safety improvements, town centre street cleaning initiatives, local government reorganisation, planning reforms, wastewater infrastructure, environmental matters and other Norfolk County Council activities. Members noted ongoing discussions regarding drainage issues affecting Mere Street and the Mere, together with proposed highway improvements elsewhere in Diss. It was noted that a grant fund remains available to support town and parish councils with street cleaning equipment.

District Councillors provided updates on South Norfolk Council matters, including the May 2027 district council elections, progress on the Diss Bus Station project, improvements to local play areas, leisure centre works, community grant funding opportunities and other district-wide initiatives.

One member of the public raised concerns regarding the general cleanliness of the town centre and the condition of some buildings. The Town Mayor outlined actions being taken by the Town Council and its partners, including enhanced cleansing measures, discussions regarding additional street cleaning equipment, engagement with local businesses and landlords, and community-led initiatives such as litter picks and town tidy events.

Members of the public also spoke in support of the proposed tree planting project, the Community Climate Action Plan and the proposed tactile 3D map of Diss. Information was provided regarding community engagement opportunities associated with those projects.

Two members of the public registered their interest to speak on Items 8b, 11 and 12 and addressed the Council during consideration of those agenda items.

FC0926/05 Items of Urgent Business

There were none.

FC0926/06 Finance

- a) Members authorised bank outgoings for July & August 2026 retrospectively.
- b) Members noted the Income & Expenditure report for July & August 2026.
- c) Members noted the Earmarked Reserves report for July & August 2026.
- d) Members considered the appointment of the Council's Internal Auditor for the 2026/27 financial year. It was

Resolved: To appoint Victoria Waples as the Council's Internal Auditor for the 2026/27 financial year.

- e) Members received the external auditor's report and certificate for the Council's 2025/26 accounts and noted that the notice of conclusion of audit was published on 16 September 2026. The external auditor drew attention to website accessibility compliance issues, which have since been addressed by the Council. Members thanked the RFO for their work in relation to the audit.

FC0926/07 Co-Option

Members considered the application received from Dr Stephen Willoughby for co-option to Diss Town Council. Dr Willoughby addressed the Council and outlined his involvement within the community, including establishing a Neighbourhood Watch scheme, engaging with local residents and supporting community wellbeing initiatives. Members noted his desire to contribute to local issues affecting Diss and strengthen community connections. Following consideration of the application, it was

Resolved: To co-opt Dr Stephen Willoughby as a member of Diss Town Council with immediate effect.

(Action: Clerk, Administrator; immediately)

FC0926/08 Community Grant Scheme (Small)

- a) Members considered report 30&31/2627 and the application from DISScovered for funding towards an accessible community crafting space. Members noted the Grant Panel's recommendation and the Town Clerk's advice that the proposed expenditure was eligible under the Council's Grant Policy. Members also noted that the applicant may be eligible for additional external funding through South Norfolk Council's Winter Pressures Grant Scheme. It was

Resolved: To award a grant of up to £1,000 to DISScovered to support its community crafting project, with the award reduced by any external funding secured towards the heaters.

(Action: Clerk; immediately)

County councillor Porteous left the meeting.

- b) Members considered report 30&31/2627 and the application from Trees for Diss and District, operating under the umbrella of the Diss Community Woodland Project. Members noted the Grant Panel's recommendation and received information regarding the proposed tree planting initiative, including measures to increase tree canopy cover within Diss, encourage community involvement and support biodiversity. Members agreed that the venue cost included within the application should instead be directed towards additional tree planting within Diss. It was

Resolved: To award a grant of £530 to the Diss Community Woodland Project in support of the Diss and District Tree Planting Project, subject to the grant funding being used only for trees planted within Diss & the reallocation of the venue costs to go towards additional trees.

(Action: Clerk; immediately)

FC0926/09**Tree Works**

Members considered report 32/2627 and the tender evaluation for the approved 2026 tree works programme. Members noted that all submissions had been assessed against compliance, competence, health and safety arrangements, supporting documentation and value for money. Members further noted that Contractor 2 had achieved the highest overall evaluation score and submitted the lowest tendered cost for the reviewed schedule of works. It was

Resolved: To appoint Contractor 2 to undertake the Council's 2026 tree works at a cost of £7,955 plus VAT, subject to completion of all necessary contractual documentation and confirmation of the final schedule of works.

(Action: Clerk; Facilities & Buildings Manager; immediately)

FC0926/10**Youth Provision**

a) Members considered report 33/2627 regarding the quotations received for the delivery of additional youth provision in Diss. Members noted the outcome of the tender evaluation, including the proposed delivery arrangements, anticipated outcomes and overall value for money. It was confirmed that the current youth provider in the town has been consulted throughout and supports the additional provision. It was

Resolved: To appoint Contractor B to deliver Diss Town Council's Youth Provision Programme for an initial one-year period, subject to:

1. satisfactory review of safeguarding arrangements;
2. satisfactory review of insurance documentation;
3. satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service and compliance checks;
4. agreement of venue arrangements;
5. completion of contractual documentation;
6. confirmation of the final delivery programme and funding arrangements; and
7. confirmation of the availability and permitted use of any additional funding.

(Action: Clerk / Projects & Grants Administrator; immediately)

b) Members considered the South Norfolk Council Youth Provision Grant Funding Agreement, which provided an initial grant of £20,000 and the possibility of a further grant of up to £10,000, subject to budget availability and evidence of progress. Members noted the associated monitoring, sustainability and future funding commitments. It was further noted that the existing youth provider had been consulted throughout the process and was supportive of the additional provision. It was

Resolved: To approve the Youth Provision Grant Funding Agreement and give delegated authority to the Town Clerk to complete and sign the necessary documentation on behalf of the Council.

(Action: Clerk; immediately)

FC0926/11**Community Climate Action Plan**

Members considered the Council's role in developing Imagine Diss, a community-led Community Climate Action Plan. It was confirmed that the Town Council would participate as a partner rather than lead the project and that no financial commitment was being made by this decision.

Resolved: To participate in the development of the Community Climate Action Plan alongside the wider community.

(Action: Clerk; ongoing)

FC0926/12**3D Map of Diss**

Members considered a request from Diss & District Rotary Club for the Council's support in principle for a proposed tactile 3D map of the historic town centre. Members noted its potential accessibility, heritage, educational and tourism benefits and that no financial commitment was being sought at this stage. It was

Resolved: To support in principle the aspiration to provide a tactile 3D map of Diss, subject to all necessary permissions, approvals and funding arrangements.

(Action: Clerk; immediately)

FC0926/13

Park

Members considered the quotation of £2,825.28 excluding VAT to replace the trampoline bed and associated components in Diss Park. The high cost was noted and the anti-social behaviour causing the limited longevity. Members asked if options for a barrier around it could be investigated and the CCTV camera could be fixed on the new trampoline to dissuade undesirable behaviour. It was

Resolved: To approve the quotation of £2,825.28 excluding VAT for the replacement trampoline bed and associated components in Diss Park.

(Action: FBM; to arrange the replacement and review proportionate protective measures, including CCTV coverage; immediately)

FC0926/14

Norfolk County Council Preliminary Consultation

Members considered Norfolk County Council's preliminary consultation on the proposed highway improvement scheme for Heywood Road, Diss. The proposals included a 20mph speed limit zone, shared pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, traffic-calming measures and associated highway alterations. Members noted comments received regarding vehicle speeds along Heywood Road and the potential benefits of the scheme in improving road safety, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. It was

Resolved: To support the proposals and confirm that the Council had no objection to the proposed scheme.

(Action: Office Administrator; by 9th October 2026)

FC0926/15

Mere

Members considered report 34/2627 regarding governance arrangements for grant applications developed by the Clear Mere Working Party. Members noted that a grant application had been submitted in advance of the meeting to meet a funding deadline and that the proposed delegation related solely to the submission of grant applications. Members further noted that any grant award, expenditure commitment, match funding, procurement activity or project delivery proposals would continue to require Council approval unless already covered by existing delegated powers. It was

Resolved:

1. To ratify the submission of the grant application on behalf of Diss Town Council.
2. To confirm that the Clear Mere Working Party will continue as an advisory working group, developing proposals and making recommendations to the Council.
3. To delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with any two of the Town Mayor, Council Leader and Chair of the Executive Committee, to submit grant applications where funding deadlines do not reasonably allow consideration by Full Council.
4. To require details of applications submitted under this authority to be reported to the next available Full Council meeting.
5. To confirm that any grant offer, funding agreement, match-funding commitment, procurement activity or project expenditure will be referred to Full Council unless covered by existing delegated powers.

(Action: Clerk; ongoing)

FC0926/16

Events

- a) Members considered the Officer recommendations relating to the Christmas Lights Switch-On event on 5th December 2026, following the cancellation of the Events Committee meeting. A member asked for a Christmas tree on the Marketplace. Cllr Knights updated the committee on the fundraising efforts via CoLab. District cllr has booked the van. It was

Resolved: To approve the officer recommendations contained in the agenda pack, excluding the recommendation concerning traffic-cone hire, which was referred to the next Events Committee meeting for further consideration.

(Action: Events Committee; to progress arrangements)

- b) Members noted the minutes of the Remembrance Committee meeting held on 7th September 2026.

FC0926/17

Policies

- a) Members considered report 35/2627 and the three new policies presented for adoption. Members discussed the proposed Artificial Intelligence Policy and requested further clarification regarding references to the use of public Artificial Intelligence platforms. It was

Resolved:

1. To adopt the Proof of Life Certification Policy and Memorial Management & Safety Testing Policy.
 2. To defer consideration of the Artificial Intelligence Policy pending further review and clarification.
- b) Members considered report 35/2627 and the four revised policies presented for approval. It was

Resolved: To approve and adopt the following revised policies:

1. Health and Safety Policy;
2. Protocol for Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure or Local Holder of High Office;
3. Freedom of Information Publication Scheme; and
4. Complaints Policy.

Officers were authorised to make minor typographical, formatting or presentational corrections that did not alter the substance or intent of the policies.

(Action: DTC Admin; immediately)

FC0926/18**Items for Noting**

Members received the following updates and reports:

- a) Members received and noted the Town Clerk's updates on activities since the last report (36/2627). including updates relating to the Diss Youth & Community Centre redevelopment project, Leisure & Community Centre proposals, Diss Strategic Liaison Forum and budget preparations.
- b) Members received and noted a verbal update from the Town Mayor on activities since the last report, including attendance at a local charity football event. Members also recorded their condolences following the recent death of Peter Frewin of the Diss Army Cadets and recognised his contribution to young people within the community.
- c) Members received and noted the Facilities & Buildings Manager's updates on activities since the last report (report 37/2627).
- d) Members noted progress on decisions made at the previous meeting of Council. Members were advised that the concern regarding the Heywood Road sign had been reported to Highways.

FC0926/19**Date of Next Meeting**

Members noted that the next meeting of the Full Council is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 21st October 2026 at 7.15pm.

Meeting closed: 21.25.

Councillor D. Craggs
Chair / Town Mayor