

DISS TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES

Prior to the meeting a minute's silence was held in memory of Tony Palmer, who served as a highly respected and dedicated District and Town Councillor and recently passed away.

Minutes of the meeting of the **Town Council** held in the **Council Chamber** at **Diss Corn Hall** on **Wednesday 12th July 2023** at **7.15pm.**

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

In attendance: S. Villafuerte-Richards (Town Clerk)
County / District Councillor Kiddie
District Councillor Minshull
1 member of the public

FC0723/01 APOLOGIES

There were apologies from councillor Browne (health reasons).

FC0723/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Minute No.	Councillors Name	Personal/Other Interest	Pecuniary Interest	Reason
FC0723/06 e)	R. Peaty	X		This councillor had a dispensation granted on 3 rd July 2023 regarding his Trustee / Treasurer role for Diss Museum enabling him to participate in discussion but not vote.
FC0723/08	D. Collins S. Kiddie G. Waterman J. Welch	X		These councillors are all members of the Beacon working group.

FC0723/03 MINUTES

Members confirmed the minutes of the June meeting. It was

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 14th June 2023 as a true record to be signed by the Town Mayor.

(Action: Clerk; immediately)

FC0723/04 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were three members of the public in attendance. County / District councillor Kiddie spoke on behalf of Norfolk County Council regarding a veterans workshop recently attended in Dereham which brought together numerous charities in support of over 40k veterans in Norfolk.

He will be discussing fleet replacement at the Ketteringham depot including upgrades on the mini road sweepers used in Diss and drawing the winners of the Big South Norfolk litter pick.

The Highways department are catching up on pothole repairs, have carried out surface dressing on the s-bend out of Roydon near Freezen Hill and installed a warning sign on the A1066. Sunnyside has also been surface dressed except for a few gaps where residents' vehicles were left in situ. The water leak on Park Road is being addressed.

Cllr Kiddie spoke of his distaste regarding the Norwich to Tilbury pylon public consultation event that took place last Friday, which he attended along with Richard Bacon MP. The map provided did not refer to the existing pylons, which together with the proposed 50m high pylons would surround Diss and the wider area. He has raised it to the scrutiny committee at the County Council who has written a strong letter of complaint as has South Norfolk Council and other affected local authorities. He encouraged members and residents to lobby their MPs to get it reviewed at a higher level.

Cllr Taylor spoke of his attendance at both the consultation and webinar. He felt that it was a done deal and they claimed they cannot afford the alternative underground option (N.B. National Grid made £4.8 billion in operating profit & 22% earnings per share). There was discussion regarding making a representation on behalf of the Town Council and holding a public meeting.

District councillor Minshull echoed the thoughts on cllr Palmer who was also Town Mayor & with whom he had the honour of working. He explained that there has been a 300% rise in homelessness in the last 9 months predominantly in the Norwich area but with Diss rating third highest where they are supporting around 40 families primarily due to domestic violence. He encouraged small organisations to apply for their councillor member grants and confirmed that he is awaiting a reply from the Planning Officer regarding the conditions set for the Frenze Road development.

Members raised concerns regarding the White Elephant restaurant development which is advertised as opening next week on Stuston Road. Considerable works have taken place including window replacement and signage without permission and plan for traffic management. Cllr Minshull agreed to contact the District's Compliance Officer tomorrow. It was noted that the license has been granted, that they have reduced from 86 to 52 covers claiming that 17 car parking spots is sufficient without any alterations to the building.

One member of the public and Diss resident spoke regarding using the power of the press to engage the public regarding the pylon proposal.

FC0723/05 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.

FC0723/06 FINANCE

Councillors noted:

- a) the bank outgoings for June 2023.
- b) the summary of Income & Expenditure for June 2023.
- c) the Earmarked Reserves for June 2023.
- d) the reconciliations of income and expenditure with the Council's bank account statements for Feb – June 2023.

- e) Members considered a payment to Diss Museum to cover the purchase of Diss-related gifts to support a cultural exchange trip by students from a local school to Japan (report reference 09/2324 referred). Cllr Peaty explained his involvement in supporting this initiative, that tea towels, totebags, bookmarks & a book written by the Museum Manager had been purchased at the request of Hartismere given that

the Japanese prefer modest gifts and that there should be an exchange to Diss also. There was discussion regarding the potential to engage with around 2,000 students across both Diss & Hartismere regarding volunteering opportunities (N.B. Cllr Waterman is progressing this with Diss High School in the new term), that the students could be invited to the next Annual Town Meeting to share their experiences and the possibility of town twinning. It was

RESOLVED: To authorise expenditure of £42.50 on Diss-related merchandise from the Museum as a donation to Hartismere Sixth Form College students undertaking a cultural exchange to Japan allocated to 4840 Promotion (Power / statutory authority - General Power of Competence).
(Action: RFO; immediately)

f) Members considered the use of the new Lloyds bank account to make cash transactions following the closure of Barclays in August 2023 (report reference 12/2324 herewith referred). It was

RESOLVED:

1. To approve the current banking mandate of the Lloyds current account and the Lloyds fixed term deposit account.
2. To approve the use of the Lloyds current account to deposit and withdraw cash and cheques within the limits set by the Financial Regulations.

(Action: RFO; immediately)

FC0723/07

AUDIT

a) Members considered recommendations to address the Council's internal Audit report for the financial year to 31st March 2023 (report reference 10/2324 referred). It was

RESOLVED:

1. To note the contents of the final internal audit report 2022/23 (Appendix).
2. To approve the proposed actions as appropriate responses to the internal audit report's recommendations.

(Action: RFO; immediately)

b) Members noted that the Council's Year End Accounts have been submitted to the Council's external auditor.

FC0723/08

BEACON EXTENSION GRANT APPLICATION

Members reviewed a Pride in Place grant application to extend the beacon in Diss Park. The type of organisation would be amended on page 1 from Local Authority to Town / Parish Council. It was:

RESOLVED: that the Pride in Place grant application to extend the beacon in Diss Park would be amended and submitted to South Norfolk District Council.

(Action: Clerk; by 28.07.23)

FC0723/9

CLOCKS

Councillors considered whether to retain or auction the two Council owned clocks. Cllr Peaty has looked at the clocks several times. He advised that the clocks will not raise any amount close to their valuation (for insurance purposes which allows you to purchase something new of a similar quality) and that there is currently a very similar Marsh of Diss wall clock for sale online at £795. The clock mechanism functions albeit a repair is required to the pendulum, there are repair dates written inside and it was manufactured in first half of the 19th century. He has tried to contact the local clock repairer to acquire a quote for repair.

The Diss model is the better clock, and he feels more information could be found from clockmaking enthusiasts. It was suggested that this clock could be retained, restored and displayed at various venues in the town such as the Museum / Corn Hall and refurbished Council Offices possible on a rotational 'on tour' basis where historical information could also be provided. It was also proposed that the second clock could be given back to Norfolk County Council who appear to own it. It was agreed that the clocks' value as assets to the town greatly exceed their monetary value. They would need to be hung vertically for the pendulum to operate and wound up weekly.

It was noted that the Corn Hall Trust had agreed to restore and put back the items removed during the building's refurbishment but that the Council chamber is now very sterile as used as a multi-purpose space and should promote the Council's history. It was

RESOLVED: to repair the Diss clock subject to quotation and get it displayed in a prominent venue preferably in the Corn Hall.
(Action: RP / Clerk; by 31.12.23)

FC0723/10 STRATEGIC PLAN

Members considered appointing an action group to review the Council's existing strategic plan to inform future strategic planning. It was

RESOLVED: to appoint cllrs Olander, Wooddissee, Peaty and Robertson to work with the Clerk to review the Council's existing strategic plan to inform future strategic planning.

(Action: SO / RP / JR / JWo / Clerk; by 13.09.23)

FC0723/11 PROGRESS REPORT

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

FC0723/12 MEMBER FORUM

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

1. He brought in an Oak tree sown in 2020 for which he is seeking a home alongside dozens of others plants. He wants them to survive and thrive and be appreciated by members of the public and suggestions for planting locations are welcomed.
2. He's hosting the annual DTC BBQ / big dinner on Friday 14th July from 6pm at his house where he hopes to promote how he lives sustainably.
3. He was invited into the former Beales building and onto the working party by the Diss Community Team last week and confirmed that there is a considerable amount of work to do to get the building ready and safe to open to the public. He has offered to help in a personal capacity with the clearing of the loading area at the rear and feels it should be in the best most presentable condition prior to opening to make the right first impression.

Cllr Peaty raised a concern regarding an invoice that he saw when carrying out the bank reconciliations relating to replacement taps due to flooding in the Corn Hall. It was noted that it is the responsibility of the landowner to replace faulty capital items only and that as the most valuable asset of the Town Council, the building's maintenance management should be monitored.

FC0723/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Councillors noted that the next meeting of Full Council is scheduled for Wednesday 13th September 2023 at 7.15pm.

FC0723/14 PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS)

Members 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.

FC0723/15 STAFFING

Members considered a report (reference 11/2324) from the Responsible Finance Officer regarding the continuation of her temporary assignment at Bungay Town Council. It was

RESOLVED: to approve the request from the Responsible Finance Officer to work 7.5 hours per week carrying out financial duties for Bungay Town Council until end of September 2023.

(Action: RFO: immediately)

Post meeting there was further discussion regarding how to move forward the support of the indoor market trial. It was agreed that the post on the Diss Community Noticeboard regarding the public realm artwork initiative was well received and would be a model for gauging interest without the requirement for specific details around start dates / prices and that this was the first step. Cllr Waterman is happy to help with promotional materials and sharing via his social media feeds.

It was noted that a short press release would help to clarify the Town Council's involvement and rationale for supporting the initiative and members of the working group also happy to support this.

There was also discussion around pricing to cover staff time and contingency, the differential between the existing market pricing structure by frontage versus per m2, potential stallholder interest from the Cornucopia closure in Harleston and the Town Council's discretion in which stalls to accept to minimise competition.

Meeting Closed 8.58pm.

Councillor Murphy
TOWN MAYOR