

# Diss Town Council

## Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the **Town Council** held in the **Ceremony Room** at the **Diss Town Council Offices** on **Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2025** at **7.15pm**.

Present: Councillors: D. Craggs (Chair), A. Kitchen, K. Murphy, J. Robertson (ex-officio), R. Peaty, J. Welch

In attendance: Sarah Villafuerte-Richards (Town Clerk)  
Susan Hurst (Responsible Finance Officer)  
District Councillor Minshull  
3 members of the public

### FC1225/01 Apologies

Councillor's Name	Apologies Received	Absent Without Apology	Reason / Approval
S. Browne	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ill health
C. Dente	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Childcare
S. Kiddie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ill health
L. Sinfield	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Holiday

### FC1225/02 Declarations of Interest

Minute No.	Councillor's Name	Personal/Other Interest	Pecuniary Interest	Reason
FC1225/11	K. Murphy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of South Norfolk District Council

### FC1225/03 Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Full Council meeting on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2025. It was

**Resolved:** To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on Wednesday 19th November 2025 as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

### FC1225/04 Public Participation

Three members of the public were in attendance. District Cllr Minshull provided an update on last year's activities covering environmental initiatives including Nutrient Neutrality, WEEE recycling events, food waste collections from April, and expanded recycling van services. Leisure-wise, the Diss Swim Centre celebrates one year since reopening with rising membership and new instructors and the new leisure centre build is due to start late March and complete April 2027. The Park Hotel successfully reopened after community support and the Long Stratton bypass is now open.

The Local Government Reorganisation is ongoing with mayoral elections postponed to May 2026 and funding lower than expected. A further update is due in March 2026, and the current consultation closes on 11<sup>th</sup> January. The District Council continues to support local groups through their Community Action Fund and member grants. Three individuals were considered rough sleepers during the last survey and were housed immediately under their "No Second Night" policy. Additional support includes phones and pet-friendly accommodation. Clare House is helping 26 families avoiding B&B costs. Diss & Roydon both now have the Mindful Town/Village status & certificates will be issued soon, among more than 20 towns trained in Mental Health First Aid.

The school uniform swap shop based at Diss Swim Centre has been successful along with the Christmas toy appeal with over 1,500 gifts distributed.

County councillor Kiddie apologised for not being able to attend. Cllr Martin Wilby provided a written report covering Norfolk County Council's response on the impact of the government delays to Norfolk & Suffolk mayoral elections to its plans and investment; Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service's promotion of winter safety checks and free home visits for the elderly and vulnerable; continued funding to the Music Hub for their Ambassadors Programme; expansion of SEND opportunities and peer mentoring; and the launch of the Connect to Work programme supporting over 4,000 residents facing employment barriers, including those with disabilities and other challenges.

**FC1225/05 Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business raised.

**FC1225/06 Finance**

- a) Members authorised the bank outgoings for November 2025 retrospectively.
- b) Members noted the Income & Expenditure report for November 2025. The month on the column title needs amending.

**(Action: RFO; by 15.01.26)**

- c) Members noted the Earmarked Reserves report for November 2025.

**FC1225/07 Budget 2026-27**

Members reviewed the Council's draft budget proposals (report 38/2526 referred) for the financial year 2026-27 for approval at the January meeting of Full Council. The current increase is 3.7%, which equates to £9 per year per band D householder. Pending the decision made later on the agenda, some Earmarked Reserves could be reduced by £6k to keep the increase in line with inflation. It was

**Resolved:**

1. To approve the Assets, Infrastructure and Events budget, along with the related Earmarked Reserves (EMR).
2. To approve the Executive budget, along with the related EMRs.
3. To approve the Assets budget, along with the related EMR's.
4. To approve the current budget with the increase of 3.70%, pending any further adjustments before the final budget-setting meeting in January 2026.

**(Action: RFO; by 14.01.26)**

**FC1225/08 Internal Audit**

Members received report reference 39/2526, the interim internal audit report and considered proposed actions relating to the auditor's recommendations. It was

**Resolved:**

1. To accept the Internal Audit Engagement of Victoria Waples, as per Appendix A.
2. To accept the contents of the interim internal audit report 2025-26 (Appendix B).
3. To approve the proposed actions as appropriate responses to the internal auditor report's recommendations.

**(Action: RFO; as detailed in the report)**

**FC1225/09 Community Infrastructure Levy**

Members considered the Council's Annual Community Infrastructure Levy Declaration for 2024-25. It was

**Resolved:** To approve the Council's Annual Community Infrastructure Levy Declaration for 2024-25.

**(Action: RFO; immediately)**

**FC1225/10 Local Government Review Consultation**

Members reviewed the Government's consultation on Local Government Reorganisation in Norfolk and Suffolk. Cllr Peaty summarised his responses and noted he was undecided on a preferred option. Comments covered the scale of proposals (some perceived as too large/too small), the 'One Unitary' cluster model around market towns (beneficial if adequately funded), the need for clearer objectives, optimum area size for efficiencies, funding, and likely influence. Cllr Peaty was not in favour of the three-unitary layout.

Members noted that the District Council consulted first and used feedback to form a preferred two-unitary option, while other options were selected prior to consultation. Discussion also covered the expected election timetable, a delay to Mayoral elections to 2028, and the anticipated Council Tax changes in South Norfolk to support financially challenged councils. It was

**Resolved:** That Cllr's Craggs & Peaty will meet in New Year to review Cllr Peaty's draft responses & invite other members to send in comments before submitting a Council response prior to 11<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

**(Action: DC/RP; by 11.01.25)**

**FC1225/11 Clerk & Town Mayor Reports**

Members noted that the Clerk & Town Mayor's updates on activities since their last reports will be available at the January meeting.

**FC1225/12 Progress Report**

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

**FC1225/13 Date of Next Meeting**

Members noted that the next meeting of the Full Council is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 7.15pm.

**FC1225/14 Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings)**

To consider 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.

**FC1225/15 Citizens Advice Porta Cabin**

Members considered a proposal to bring the former Citizens Advice porta cabin into community use. Members noted that it is a sizeable, serviceable space. There is interest in a space for a men's/community shed which could serve as a pilot to evaluate the demand for hire of a potential community facility. Initial research indicated sufficient interest to cover estimated running costs of approximately £6,000 per annum. It was

**Resolved:**

1. To request that the Citizens Advice holds off on the demolition of their porta cabin.
2. To liaise with South Norfolk District Council regarding the transfer of the lease from Citizens Advice to Diss Town Council.
3. To progress discussions regarding the Men's Shed with the interested parties.
4. To negotiate a financial contribution from Citizens Advice towards reuse and/or any future demolition.
5. With the support of Citizens Advice, to engage local community groups to assess demand and an appropriate fee structure.
6. To budget £6k to cover running costs for the cabin.

**(Action: Clerk/RFO/DC/RP/JR; immediately)**

Meeting closed: 20.22.

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Councillor D. Craggs  
Chair / Town Mayor