

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

Minutes of the meeting of the **Town Council** held in the **Council Chamber** at **Diss Corn Hall** on **Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024** at **7.15pm.**

Present: Councillors: D. Collins, M. Gingell, S. Kiddie, A. Kitchen, K. Murphy (Chair), S. Olander, R. Peaty, L. Sinfield, E. Taylor & J. Welch & J. Robertson

In attendance: Sarah Villafuerte-Richards (Town Clerk/Chief Executive Officer)  
Robert Ludkin (Facilities & Buildings Manager)  
County / District Councillor Kiddie  
7 members of the public

**FC0324/01 APOLOGIES**

There were apologies from councillor Browne.

**FC0324/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

Minute No.	Councillors Name	Personal /Other Interest	Pecuniary Interest	Reason
FC0324/15	K. Murphy	X		This councillor is a South Norfolk District Councillor & the District Council own the site.
FC0324/11	S. Olander		X	This councillor's employer is landlord of the Post Office building.
FC0324/7	S. Kiddie K. Murphy S. Olander R. Peaty L. Sinfield E. Taylor	X		These councillors were in receipt of a councillor allowance.
FC0324/17	A. Kitchen	X		This councillor knows both of the Honoured Citizen nominees through his association with the Diss & District British Legion.

**FC0324/03 MINUTES**

Members confirmed the minutes of the Full Council meetings on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024. It was

**RESOLVED:** To approve the minutes of the meetings of Full Council held on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024 as a true record to be signed by the Town Mayor.

**FC0324/04 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were 7 members of the public present. County / District Councillor Kiddie presented his report. The County are catching up on repairing potholes given the inclement weather. The exit from the train station into Nelson Road is complete and buses can now go up to the station however only buses are allowed to exit, which was not what was agreed. Cllr Kiddie is arranging a meeting with relevant Officers and Network Rail to resolve. Connect Services are already using the station and Simonds revising their timetables after Easter.

More work is being planned in front of Roydon village hall next financial year. A grant had been arranged to pay for a sign in Croft Lane in response to residents' concerns around speeding however a resident objection has resulted in the sign being removed. The 7.5 tonne limit sign is up so it was suggested that residents get together to review requirements.

Trees have been installed on Fair Green and in Roydon – Fersfield, made possible via his member grant. The flooding in Bellrope / Swamp Lane will be investigated once the water level has reduced.

As Diss High School Governor, cllr Kiddie sat on the disciplinary panel for a pupil exclusion which was followed by an Ofsted inspection interview and feedback is awaited.

As Armed Forces Champion for Norfolk, he has been liaising with the NHS from a County perspective to ensure veterans are identified and supported. Veterans can apply for an ID card providing certain discounts and enabling voting. A new Commissioner has been welcomed and their first task is to help Dereham achieve Armed Forces Gold Award. During Armed Forces week in June, access to leisure centres will be free of charge to veterans. The swimming pool works are moving forwards at pace.

There were questions regarding fixing noisy drain covers and loose briquettes in Mere St. Ideally these issues should be reported online via FixMyStreet where all details can be captured & progress monitored but cllr Kiddie will investigate.

**(Action: KK; by end April)**

A member of the public spoke in advance of the confidential DYCC item. As a regular hirer of building, he expressed a strong view that the central location of the site and services that operate out of the building, that all should be done to retain the building / site. He would be willing to help in any consultation process.

A member of the public spoke regarding his recent purchase of the Cemetery bungalow. He has concerns about the rubbish that has been discovered on the site since his occupation including concrete, wire fencing, corrugated sheet, roof tiles & a car battery. He has liaised with the Council's Facilities & Buildings Manager who has already had the items removed from the site, which are thought to have been dumped their following the clearance exercise by the Council in preparation for the sale. He asked for the Clerk to contact him following the meeting.

**(Action: Clerk; immediately)**

#### **FC0324/05 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There were two items of urgent business raised. Members have requested a press release regarding the budget increase, which has been drafted for review. A concern was shared regarding the length of the e-agenda pack for this meeting. This was acknowledged and it was noted that the additional number of Full Council meeting should help to spread items across agendas more evenly.

#### **FC0324/06 CO-OPTION**

Members considered two applications for co-option to Diss Town Council. Annie Goulder was unable to attend this meeting due to the late date change. Cllr Sue Kiddie spoke as her proposer. Annie has shown her intent and dedication to the Town Council through her attendance at & contributions to meetings over the last 9 months. She has significant experience at a high level in the NHS, which will be invaluable. Cllr Gingell summarised the application for Declan Craggs who is a qualified accountant with knowledge of VAT, and experience in care homes. Declan spoke regarding his health & social care background, knowledge of budgeting & governance experience as school governor for the infant and junior school. He would be interested in the vacancy on the Executive committee. It was

**RESOLVED:** 1. To co-opt Annie Goulder to Diss Town Council (with declaration of acceptance of office form to be signed post meeting)

2. To co-opt Declan Craggs to Diss Town Council with the declaration of acceptance of office signed at the meeting.

*Both councillors were congratulated, and Cllr Craggs welcomed to the table.*

**FC0324/07**     **FINANCE**

- a) Members noted bank outgoings for January and February 2024. The expenses on fuel for the outdoor team was raised as something to review.  
**(Action: FBM / RFO; immediately)**
- b) Members noted the Income & Expenditure report for January and February 2024. It was noted that the expenditure on the Corn Hall door repairs should be reimbursed.
- c) Members noted Earmarked Reserves for January and February 2024.
- d) Members noted the reconciliations of income and expenditure with the Council's bank account statements for September 2023 – January 2024.

**FC0324/08**     **INTERNAL CONTROLS**

Members considered recommendations from the Executive committee regarding the review of internal controls (report 58/2324 referred). It was

RESOLVED: To approve the adoption of the following internal control documents:

- a) the Insurance Schedule
- b) Financial Regulations
- c) External & Internal audit policy
- d) Financial Reserves Policy
- e) Financial Statement Control Policy
- f) The Governance & Risk Management Policy
- g) The Investment Strategy

**(Action: RFO; immediately)**

**FC0324/09**     **EMERGENCY AND RESILIENCE PLAN**

Members reviewed the updated emergency plan and considered adopting resilience procedures. It was noted that a few amends have since been made including removing the personal councillor email aliases, including work mobile numbers for the Clerk & Facilities & Buildings Manager. The new Churchill retirement home contact details should be added as well as the newer councillors. This is a living document and the Council & the Deputy Town Clerk was commended for having such a comprehensive plan. It was

RESOLVED: to approve the updated emergency plan and adopting resilience procedures with minor amends.

**(Action: DepClerk; immediately)**

**FC0324/10**     **NORWICH WESTERN LINK**

Members received an update regarding the Norwich Western Link project and correspondence thereon. There was discussion regarding the positives and negatives and its impact on Diss residents. It was

RESOLVED: for the Clerk, the Chair of Infrastructure committee, and another member of the committee to draft a letter of response / DTC view for review by the next appropriate meeting of Council.

**(Action: Clerk; by end April)**

**FC0324/11**     **POST OFFICE**

Members considered an alternative location of 35e Mere Street (formerly Octagon Craft Gallery & Coffee Lounge) for the Post Office proposed move following consultation feedback. It was noted that only one secure counter was proposed, which was considered insufficient given increased customer requirements to deposit cash following several bank closures. Members are still concerned about the impact of queues out of the

building onto a pathway close to a busy road particularly with limited parking. It is strongly felt that options for the current location should be reviewed given it is such a focal point in the town. There was a view that the consultation was simply a tick box exercise, and that the decision has already been made based purely on finances. Members are obviously keen to retain a Post Office presence in the town.

The local MP did not receive the initial consultation and the Area Franchisee Manager for South Norfolk was not afforded the opportunity to review Diss. It was noted that the current site was gifted to Diss in 1953 to recognise the late Queen's coronation.

The Town Council has engaged District Council Officers and Royal Mail has commented and had their response acknowledged.

It was noted that banking services will be accommodated in the Corn Hall but that alternative premises would be more suitable. It was

RESOLVED: to re-submit Diss Town Council's objection today with minor amendments and within the consultation's deadline.  
**(Action: Clerk; immediately)**

**FC0324/12 PROGRESS REPORT**

Members noted progress on decisions made at the last meeting.

**FC0324/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members noted that the next meeting of Full Council is scheduled for Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 7.15pm.

**FC0324/14 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 items which are properly considered to be of a confidential nature.

**FC0324/15 JOHN GROSE SITE**

Members received confidential information from South Norfolk District Council on the plans for redevelopment of the John Grose site. They are currently liaising with key stakeholders on initial plans prior to wider consultation. Members emphasised the need to minimise any impact on Park Road given current traffic congestion.

**FC0324/16 DISS YOUTH & COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Members considered recommendations regarding the future of the DYCC (confidential report 58/2324 referred). Several options were considered but further information was requested as quickly as possible.

*Standing Orders 3y were suspended to allow the meeting to continue beyond two hours.*

It was

RESOLVED: 1. That a working group of cllrs Peaty, Taylor & the Clerk would meet to determine additional information required and that expenditure of up to £1,100 could be spent on a high-level budget for roof replacement.

2. That Council requests a contribution of £872.40 from Park Radio Ltd towards electricity costs for 2023-4, and review the 30% costs attributable to a more accurate percentage of their usage.  
**(Action: Clerk/RP/ET; immediately)**

**FC0324/17    HONOURED CITIZEN AWARDS**

Members considered nominations received for the Honoured Citizen Awards. It was

RESOLVED: To make two Honoured Citizen awards for 2024-25 to Mary Cotton and Mike Garnham of the Diss & District Royal British Legion branch.

**(Action: Clerk; immediately)**

Meeting Closed: 9.38pm.

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Councillor Murphy  
TOWN MAYOR