

Diss Town Council

Minutes

Minutes of the **Annual Town Meeting** held in the **Main Auditorium** at **Diss Corn Hall** on **Wednesday 30th April 2025** at **6.30pm**.

Present: Councillors: D. Collins, D. Craggs, A. Goulder, S. Kiddie, A. Kitchen, K. Murphy (Chair), J. Robertson, R. Peaty, L. Sinfield, J. Welch.

In attendance: Sarah Villafuerte-Richards (Town Clerk)
Kimberley Jaynes (Marketing & Events Officer)
County / District Councillor Kiddie
District Councillor Minshull
91 members of the public

ATM0425/01 Welcome by the Town Mayor of Diss

Councillor Kieran Murphy welcomed those in attendance to the Annual Town Meeting.

ATM0425/02 Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Tuesday 16th April 2024 were agreed as a correct record and were duly signed by the Town Mayor. It was

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Tuesday 16th April 2024.

(Action: Clerk; immediately)

ATM0425/03 Report on Activities of Diss Town Council

Members received the annual report on the Council's activities. The Town Mayor thanked two former councillors and welcomed Cllr Annie Goulder and Cllr Declan Craggs. Cllr Taylor reported on progress with the Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan, and Cllr Olander provided updates on the Beacon extension, the D-Day 80th anniversary event on 6th June, and the new Market Place planting scheme.

Former councillor George Waterman outlined progress on the proposed Green Corridor network, including areas around Rectory Meadow, the Nunnery on the Park, and the bridleway by the Catholic Church. Cllr Olander also updated residents on the Diss Youth & Community Centre, including roof-replacement cost estimates and ongoing work to assess community-space needs. The Council will host summer engagement events on the Market Place and is working with volunteers on upcoming activities, including Diss Carnival on 16th June.

ATM0425/04 Report on the Activities of County & District Councils

County Councillor Kiddie reported that the Local Government Review (LGR) remains ongoing during the election period. He encouraged residents to contact him regarding highways, schools, and adult education, stressing his commitment to serving Diss irrespective of political affiliation. He also provided updates on food-waste collection and other environmental work.

District Councillor Minshull summarised a productive year, noting a £5 annual Council Tax increase, keeping rates among the lowest nationally. He highlighted the new "WTF" fly-tipping campaign, a nature-recovery grant, and recent changes to five-year land supply rules, while confirming that the Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan continues to offer some protection for allocated sites.

Further updates included the forthcoming dentistry school, the opening of Clare House supporting 26 families, and progress on the District's leisure redevelopment: Phase 1 completed with the new swimming pool (over 25,000 visitors), Phase 2 delivering a leisure and community building, and Phase 3 providing a new bus station and GP surgery. Completion ahead of any move toward a unitary authority was emphasised.

ATM0425/05 Question & Answer Session

Residents raised a range of local matters during the question-and-answer session.

Concerns were expressed about the appearance of Mere's Mouth, including maintenance, railings, planting and general presentation. Members were advised that signage across Council sites will be improved over the summer, and further enhancements such as repainting and updated planting schemes are planned. The Flock sculpture will remain in place. A request was made to add an additional representative to the working group for this area.

Issues were also raised around the Diss Publishing Store area, including the need for a facelift to the public toilets, ongoing pigeon-related issues, and concerns about flooding, with heavy rainfall affecting the Mere and causing sewage caps to lift in the roadway. The use of signage to deter bird feeding was suggested.

Questions were asked regarding town-centre maintenance, particularly weeds in Mere Street. The Council confirmed that the maintenance team continues to work hard to manage weeding across the town.

Residents sought updates on the Diss Youth & Community Centre (DYCC). Members confirmed that the building remains closed due to the presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) and that decisions regarding its future must ensure responsible use of public funds. Discussion also touched on Mere water levels.

A representative from a youth organisation highlighted challenges facing young people in Diss, including pressures on mental health, reduced social interaction, and limited universal youth provision. They noted the need for a dedicated youth venue, space for outreach both in and out of school hours, and support for future projects. The group currently engages with around 20 young people every other Wednesday but faces financial pressures and a need for suitable temporary space. A representative from Park Radio Ltd confirmed plans to relocate to the Corn Hall.

ATM0425/06 Presentation by Andy Davidson – First Aid

Members received a presentation outlining the range of first-aid training courses available, including qualification courses, baby & adult first-aid awareness, and street first aid, with a focus on bleed-control training. It was reported that bleed-control kits are being made available in public spaces.

Details were shared of a public session at Diss Bowls Club on 25th May (10:30–12:30) on responding to major life-threatening bleeds, highlighting the importance of rapid first response.

The presentation also covered issues linked to knife crime, county lines and vehicle incidents, with an emphasis on ensuring as many people as possible are trained. Work is ongoing with schools and with Norfolk County Council to widen access to training for young people. Local businesses were encouraged to purchase bandages and thermal blankets, which can help save lives. It was noted that bleed kits are expensive, and efforts continue to secure grant funding to support their wider rollout.

ATM0425/07 Live Video Stream with Adrian Ramsey MP

Adrian updated the meeting on constituency matters in the Waveney Valley, including engagement on the proposed National Grid electricity pylon route, rural energy costs for off-grid households, and the impact of national infrastructure decisions on local communities.

It was further noted that he has highlighted issues affecting the area such as access to healthcare and dentistry, support for farming and land management, and flood resilience, with an emphasis on ensuring rural concerns are represented in national policy discussions.

Break & Networking

ATM0425/08 Diss Town Football Club – Council Grant Recipient

Members received an update on the Council grant awarded to Diss Town Football Club. The Club reported progress on its floodlight-replacement project, confirming that the new LED floodlights are expected to significantly reduce running costs, with estimated usage of

around £20 per game, compared with approximately £70 per game under the previous system.

Members received a brief update from the Green Infrastructure Alliance, which aims to promote local green-infrastructure initiatives. Residents interested in supporting or joining the project were invited to sign up.

ATM0425/09 Award Presentations to the Honoured Citizens for 2025/26 & the 2024/25 Town Mayor's Nominated Charity, Nelson's Journey

The Town Mayor awarded Alan Franks and Richard Pither with their Honoured Citizen awards.

Richard Pither was recognised for decades of voluntary work and civic involvement. Since arriving in Diss in 1963, he has played key roles in the Young Farmers, Diss Rugby Club, and served as a town councillor. As a Rotary Club president, he also helped launch the Diss Community Woodland Project, leading to the creation of Quaker Wood in 2010.

Alan Franks was celebrated for his leadership in major community initiatives. He helped raise over £120,000 for the Corn Hall refurbishment in 2013 and supported the wider Heritage Triangle regeneration. He also founded the Diss Cyclathon, raising over £10,000 for local charities, and was instrumental in the transformation of Beales into No.8 Market Place.

The Council will publish the reasons for each award nominee on its website.

(Action: KJ; immediately)

The Town Mayor also presented the annual donation to the Mayor's nominated charity for 2024/25, Nelson's Journey, with a total of £1,172.23 raised. The cheque was received on behalf of the charity by Linda Clark.

Meeting closed: 20.52.

Councillor K. Murphy
Chair / Town Mayor