

Diss Town Council

Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the **Full Council** held in the **Council Chamber** at **Diss Corn Hall** on **Wednesday 17th September 2025** at **7.20pm**.

Present: Councillors: S. Browne, D. Collins, D. Craggs (Chair), C. Dente, A. Goulder, A. Kitchen, K. Murphy, J. Robertson (ex-officio), R. Peaty, L. Sinfield, J. Welch.

In attendance: Sarah Villafuerte-Richards (Town Clerk/CEO)
County / District Councillor Kiddie
District Councillor Minshull
5 members of the public

FC0925/01 Apologies

Councillor's Name	Apologies Received	Absent Without Apology	Reason / Approval
S. Kiddie	☒	☐	This councillor was unable to access the meeting via remote access due to a technology failure.

FC0925/02 Declarations of Interest

Minute No.	Councillor's Name	Personal/Other Interest	Pecuniary Interest	Reason
FC0925/09	S. Browne	☒	☐	This councillor is a presenter on Park Radio Ltd
FC0925/09	K. Murphy	☒	☐	This councillor is a member of the South Norfolk District Council's Planning Development Committee

FC0925/03 Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Full Council meeting on Wednesday 30th July 2025. It was

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council meeting held on Wednesday 30th July 2025 with a wording amendment to minute reference FC0725/13 replacing 'recruitment' with 'recommendations' as a true record for signing by the Chair. There was a comment relating to the confidential item, which will be reviewed after the public part of the meeting.

FC0925/04 Public Participation

There were five members of the public in attendance. County / District Councillor Kiddie reported that the Norfolk Castle Museum has reopened after a £27.5 million refurbishment, and the Long Stratton bypass is open and almost complete. The flashing signs on Willbye Av and Uplands Way have been installed to improve safety outside the High School. The new 20mph speed limit at the top of St Nicholas St, Denmark St, Shelfanger Road and Roydon Road is effective from 22nd September, and the County filled 7kms of potholes from Diss to Thetford. The new food waste law is coming into effect April 2026. Householders will be issued with receptacles for kitchen and a larger external lockable one collected each week. Diss will be selected first as a trial urban area and side waste will no longer be collected.

District Councillor Minshull reminded members that the places were filling up fast for the mental health training in Roydon at the beginning of October. The results of the public consultation regarding the John Grose site will be presented to board in October, final plans and designs presented to Cabinet middle of October and the planning application considered at the end of October. They anticipate starting on-site early in the New Year albeit investigative work has already commenced.

Their bid for a two-Unitary Council was submitted on Friday and three proposals for a one, two and three-Unitary Council have been sent to the Minister, the results of which should be known before the end of December. It is rumoured that the role of Town & Parish Councils will be considered within the next 5-10 years with the impact likely to be greater for the smaller parishes.

Lotus cars are stopping production resulting in a loss of 500 jobs by Christmas and significant impact on other smaller businesses who supply Lotus. The District Council is offering support to staff faced with redundancy, planning work on the road network by Lotus to generate new businesses interest to fill gaps and liaising with other companies to see if they can employ the former Lotus employees.

The District Council's position on the flags is that they won't be removing them as they own very few lampposts. It was noted that planning consent is not required for the Union Jack or Home Nations flags and that the whole of Norfolk has been affected. If they become a danger or litter, they will be removed.

A third member of the public spoke on the impact of the USAAF memorial recently installed in Mere St, which is bringing and will bring people in to the town particularly those from the United States. The other two members of the public were

The other two members of the public were interested in item 9.

FC0925/05 Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business raised.

FC0925/06 Finance

- a) Members noted bank outgoings for July 2025 and August 2025.
- b) Members noted the Income & Expenditure report for July 2025 and August 2025.
- c) Members noted the Earmarked Reserves report for July 2025 and August 2025.
- d) Members received the bank reconciliations for May & June 2025 reviewed by the Council's Internal Control Councillor.

Members were encouraged to raise any specific financial queries with the RFO in advance of meetings so that comprehensive responses can be brought to all at the meeting.

FC0925/07 Budget

Members considered the first budget report (report reference 23/2526) following two Budget Action Group meetings. It was noted the budget announcement is awaited, no considerable changes have been proposed and that some funds have been proposed for Earmarked Reserves to replace a van and sum for future streetlighting replacements.

FC0925/08 Emergency Plan

Members reviewed an updated Emergency Plan (report reference 24/2526). The main updates were summarised. It was noted that the plan has the full support of the District Council's Emergency Planning Officer. It was suggested that a clause be added to cover online meetings during an emergency such as the pandemic. It was

Resolved: To approve the updated Town Emergency Plan including the procedure for operating as a Council during a pandemic or similar and publish.
(Action: Clerk / Admin Officer; immediately)

FC0925/09 Council Sites / Premises

Members received a report (reference 25/2526) summarising the current situation with three of the Council's sites / premises. The feasibility study provides lots of answers to the points raised regarding, expected building costs, hire and usage rates, overheads and running costs. There was discussion regarding the potential hire of an empty property in a town centre location although it is unlikely to meet the Council's parking requirements. District Councillor Minshull advised that in light of their new High Street Auction powers and requirement to complete any large-scale purchases before the next financial year, they would look to take the properties rented out on long term leases.

The Clerk shared a proposal to consider developing a modular community building on the DYCC site, which should be less expensive to build and flexible for accommodate future needs. There were some concerns about modular buildings including their life expectancy, which would require more information. The purpose of the discussion was for the Council to provide a steer to the Clerk on the next route to take to help them make an informed decision.

It was noted that usage at the Sports Ground site has decreased, the lighting has reached the end of its useful life, that the site has potential for development, South Norfolk has been identified as an area lacking in 3G pitches, which could be a net positive for town.

There was a view supported by a member of the public that the DYCC site offers more potential than the Council Offices to fulfil both the Council's staffing needs, the needs of the wider community and to adapt to likely future changes. Another view was that the current staff configuration at the offices is not ideal, but it works for now and that the strategic plan should inform future direction.

District councillor Minshull reminded members of the extended duration and cost of the Heritage Triangle Project and the need to cost in a Project Manager and contingency.

It was agreed that the feasibility study would be re-circulated, a specification would be drafted as a basis for cost estimates for a community facility on the DYCC site and an informal workshop would be organised. It was

Resolved: to arrange an informal workshop of members before the end of November to review the feasibility study, finance options and estimates for traditional & modular buildings.
(Action: Clerk; by 30.11.25)

At 21.17, it was

Resolved: to invoke Standing Orders 3x and continue with the meeting beyond the two hours from commencement to complete the business on the agenda.

FC0925/10 Clerk & Town Mayor Report

Members received the Clerk's & Town Mayor's updates on activities since their last reports. The Mayor added that he attended the Litter picking Group's 50th pick.

Cllr Peaty updated members following the last Diss Corn Hall Trustee meeting. The Council Chamber is acting as the temporary staff office following the Park Radio move and that smaller Council meetings are likely to be held at the Council Offices. They are looking to model their AGM (21st October) on the Council's Annual Town Meeting and are pulling together their financial update to 30th September.

FC0925/11 Progress Report

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

FC0925/12 Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the Full Council is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 15th October 2025 at 7.15pm.

N.B. Post meeting members re-considered the last meeting minutes. It was reiterated that the back pay to staff to April 2025 was a contractual or statutory requirement.

Meeting closed: 9.41pm.

Councillor D. Craggs
Chair / Town Mayor