

DISS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held in the Council Chamber at Diss Corn Hall on Wednesday 11th September 2024 at 7.15pm.

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

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

FC0924/01

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from councillors Browne & Robertson.

FC0924/02

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

FC0924/03

MINUTES

Members received the minutes of the Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 28th August 2024. It was

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the meeting of the extraordinary Full Council held on 28th August 2024 as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor.

FC0924/04

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were three members of the public in attendance. Roydon Parish Councillor Waterman encouraged members to meet at the DYCC on Saturday (14th September) at 10am to support the monthly litter pick. There was a request to pick around the Diss Food & Wine shop / Buttermarket where there are lots of cigarette butt ends and suggestions for picking locations are welcomed.

Several spates of vandalism have taken place at Quaker Wood and most recently have become more serious with benches uprooted & thrown in the pond along with shopping trolleys. The crimes have been reported.

Members were advised of the recent knife amnesty that came into force on 28th August restricting certain types of knives (exceeding 8 inches in length with a serrated edge). The public is being asked to hand in such knives although the nearest Police station is Wymondham and where appropriate apply for compensation. There has been little publicity about the amnesty, and it was agreed that the Clerk would liaise with Norfolk Constabulary regarding accessing promotional materials to share more widely, particularly with local schools.

(Action: SVR; 17.10.24)

County / District Councillor Kiddie has been reviewing various policies including fly-tipping. Concern was raised regarding challenging budgets. Highway works include repairing potholes on Sawmills Road near bridge / Walcot Green, pavement refurbishment, and white lining. The entrance to the village hall has been resurfaced using up cllr Kiddie's County grant.

As Norfolk Armed Forces Champion, he attended a meeting relating to veteran engagement with businesses and the wider community, which considered the impact of ex-servicemen & women up to 65 being called up as reserves, particularly for large organisations. Twenty prizes of £20 have been given to the winners of the litter picks and 700 bags of litter was collected.

There was a question regarding the lack of weeding around the town, particularly in the highway. There was discussion regarding traffic backed up on Stuston Road past the bridge joining with the A1066 and the possibility of weight restrictions for HGVs. It was noted that the satellite navigation systems take drivers the quickest / shortest routes so any signage is ignored.

There was also a question regarding the possibility of removing an unused cycle rack outside the library on Church St.

(Action: KK; 17.10.24)

District cllr Minshull reported that leisure staff will be given training in dealing with stab victims. It was emphasised that this is not a major issue in South Norfolk but if one life can be saved, it's worth it. It is hoped that the District Councillor grants will be put towards installing the necessary equipment next to the existing defibrillator kit on Diss Corn Hall. Units cost approximately £400 so the Town Council may wish to consider additional units and / or training for residents to use them.

(Action: Clerk; 31.12.24)

Planning consent to demolish the existing buildings on the John Grose site should come this week and work inside to remove asbestos has been undertaken. Two significant issues facing the District Council include the withdrawal of the cold weather payment affecting 10,500 households in South Norfolk. They are working on a plan to ensure they have the benefits they are entitled to and will be running the warm rooms scheme again this year. The second issue is the new government's announcement to build millions of extra homes across the country. 22,000 are planned for South Norfolk over the next 4.5 years. This equates to an additional 400 homes for Diss & Roydon and as a 5-year land supply cannot be demonstrated, this will open the floodgates to developers and the Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan is likely to be disregarded.

They are running a controversial fly-tipping campaign, which has got people talking about it. There was discussion regarding improving the positioning of recycling centres across the districts to encourage the public to use them, the reduction in County budgets for such and the disconnect given the District's responsibility for fly-tipping.

There was also a suggestion that the District Council could work collaboratively with the Citizens Advice team to support pensioners in getting any extra financial help available.

(Action: GM; 17.10.24)

It was noted that the District councillors have tried to contact our new MP several times but are awaiting a reply.

FC0924/05 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business raised.

FC0924/06 FINANCE

- a) Members noted bank outgoings for July 2024.
- b) Members noted the Income & Expenditure reports for July 2024.
- c) Members noted the Earmarked Reserves reports for July 2024.
- d) Members noted the reconciliations of income and expenditure with the Council's bank account statements for June & July 2024.
- e) Members noted that amendments will be required in the prior year's comparatives when completing next year's Annual Governance & Accountability Return and that the external auditor report and certificate for the Council's Year End 2023/24 Accounts are awaited.
- f) Members considered the removal of a former member of staff and the addition of an existing member of staff as signatories to the Council's bank accounts to process payments. It was

RESOLVED: to remove the former member of staff and add an existing member of staff as signatory to the Council's bank accounts to process payments.

(Action: Clerk; immediately)

FC0924/07 CASUAL VACANCY

Members noted that the elections team at South Norfolk Council has been notified of the Council's casual vacancy and that it will be filled by co-option if an election is not called within 14 working days of the notice being displayed. Co-option publicity will take place thereafter.

FC0924/08 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Members considered an acting Executive Committee Chair to work with the Clerk prior to formal election at the October meeting of the committee. It was also noted that Cllr Browne has resigned as its Vice-Chair. There was discussion regarding the key task for this committee in preparing a budget and reviewing committee dates accordingly. Cllr Peaty put himself forward but would need to give up his role as Planning Chair to free up time and would require support from other members. Cllr Craggs put himself forward to support cllr Peaty. It was also noted that cllr Taylor had already offered to re-assume the Planning Chair & cllr Goulder is happy to support the budgeting process. It was

RESOLVED: 1. To appoint councillor Peaty as Acting Executive Committee Chair and cllr Craggs as Vice Chair prior to formal election at the October meeting of the committee.

2. To appoint cllr Taylor as Chair of the Planning committee prior to formal election at the next meeting of the committee.

(Action: Clerk; immediately)

FC0924/09 **COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME**

Members considered appointing two new representatives to join the Council's Community Grant Panel. It was

RESOLVED: that councillors Collins & Kiddie join the Council's Community Grant Panel and that the Panel would meet before 30th September to review the grant applications received for consideration by Full Council at the October meeting.

(Action: Clerk / Grant Panel; by 17.10.24)

FC0924/10 **DISS YOUTH & COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Members received a project update from the DYCC Action Group. FMG Consulting Ltd has now been appointed to undertake the feasibility study, an initial meeting has been held and the bid for Pride in Place funding was successful, which will cover the total cost of the study. South Norfolk Council was thanked for their support in this process. Currently in the data gathering phase & the Action Group will review the submission including historical financial info, stakeholder info before it's sent to FMG. Regular meetings are scheduled with FMG. It was noted that a theatre in Northampton found an alternative solution to increase the lifespan & it was agreed that FMG would be asked to explore any realistic alternative options. Rough estimate. The Group were thanked for their quick work on the project.

(Action: Clerk; immediately)

FC0924/11 **CLERK, COUNCIL LEADER, TOWN MAYOR & CHAIR FORUM**

Members considered updates from or questions to the Clerk (report referred), Council Leader, Town Mayor and Committee Chairs on their activities since the last meeting. There was discussion regarding widening the advertising for a Locum Responsible Finance Officer and the Clerk is going to follow up with the two consultancies approached and put a post on the Clerk's Network Facebook page to see if there are any part-time RFOs looking for additional hours. The job description and appointment terms for the permanent RFO role will be considered once the locum is in place. The additional administrative meeting support is starting 16th September.

(Action: Clerk; immediately)

FC0924/12 **PROGRESS REPORT**

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

FC0924/13 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members noted that the next meeting of Full Council is scheduled for Wednesday 23rd October 2024 at 7.15pm.

FC0924/14 **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.

FC0924/15 **DISS CORN HALL**

Members considered a confidential update regarding Diss Corn Hall. It was

RESOLVED: to support the principles of the draft agreement between Park Radio Ltd and the Diss Corn Hall Trust subject to a detailed contract, plan for enabling works, full repairing lease and Diss Town Council stated as an interested party as landlord.

(Action: Clerk; immediately)

Meeting Closed: 9.15pm.

Councillor Murphy
TOWN MAYOR