

Diss Town Council

Minutes

DRAFT

Minutes of the meeting of the **Events Committee** held in the **Ceremony Room** at **Diss Town Council Offices** on **Tuesday 16th June 2026** at **7pm**.

In attendance: S Brazier, M Cotton, Cllr D Craggs, E Forsdyke, J Grint, K Jaynes, R Ludkin, G Pagan, B Rogers, Cllr T Shava, Cllr L Sinfield, S Villafuerte-Richards, G Waterman, Cllr P Wilson,

3 members of the public

Cllr Craggs stepped in as Chair of this meeting in Cllr Dente's absence.

E0626/01 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr C Dente (Chair). No apologies were received from Cllr T Knights.

E0626/02 Minutes

Members reviewed the minutes of the last meeting held on 2nd June 2026. It was

Resolved: to approve the minutes of the events meeting held on Tuesday 2nd June 2026 as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

(Action: KJ to un-draft minutes on website, immediately)

E0626/03 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

E0626/04 Public Participation

There were 3 members of the public present- Matt Smith (Park Radio), Lindsey Booty (The Corn Hall) and Andy Rackham.

A query was raised regarding a tabled document sent to members after the agenda pack was published online.

(Action: KJ to add item 6c to website agenda pack, immediately)

E0626/05 Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

E0626/06 Carnival Debrief

a) Members reviewed feedback received from Diss Carnival 2026, which was overwhelmingly positive.

Key points discussed:

Restricted toilet access at the Park after the cleaners had gone. Ensure toilets are left unlocked by cleaners until end of the event in future.

Cllr Sinfield queried less bunting on display around the town. RL confirmed this was due to previous bunting falling down in various places around the town centre. The fixing points are limited to keep above the height restrictions for lorries. Going forward, we would need additional brackets fitted so more bunting can be installed higher.

(Action: RL to note for 2027)

There were several issues with traffic management following similar issues for Remembrance 2025. Vehicles were exiting Morrisons & a Security Steward had to step in & close the A1066 while the procession was on route as the T/M was not stationed there as

agreed. A similar issue was experienced earlier on Heywood Road as the procession approached from Walcot Road. Mount Street residents did not receive road closure letters which were meant to be delivered by traffic management team. RL has provided feedback and an alternative contractor will need to be sourced for future albeit at a greater cost. It was suggested that part refund should be requested from them due to failings.

(Action: RL to liaise, by next meeting)

The issues with the end of the procession route and the funfair taking up more space than agreed were the same last year and need to be addressed for future events.

Both positive and negative feedback was received regarding sound including minimal commentary from the compere. Park Radio will review all feedback and address for improvements going forward.

(Action: JG/Park Radio for future events)

'What The Truck' reported a lack of footfall to their stall as they were placed by the Pavilion away from the other food vendors despite very good footfall reported by a neighbouring stall. Members shared that those who tried the food on the day were not very impressed with the quality. Committee agreed a refund would not be given on this occasion.

(Action: DTC Admin to reply, by next meeting)

Cllr Sinfield said she had received feedback from people who said there wasn't much to do at the Fun Day for families. Charity stalls were mainly selling things rather than offering activities for kids. Previously, forms have included a request for charity stalls to provide a free activity for families as part of their discounted pitch - SR requested this is added to future forms.

(Action: DTC Admin, for future event)

The climbing wall was a paid for activity from the committee for visitors to use but many weren't aware that this was actually free on the day. For future events, if we have paid for an activity, more promo is to be done to share this. Or there was discussion that we pay someone to take a small fee to generate income.

(Action: KJ, for future event)

It was noted that there was a stall selling fake toy goods at the Fun Day (the items didn't have trademarks underneath) which DTC has reported to trading standards & will be recorded for future events.

(Action: KJ, for future event)

Security stewards were great on the procession, but members found they were reluctant to take action with certain issues at the Fun Day. A member of the public entered the main area without consent while entertainment was taking place. They also frequently 'performed' directly in front of other paid pavilion performers. Security was asked several times to remove this individual by committee members and on one occasion, the steward was standing back watching and filming the individual on his phone. Park Radio asked them face to face to do something about it and they didn't move him on. Committee agreed that an email should be sent to the security asking for some money back due to these significant failings.

(Action: RL, by next meeting)

It was noted that despite it being a sports theme this year, there was a lack of involvement from local sports clubs and teams resulting in less floats in the parade. The shortage of floats was observed by members of the public on social media.

- b) Members received an update on finances for Diss Carnival 2026. It was noted that the current surplus stood at £6,089.20, with a further £500 expected from the funfair.
- c) Members considered a cost and benefit analysis report outlining the staffing and financial implications of delivering Carnival.

Discussion focused on:

- Staff resource requirements.
- Impact on other Council projects.

- Volunteer recruitment and retention challenges.
- Long-term sustainability of the event.

A proposal was made to pause the Carnival in 2027 and return in 2028.

Members noted that almost £16,000 of staffing costs were spent purely on doing work for Carnival 2026, equating to over 550 hours of staff time.

GW highlighted that a lot of projects around the town are delayed, held up or not completed because of time spent on organising this one-day event. Sites such as DYCC, sports ground, mere water quality and mere drain, DDNP review process.

Members noted there are lots of pending projects waiting in the background which could really benefit the town, if staff were allowed the time to focus on them.

All acknowledged that Carnival is a much-loved traditional event in the town held annually which will be greatly missed if it wasn't to take place next year. Members agreed that if more people were willing to actively get involved in the workload for organising the event, this would reduce the impact on Council staff.

Previous Carnivals have had more involvement from a few volunteers reducing the staff burden. This year, we had less volunteers, so all DTC staff were involved to organise and run the event.

A suggestion was made that the Town Council could consider bringing in an additional member of staff to specifically do events.

GP proposed that the town could rotate the big events so each year, a different event would take place. 1 big event each year on the Park – Organ Festival, Carnival, Life Fest, Transport Festival. This would allow some down time for event organisers in between events and may be more exciting for the public who have more variety.

EF highlighted that it's the same volunteers and staff helping with the event year on year which inevitably results in volunteer and staff burnout. It was noted that several of these volunteers have full time jobs separate to the voluntary role. Unless more volunteers come forward to help, the existing staff and volunteers cannot keep up the same level of work year on year.

A suggestion was made to consider having a volunteer recruitment open day to try and encourage help for town events.

Cllr Craggs said councillors have tough decisions to make such as sacrificing a one-day event for a year to allow the Council to catch up and focus on the town sites and projects. GW added that the Carnival doesn't cost anything if it doesn't take place but the sites do.

Doing Carnival every other year allows for longer planning time. It was noted that we couldn't book some of the brilliant performers we wanted to due to how late we were in contacting them. In previous years, the Carnival planning has started from September. This year, planning started much later due to other events and projects.

AR highlighted that if the town projects were able to be completed, the Mere water quality would finally be sorted meaning the dragon boats and raft race could be brought back again for future events.

In support of the proposal to have a break from Carnival next year and return in 2028, 11 (majority) voted in favour & a decision would be taken by Full Council.

Post meeting note - the minutes of this meeting will be sent out with the Full Council agenda in July for a final decision to be made.

(Action: DTC Admin, by 23.07.26)

E0626/07 Christmas Lights Switch-On

- a) Members reviewed and discussed a proposal for the Diss Christmas Lights Switch-On event, focused on reduced duration and a more compact layout. It was agreed to reduce the timings of the event to 4.30pm-7pm following feedback from previous years.

With the shorter event timings, it was proposed to move Santa's Grotto closer to the main event. The URC has been used previously but feedback from visitors last year was that the ceilings were very high and the space didn't have the cosy grotto feel. Suggestions of other locations to consider: No.8 Marketplace and Diss Museum.

Members highlighted that using No.8 Marketplace could be unfair to other businesses who have suitable buildings in the Market Place. Grotto queuing may be a little crowded if the rest of the building is open for shoppers. The Museum was a preferable location. DTC will enquire with the Museum.

(Action: DTC Admin, by next meeting)

AR has a grotto, used in a previous year, which could be considered but members needed costings first.

(Action: DTC Admin to email AR for quote, by next meeting)

Santa will be the same person as previous. Matt happy to do visuals for the promo screen if members choose to have it.

(Action: Matt/Park Radio, by event)

Shops are encouraged to open later for the event & put on activities that can be promoted as part of the event – members needed to go round and talk to shops to promote this.

(Action: DTC Admin to email members, by next meeting)

- b) Members confirmed infrastructure and entertainment acts for DTC to book. Park Radio would be happy to do staging and sound again – quote to be considered. The exact location of the stage can be confirmed at the next meeting once we know more about the nearby stall requirements for electric etc.

(Action: DTC Admin to email members, by next meeting)

- c) A proposed running order for entertainment was considered including 5 carols at 5 lead by the Churches Together around the Christmas tree, a performance at 4.30pm on stage (act tbc), 5-minute performance from the Corn Hall panto cast, the switch-on at 6pm and a live band to finish. Santa's grotto, food stalls and the usual parade will also take place in between. Members agreed this reduced schedule is better and more impactful.

Members suggested the Salvation Army could play the backing music for the carol singing at 5pm and/or the choir performance if the band is available. SR to speak with St Mary's Revd & choir then contact Salvation Army.

(Action: SV-R, by next meeting)

Panto cast is keen to be heavily involved – they would do a 5-minute performance on stage, then join the parade at the bottom of Mere Street. Cast member is Graham from The Bill and it was agreed he'd go up on the stage with Dinsdale and The Mayor to turn the lights on subject to agreement.

(Action: Lindsey Booty, by next meeting)

E0626/08 Member Updates

There were none.

E0626/09 Date of Future Meetings

Members noted the next meeting of this committee is scheduled for Tuesday 21st July 2026.

Meeting closed: 20:35.

Clr Declan Craggs
Substitute-Chair