

Diss Town Council

Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the **Town Council** held in the **Council Chamber** at **Diss Corn Hall** on **Wednesday 12th March 2025** at **7.15pm**.

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

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

FC0325/01 Apologies

Councillor's Name	Apologies Received	Absent Without Apology	Reason / Approval
S. Browne	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ill health
D. Collins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ill health
S. Olander	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ill health These apologies were not accepted.

FC0325/02 Declarations of Interest

Minute No.	Councillor's Name	Personal/Other Interest	Pecuniary Interest	Reason
FC0325/06 FC0325/09	D. Craggs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	This cllr proposed the Co-Option candidate and is a member of the Grants Panel
FC0325/09	S. Kiddie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	This cllr is a member of the Grants Panel
FC0325/18	A. Kitchen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	This cllr knows one of the Honoured Citizen nominees
FC0325/06 FC0325/09	K. Murphy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	This cllr seconded the Co-Option candidate and is a member of the Grants Panel
FC0325/09 FC0325/18	R. Peaty	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	This cllr is a member of the Grants Panel and knows one of the Honoured Citizen nominees

FC0325/03 Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Full Council meeting on Wednesday 19th February 2025. It was

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on Wednesday 19th February 2025 as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

FC0325/04 Public Participation

There were nine members of the public in attendance. County Councillor Kiddie explained there were three geographical division options across Norfolk & Suffolk under consideration with the Devolution proposals and it was note that District Cllr Minshull is attending a conference this week on the subject. Funds have now been depleted for Highways towards end of the financial year. Most of the recent disruption from roadworks is due to essential emergency gas works.

The pathway from Sunnyside to the Catholic church on Shelfanger Road should be resurfaced in May. The spare signage for the Diss Beacon cycle route is stored with the Town Council and he was on the interview panel for new Head of Science at Diss High School. There was a request to follow up on the recently attended to water leak on Shelfanger Road, which hasn't been fixed and to enquire about telecommunication engineers working on the cabinet opposite fish and chip shop on Shelfanger Road.

(Action: KK; immediately)

District cllr Minshull advised that a consultation regarding the government reorganisation is underway, that a Band E property pays £306 for Council Tax in Norwich compared to £165 in South Norfolk and that the District Council is vigorously resisting the planned land grab by Norwich to take in the hospital, two business parks and Lotus engineering at Hethel. He will provide a briefing to Diss and Roydon councillors once he knows more about the reorganisation.

(Action: GM; by 23.04.25)

He congratulated the Town Council on their successful VE Day grant application and advised that the Greater Norwich Growth Board has awarded £1.5m to the UEA & Hospital Trust to build a new dental school, which will offer treatment carried out by students supervised by qualified professionals with the aim of retaining the trained dental students in the area. He also talked about 'Mindful villages', a programme to train volunteers to provide mental health support.

Their homeless prevention grant has been reduced by £1m, which is a 4% reduction. They have secured £4m to continue to provide the warm home discount. A temporary safe and secure stopping place for up to six weeks has been set up for gypsies and travellers in Norwich and the Police can send them on there if they arrive in a public space.

It was noted that item 14 was confidential as members were receiving a presentation from the consultant, that a comprehensive update was provided to the last meeting and that the report would be shared publicly in due course. Items 16 & 17 are considering more than one quote and are commercially sensitive.

FC0325/05 Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business raised.

FC0325/06 Co-Option

Members considered one application for co-option to Diss Town Council. Catherine explained that she has worked for a corporate estate agency for many years and has been a Diss resident for 37 years. She has recently opened a business in town and has more time to volunteer. Their company's ethos is to give back to the community and they currently fund a breakfast club and free fruit scheme at the High School. Catherine's proposer, Cllr Craggs, spoke about her management background, positive attitude, ethics and skillset which will support DTC going forwards. It was

Resolved: to co-opt Catherine Dente as a councillor of Diss Town Council.

(Action: Clerk / CD; by 30.04.25)

Cllr Dente joined councillors at the table.

FC0325/07 Finance

- a) Members noted bank outgoings for February 2025.
- b) Members noted the Income & Expenditure report for February 2025.
- c) Members noted the Earmarked Reserves report for February 2025.

FC0325/08 Internal Controls

Members received the interim internal audit report for period ending 31.12.24 and noted that the one recommendation has been completed. Positive feedback was received on this report, which would be shared with the Finance Officer.

(Action: Clerk; immediately)

FC0325/09 Community Grant Scheme

Members considered recommendations from the Grants Panel & Clerk regarding four funding applications (report 60/2425). It was noted that grants of £15,205 had been applied for and only £6,900 remains in the budget for this financial year. There was discussion around awarding more to the Corn Hall and less to Park Radio and it was

- Resolved:**
- 1. a) To award £590 to Diss Corn Hall Trust to host a monthly Open Mic Night to cover venue contribution and building costs and marketing & promotion.
 - 2. To award £1,000 to My Period to provide free accessible period products and advance education.
 - 3. To refuse the £1,000 grant requested from The Norfolk Community Law Service to host legal advice drop-in sessions.

4. a) To award £5,310 to Park Radio Ltd to deliver the Voices of Diss - A Community Storytelling & Oral History Project.

5. That the grant form financials section is amended to include a request for a breakdown of costs plus total project costs.

(Action: Clerk / Finance Officer; immediately)

FC0325/10 Clerk's Report

Members noted the Clerk's report will be presented at the April Full Council meeting.

FC0325/11 Progress Report

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

FC0325/12 Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the Full Council is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 23rd April 2025 at 7.15pm.

FC0325/13 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 items which are properly considered to be of a confidential nature.

This item was brought forward to allow a member of the public to answer any questions prior to decision-making.

FC0325/14 Rectory Meadow

Members considered quotes received for fencing and a planting scheme to replace the hedge at Rectory Meadow (confidential report 62/2425). There was discussion regarding the number of gates for safety. It was

Resolved: 1. To approve the quote from Clarke Fencing Ltd of up to £7,475 from Earmarked Reserves Community Infrastructure Levy funds to install new fencing and two gates as per the proposed positioning at Rectory Meadow subject to further discussions with Diss Cricket Club.

(Action: Clerk / FBM; by 30.04.25)

2. That Diss Town Council assumes responsibility for the green infrastructure on the path side of the fence at Rectory Meadow.

3. That the lease between Diss Town Council and Diss Cricket Club is reviewed to reflect any changes.

4. To approve the proposed planting scheme for installation in Autumn 2025.

(Action: Clerk / FBM; by 31.10.25)

FC0325/15 Diss Youth & Community Centre

Members received a presentation from FMG Consulting Ltd following their feasibility study on the DYCC. It was

Resolved: That the presentation and report would be circulated to all members and there would be an update following review by the DYCC Action Group at the next Full Council meeting.

(Action: Clerk / DYCC AG; by 23.04.25)

FC0325/16 Council Leader

Members considered the removal of the title of Council Leader from councillor Simon Olander as per the protocol and Standing Orders 9. It was agreed that the leadership role would be considered at the May meeting. With one abstention and ten in favour of the motion, it was

Resolved: 1. To remove the title of Council Leader from cllr Olander as per clause 3 of the DTC Leader Role & Protocol.
2. That the Council Leader role becomes vacant until our next election in May 2025 when the leadership role will be considered.

(Action: Clerk; immediately / by 21.05.25)

At 21.19, 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.

FC0325/17 Electricity Contract Renewal

Members considered recommendations for renewal of the Council's electricity contract (confidential report 61/2425). It was

Resolved:

1. To approve a new 36-month green electricity contract with British Gas to commence from 1st October 2025 at an annual cost of £21,710 through the broker The Utility Supplier Group.
2. If prices fluctuate significantly, to delegate authority to the Clerk to work with the Chair of the Executive committee and Finance Officer to appoint the best value electricity supplier on a (maximum of) 36-month contract to start from 1st October 2025.
3. To review the gas contract in September 2026 aiming for an 18-month contract, so they and at the same time as the electricity.

(Action: Clerk / Finance Officer; immediately / by 30.08.26)

FC0325/18 Honoured Citizen Awards

Members considered nine nominations received for the Honoured Citizen awards, which would be presented at the Annual Town Meeting on 30th April. It was noted that this was a record number of nominations, all were very worthy, and it was a difficult decision to make. Votes were counted and it was

Resolved: To award three Honoured Citizen awards to Katie Brame, Richard Pither & Alan Franks.

(Action: Clerk; by 30.04.25)

Meeting closed: 21:42.

Councillor K. Murphy
Chair / Town Mayor