

# DISS TOWN COUNCIL

## MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held **online** on **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020** at **8pm**.

*Prior to the meeting, the Chair, Councillor Sonia Browne extended her thanks on behalf of the Town Council to former Councillor Howard after his recent resignation for his contribution to the work of the Council over many years and wished him well for his future endeavours.*

Present: Councillors S. Browne (ex-officio)  
D. Collins  
M. Gingell  
S. Kiddie  
J. Mason  
K. Murphy  
S. Olander (ex-officio)  
D. Poulter  
J. Robertson  
E. Taylor  
S. Warren  
J. Welch

In attendance Sarah Richards, Town Clerk  
Sonya French, Deputy Town Clerk  
Alex Jamieson, Responsible Finance Officer  
Robert Ludkin, Maintenance Manager  
District Councillor Minshull

### **FC1020/01 TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Kitchen was not in attendance and apologies had not been received. County and District Councillor Kiddie also gave his apologies.

### **FC1020/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

Minute No.	Councillors Name	Personal/Other Interest	Pecuniary Interest	Reason
FC1020/07	S. Browne		X	This councillor is an employee of Citizens Advice, Diss, Thetford & District.
	M. Gingell		X	This councillor is a volunteer of Citizens Advice, Diss, Thetford & District.

It was noted that Councillor Warren no longer volunteers for the above organisation.

### **FC1020/03 MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020 were approved as a true record and will be signed with the Clerk post meeting.  
**(Action: Clerk / SB; immediately)**

### **FC1020/04 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Councillors considered a resolution under Standing Orders 3d to 3h to suspend the meeting to receive reports from the County and District Councillors, on behalf of the Police, and to hear comments from members of the public on items to be discussed on the agenda. County and District Councillor Kiddie was unable to attend and sent his apologies.

District Councillor Minshull spoke of his role in judging South Norfolk Council's (SNC) Community Awards and informing the competition winners. He was delighted that the Waveney Wildlife Trust was given the environmental award for its outstanding work on Frenze Beck, which has been a much-needed facility during Covid-19. Members and staff were encouraged to visit.

He talked of the uncertainty around Covid-19 and the collaborative One Team approach of SNC and Broadland Council, which has saved considerable funds. They have been focusing on

providing support throughout the pandemic and over a quarter of their staff have been redeployed to help with parcel delivery, prescription collection and answering phones. Over 20,000 calls have been received during the period and 5,000 shielding residents have been checked on regularly. Every homeless person has been provided with accommodation and each business assisted with either a grant or financial support. Four-thousand food parcels have been distributed and 78 residents given safe accommodation.

They have updated over 4,000 webpages and received 0.25 million website visits. Three quarters of their staff have been working from home and SNC is one of a few Councils that has not reduced its waste collection service with over one million bins being collected as normal. SNC / Broadland will be working with market towns to try and help increase footfall as well as working with Trading Standards and the Police to do Covid compliance business checks, which will work on a yellow and red card system. It is hoped that any business found not complying will after the first visit given help and advice to improve. On the second visit a red card will result in the business being shut.

They feel well equipped to face a second lockdown should it take place given experience to date and members were asked to review their Declarations of Interest submissions given possible volunteering activities relating to Covid. It was agreed that the Clerk would remind all councillors of the requirement to review their Declarations and provide details as required.

**(Action: Clerk; immediately)**

There were no questions.

**FC1020/05** **ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There were none.

**FC1020/06** **FINANCE**

- a) Members noted bank outgoings for September 2020.
- b) Members received the summary of Income and Expenditure for the month ending September 2020.
- c) Members received the summary of Earmarked Reserves for the month ending September 2020. There was a question regarding the funds allocated to the Heritage Triangle Project. It was noted that there are still some works outstanding and this will cover further invoices. It was agreed that the Infrastructure committee would review the remaining HTP project expenditure and work with the Heritage Triangle Trust to tie up any loose ends before the end of this financial year.
- d) Members considered appointing a councillor to act as Internal Controls Officer and reconcile quarterly and financial year end Income and Expenditure with the Council's bank account statements. It was

**(Action: Clerk; by 22.10.20)**

RESOLVED: to appoint Councillor Gingell to act as Internal Controls Officer and reconcile quarterly and financial year end Income and Expenditure with the Council's bank account statements.

**(Action: RFO / MG; quarterly)**

**FC1020/07** **COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME**

Members considered a recommendation from the Grant Scheme Panel regarding an application for funds from Citizens Advice Diss, Thetford & District (CADAT) (report reference 21/2021 referred). There was a discussion regarding the interest of one of the councillors on the Grants Panel, but it was agreed that the vote remains with the Council based only on a recommendation by the Panel. It was noted that CADAT do some great work and the recommendation is based on the financial situation which was submitted as part of the application. The organisation has prudently allocated funds to cover loss of major income, but it still leaves them with £19k surplus for last financial year.

It was not deemed appropriate to expect the taxpayers of Diss to financially support a company, which is in good financial health. There was a query regarding the residents benefitting from the requested funds given it operates in Thetford and across the District as well as Diss and it was noted that Thetford Town Council is absent from the list of organisations who have funded CADAT on their website. It was

RESOLVED: not to award the requested grant to Citizen's Advice Diss, Thetford and District.

**(Action: Clerk; immediately)**

The RFO left the meeting post financial related items.

**FC1020/08**      **DISS PARK**

Members considered appointing an Action Group of three members to work with the Deputy Town Clerk and Maintenance Manager to consider the feasibility of measures to prevent encampments on Diss Park with a report to the Facilities committee.

It was noted that this item had been added to this agenda in response to a request by the Council Leader following two incidents within one year and to allow time for the Action Group to research any possible options for presentation to the Facilities committee at the end of November.

There was discussion on whether Council should first take a view on whether anything could be done before setting up an action group and whether it would be a good use of taxpayers' money. Given the budget setting period, it was felt that the Facilities committee should consider the resource implications versus the benefit(s) of this project against all other potential Facilities related projects and prioritise accordingly for consideration by all councillors.

It was noted that over £100k had been spent on improving the play areas, that the Park has previously been awarded Green Flag status and that considering possible measures to prevent encampment access along a relatively short stretch of Park Road need not be cost prohibitive.

Members discussed the cost of removing the encampments and although there is no fee, staff time is required, and the next group may not be as willing to leave as the two previous groups. Access to the Park for emergency services and events was noted. It was

RESOLVED:                      to appoint Councillors Murphy, Olander, Taylor and Warren to work with the Deputy Town Clerk and Maintenance Manager to consider the feasibility of measures to prevent encampments on Diss Park and provide a report to the Facilities committee to inform budget proposals.  
**(Action: SF / MM / KM / SO / ET / SW; by 19.11.20)**

**FC1020/09**      **NORFOLK ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS**

Members considered Diss Town Council's representative to the Norfolk Association of Local Councils. The Clerk provided assurances that she would only vote on behalf of the Council where she was confident of their standpoint and that she would canvass opinion either via email or relevant committee otherwise. It was

RESOLVED:                      To nominate the Clerk as Diss Town Council's representative to the Norfolk Association of Local Councils.  
**(Action: Clerk; immediately)**

**FC1020/10**      **PROGRESS REPORT**

Members noted progress on decisions made at the last meeting of Council. It was noted that there has been a lack of response from SNC regarding item 1, which was explained by a SNC focus on the Covid-19 response. District Councillor Minshull agreed to liaise with the responsible Director for an update and it was noted that the next meeting of the Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan has been postponed until 26<sup>th</sup> October.

**(Action: GM / Clerk; immediately)**

**FC1020/11**      **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members noted that the next meeting of Full Council is scheduled for Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

Meeting Closed: 9.01pm

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Councillor Browne  
TOWN MAYOR