

## **ANNUAL DISS TOWN MEETING** **MINUTES**

Minutes of the proceedings of the **Annual Meeting of Duly Registered Local Government Electors** held in the Diss Youth & Community Centre, Shelfanger Road, Diss on **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2019 at 6.30pm.**

Present: Councillor Trevor Wenman (Town Mayor) in the Chair  
Sarah Richards (Town Clerk)  
Sonya French (Deputy Town Clerk)  
Councillors Browne (Deputy Town Mayor), Crawford, Howard, Kitchen,  
Mason, Olander (Council Leader), Robertson & Taylor  
County/District Councillor Keith Kiddie  
Former District Councillor Tony Palmer  
3 representatives from the Police  
3 Youth Councillors  
1 Member of the Press  
33 electors

### **1. WELCOME BY THE TOWN MAYOR OF DISS**

Councillor Trevor Wenman welcomed those in attendance to the annual parish meeting of Diss.

### **2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018 were agreed as a correct record and duly signed by the Town Mayor.

### **3. ANNUAL REPORT FROM DISS TOWN COUNCIL**

Councillor Trevor Wenman presented a report of the activities of the Town Council over the last 12 months, which included; investment in the roadways & roundabout at Diss Cemetery (in partnership with local organisations); netting of the Park Pavilion to reduce the bird droppings in this area; working with the Diss Youth Council to upgrade the Park play equipment & Skateboard Park on Shelfanger Road using developer contributions from the Longmeadow estate; improvements to the Diss Youth & Community Centre site including more flexible hire spaces for existing and new users and the completion of the £3.4million Heritage Triangle Project, which has seen the restoration & extension of the Corn Hall, the development of the streetscape around the 'Triangle' & the creation of a new garden & boardwalk across the Mere.

Assets from South Norfolk District Council are to be transferred to the Town Council. Suffolk County Council is managing around 230 streetlights & have started to convert the lamps from sodium to more environmentally friendly and more cost-effective LED lamps. Retaining public toilets at Mere's Mouth was a key issue for the town and works to refurbish the facility will be undertaken by South Norfolk Council's contractors in the next few months.

The success of this year's events was celebrated particularly the Carnival (9<sup>th</sup> June 2019) & Christmas Lights Switch-on event, overseen by the Town Council but primarily organised by small groups of volunteers. Other forthcoming events include; a Ukulele Busk (15<sup>th</sup> June); third Diss Cyclathon (23<sup>rd</sup> June); Fun in the Sun on 20<sup>th</sup> July (collaboration between Park Radio & Diss & District Rotary Club); the Heritage Transport Fayre (15<sup>th</sup> September) & regular car boot sales on the Park starting from 2<sup>nd</sup> June.

Improvements to infrastructure included the project spearheaded by Doreen Collins and in partnership with local businesses and the Town Council to install planters (Floral Diss) along Mere Street, working in partnership with Norfolk County Council to influence positive highway related changes (NCC has invested approximately £1million in Diss' road network this year).

Reference was also made to the Town Council's role as a consultee only on planning applications most notably this year the revised Marston's application for the site south of Park Road being refused for the second time and the community's support of the Parish Fields site.

Finally, the considerable staffing & councillor changes were highlighted to include; the change in Town Clerks; new Deputy Clerk; change in Council Leader; new Deputy Mayor role and change to councillors. Eligible candidates were encouraged to put themselves forward for co-option.

Chairman of Diss Youth Council, Kieran Murphy, advised members of the wide range of activities they have been involved in since their launch in September 2018 including dementia awareness plays, attendance at events, gardening, an intergenerational project serving up a festive social luncheon and market research with young people regarding how to spend developer contributions.

#### **4. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR FOR DISS**

County Councillor Keith Kiddie provided a report on his activities as the County Council representative for Diss. The different functions of the three tiers of local authorities was explained and electors were encouraged to use the relevant contacts in the literature provided. The broad range of responsibilities for Norfolk County Council as the fifth largest county in England, was explained and include highways, adult & social care, education and broadband services. It was also emphasised how the three authorities work in collaboration with each other, exemplified recently by the retention of the Children's Centre provision in Diss.

#### **5. ANNUAL REPORT FROM MEMBERS OF SOUTH NORFOLK COUNCIL REPRESENTING DISS**

Former District Councillor Palmer reported on his memorable achievements over the last 12 years as member of South Norfolk Council representing Diss most notably, the donation of the Mere fountain & Town Mayor's robes, the late Glyn Walden's contribution to the Corn Hall, Cittaslow movement, improved links with the Police, representative of the Town Council for Diss Museum and the Citizens Advice Bureau, contribution as member of South Norfolk Council's Planning committee, and his work on the rail station travel plan including the proposed Nelson Road link. He thanked former and existing Town Councillors, his supporters & concluded that he has been honoured to have served Diss & South Norfolk as a great place to live.

#### **6. ISSUES RAISED BY ELECTORS**

Several issues were raised by electors including:

- a) The difference between a pelican and zebra / tiger crossing. It was noted that a pelican crossing has traffic lights and cost considerably more to install & maintain than the new tiger crossing installed outside the leisure centre.
- b) Eligibility criteria for a Town Councillor. It was noted that applicants have to be at least 18 years of age, British or a citizen of the Commonwealth or European Union, registered to vote in the area or have lived, worked or owned property there for a least 12 months before an election.
- c) Contribution towards the current environmental concerns. Diss Youth Councillors advised that they would consider this in liaison with their Friends of the Earth representative and the Town Council welcomes any ideas and/or support of the community on the subject.
- d) Condition of dilapidated buildings. It was noted that South Norfolk District Council only has powers to act if the building is deemed to be unsafe. Otherwise, it is the building owner's responsibility.
- e) Street cleaning. It was noted this is the responsibility of South Norfolk Council and the business owners for the area outside their premises. More regular street cleaning was requested.
- f) The relocation of the Visitor Information service from Mere Street to the Corn Hall. It was noted that this was a decision by South Norfolk Council due to the considerable costs of running the service and the data which proved that a very small percentage of visits were visitor related.
- g) Mere Street pedestrianisation. It was noted that this is an option currently being explored by the Town Council in liaison with businesses, residents, the Police & higher tier authorities. There are potential locations for delivery vehicle drop off points on Market Place in addition to the Mere Street loading and unloading bays opposite Mere's Mouth.

h) Wetherspoons development. It was noted that the applicant is dealing with two legal matters with adjacent landowners prior to arranging a site meeting to agree construction requirements. The Town Council will be involved in this process & will advise accordingly.

The meeting was followed by the presentation of awards to past serving Town councillors (Kayt Button, Michael Crawford, Mary Gibson, Chris Liggett, Fiona & Trevor Wenman) the Honoured & Junior Good Citizens (Jim Bidwell & Zinhle Moyo) and the Mayor's charities (Mind & Tearfund).

The meeting was declared closed at 8.09pm.

Signed as a true record - \_\_\_\_\_  
TOWN MAYOR