

# DISS TOWN COUNCIL

## MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held in the Council Chamber at Diss Corn Hall on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019 at 7:15pm.

Present: Councillors S. Browne (ex-officio)  
M. Gingell  
N. Howard (Chair)  
S. Kiddie  
J. Mason (Vice-Chair)  
S. Olander (ex-officio)  
D. Poulter  
J. Robertson

In attendance: Miss S. Richards (Town Clerk)  
Mrs A. Jamieson (RFO)

### **EX1219/01 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Taylor.

### **EX1219/02 NOMINATION OF SUBSTITUTE REPRESENTATIVES**

There were none.

### **EX1219/03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

### **EX1219/04 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the Executive Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019 were confirmed as a true record.

### **EX1219/05 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public in attendance.

### **EX1219/06 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There were none.

### **EX1219/07 BUDGET**

Members considered recommendations from the Budget Action Group regarding the 2020/21 budget (report reference 26/1920 referred). It was noted that good progress has been made towards the budgeting process compared with previous years. Members discussed the current unknowns such as cost of living increases, tax base and potential costs for site improvements such as Cemetery Chapels, for which quotations are awaited. It was noted that the percentage variation between this year's budget against proposed budget is available in the end of quarter 2 report, which will be presented to Full Council next week.

There was discussion on staffing costs & setting a realistic budget that can be managed operationally by the Clerk and reported to Council. Members also discussed potential discrepancies between staff salary scale ranges. It was agreed that the committee would consider a staffing pay review during the 2020/21 financial year to include performance related increments to ensure it is able to recruit and retain staff.

There was a request to more clearly present the Earmarked Reserve (EMR) data alongside the proposed budget proposals for expenditure. It was agreed that the allocation from EMR DYCC to allow for ground floor improvements would be considered at a future meeting. Members discussed the requirement to purchase additional burial land, noted that the land adjacent to the Cemetery has been put forward as a potential development site and that the Facilities committee should consider this further.

Hire fees were discussed and it was agreed that where increases were proposed that these should be consistent. Members considered the grant scheme allocation. There was discussion around allocating the Corn Hall grant funds to the existing Corn Hall maintenance budget to cover anticipated

costs, which should be met by the Council as owner with responsibility for the building. It was agreed that the Facilities committee should review the responsibilities document prior to a discussion with the Corn Hall, which could refer to the partnership agreement relating to the Heritage Triangle Project.

It was noted that Councillor Gingell is drafting a proposal regarding the grant scheme process, which will be reported to Council in due course. It was agreed that the grant scheme budget allocation should be retained at £20k, which is 3% of total expenditure in order to support organisations, which help to achieve the Council's aims.

Councillors considered how best to publicise the budgeting process. It was noted that an article explaining the budgeting process has been submitted in the monthly column being released this week. It was agreed that clear and engaging information should be disseminated via the Council's website and social media to explain the process and how the Town Council's element of the Council Tax (10%) is made up. This should include re-use of the responsibilities graphic for the three different tiers of local government.

It was noted that approximately 80% of the Council's budget is core costs, which are spent to maintain current facilities and services and that the remaining 20% can be allocated to additional projects.

Queries were raised regarding proposed budgets for sites given works required, expenditure to date, committed expenditure and EMR allocations. It was agreed that Councillor Poulter would meet with the RFO to confirm that sufficient allocations are proposed for planned projects across the current budget and EMR and that this is reflected in an easy to understand format.

The RFO commented that she has estimated realistic income and expenditure forecasts based on actuals. It was agreed that the proposed EMR expenditure would be more clearly presented against the project priorities (high, medium & low) and it was noted that not all projects would be completed in the next financial year.

The Chair of the Infrastructure committee received confirmation that the review of budgetary requirements for his committee would be undertaken in time to feed into the overall budget approval process. It was

RESOLVED: That members recommend to Full Council:

1. A 0% increase in the staffing budget for 2020/21.
2. An allocation to cover the potential cost of replacing a member of the maintenance team from Earmarked Reserves.
3. An increase in hire fees of 2% for the Cemetery Bungalow, Sports Ground, Allotments & Mere.
4. The continuation of a grant allocation of £20k in the 2020/21 budget.
5. The re-profile of the current allocation of councillors' allowances including the Town Mayor to reflect the additional responsibilities of the four committee Chairs, the Council Leader and the Town Mayor.
6. Consideration of a budget publicity plan.

**(Action: RFO; immediately)**

**EX1219/08**

**PROGRESS REPORT**

Members noted progress on decisions made at the last meeting of the Executive Committee. There was a request to review exit interview forms at a future meeting.

**EX1219/09**

**MEMBER FORUM**

There was no information or issues relevant to this committee from members for brief discussion, action or inclusion on a future agenda.

**EX1219/10**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Councillors noted that the next meeting of the Executive Committee is scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

**EX1219/11**

**PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS)**

Members considered a resolution under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 and Standing Orders 1c 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.

**EX1219/12**

**CEMETERY CHAPEL**

The consideration of quotations received to undertake a structural survey of the Cemetery Chapels to inform the budgeting process for 2020/21 was deferred to a future meeting.

**(Action: Clerk; immediately)**

Meeting Closed at 9.15pm.

-----  
Chairman: Councillor Howard