

DISS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the **Infrastructure Committee** held in the Marriage Room at **Diss Town Council Offices** on **Wednesday 18th December 2019** at **7:15pm**.

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

In attendance: Miss Sarah Richards, Town Clerk
Councillors Howard and Robertson

INF1219/01 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Kitchen.

INF1219/02 **NOMINATION OF SUBSTITUTE REPRESENTATIVES**

Councillor Howard substituted for Councillor Kitchen.

INF1219/03 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST¹ AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

There were none.

INF1219/04 **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

It was noted that the minutes of the Infrastructure Committee held on 25th September 2019 were confirmed as a true record.

INF1219/05 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public present.

INF1219/06 **ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There were none.

INF1219/07 **PEDESTRIANISATION OF MERE STREET**

Councillors considered extending the current Traffic Regulation Order on Mere Street to enable the removal of free-flowing traffic at specific times of the day in consultation with local traders. It was noted that Chapel Street is too narrow to accommodate both large delivery vehicles and allow passing traffic. The rear of Mere St adjacent to the Mere is also narrow and not of a sufficient highways standard to accommodate additional delivery vehicles & there didn't appear to be any condition on the Wetherspoon consent to reinstate the rear access road. There was discussion regarding the impact on traders and the requirement to have a significant majority of traders in support of the scheme before Norfolk County Council will explore potential schemes. Members considered the requirement for flexibility to the proposed Traffic Regulation Order timings to allow large / heavy deliveries, access for emergency vehicles and the potential barrier to prevent traffic passing at Mere Street / Market Place junction.

There was discussion about the benefits of the scheme to improve the shopping experience and therefore footfall for the businesses, public safety and that it has been successfully achieved in other towns. It was noted that the existing signage could be reviewed although it is regularly ignored. It was agreed that the contact database of Mere Street traders being collated via a Diss Community Team (former Town Team) initiative, would help the Council to engage with traders to tackle key issues in the town such as improved cleanliness as a foundation for discussing traffic reduction in the area. It was

RESOLVED: to develop relations with Mere Street traders to tackle key issues in the town including through traffic in Mere Street.

(Action: Clerk / DC / Infrastructure Committee; by 13.02.20)

INF1219/08 **BUDGET**

a) Councillors considered budgetary recommendations from the Infrastructure committee for referral to Full Council. The pedestrianisation of Mere Street was discussed but it was agreed that the requirement for funds would be likely to impact on the 2021/22 budget and not the forthcoming year. It was also noted that parishes in the Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan are planning to contribute funds towards

publicity, that Councillor Poulter would liaise with the RFO regarding best process and that the Council still has approximately £8k in Earmarked Reserves for the Plan.

There was discussion around the Residents Parking Scheme, a South Norfolk Council (SNC) led initiative, aimed at tackling on-street parking issues in the town. It was agreed that the schemes undertaken by Costessey & Trowse Town Councils should be reviewed and there was discussion about the Town Council investigating employing a part-time Traffic Enforcement Officer, funded via penalty notices, given there are only two for the whole district Council. It was also noted that there are Community Infrastructure Levy monies available, which could contribute towards some of the parking scheme and that one town had closed off parking in an area around a school due to parking issues. It was

- RESOLVED:
- i) to budget £5k towards the Residents Parking Scheme with the remaining £5k allocated from Community Infrastructure Levy funds
 - ii) Not to budget £9k for pedestrianisation of Mere St in the 2020/21 budget pending further research.
 - ii) to investigate the Residents Parking Schemes undertaken by other Town Councils.

(Action: Clerk / RFO; by 08.01.20 / by 13.02.19)

- b) Councillors considered expenditure from Earmarked Reserves to undertake resurfacing works at Mere's Mouth. It was noted that the Norfolk County Council Highways Engineer had confirmed that both the resin bound, and hot rolled asphalt & chippings options would have similar longevity and that both options were existing in the Mere's Mouth area. It was agreed that vehicles should be discouraged from driving over the resurfaced area and that planters could be installed to also enhance the aesthetic appearance of this area. A discussion would also be undertaken with South Norfolk Council regarding protection of the resurfaced area for the Mere's Mouth toilet refurbishment. It was

RESOLVED: to allocate up to £27,100 to resurface the Mere's Mouth area including Madgett's Walk and Park footpath with resin bound treatment & explore further enhancements to the area at the next Facilities committee meeting.

(Action: Clerk / Dep TC / MM; by 31.01.20 / 20.02.20)

INF1219/09

PARKING

Councillors considered action regarding ongoing issues with illegal and inconsiderate parking around the town. There was discussion about receiving a regular update from Norfolk Parking Partnership regarding numbers of vehicles parked illegally / fined in the Heritage Triangle area. Members also discussed traders parking vehicles outside businesses and that the planter on Council owned land in front of the new café could be moved to prevent parking. It was noted that the concept of the Heritage Triangle Programme was to create an area free from lines and signs but that the parking in this area was worse than before. It was also noted that the limited signage in the area is not illuminated during the hours of darkness. There was a request to enforce the illegal parking outside another café on the Market Place / Mere Street.

Members discussed the impacts of the changes to long and short stay car parks, the complaints received to date and the background to the District Council's scheme, which aimed to create a balance between visitor and worker usage. It was noted that the Shelfanger Road (Heritage) car park is rarely full at 8.30am. It was agreed that a meeting should be arranged with the relevant car park Officer at SNC and the Medical Practice Manager to discuss the issues experienced, which would provide an opportunity to discuss improving the medical provision more generally. It was also agreed that the Service Level Agreement relating to existing traffic enforcement should be requested along with discussion around a mechanism for receiving penalty notice funds in order that the Town Council could consider employing a part-time Traffic Enforcement Officer for Diss. It was

- RESOLVED:
- i) to arrange a meeting with Diss Medical Practice and South Norfolk Council's car park Officer to discuss parking issues
 - ii) to request a regular update from Norfolk Parking Partnership regarding number of vehicles parked illegally / fined in the Heritage Triangle area
 - iii) to request the Service Level Agreement relating to existing traffic enforcement in Diss and investigate the mechanism for receiving penalty notice funds to inform consideration of employing a part-time Traffic Enforcement Officer for Diss
 - ii) to investigate whether the signage and lighting is legally sufficient for the Heritage Triangle area.

(Action: Clerk / SO; by 13.02.20)

INF1219/10

PROGRESS REPORT

Councillors noted progress on decisions made at the last meeting of Council related to the Infrastructure Committee. Councillor Taylor provided an update on the Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan. It was noted that the Group is considering green spaces for designation under the Plan, which would provide more protection. Designation should be used where land (public or private) is not extensive (up to 50

hectares), local in character, reasonably close to community, demonstrably special because of beauty, historic significance, recreational use or tranquillity. It was agreed that areas of land meeting these criteria would be forwarded to the Group for consideration and the current designations by SNC would be found.

There was also an update regarding the street cleaning equipment research undertaken. Three firms have been identified that could supply a machine costing around £13k. It was agreed that a trial would be undertaken with similar equipment belonging to Ipswich Borough Council and that SNC would be approached regarding a financial contribution given previous discussions regarding SNC purchasing equipment and the Town Council carrying out the cleaning / maintenance. It was also noted that the staffing and material costs would need to be considered along with the option to lease the equipment.

(Action: SK / MM / RFO; by 13.02.20)

INF1219/11 **MEMBER FORUM**

Councillors considered information or issues relevant to this committee from members for brief discussion, action or inclusion on a future agenda. Members considered the issues relating to NCC-owned streetlighting specifically that lights out had been reported and not repaired. It was also reported that SNC-owned paving is being lifted by the roots of an oak tree outside the cycle shop on Chapel Street. Members were asked to take photo evidence of issues around the town to be forwarded to the relevant authority for follow up.

(Action: Clerk / SO; by 13.02.20)

INF1219/12 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Councillors noted that the next meeting of the Infrastructure Committee is scheduled for 19th February 2019.

INF1219/13 **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.

INF1219/14 **HIGHWAYS NETWORK IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY**

Members considered the draft Diss Network Improvement Strategy plan (December 2019) from NCC. Councillor Taylor summarised his views that the plan would provide only marginal improvement. The suggested improvements to walking and cycling routes were applauded although it was noted that shared routes would only be successful with major infrastructure changes. NCC's justification for not considering any further the link road options is understood. The underestimation in housing growth in the Plan (300) compared to the Greater Norwich Local Plan consultation document (400 + 100 carry over from last plan) was noted, which is also reflected in the shortfall in parking spaces required.

It was noted that Sawmills Road has a high volume of road users trying to avoid the A1066 traffic, which has not been acknowledged in the Plan or with the proposal to develop the Frontier site with a minimum of 200 properties. It was felt that the medium-term objectives of dual laning Sawmills Road and the Morrison roundabout improvements were both good options to be taken forward as soon as possible.

Vehicle movements appear not to have been reviewed and the Market Towns Transportation study undertaken in 2008 addressed many of the same highways issues but has not been referred to. It was also noted that the proposed east – west link road at the north of the town connecting Heywood and Shelfanger Roads should help to reduce the traffic congestions on Sunnyside and that space for a new car park should be investigated. It was

RESOLVED: that Councillor Taylor drafts a response to the draft Diss Network Improvement Strategy based on comments discussed to inform a meeting in the New Year between Norfolk County Council and representatives from the Infrastructure committee.

(Action: ET / Clerk / SO / DP; by 31.01.20)

Meeting Closed at: 9.15pm.

Chairman: Councillor Olander