

Green Flag application DRAFT

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Introduction

Simmons Park sits within the beautiful East Okement Valley, classified as a conservation area protected not only by the valley itself but also the charitable status of the land. It is within easy reach of Okehampton Town Centre, accessible by foot, road and rail and has been described many times as the jewel in Okehampton's crown.

The East Okement river runs through the park which creates a natural divide between the recreational sports and children's play area side and the formal garden areas. Thanks to the spacious green space available the park is freely accessible for hire by all through the Town Council, it acts as a focal point for many community events. Our dedicated Park Staff work hard to maintain the space to a high standard which has helped protect it and encourage continual use. From duck races and Santa runs to a variety of celebrations, including Party's in the Park, concerts, fairs, and carnivals. There isn't much the Park hasn't been used for over the years.

The town recently celebrated it's 400-year Charter, joining our celebrations for this milestone event was our neighbouring Hamlets Parish Council's 125th anniversary and the Okehampton United Charities 150th anniversary. These events, which were hosted within the park, provided a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our area's accomplishments.



Above: Newcombe's Falls - part of the water gardens. Autumn in Simmons Park adds splashes of colour such as the Acers around the water gardens.



Above: Newcombe's Falls — part of the water gardens. Autumn in Simmons Park adds splashes of colour such as the Acers around the water gardens.

Below: Chalet Trelor named after the Mayor of London in 1907 who opened the park and is a Grade II listed Alm's House.



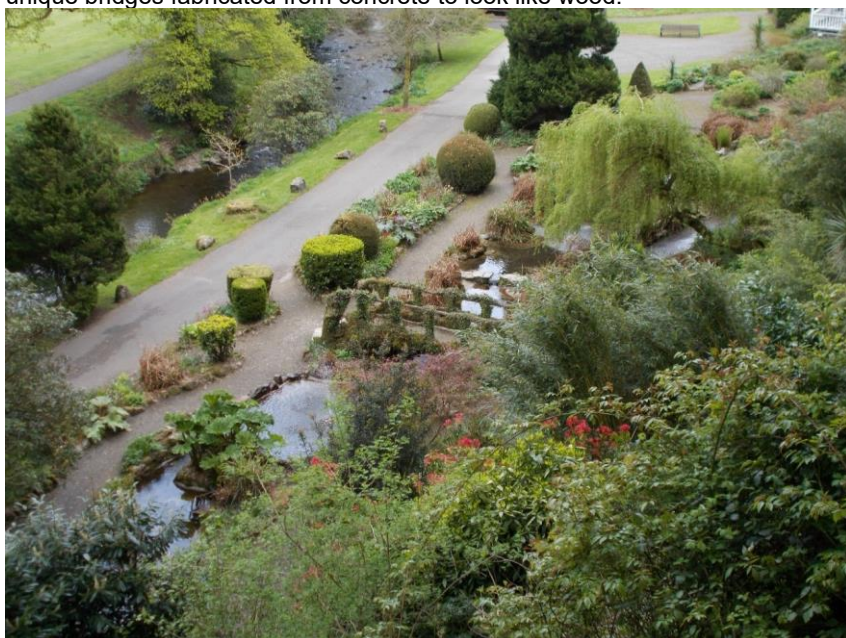


Above: The new band stand, built in 2012, used as a venue for bands and performers at events in Simmons Park.

Below: The younger children's playground built with the assistance of funding from Okehampton United Charity



Below is the view from the top path looking down over the water gardens with their unique bridges fabricated from concrete to look like wood.



Recently, we were able to replace a structure on the old bandstand base. We had a generous donation from a member of the public which added to our existing budget. We are now hoping the pergola will provide a venue for wedding photographs and art exhibitions. New planting around the base will enhance the area and add a range of colours and scents. The pergola was designed and constructed by a local metal fabricator who saw a picture of the original ~~structure-bandstand~~ and created a modern version that met all the safety requirements while still retaining the historic feel. The base has commemorative plaques added celebrating the life of the late Queen Elizabeth II, the Coronation of the King Charles III, the generous benefactor who helped finance the project and Sydney Simmons who gave the park to the town. The refreshed planting has a royal theme with Queen Elizabeth II roses and Lily of the Valley and Delphiniums a favourite of King Charles and Queen Camilla. ~~the coronation of the new King Charles III, the generous benefactor who helped finance the project and Sydney Simmons who gave the park to the town. The refreshed planting has a royal theme with Queen Elizabeth II roses and Lily of the Valley and Delphiniums a favourite of King Charles and Queen Camilla.~~

Commented [EJ1]: Coronation?



Above: The first shelter in the park as well as a monument to Sydney Simmons the parks generous benefactor.

Below: are some of the more recent events that have taken place in Simmons Park free of charge for the whole community to enjoy and be able to take part in.
~~Below: are some of the events that have taken place in Simmons Park free of charge for the whole community to enjoy and be able to take part in.~~

Commented [EJ2]: the more recent events



Above is the 2022/23 Mayor and residents of the Town celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Below is the Mayor trying out the newly installed zip wire which was partly funded by Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council.



Below is the new band stand being used as a royal selfie booth on coronation weekend.



The Rotary Club of Okehampton hold their summer fair in the park with duck racing down the river and lots of stalls and games.



You're Invited!

Bring your picnic along to Simmons Park - Sunday 5th June from 11am & help celebrate Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee

Food & Drink live entertainment guide dog demo stalls bouncy castle duck races & Best Hat competition

All Duck Ticket holders will be entered into the **PLATINUM DUCK** draw, sponsored by W.J. Pearsall, the lovely jewellers in The Arcade, Okehampton & the lucky winner will get a £150 W.J. Pearsall voucher to spend in the shop

DUCK TICKET SALES:

outside
Waitrose
Friday 27th
May



in Red
Lion Yard
Saturday
28th May

ALSO: **DOGBERRY & FINCH** (cash only please)





Park Volunteer Group

What Can I Do

to help in Simmons Park



Tuesday 13th June

at 10am in the Pavillion in the Park free tea and cake

Find out more about the management of Simmons Park

Meet the Park Keeper and sign up to the park volunteer group



A newly formed volunteer group is helping the parks team with the maintenance of the park, led by the parks apprentice as part of his course. They meet once a month and help with weeding, pruning and generally keeping the park looking tidy. As always we recognise the hard work carried out by our Parks staff for keeping our town attractive to locals and visitors.

Below is the rose bed which with help from the volunteer group has had a overhaul with new gravel and trellis and the ~~volunteer group~~ weeding and pruning of the area being completed by the volunteers.-



Site Description and Background

Site

Simmons Park is owned and managed by the Okehampton Town Council on behalf of Simmons Park Charity. It lies within the District area of West Devon Borough Council, in the County of Devon. Okehampton, approximately 25 miles west of Exeter along the A30, has a population of about 5922 at the 2011 census and is an 'Area Centre' in the Structure Plan, serving a wide rural community. The Park, with a total area of approximately 25.5 acres (10.3 hectares) is located on both sides of the East Okement River, just south of the Okehampton town centre, with access from Mill Road. There are also several [pedestrian](#) entrances to Simmons Park from Station Road and the newly reopened train station.



The original historic Park is linear, contained by the River and heavily wooded slopes that back onto residential properties in Station Road. The whole Park is within the Okehampton Conservation Area, includes one Grade II Listed Building and is on the English Heritage Register of Parks & Gardens of Special Historic Interest.

Background

Simmons Park occupies a narrow strip of land between the East Okement and a spur of high ground to the west. The wider end of the strip nearest the town was known early in the 19th century as Jole's Meadow, and the narrower wooded part to the south as Jole's Bere Wood. Both were the property of Solon Luxmoore who died in 1848 after holding the office of Town Clerk for 55 years. In his time the wood came to be called Solon's Copse while the meadow acquired the alternative name of Hilly Field. A footpath ran through the copse as it still does, and the area was recognised as a favourite playground for children. The original Park on the western side of the East Okement River, and funds for its layout, were given to the Town by Mr Sydney Simmons (1840-1924), a locally born businessman who travelled the world before making his fortune in London, where he also donated Friary Park in Friern Barnet to local people.

¹ Ordnance Survey Map showing the Location of Simmons Park in the centre of Okehampton.

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The layout was designed by Mr Francis Worden, the Borough Architect & Engineer, under the close direction and instruction of Sydney Simmons. No copies of the original layout plan appear to have survived.

One of the conditions attached to the gift was the inclusion of alms-houses. As a result, five were built in three separate buildings. These all add to the architectural interest of the Park and one in particular, 'Chalet Treloar', is a Grade II Listed Building.

The Park was formally opened on 8 July 1907 by Sir William Treloar, Lord Mayor of London, and a close personal friend of Sydney Simmons. It was a grand occasion, attended by very many dignitaries, but marred by exceptionally heavy rain.

The original historic Park was first extended in 1909, then expanded across the East Okement River where it became closely linked with the Grammar School (now the Okehampton Community College) and the school's and Town's sports facilities. An attractive and ornamental Bandstand was erected near to Chalet Treloar in 1911, funded by voluntary subscriptions, to commemorate the Coronation of King George V. It was demolished in the 1960s, leaving only the granite plinth as the wooden construction and location under the trees was not conducive to a long-life span and it was deemed unsafe.

The historic Park has changed little in layout over the last 116 years. In recent years maintenance work has been sympathetic continuing on from the Heritage Lottery Bid and the management plan. On-site user surveys have shown the high regard and appreciation of the Park by both residents and visitors. Also, the surveys have indicated high priorities accorded by users to the repair and restoration of historic features and increased security.

Simmons Park, officially opened in 1907, is Okehampton's only designed public park. In contrast with the overwhelming number of public parks in the County of Devon, which are owned and maintained by District Councils or Unitary Authorities. Simmons Park is the responsibility of the Town Council, despite considerable limitations on capital and maintenance resources, Okehampton Town Council has maintained the Park to the delight and enjoyment of very many residents and visitors, acquiring "much loved status."

Since the Heritage Lottery funding in 1999 helped to restore Simmons Park to its former glory improvements have continued to be made. A new band stand erected in 2012, as a focal point connecting the Bowls Club, Leisure Centre and Putting Green has been used for performances and events. There is a putting green near the leisure centre and there are plans in the very early stages of

upgrading it to adventure golf. A new rose bed was planted in honour of Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee. As part of her Platinum Jubilee one of the stone troughs in the park was cleaned and had its lead lettering restored. The old band stand near Chalet Trelor has had a new structure designed and erected on the original granite plinth and plaques to commemorate King Charles III coronation and the life of Queen Elizabeth II were added to the existing plaques.

A walk-through Simmons Park takes in a vast range of environments and habitats. From the formal garden at the pedestrian entrance to the wooded area on the way to the water gardens a variety of species is in evidence. Crossing the East Okement over one of the many bridges will lead you to the wild meadow and the sports, recreation facilities and play area. There is an area of Simmons Park for everyone of all ages ranges and abilities.



Above: The water gardens in Winter

PLATTS MEADOW

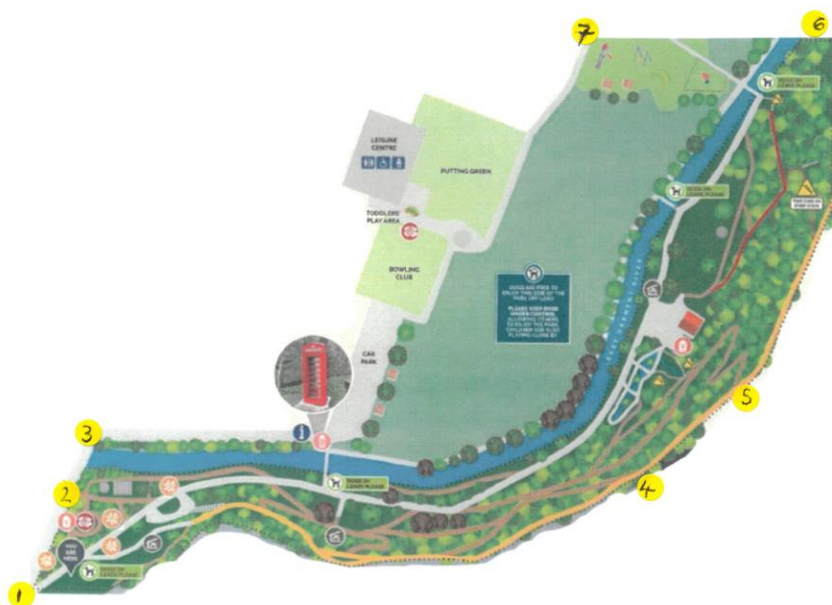
Platts Meadow adjoins Simmons Park. It is left as a wild flower meadow and has, due to careful management since 2012, seen an increase in rare wild orchids, Rattle and Knapweed. It is managed to strengthen the diversity of species and wildlife in the area and is only cut twice a year and at a variety of heights. The bracken is rolled to reduce the risk of it spreading and no chemicals are used in the meadow.

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Knapweed. It is managed to increase diversity of species and wildlife in the area and is only cut twice a year and at a variety of heights. The bracken is rolled to reduce the risk of it spreading and no chemicals are used in the meadow.

Site Details and General Information

Entrances



2

1. Pedestrian and Vehicle Access to Chalet Treloar
2. Pedestrian Access
3. Pedestrian and Vehicle Access to Car Park and Park
4. Pedestrian Access step free route
5. Pedestrian Access stepped route.
6. Pedestrian Access from Fatherford
7. Pedestrian Access from Ball Hill

Contact Information

Out of Hours Emergency	Okehampton Town Council James McGahey
Park Keeper	James McGahey parks@okehampton.gov.uk
Park Booking for Events	Okehampton Town Council 01837 53179 www.okehampton.gov.uk/facilitiesforhire
CCTV	Okehampton Town Council Emma James Townclerk@okehampton.gov.uk 01837 53179

² Location of entrances in Simmons Park- Map by GCGD

Pavilion in the Park	Okehampton Community Recreation Association (OCRA) Manager: Ian Blythe
Leisure Centre	Fusion
Alms Houses	Simmons Homes Clerk: Karen Percival

Management Vision, Aims and Objectives:

Management Vision

Lawns

2.1 Existing lawns are to be maintained by regular mowing 14-20 times per annum with cuttings removed for all the cuts preventing excess cuttings on the sward. Cuttings are removed to the dedicated compost bays and mixed where necessary. Land drains are to be cleaned annually from inspection points or outfalls and repaired or replaced where drainage fails. Areas of disturbed ground or compaction are to be cultivated and reseeded to a fine ryegrass-free seed mixture and temporarily fenced off using bent canes or coppice sticks. Where excessive moss or weeds occur, lawns should be improved firstly by surface raking, hollow tinning, sand dressing or other appropriate works, including surface dressing with organic fertiliser, in preference to use of selective herbicides, due to the proximity of the river. Steep areas and edges, including around rockwork, are to be strimmed at the same time as mowing.

2.2 Shrub and Flower Beds

Shrub and flower beds are to be kept weed free by regular hoeing; spot use of glyphosate herbicide on perennial weeds; cultivation by hand and compost mulching each spring and autumn; and periodic lifting, dividing and deep cultivation of herbaceous beds at three-to-five-year intervals. The following shrubs should be pruned to best horticultural standards every spring:

Aucuba

Forsythia

Rosa

The following shrubs should be pruned to best horticultural standards after flowering or every autumn:

Buxus

Rhododendron

Prunus laurocerasus

The following shrubs and plants should be vigorously deadheaded at least twice each flowering season:

Roses

Weigela

Camellia

Gaps at the front of beds are infilled with bedding plants and spring bulbs as indicated on the landscape contract planting plans. Beds will be inspected monthly.

2.3 Specimen Trees

Individual trees and woodland areas should be inspected annually by an Arboricultural Association approved contractor to ensure that:

- Unsafe, dead or dying trees posing safety risks are made safe or removed;
- Important historic specimen trees are maintained in a good health and aesthetic condition and with adequate space for visual appreciation by visitors to the park;
- Specimen trees are retained to their maximum safe biological life.

Tree works should only be undertaken by a similarly approved and experienced Arboricultural contractor, working to a minimum of BS 3998. The standard of safety will differ between trees overhanging footpaths and trees in the centre of denser parts of Solon's Copse. Tree works will be subject to Conservation Area consents.

Oak tree bowling green - to maintain a watching brief on the condition of this specimen.

This tree has a TPO on it and has been left as a habitat. It is has a tomogram every 3 years to check on the rate of decay from the honey fungus. Oak trees contain more life than any other tree especially in the last 200 years of their life hence the preservation of this tree.

2.4 Woodland Trees

Solon's Copse is to be managed on a coppice-with-standards basis, a third coppiced and thinned every five years, so that a fifteen-year rotation is established favouring oak standards, hazel and other native coppice trees. Some overstorey trees will need to be felled at intervals. This work is subject to Conservation Area and Felling Licence consents and conditions. Work should only be carried out by experienced staff or contractors with chainsaw certificates, primarily by handworks. Felled material is to be left in situ as habitat piles, or removed by hand as firewood or poles, due to the limitations of access. Where, exceptionally, a timber tree has to be removed, extraction by an experienced horse logging contractor should be considered. Trees taken down in the park are considered for projects in the park such as the creation of benches.

2.5 Tree Report

Following the receipt of a preliminary tree report, to adhere to the recommendations contained therein and to plant new specimens when required following the removal of diseased, unsafe or dying trees. The inspections are to be carried out every 18 months to 3 years depending on the use of the area.

2.6 Woodland Ground Flora

Within Solon's Copse, the natural ground flora is to be allowed to regrow between coppicing. Elsewhere within the park, ground flora is to be managed as follows:

- Bramble, bracken, sycamore and maple regeneration and other weed species are to be cut and removed annually;
- Natural regeneration of oak, beech, yew and ornamental species is to be thinned progressively where required for replacement, subject to the character of individual areas (such as beech preferred within the beech wood area);
- Ornamental semi-natural species such as Butcher's Broom, Bluebell, Daffodils and Stinking Iris are to be protected and retained;
- Replanted larch behind Chalet Treloar are to be periodically thinned to favour open grown, deep-crowned picturesque form 'alpine' larch;
- Dense prickly vegetation is to be retained behind Mayor's Seat on the bank and other locations where erosion caused by pedestrians can or does occur;
- Laurel and *Rhododendron ponticum* are to be trimmed annually or coppiced individually on a ten-year rotation;
- Viewpoints identified on the restoration plan are to be pruned annually where necessary to retain views.

2.7 Riverbank

The riverbank vegetation is to be managed by selective annual trimming in September to maintain views, periodic coppicing of alder and sycamore and retention of riverside oaks. Control invasive weeds such as Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam using herbicides agreed by the Environment Agency.

2.8 Leaf Collection

Autumnal leaf collection should be carried out for all paths and minimum 300mm wide verges, all lawns, beds and water features. Leaf collection is not required in woodland areas. Leaves are collected and removed to the compost site.

2.9 Hedgerows

Boundary hedgerows to be trimmed annually and, where thin, subject to trespass or over tall, cut and lay at 10-to-20-year intervals, using existing planting, infilling where necessary with hawthorn and hazel.

2.10 Planted Specimen Trees

Maintain newly planted specimen trees by maintaining a weed-free area, 2m diameter and maintain mulch 75mm deep; checking ties are firm but loosen in season to allow stem growth; remove all ties and stakes after two years growth; avoid use of strimmer close to tree; carry out formative pruning annually to Arboricultural standards.

2.11 Plant and Equipment

To maintain landscape, shrubs, trees and flower beds it is essential to replace equipment over time with due budget provision acknowledged as part of this management plan.

3.0 HARD LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

3.1 Tarmacadam Paths

The existing smooth-surfaced main tarmacadam path is popular with people of all abilities and should therefore be maintained as a smooth, clean surface. It may require resurfacing at twenty-year intervals and is currently in good condition. To avoid raising the path level unduly, previous layers may need to be planed off prior to resurfacing. Where specific areas are disturbed or in poor condition, the surface should be repaired to match as closely as possible the existing surface. Surface drains and gullies should be cleaned out once each year to a minimum functioning standard.

3.2 Stone-surfaced Paths

Stone surfaced paths should be leaf blown at least four times each autumn; inspected at least weekly to be free from obstruction or hazard; hand raked and cleared of soil twice each year; scarified, regraded to cambers, made up where necessary using Meldon 20 mm down scalplings to match and rolled each year using small machinery suitable to the access. On zigzag and steep-edged paths, damaged rustic stone edging should be reinstated or repaired at the same time and planting of butcher's broom and use of bent poles and layered coppice to restrict corner-cutting and erosion should be maintained on an annual basis each winter.

3.3 Grounds Maintenance

Budget provision to be maintained each year for necessary works to maintain these routes.

3.4 Benches

Oak benches should be cleaned and rubbed down each year, planing carried out if necessary and any splits infilled with exterior, self-coloured wood filler. After twenty years some may need to be replaced to the original design.

Ornamental benches should be inspected weekly and cleaned as necessary. Paintwork to iron should be rubbed down and recoated as necessary in situ at three-year intervals and one bench removed for full refurbishment each alternate year. Woodwork to the benches should be rubbed down and treated with one coat of raw linseed oil each summer.

Budget provision to be made on an annual or as when required basis for the replacement of quality benches.

3.5 Bins and Litter

Bins should be emptied, and litter collected on a daily basis.

3.6 Buildings

Graffiti should be removed using proprietary cleaners within two days of its occurring. More serious but superficial damage should be repaired within two weeks. Extensive loss to arson or similar requiring replacement should be achieved within six months of the damage occurring.

Shelters should be inspected and swept clean on a daily basis; no regular maintenance should be required within the shelters. Paintwork to the park keeper's office/meeting room should be rubbed down and repainted at four-year intervals and the interior of the building cleaned weekly.

The tractor shed should not require maintenance, but damage to steelwork should be made good in accordance with the sheet supplier's recommendations. The shed should be cleaned out annually and all non-essential stored materials disposed from the exterior compound on an annual basis.

Electrical installations should be checked by a qualified electrician at five yearly intervals. PAT testing is undertaken annually.

Water supplies will be checked regularly to prevent legionella and ensure compliance with current regulations.

3.7 Playground Equipment

Playground equipment to be replaced on a when required basis through purchase, lease or sponsorship. The equipment is checked weekly for any faults.

3.8 Stone Retaining Walls

Stone retaining walls to the riverbank and boundary hedgerows should be inspected annually and repaired where necessary to match the surviving parts. Either vertical drystone hedge walling, using stone on site or Meldon selected 100-225 mm walled stone; or mortared walls using a 1:3 mix of hydraulic lime mortar and grey coarse sand/stone dust, with 'trowel-handle' pointing. Maintain and rake out to weep holes where necessary.

3.9 Iron Railings

Repaint railings and all painted ironwork to bridges at five yearly intervals including rubbing down, zinc primer where necessary, undercoat and two coats of gloss to match the restored colour.

3.10 Resin-bound Grit Surfacing to Bridges

A ten-year interval, or as necessary to sustain grip, reapply resin and silver-grey granite grit, 2.5mm size.

3.11 The Pond

Each year in autumn, trim back herbaceous growth, clean out silt from the gully pots for intake on the park boundary, waterfall and outfall. Clean out silt from the pond; replace pump and fountain fillers; carry out maintenance to pump and make good any leaks to the pond render.

3.12 Plant and Equipment

Plant and equipment to be replaced following budget provision to maintain the park.

3.13 Structural Inspectors

Carry out safety inspections to bridges each year.

3.14 Signage

As set out in the Heritage Lottery Fund documentation, information and interpretation signage within the park will be maintained and enhanced; to include a noticeboard at the main entrance gates, and information boards regarding the parks trees and wildlife habitats will be provided as an educational facility.

Management Aims

The Okehampton Town Council, in consultation with Simmons Park Charity and its various partners, will be guided by the following ten major aims when considering options for Simmons Park:

- 1 Recognise, sustain, and increase the heritage value of the Park, through a programme of capital improvements and revised management practices;
- 2 Conserve, restore and enhance the historic design and character of the Park, in harmony with new uses and features; while making sure the park is inclusive to all ages and abilities

- 3 Increase use of the Park, by both local residents and visitors, by improving and extending the range of facilities, appropriate to its heritage importance;
- 4 Adhere to a Management Plan for the Park, to ensure on-going high standards of maintenance and future developments;
- 5 Promote the Park as a valuable educational resource, such as pond dipping and school visits
- 6 Support the West Devon Borough Council and OCRA's bid for funding for replacement and enhanced sports facilities, while seeking their compatibility with the Park's heritage importance;
- 7 Develop the provision of parks and open spaces in Okehampton, by using Simmons Park as an example of good practice and showing what can be achieved in partnership;
- 8 Improve and promote the image of Okehampton through high standards of landscape design, specification, and maintenance of the sites ecology and diversity;
- 9 Improve the security of the environment for users of the Park, while seeking to minimise incidence of damage and vandalism, consistent with the Park's heritage importance;
- 10 Involve local people in the decision-making processes, while seeking and utilising appropriate expert advice, on all aspects of the Park's repair, restoration, enhancement, and future maintenance.

Although the park has a management plan set until 2025 the Parks committee are committed to making changes to as and when necessary. In the light of the Ash Die back it was not prudent to replant trees like for like as stated in the management plan. Other native species of trees were planted expanding the range of trees in the park future proofing its resilience if another species is targeted by disease. The parks team have also been trialling using sheep's wool around the base of new trees as a natural way to retain moisture.

During the span of the management plan the Council has recognised the climate crisis and has adapted its planting in the park as this dictates. The parks team are incorporating plants that are able to withstand more extremes of weather, plants that don't require large amounts of water. Devon has been under water restrictions for many months, and although the parks team are allowed to use a hosepipe, they have been leading by example by using less water.

While also not part of the management plan the parks team are trying to increase the habitat diversity in the park by leaving areas unmown and others with shorter grass. The parks team feel it is very important to leave areas with flowering weeds for the wildlife to feed on early in the year without compromising the balance between the park being a space for nature and also a formal garden area for residents and visitors.

The team recently purchased a wildlife camera with grant money and are using it in the park to see what type of wildlife is there currently. Using the information from it to plan how to aid the species seen. This then assists the plant types and density decisions as well as the management of them. The creation of a nature trail to help educate children in ways they can help the wildlife in their own gardens

is planned. This trail includes hedgehog houses, bug hotels, bat boxes and pond dipping and incorporates footage from the camera to give everyone an idea of the wildlife around them.

The byelaws prohibit the use of bikes in the park. The parks committee are investigating the possibility of adding bike racks to the carpark. It was felt that the park is near several cycle routes but without somewhere for the cyclists to safely leave their bikes it was discriminating against them when visiting the park. There are no cycle racks close to the park and so it was felt that making a designated space for the bikes would then encourage cyclists to visit the park without falling foul of the byelaws. It was also felt that encouraging cycling was a positive green step for the council and by making it easier for people it was more likely that they would visit.

Management Objectives

OTC- Okehampton Town Council

1. A WELCOMING PLACE

Aim: To positively welcome people into the park in terms of both physical and social access

	Objective	Implementation/Task	Timescale/Frequency	Responsibility
1.1	<p>To improve on the existing directional signage, providing clear information that is easily interpreted including contact details and reference to byelaw.</p> <p>To include directional signage from the Simmons Park Car Park and use of QR codes</p> <p>Manage existing signage until new signs are in place.</p>	<p>New signs have been fitted at the pedestrian and carpark entrances which include maps showing footpaths through the park.</p> <p>New fingerposts have been put up guiding visitors from the station to the town through the park with distances added.</p> <p>Keep clear of graffiti, update information when necessary and repair damaged signs.</p>	Ongoing	OTC
1.2	<p>To provide informational signage at all entrances to the park and maintain entrances to ensure they are visually clear, unobstructed and promote a sense of arrival</p>	<p><u>The signage is evolving as work is undertaken and as budgets and grants allow.</u></p> <p><u>Wildlife interpretation boards explaining the importance of wildlife to the Park are in the initial stages.</u></p> <p>The signage is evolving as work is undertaken as budgets and grants allow.</p> <p>Wildlife interpretation boards explaining the importance of wildlife to the Park are in the initial stages.</p>	Ongoing	OTC

		Further educational signs are planned.		
1.3	Maintain visibility into and across the park where appropriate or at specific points.	Carry out vegetation management in accordance with the maintenance schedule.	Monthly	OTC
1.4	Ensure Simmons Park is accessible to all.	All access points are unrestricted, not all are suitable for wheelchair access. Signage indicates hard paths and step free routes. Ensure all hard surfaces are safe and maintained and inspected regularly.	Checked weekly	OTC
1.5	Provision of promotion information relating to accessibility.	Ensure promotional information and maps clearly identify suitable routes and facilities. <u>Leaflets about the park are available from the book swap in the phone box in the carpark of the park and other locations including the Town Hall, Museum and Library</u> Leaflet about the park available from the book swap in the phone box in the carpark of the park.	Online information provided on Town Council website and shared on social media.	OTC
1.6	Brown Tourist signs on main roads through Okehampton	There are currently signs directing people to the park but they are not on all access roads to the town. Discussion to have	Next 3-5 years as signs need replacing and upgrading	OTC DCC

		with Highways department about improving signage.		
2. HEALTHY, SAFE AND SECURE				
Aim: To ensure a healthy, safe and secure experience for park users				
	Objective	Implementation/Task	Timescale/Frequency	Responsibility
2.1	Ensure park and facilities are safe to use.	Inspection of park, park approaches and facilities including play area equipment, etc. Annual RoSPA inspections.	Daily visual and weekly recorded Annual	OTC
2.2	Ensure all plant, machinery, equipment, and maintenance operations are safe for maintenance staff and volunteers.	Checks on machinery. Regular servicing of equipment. Appropriate staff and volunteer training and workplace risk assessments.	Daily visual Minimum annually Updated regularly but as a minimum annually	OTC
2.3	Ensure health and safety policies and risk assessments are in place, in practice and reviewed.	Carry out health and safety risk assessments of all buildings, paths, benches, infrastructure, and soft landscape areas. Carry out tree safety inspections and keep an up-to-date record.	Annually or if any significant changes in operations occur Every three years or sooner if required	OTC

2.4	Have emergency, fire and first aid procedures in place for all events in park.	Ensure all hirers have completed risk assessments, management plans and insurance for events. Ensure qualified first aider present for all volunteer activities.	For each event, supplied 8 weeks in advance.	OTC Groups using the park
2.5	Encourage responsible dog ownership and good practice in the park.	Byelaw reference displayed on entrance boards. New signs displayed in the park Enforcement by WDBC by informal means only.	Ongoing	Visitors to the park OTC
2.6	Increase the sense of safety and security in the park.	Ensure the maintenance and front-line staff have a recognised uniform.	Daily	OTC
2.7	Address crime, security and anti-social behaviour issues and problems at a local level.	CCTV coverage in park, with CCTV control room in radio contact with PCSOs. Liaise with PCSOs PCSOs patrol park on a regular basis	Ongoing	OTC Police Torbay monitoring hub
2.8	Promote the role that the park plays in improving the quality of life of local residents (e.g. health and wellbeing and contact with nature).	Funding by Okehampton United Charity will provide a new piece of play equipment to be installed in 2024 Leaflet for the park and Fairplace sensory garden printed 2022 to help visitors to the park and	ongoing	OTC Okehampton United Charity

		<p>garden broaden their sensual experience.</p> <p>New wildlife camera purchased to share images of the parks wildlife. New hedgehog and bat and bird houses purchased to start an education trail through the park to bring children closer to nature</p> <p>Upgrade planned to the pitch and put lawn.</p>		
3. CLEAN AND WELL MAINTAINED				
Aim: To provide a well-maintained and clean park				
	Objective	Implementation/Task	Timescale/Frequency	Responsibility
3.1	Ensure that the park is kept clean and litter free.	<p>Park Staff to adhere to specification for emptying bins and cleaning park.</p> <p>Litter Picking station installed at the Pavilion in the Park</p>	Daily cleaning	OTC
3.2	Have procedures in place to deal with vandalism and graffiti.	Respond to acts of vandalism/graffiti within 48 hours or immediately if offensive.	As required	OTC
3.3	Ensure that all staff are aware of the content of the management and maintenance plan- (MMP) .	All staff briefed and trained on relevant aspects and general ethos of MMP. All new staff briefed and trained during induction process.	All new staff briefed, exiting staff given yearly refresher course	OTC
3.4	Grounds maintenance to be delivered to the highest standards throughout the park with consideration to specialised items of grounds	Carry out all maintenance in accordance with the maintenance specification and schedule.	<p>As per schedule</p> <p>Weekly</p>	OTC

	maintenance such as the putting green.	Carry out regular inspections to ensure work is to a high standard.		
3.5	Ensure buildings are maintained to a high standard.	Prepare a planned preventative maintenance programme (PPMP).	Ongoing	OTC
3.6	Ensure all OTC staff are suitably trained.	Skills analysis Gap analysis Training matrix	Annually	OTC
3.7	Foster a sense of community ownership thereby increasing respect and care of the park.	Develop activities through community and volunteer groups to include, the parks volunteer group	Ongoing	OTC
3.8	Maintain consistency in site furniture design.	Ensure all replacements match existing where possible. Park furniture given maintenance yearly to elongate life.	As and when required	OTC
3.9	Actively manage the ponds. Maintain waterfall.	Carry out water quality checks. Removal of any litter or other items.	Annually Weekly	OTC Rock Compliance
3.10	Strive to attain and maintain a Green Flag Award for quality.	Complete and submit Green Flag application.	January 2024	OTC Parks Committee and Parks team
4. SUSTAINABILITY				
Aim: To improve the environmental quality and sustainability of practices carried out in the park				
	Objective	Implementation/Task	Timescale/Frequency	Responsibility
4.1	Encourage waste recycling.	Composting green matter Integrating shredded paper from the office into the composting	Ongoing	OTC

4.2	Promote wildlife protection, biodiversity management and environmental education and awareness.	Bird and owl boxes put up in the park. Hedgehog houses purchased Bat boxes purchased to be put up. Bird feeders keep full all winter No Mow May areas in the park Sharing of wildlife found in the park on social media and newsletters	Ongoing	OTC
4.3	Employ and develop management and maintenance practices to promote biodiversity.	The meadow is only cut twice a year- March and October leaving the grass after the cuts at three different heights. The bracken is rolled down to prevent spreading. Banks are cut once a year	Ongoing	OTC
4.4	Promote education about nature and conservation.	Published and promoted Simmons Park and Fairplace garden sensory map leaflet. Interpretation board is being installed other education boards will follow.	Ongoing	OTC
4.5	Keep pollution to a minimum and be energy and water efficient.	Electric tools New fuel for tractor Water butt Wool and bark around trees to retain moisture	Ongoing	OTC
4.6	Ensure staff are trained to understand environmental issues, principles of sustainability and management practices to increase biodiversity.	Update training course.	All new staff to be trained and existing staff given refresher course.	OTC

5. CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE				
Aim: To maintain the landscape character and increase awareness and understanding of the park's heritage				
	Objective	Implementation/Task	Timescale/Frequency	Responsibility
5.1	Ensure appropriate management of natural features, wildlife and flora.	Follow the management plan and environmental policy and ensure appropriate training as per 4.6 above.	All new staff to be trained and existing staff given refresher course	OTC
5.2	Ensure appropriate management of historic buildings and structural features.	WWII Pillbox in the park has been cleared and cleaned Ponds have been replanted Old bandstand has been renovated	2023-2024	OTC
5.3	Produce permanent information panels to raise awareness of the heritage value of the park.	Develop ecology boards for flora and fauna as well as the history of the park	2024	OTC
5.4	Protect the fabric and historical integrity of the park and its buildings.	Follow the management plan Weekly inspections of the park Do corrective maintenance to prevent issues become larger.	Ongoing	OTC
5.5	Create opportunities for visitors to further explore and understand the heritage of the park.	Promote Simmons Park on Facebook Monthly newspaper column by the park keeper	Ongoing	OTC
5.6	Develop a programme of activities and events that will allow adults and children to become directly involved in heritage-related initiatives.	The Council provides a grant for OCRA to provide a Fields in Trust day of activities as part of the Queen Elizabeth II playing fields scheme.	Ongoing	OTC
6. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT				

Aim: To provide opportunities to increase community use and involvement				
	Objective	Implementation/Task	Timescale/Frequency	Responsibility
6.1	Assess the number and profile of users, the pattern of use and users' perception of safety and enjoyment.	Review trip advisor comments Try a Facebook survey	Annual	OTC
6.2	Increase the usage of the park.	Park booking has been moved online to stream-line the process Funding is currently being sought to upgrade the putting green.	Ongoing	OTC
6.3	Publicise improvements and availability of resources.	Continue publicity to ensure that users and prospective users are aware of improvements and facilities in the park. Maintain website and use social media.	Ongoing	OTC
6.4	Continue to promote a sense of local ownership by involving the local community in management of the park and activities.	All parks committee meetings of the council are open to the public and are also live streamed on the councils Facebook page. Started a parks volunteer group to allow people to help with the management of the park. We try and allow as many local groups as possible to use the park free of charge.	Ongoing	OTC
6.5	Increase opportunities to enjoy the park through developing a programme of activities and events.	Existing annual events: Rotary fair Fair in the park twice a year Dog show Santa run Neon run Fields in Trust Sports week	Current	OTC

		Woodland trust events Dartmoor National Park wildlife day Park Run- anticipated starting 2024	2024	
6.6	Create a regular volunteer force to assist in park activities and events.	Work with existing user groups to ensure co-ordination of activities and users' needs being met. Promote Simmons Park to other community organisations within the town. Actively draw groups who take part in other events in the Town into events taking place in Simmons Park	Ongoing	OTC
6.7	Work with businesses to promote Simmons Park as part of the Okehampton shopping experience.	Retailers and businesses within the town have been involved in promoting the town. For example working with the Town Council to promote: The Christmas Lights Switch on The Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service Feasibility study for the creation of a BID in Okehampton is currently underway which will help promote Okehampton and the park. Relining of the carpark to include motorbike parking and the inclusion of a bike rack to make it easier for people.	Ongoing	OTC
7. MARKETING PLAN				

Aim: To develop the park as a civic amenity and ensure effective promotion of the park as a community resource				
	Objective	Implementation/Task	Timescale/Frequency	Responsibility
7.1	Ensure that users and potential users are kept fully informed of the improvements in the park	Continue to use newsletters. Use Town Council Facebook page Colum in Okehampton Times monthly Colum in Okehampton Times monthly	Ongoing	OTC
7.2	Promote the facilities in the park.	Use website and social media to advertise the facilities in the park, Use book swap on site for parks leaflets and trail sheets	Ongoing	OTC
7.3	Maximise future usage of the park.	Advertise possibility of hiring park for events and how to apply – application form on website with link and information on how to get paper copy	Ongoing	OTC
7.4	Attract a wider range of users and increase the number of users who are currently not visiting the park.	Use newsletter and social media to consult with non-users and establish what would encourage them to use the park	Ongoing	OTC
7.5	Provide appropriate marketing support to activities and events to help maximise their attendances	Advertise all activities and events on websites and social media	Ongoing	OTC
7.6	Reinforce perceptions of the park as a safe, pleasant, inclusive and well managed place to visit.	Ensure that police presence, CCTV and management have high profile in awareness campaigns.	CCTV recording 24/7 with coverage of park	OTC

8. MANAGEMENT

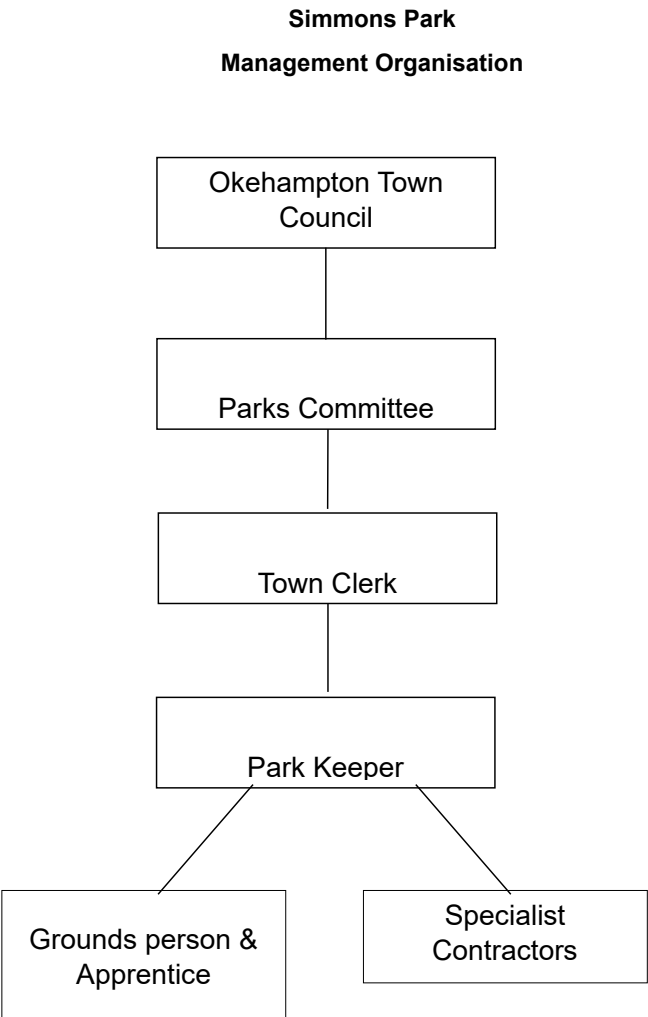
Aim: To ensure all those involved in the management and maintenance of Warminster Town Park use the Management Plan as a working document

	Objective	Implementation/Task	Timescale/Frequency	Responsibility
8.1	Implement the Management and Maintenance Plan (MMP).	<p>Continue to employ Full-time site-based park keeper</p> <p>Parks Committee to meet quarterly to monitor management or more frequently if required.</p> <p>All staff and contractors to follow MMP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On-site meetings• Written reports of inspection <p>Town Clerk to review budget requirements and report to council.</p>	Ongoing	OTC
8.2	Ensure greater on-site staff presence with all staff conversant with MMP.	<p>Park keeper on site full time (Mon–Fri)</p> <p>Groundsman on site Monday-Thursday Summer time and Monday – Wednesday Winter time.</p> <p>Apprentice on site daily (Mon–Friday).</p>	Ongoing	OTC

8.3	Ensure effective monitoring of the MMP.	Implement monitoring process by regular meetings of OTC's Parks Committee.	Quarterly	OTC
8.4	Ensure management is financially sound.	Ensure relevant provision in the Council's budget. Parks Committee to provide planned or preferred spend to include within budget.	Budget process begins with budget workshops in September each year.	OTC

Management Structure and Maintenance Arrangements

Managements Structure



Maintenance Arrangements

The Parks Committee

The Parks Committee is made up of ~~11 members of appointed councillors, 11 members,~~ including the chairs of the other committees and the Mayor. The Park Keeper has a standing agenda item to report back to the committee on issues and upcoming works in the park.

Commented [EJ3]: Of appointed councillors including

The committee meets quarterly although extra meetings can be called if necessary, and all meetings are open to the public and live streamed on the Council's Facebook page. Meetings are in the Town Hall Council Chamber and are on a Monday night usually starting at 7pm. The committee is supported by OTC officers including the Town Clerk, Park Keeper, and Admin Officer.

The committees responsibilities

To carry out the Council's responsibilities for the following:

- i. The provision of grounds maintenance services for:
 - a. Simmons Park, Platt's Meadow, Putting Green;
 - b. Simmons Park car park and approach road;
 - c. Skate Park/BMX Track; Clapps Wood, Fairplace, the viewing area behind Lidl where the rivers converge, grass verge at West Bridge, and all land in the ownership of Okehampton Town Council (excepting the footprint of the Town Hall, Charter Hall, Cinema, Lower Market Hall and Public Toilets at Fairplace)
 - d. Land owned by others including the raised flower bed and seating area in New Road, the Gateway Mural area at the junction of East Street and Crediton Road and the planted area off the roundabout in School Way
 - e. Cemetery;
 - f. Seats and bins around town

Budget

To have authority for spending within the allocated budget.

Fees

To determine and keep under review the fees and charges for the committee's services where statutory authority exists for the levying of such charges.

Payment of Expenses

To have authority to authorise cheque and BACS payments for all invoices and expenses.

Monitoring and Plan Review

The plan is to be current over a ten-year period, from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2031. It is to be reviewed by three dates:

- i) by 31 December 2025;
- ii) by 31 December 2028;

- iii) by 31 December 2031, at which time a second ten-year management plan is to be produced.

This plan is to apply to Simmons Park and Kempley Meadows (pleasure grounds), the boundary of which is set out in the restoration plan. In future the plan may be extended to cover other amenities venues throughout the parish of Okehampton.

The following objectives of management are derived from the restoration plan:

- i) To improve the maintenance of historic features, details, surfaces and surviving structures across the park;
- ii) To manage the park's surviving historic structures, planting and features based on the evidence of the Ordnance Survey second edition, 1932 revision, and historic photographs;
- iii) To conserve and improve the wildlife value of the site and public appreciation of wildlife. By managing the diverse range of habitat types, consistent with the objective of conserving the designed historic landscape;
- iv) To maintain access across and to the park for people with disabilities;
- v) To seek public co-operation and consensus over the management of the park as and when such opportunities arise;
- vi) To encourage public use and activity within the park by maintaining the sense of security and by using the park for public events where this can be achieved without physical damage to the heritage asset or disruption of the quiet public enjoyment of the park.

The management proposals which follow respond to the description of the park set out in the restoration plan and the above objectives.

Background Information

Historical Development

Simmons Park is situated 250 meters south of the centre of Okehampton, to the west of the East Okement River which flows from south-east to north forming the eastern boundary of the site. The 4ha site is bounded to the north by Mill Road, from which it is separated by low granite walls. Forming part of the early 20th century layout of the park, these walls formerly supported iron railings which were removed temporarily during the Second World War. The south-east boundary is formed by a traditional Devon hedge and bank which separates the park from an area of public open space extending east along the valley of the East Okement River. To the west the site adjoins the boundaries of early 20th century villas on the east side of Station Road. The park is separated from these properties by a fence and walls following the crest of the steep east- and north-east-facing escarpment above the river. The park occupies this escarpment and a narrow strip of level ground extending along the west bank of the river. There are extensive views south-east along the river valley towards Dartmoor and Okehampton Park, and further views east across the recreation ground, sports pitches, and school grounds on the east side of the river.

In the late 19th century the arrival of the railway and the development of extensive quarrying outside Okehampton led to the expansion of the town, with new residential development taking place between the ancient centre of the town and the railway station about 1 kilometre

to the south-south-east. Beside the East Okement River in Okehampton there was an area called Jole's Meadow (also known as Hilly Field) and Jole's Bere Wood (also known as Solon's Copse after once belonging to Solon Luxmoore). This meadow and wood was already a local beauty spot and favourite playground for children. It came on to the market in 1905 and there was concern it might be built on. Okehampton Town Council bought the land on 30th September 1905 for £1,000, on a mortgage from Dingley and Pearse's Bank and then applied to the Local Government Board for sanction to raise a loan of £1,250. The extra money was to be spent on laying out the new park. This was turned down but Sydney Simmons heard about the plan and decided to make the Town Council an offer they could not refuse. He offered to buy the land from the Council, give the park to the people of Okehampton and lay out the park at his own expense, provided he was allowed a free hand in its design.



The new park was laid out to the designs of Francis Worden, Borough Architect and Engineer, who worked in close consultation with the donor. As part of his benefaction, Sydney Simmons required that alms-houses should be built within the park. Three structures comprising five alms-houses were incorporated into Worden's plan.

The park comprised a picturesque riverside walk, woodland paths, cascade, a group of picturesque structures including a Swiss chalet and two lodges, and areas of formal gardens incorporating a series of relocated architectural fragments. These are shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1932 and survive essentially unchanged today.

This offer was accepted and work started on the park, which was more lavishly laid out than Town Council could afford even with Sydney Simmons spending £3,000 on buildings and landscaping.



The Council borrowed £300 from the Oddfellows to cover the cost of the gates and railings; the rest was paid for by Sydney Simmons. He wanted to call it Sinin Dale or Vale but he was talked out of this idea.

It opened to the Public on 8th July 1907 by the Lord Mayor of London, the Right Honourable Sir William Purdie Treloar and enlarged in 1909.



The following year Sydney Simmons gave Friary Park, Finchley to the local people at a cost of £7,000. Friary Park is twinned with Simmons Park. Friary Park is on land formerly around The Friary/Friern House, built in the 19th century. The site was acquired in 1909 and opened as a public park in 1910. At the park's highest point is a large bronze statue of The Peacemaker, donated by Sydney Simmons JP and dedicated to Edward VII, who had died just before the new park was due to be officially opened. The park was laid out with bowling green and pavilion, tennis courts, putting green and playground, with more formal gardens around the house, now a café.



A bandstand was constructed in 1911 to commemorate the coronation of King George V (inscription); this structure was partially demolished in the mid-20th century

In 1921 Okehampton Town Council acquired Kempley Meadows, which now forms part of Simmons Park, and Sydney Simmons provided the funds to have the recreation grounds, including a bowling green, laid out with it being a condition that the work be done by the men of the town who were out of work. On opening match day the first jack rolled is still the silver jack presented to the club by Mrs Simmons.



The Bowling Club celebrated the 100-year anniversary in 2023 and is expanding their club house to accommodate the increase in members and to upgrade facilities for the lady bowlers.



Land to the east of the East Okement River was laid out as a recreation ground with sports pitches and a pavilion in the 1930s. Okehampton Grammar School was constructed to the north-east of the park in the same period. A swimming pool and other facilities were developed at the recreation ground in the late 20th century



In 2002, Simmons Park was refurbished, the works being funded by Okehampton Town Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund and individual donations. The works included the restoration of the beautiful woodland walks and the addition of a rose garden to celebrate Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee.

The original swimming pool opened in the 1960's has been filled in and replaced with a childrens play area and gym.



The original pavillion was demolished and a new building was put up on the edge of the site.



Since then the park has grown to include multi-sports facilities, play areas for all ages and the Parklands Leisure Centre in which the new swimming pool is sited. A putting green was created next to the leisure centre and it is hoped to upgrade the facilities available with an adventure golf course based on features of Okehampton.

Simmons Park is part of the Fields in Trust historic protection programme and has been protected since December 2012 under the Queen Elizabeth II Fields protection.

Simmons Park is entered from a north-west entrance comprising of a pair of rusticated granite piers supporting a pair of ornamental wrought-iron carriage gates. The carriage entrance is surmounted by a wrought-iron overthrow which incorporates a lantern and the name 'Simmons Park'. A single pedestrian gate supported by a further rusticated granite pier adjoins the carriage entrance to the west. Within the park, and set above a rocky bank, stands a two-storey Arts and Crafts-style half-timbered lodge. The lodge formed part of Sydney Simmons' provision of alms-houses within the park.



A further entrance leads into the park from Mill Road comprising of a pair of green-painted timber gates supported by a pair of rusticated granite piers, and is approached from the road by a short, cobbled path. Within the park stands a single-storey picturesque lodge with half-timbered gables, bay windows, and a timbered porch on the west facade.

The east facade which faces the East Okement River and has an exposed basement incorporates a ground-floor veranda. This lodge also forms one of the group of alms-houses established by Sydney Simmons in the park.



A Second World War pill box is concealed to the north-east of the lodge adjacent to the Mill Road bridge, built for use by the local Home Guard in case of attack by German gliders landing in the park.



A monolith set on an inscribed pedestal records the donation of the park by Sydney Simmons and its opening in July 1907 as well as a granite pinnacle from St James' church. A granite cattle drinking trough commemorating the coronation of King Edward VII in 1902, which was removed to the park in the mid 20TH Century from its original position in the Market Place.



A chain of four informal stone-edged pools extends north from the foot of the cascade with a rustic bridge constructed from cement render in imitation of wood, crossing from east to west at the central point. The pools are surrounded by ornamental planting. The cascade comprises a series of rocky pools and falls edged with rustic stones forming planting pockets. Crazy-paved stone paths and steps ascend each side of the cascade allowing access to the upper woodland walks.



The Swiss chalet (listed grade II), known as 'Chalet Treloar' after the Lord Mayor of London and friend of Sydney Simmons who opened the park in 1907. This picturesque building contains a further two alms-houses founded by Sydney Simmons in 1907.



South-East of the chalet the octagonal granite drum base survives from the bandstand erected in 1911 to commemorate the coronation of King George V. The bandstand base is surrounded by rustic rockwork and ornamental planting. A new addition is a

replacement arbour on the original band stand base erected in 2023. It was designed and paid for by a benefactor as part of King Charles III coronation and the planting round the base will be redesigned to incorporate flowers know to be favourites of the King and Queen.



Land Ownership

Byelaws

Byelaws under section 164 of the Public Health Act, 1875 and sections 12 and 15 of the Open Spaces Act, 1906, were made by the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Okehampton with respect to Simmons Park in 1911. Subsequently these were confirmed by the Secretary of State on 23rd May 1972 and are still valid today.

1. Throughout these byelaws the expression "the Council" means the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Okehampton, acting by the Council, and the expression "the pleasure ground" means the pleasure ground known as "Simmons Park", Okehampton.

2. An act necessary to the proper execution of his duty in the pleasure ground by an officer of the Council, or by any person or servant of any person employed by the Council, shall not be deemed an offence against these byelaws.

3. Any part of the pleasure ground which is so enclosed that persons can be excluded therefrom shall be opened at the hour of six-thirty in the forenoon and shall be closed at the hour of ten in the afternoon of every day during the months of April, May, June, July, August, and September, and shall be opened at the hour of seven in the forenoon and shall be closed at the hour of seven in the afternoon of every day during the months of January, February, March, October, November and December. Provided always that this byelaw shall not be deemed to require any such part of the pleasure ground to be opened and closed at the hours hereinbefore prescribed on any day when, in pursuance of any statutory provision in that behalf, the Council close the pleasure ground to the public.

4. On any day on which any part of the pleasure ground to which the foregoing byelaw applies is open to the public a person shall not enter that part before the time or enter or remain in that part after the time appointed in the foregoing byelaw.

5. A person shall not in the pleasure ground:

- (i) wilfully, carelessly or negligently soil or defile any wall or fence in or enclosing the pleasure ground, or any building, barrier, railing, post or seat, or any erection or ornament;
- (ii) climb any wall or fence in or enclosing the pleasure ground or any tree or any barrier, railing, post or other erection;
- (iii) wilfully, carelessly, or negligently remove or displace any barrier, railing, post or seat, or any part of any erection or ornament, or any implement provided for use in the laying out or maintenance of the pleasure ground.

6. A person shall not bring or cause to be brought into the pleasure ground any cattle, sheep, goats or pigs, or any beast of draught or burden, unless in pursuance of an agreement with the Council or otherwise in the exercise of any lawful right or privilege, he is authorised to do so.

7. A person shall not, except in the exercise of any lawful right or privilege, bring or cause to be brought into the pleasure ground any barrow, truck, machine or vehicle other than:

- (a) a wheeled bicycle, tricycle or other similar machine;
- (b) a wheelchair, perambulator or chaise drawn or propelled by hand and used solely for the conveyance of a child or children or an invalid. Provided that where the Council set apart a space in the pleasure ground for the use of any class of vehicle, this byelaw shall not be deemed to prohibit the driving in or to that space by a direct route from the entrance to the pleasure ground of any vehicle of the class for which it is set apart.
- (c) A person shall not, except in the exercise of any lawful right or privilege, ride any bicycle, tricycle, or other similar machine in any part of the pleasure ground.

8. A person who brings a vehicle into the pleasure ground shall not wheel or station it over or upon:

- (i) any flower bed, shrub, or plant, on any ground in course of preparation as a flower bed, or for the growth of any tree, shrub or plant;

- (ii) any part of the pleasure ground where the Council by a notice board affixed or set up in some conspicuous position in the pleasure ground prohibit its being wheeled or stationed.

9. A person shall not affix any bill, placard or notice to or upon any wall or fence in or enclosing the pleasure ground, or to or upon any tree or plant, or to or upon any part of any building, barrier or railing, or to any seat, or of any erection or ornament in the pleasure ground.

10. A person shall not in the pleasure ground walk, run, stand, sit or lie upon:
any grass, turf or other place where adequate notice to keep off such grass, turf or other place shall be placed: Provided that such notice shall not apply to more than one-fifth of the area of the pleasure ground;
any flower bed, shrub or plant, or any ground in course of preparation as a flower bed, or for the growth of any tree shrub or plant.

11. A person shall not wilfully, carelessly or negligently throw or discharge in the pleasure ground any missile to the damage or danger of any person.

12. A person shall not in the pleasure ground:

- (i) bathe, wade or wash in any ornamental lake, pond, stream or other water;
- (i) wilfully carelessly or negligently foul or pollute any such water;
- (i) take, injure or destroy, or attempt to take, injure or destroy any fish in any such water, or wilfully disturb or worry any water fowl.

13. A person shall not cause or suffer any dog belonging to him or in his charge to enter or remain in the pleasure ground, unless such dog be, and continue to be, under proper control and effectually restrained from causing annoyance to any person and from worrying or disturbing any animal or water fowl and from entering any ornamental water.

14. Where the Council set apart any such part of the pleasure ground as may be fixed by the Council, and described in a notice board affixed or set up in some conspicuous position in the pleasure ground, for the purpose of any game specified in the notice board, which, by reason of the rules or manner of playing or for the prevention of damage, danger or discomfort to any person in the pleasure ground may necessitate, at any time during the continuance of the game, the exclusive use by the player or players of any space in such part of the pleasure ground - a person shall not in any space elsewhere in the pleasure ground play or take any part in any game so specified in such a manner as to exclude persons not playing or taking part in the game from the use of such a space.

15. A person resorting to the pleasure ground and playing or taking part in any game for which exclusive use of any space in the pleasure ground has been set apart shall: (i) not play on the space any game other than the game for which it is set apart;

(ii) in preparing for playing and in playing, use reasonable care to prevent undue interference with the proper use of the pleasure ground by other persons;

(iii) when the space is already occupied by other players do not begin to play thereon without their permission;

(iv) where the exclusive use of the space has been granted by the Council for the playing of a match, not play on that space later than a quarter of an hour before the time fixed for the beginning of the match unless he is taking part therein;

(v) except where the exclusive use of the space has been granted by the Council for the playing of a match in which he is taking part, not use the space for a longer time than two hours continuously, if any other players make known to him a wish to use the space.

13.A person shall not in any part of the pleasure ground which may have been set apart by the Council for any game, play, or take part in any game when the state of the ground or other cause makes it unfit for use and a notice is set up in some conspicuous position prohibiting play in that part of the pleasure ground.

14.A person shall not in the pleasure ground:

(i)except as hereinafter provided, erect any post, rail, fence, pole, tent, booth, stand, building or other structure: Provided that this prohibition shall not apply where upon application to the Council they grant permission to erect any post, rail, fence, pole, tent, booth, stand, building or other structure, upon such occasion and for such purpose as are specified in the application;

(ii)beat, shake, sweep, brush or cleanse any carpet, drugget, rug or mat, or any other fabric retaining dust or dirt;

(iii)hang, spread or deposit any linen or other fabric for drying or bleaching;

sell, or offer or expose for sale, or let to hire, or expose for letting to hire, any commodity or article, unless, in pursuance of an agreement with the Council, or otherwise in the exercise of any lawful right or privilege, he is authorised to sell or let to hire in the pleasure ground such commodity or article.

15.A person shall not in the pleasure ground wilfully obstruct, disturb, interrupt or annoy any other person in the proper use of the pleasure ground, or wilfully obstruct, disturb or interrupt any officer of the Council in the proper execution of his duty, or any person or servant or any person employed by the Council in the proper execution of any work in connection with the laying out or maintenance of the pleasure ground.

16.A person shall not in the pleasure ground, use any obscene language to the annoyance of any person.

17.Every person who shall offend against these byelaws shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding twenty pounds.

18.Every person who shall infringe any byelaw for the regulation of the pleasure ground may be removed by an officer of the Council, or by any constable, in any one of the several cases hereinafter specified: that is to say:

(i)Where the infraction of the byelaw is committed within the view of such officer or constable, and the name and residence of the person infringing the byelaw are unknown to and cannot be readily ascertained by such officer or constable;

(ii)Where the infraction of the byelaw is committed within the view of such officer or constable and, from the nature of such infraction, or from any other fact of which such officer or constable may have knowledge, or of which he may be credibly informed, there may be reasonable ground for belief that the continuance in the pleasure ground of the person infringing the byelaw may result in another infraction of a byelaw, or that the removal of such person from the pleasure ground is otherwise necessary as a security for the proper use and regulation thereof.

The COMMON SEAL of the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the BOROUGH OF OKEHAMPTON was hereunto affixed this Twenty-first day of February, One thousand nine hundred and Seventy-two in the presence of:

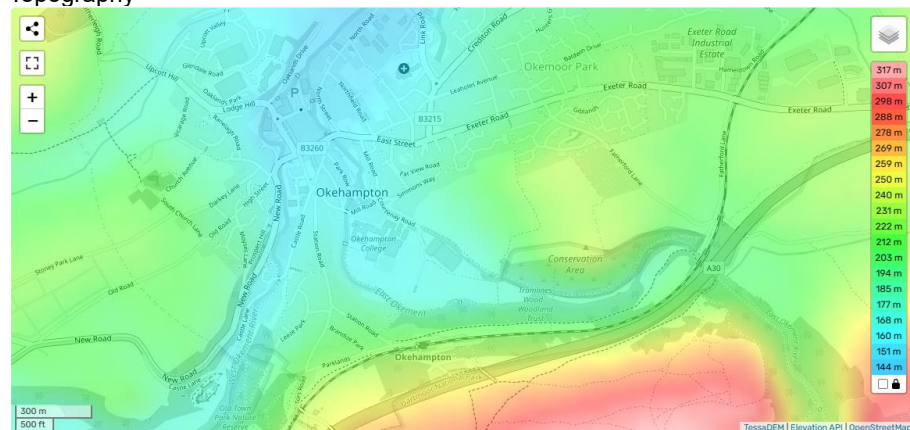
H.R. Horne Mayor A.E.F. Dear Town Clerk

The Secretary of State this day confirmed the foregoing byelaws and fixed the date on which they are to come into operation as the first day of July 1972.
K. P. Witney An Assistant Under Secretary of State HOME OFFICE, WHITEHALL 23 May 1972

It is hereby confirmed that a foregoing printed copy of the Byelaws is a true copy of the Byelaws as confirmed.

A.E.F. Dear Town Clerk TOWN HALL, OKEHAMPTON

Topography



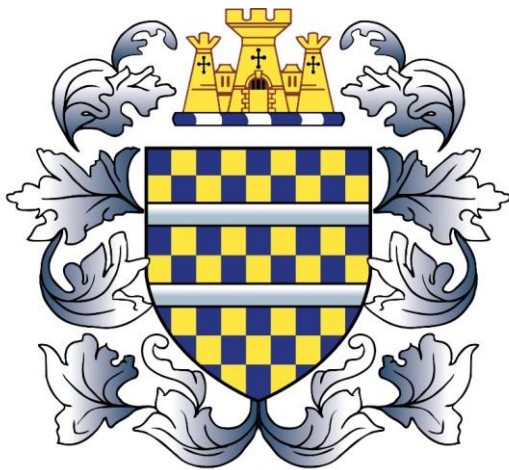
Archaeology

The park has never had an archaeological survey done on it, from historical records and photographs it has always been grass land, although during WWII trenches were dug in it and part of it was turned over to the growing of food.



The lidar map shows that there is not a lot of activity under the ground in Simmons Park and as it is a Queen Elizabeth II playing field will never be built on so there is a lack of need to perform any archaeology on the site.

Strategic Context and Policies



Okehampton Town Council

**Strategic Plan
2023-2027**

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Introduction

This Strategic Plan sets out Okehampton Town Councils aims and objectives and provides the policy framework within which the elected Members (Councillors) make decisions and the Officers (staff) conduct their day-to-day work.

Okehampton Town Council has 14 elected members and elections take place every four years, the next being in May 2027. The Council is non-political and operates through Committees of which there are 4; Policy and Resources, Parks and Open Spaces, Property and Planning, all of which are decision making and report to the Full Council. In 2018 the Council adopted the Power of Competence which was renewed in 2023 following the elections.

There are 8 members of staff. The Town Clerk, an Assistant Town Clerk, Administration Assistant and Mayors PA, 2 Caretakers (Senior and Assistant), a Park-Keeper, Groundsperson and Horticultural Apprentice. The Town Clerk, Park-Keeper and Apprentice being full-time employees.

In September 2022 Okehampton Town Council presented West Devon Borough Council (WDBC) with a petition for a Community Governance review of its boundary the aim of which is to bring the recent urban developments into the town which would give the council greater opportunity to:

- continue to afford community projects
- continue to provide services for the benefit of all
- give OTC a greater democratic voice within the county and central government
- bring increased opportunities and access to a wider range of funding
- to provide future growth opportunities

WDBC has twelve months from the petition validation date (November 2022) to complete the review

Mission Statement

The primary role of Okehampton Town Council is to provide a democratic and representative voice for the community. It will support, and contribute towards, the sustainable environmental, economic and social well-being of the town, having regard to the needs and wishes of the town residents. Okehampton Town Council recognises its obligations to deliver cost-effective quality services and will work with other councils to ensure that the town remains at the heart of the local community.

Priorities

Further information about each priority can be found within the specific strands of the Strategic Plan.

Democracy (D) – Okehampton Town Council consists of an elected body of local people to provide a strong voice on decisions and services that affect the everyday life of local people including:

- D1 Representation – the council will act as democratically elected leader of, and advocate for, the interests of the community. Councillors will receive support in their roles as representatives, leaders and the delivery of participation and engagement in public life.
- D2 General Power of Competence (GPC) – the council will seek to maintain the GPC in order that it has the fullest opportunity to act for, and in the interests of, the residents of the town.
- D3 Engagement – the council will seek to engage with electors before making changes that affect the populace or relevant stakeholder groups. This will take place through Councillor Surgeries, the Annual Council Meeting and Town Assembly, Council and Committee Meetings, the Council website, social media and the press.
- D4 Civic/Ceremonial – the council will seek to sustain civic and ceremonial traditions

Climate Change and Biodiversity (Cc) – Okehampton Town Council has signed up to the Devon Climate Declaration which was prepared by a consortium of public, private and voluntary organisations collaborating through a Devon Climate Emergency Response Group and will review its practices with a view to reducing its carbon footprint, encouraging others to do the same

- Cc1 Reduction - the council will review its plans and strive to reduce its carbon emissions to meet or exceed the targets within the Devon Climate declaration
- Cc2 Working Together – the council will work with town residents, businesses, other local authorities and visitors to assist in the reduction of Okehampton's production and consumption emissions to meet IPCC recommendations at the latest.
- Cc3 Risk - the council will work to understand the near-term and future risks of climate change for Devon to plan for how our infrastructure, public services and communities will have to adapt for a 1.5+degree warmer world
- Cc4 Encouragement - the council will encourage local organisations, businesses, communities and individuals to do the same

Community (C) – Okehampton Town Council seeks to be at the heart of the community and its activities. It will work closely with local voluntary, business, community groups and third/public sector partners within Okehampton that are key to vibrant and successful community life.

- C1 Working Together – the council will work with the Borough and County Councils, local Town and Parish Councils, and other representative bodies, partners and public authorities to promote a vibrant and healthy community life and wellbeing.
- C2 Community Engagement – the council will develop communications to meet statutory and other requirements to communicate key messages
- C3 Financial Assistance – the council will maintain a Grants Scheme to support eligible organisations providing benefits to the residents of Okehampton town
- C4 Outside Bodies – the council will appoint representatives to, and work with, community and other groups supporting residents of the town
- C5 Community Assets – the council will manage the community assets in its ownership and that it is responsible for to support the development and delivery of community services, benefits and community wellbeing
- C6 Allotments - the council will support other bodies to maintain allotments to service the Parish as necessary
- C7 Burial Grounds – the council will maintain a burial ground to service the Parish, including making provision for additional burial facilities, as necessary
- C8 Events – the council will seek to deliver events marking significant national occasions whether on an annual or occasional basis, and support where possible third-party events
- C9 Emergency Plan – the council will strive to help coordinate responses to social and environmental emergencies that may arise

Environment (En) – Okehampton has a strong identity and character due to its rich natural heritage. The Town Council will work to ensure this heritage is protected and enhanced for present and future generations, including those buildings and areas of land which it owns or is responsible for.

- En1 Environment (general) – the council will actively contribute to and promote policies and initiatives that support, protect and sensitively and sustainably develop the unique historic, build and natural environments of the town
- En2 Environment (council ownership) – the council will maintain and protect the heritage and natural assets in its ownership, and that it is responsible for, including through the maintenance of appropriate records, maintenance plans, inspections and works
- En3 Trees – the council will manage and maintain shrubs and trees on land which it owns or is responsible for, including the maintenance of inspection, arboriculture and planting schemes
- En4 Recreation – the council will maintain, on land that it owns or is responsible for, existing areas of leisure and recreation purposes
- En5 New Development – the council will seek to inform and shape new development in the town by scrutinising and commenting on all planning applications to ensure sustainable and managed growth supported by the appropriate infrastructure. This includes working closely with the joint Okehampton Hamlets and Town Neighbourhood Development Plan, now and once approved.

Economy (Ec) – Okehampton Town Council will work to support the business community and other stakeholders within the local economy and promote footfall as well as embedding good practice in its roles as an employer, landlord, steward of community assets and service provider

- Ec1 Economic Development – the council will seek to support and/or deliver initiatives to promote, develop and maintain a healthy local economy and commercial sector
- Ec2 Working Together – the council will work with representative bodies, partners and public authorities to promote a vibrant and healthy local economy
- Ec3 Best Value – the council will work to minimise council costs and provide value for money services which are relevant, efficient economic and effective. In doing so it will reflect good employment and business practices
- Ec5 Income Generation – the council will manage its commercial assets to provide income streams on a commercial basis to support the development and delivery of community services and benefits. The council will also seek to develop new income streams as opportunities arise which contribute to the local economy and to maximise investment income.

Workforce (W) – Okehampton Town Council employs 8 members of staff and has 14 elected members all of whom play an important part in the efficient delivery of council services

- W1 Training and Support – the council will support employees and members to undertake their respective roles efficiently, and safely by providing them with training relevant to their requirements and to aid professional development
- W2 Policy – the council will follow legislation and guidance ensuring that they are a good supportive employer
- W3 Health & Safety - the council will ensure that it has, and keeps regularly reviewed, the necessary policies ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees and members, and provide the necessary personal protective equipment

Climate Change and Biodiversity (Cc)

Okehampton Town Council has signed up to the Devon Climate Declaration which was prepared by a consortium of public, private and voluntary organisations collaborating through a Devon Climate Emergency Response Group and will review its practices with a view to reducing its carbon footprint, encouraging others to do the same

- Cc1 Reduction - the council will review its plans and strive to reduce its carbon emissions to meet or exceed the targets within the Devon Climate declaration

Okehampton Town Council has set up a working group to review its own internal practices including the supplies it uses, the services it provides and other possibilities with a view to reducing its own carbon emissions, buying locally and sustainably where possible. The group will also investigate the feasibility of the provision of additional services and assistance to the community enabling them to reduce their own carbon footprints.

Details of actions taken by the Council as of March 2020 and further ideas for investigation and consideration is included at the end of this document.

- Cc2 Working Together – the council will work with town residents, businesses, other local authorities and visitors to assist in the reduction of Okehampton's production and consumption emissions to meet IPCC recommendations at the latest.

A wider reaching group comprising of Members of other surrounding local parish and town councils has been initiated by Okehampton Town Council. The aim of the group is to share ideas, possibilities, practices put into place and the feasibility of bulk purchasing.

Members of the group will feedback information and ideas to their own councils for further investigation and consideration.

- Cc3 Risk - the council will work to understand the near-term and future risks of climate change for Devon to plan for how our infrastructure, public services and communities will have to adapt for a +1.5 degree Celsius, or more, warmer world

To enable the Council to better keep abreast of information and initiatives as they come forward, Members of the Council have been nominated to attend other climate related meetings:

- Okehampton Climate Action Group
- Corporate meetings; ie DCC, WDBC

These Councillors will feedback to the Climate Change Working Group relevant information which will be acted upon accordingly.

- Cc4 Encouragement - the council will encourage local organisations, businesses, communities and individuals to do the same

The Council, in January 2020, held an eco-coffee morning with the aim of highlighting to the community and individuals' easy ways in which they can each reduce their carbon footprint and information that may have been relevant to them. This event was successful and further events will be held.

Actions Okehampton Town Council has taken to reduce its impact on the climate and its carbon footprint:

- Signed up to the Devon Climate Declaration (2019)

- Signed up to the Tree Charter (2019)
- Town/Charter Hall boiler replaced in 2018 with an energy efficient model
- Disposable plastic cups replaced with reusable 'picnic' style glasses for office and visitor use
- Waste collected by Devon Contract Waste who operate a "Zero to Landfill" policy, the waste is sorted and recycled or used for energy generation
- Existing lightbulbs replaced with energy saving LED lightbulbs when necessary
- Shredded paper used in composting from office and parks
- Parks waste from maintenance used in composting which is then used on the parks flower beds
- Parks pond fed by natural water source
- Replanting any trees on its land as and when any are removed due to disease, are dying or have fallen with native species, like for like where possible
- West Bridge verge planted with Wildflowers and maintained as a wildflower meadow
- Recycling of printer ink cartridges and toners
- Charter Hall hirers encouraged to recycle as much waste as possible
- Council coffee grounds used in composting
- Working Group stand at the Rotary Group coffee morning in the Charter Hall on 30th November 2019 and holding community event/council coffee morning on 18th January 2020 promoting climate change
- Supporting the proposed regular rail link from Okehampton to Exeter and beyond
- Has nominated Councillors to attend other climate related meetings:
 - Okehampton Climate Action Group
 - Corporate meetings; ie DCC, WDBC

2020

- Held an 'Eco Awareness' coffee morning on 18th January 2020
- Set up a Climate Group outside of the remit of the Town Council for representatives from local councils in the locality to share ideas
- Signed up to Devon Contract Waste's newly formed Circular Economy Scheme to enhance and promote recycling within the Council
- Received and planted a Landmark Tree in March 2020 to help mark and replenish tree loss from the Ash Dieback Disease
- Tree Policy relating to the felling of trees
- Working with StOC to improve management of the meadow in Simmons Park to further encourage biodiversity
- Members given the opportunity to 'opt-out' of receiving hard paper copies of meeting agendas and associated papers (as of March 2020 8 Members had signed up)
- Paper supply changed to 100% recycled off white paper (February 2020)
- Joined Devon Communities Together (August 2020)
- Electricity for Fairplace toilets supplied by Octopus Energy. 100% renewable energy

2021

- Boxes delivered to Ockment Centre for the public to recycle foil packs (i.e., Crisp packets)
- Renewed waste removal contract with Devon Contract Waste at a reduced cost. The only zero to landfill operator in the Southwest
- Attended WDBC Climate Change Forum and Devon Donut Group
- Planted a sensory garden at Fairplace to encourage wildlife
- Installed bird boxes in Simmons Park
- Installed recycled plastic picnic benches in Simmons Park. Supplied by Devon Contract Waste and made from plastic recycled in the Southwest.
- Attended the Uniting Rural Communities to Tackle Climate Change event

2022

- Owl boxes planned to be installed
- More bee friendly planting in sensory garden
- Bird feeders installed in Simmons Park

- New wildflower area created
- New pond flowers planted to encourage wildlife
- Wildflower verges planted
- Councillors opting out of receiving paper copies of agendas and associated reports
- Areas in the park left for 'no mow in May' and not mowed in June
- New orchids in the meadow
- Soft plastic and batteries recycling point in the Council office
- Replaced some bins with bins made from recycled plastics
- Climate neutral production of office printer and climate neutral printing (printer lease dates 04.10.2022 – 03.10.2027)
- Supported Plastic Free Okehampton Group to start the water Refill Scheme
- Purchased refillable water bottles to commemorate the Queens Platinum Jubilee
- Purchased compostable cups and plates for the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations 2022
- Council Hosted Big Green Week Community Event
- Bus and train timetables available for the public from the Town Hall
- Replaced felled Ash Trees in Clapps Wood (felled due to ash-dieback)

Future Plans

The Climate Change Working Group is/will be investigating what other actions it can take in relation to its own property/areas of business including;

- Renewable energy
 - Solar panel installation on the Charter Hall roof as part of the roof replacement project
 - Solar panels to be considered for the Tractor shed in the park
- Wildflower verge planting on other sites i.e., skate park, verges
- Charging point for electric vehicles in Simmons Park
- Production of an Okehampton hub bus map to encourage public transport use
- Review use of chemicals used for weed control
- Working with Tamar Energy to support vulnerable residents
- Investigate possible site for public gardens or allotments

Community (C)

Okehampton Town Council seeks to be at the heart of the community and its activities. It will work closely with local voluntary, business, community groups and third/public sector partners within Okehampton that are key to vibrant and successful community life.

- C1 Working Together – the council will work with the Borough and County Councils, local Town and Parish Councils, and other representative bodies, partners and public authorities to promote a vibrant and healthy community life and wellbeing.

Representative Members of both West Devon Borough Council (WDBC) and Devon County Council (DCC) are invited to attend meetings of the Council. They provide information and similarly feedback to WDBC/DCC any issues that may have arisen.

Members of WDBC, DCC and other bodies can be invited to the regular Councillor Surgeries giving residents the opportunity to speak directly with them in a local setting.

When necessary the different tiers of Council work together on initiatives to improve facilities within the town and surrounding areas, this may include the holding of joint meetings and/or public consultations.

- C2 Community Engagement – the Council will develop communications to meet statutory and other requirements to communicate key messages

Community engagement is about giving local people a voice and involving them in the decisions that affect them and their community. It is about development of relationships and clear communication to deliver better services and projects.

The aim of this strategy is to engage residents and encourage their participation in decision making to secure better services and to create a more active and informed community. This strategy sets out how Okehampton Town Council will engage its community across a broad range of its activities and sets out short, medium, and long term aims.

At present residents and other interested persons/organisations can communicate with or receive information from the Council in the following ways:

A – NEWSLETTER published monthly which includes names and contact details of the staff and all councillors, details of forthcoming meetings, councillor surgeries, information about local issues and council activities. Hard copies are made available in the Library, Ockment Centre and Town Hall, and online through the email mailing list, website and social media.

B – ANNUAL REPORT published in March. It includes details of council activities, achievements, its organisational structure, grants awarded and a summary of accounts. Hard copies are made available in the Library, Ockment Centre and Town Hall, and online through the email mailing list, website and social media.

C – WEBSITE address is www.okehampton.gov.uk Information and photographs are updated regularly, details include information about the council and its activities, local amenities and organisations, current issues, and events. Links to the council's website can also be added to the websites and apps of other tourism organisations, and vice-versa.

D – ANNUAL TOWN MEETING is held in March or April at 7p.m. and gives electors of the parish a chance to air their views or ask questions on matters relating to Okehampton. A speaker will generally give an address on a local issue such as restoring the passenger service to the railway, or relevant items for example cyber security.

E – COUNCIL MEETINGS members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the council and are given the opportunity to address the councillors on local issues. There is no requirement to make a formal request to speak prior to a meeting.

F – CONTACT WITH CLERK OR OTHER STAFF can be made by telephone, email, post or by calling at the office in the Town Hall from 9:30am to 4pm on Monday to Thursday and at other times by appointment.

G – COUNCILLOR SURGERY is held from 10am to 12noon on the third Thursday of each month except August and December, in the Council Chamber, Town Hall or online. Two councillors are available at these times to speak to residents about local matters. Other parties can be invited to co-host the events.

H – INVESTITURE OF NEW MAYOR is held in May and includes announcement of those persons who have been given Mayoral Awards. Local organisations are invited to send representatives to the event which is followed by refreshments where different community leaders and groups can exchange ideas and information.

I – FACEBOOK has been set up for the Council and the Mayor and posts are shared to the Okehampton Information Hub

J – PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS may be held to gauge support for projects or to

communicate intention and information to residents, on a formal or informal basis if expedient to do so.

K – FEEDBACK from members of the public and stakeholders is welcomed, and the council will aim to find out what the community wants or expects from its council and how content it is with existing services by circulating information on activities and inviting residents to submit their observations to the council by email or letter. Messages and comments submitted through social media platforms will not be considered as it is not possible to ensure they are all captured. Relevant and appropriate comments will be considered by the Council or one of its committees or working parties.

L – EVENTS - the Council will consider attending other locally held events such as Okehampton Show, possibly sharing a space with other stakeholders and hosting its own coffee mornings.

- C3 Financial Assistance – the Council will maintain a Grants Scheme to support eligible organisations providing benefits to the residents of Okehampton town

Council Policy clearly sets out the criteria and application process, and applications are routinely considered at meetings of the Policy & Resources Committee.

The Grants Budget is reviewed annually as part of the precept and budget setting process.

- C4 Outside Bodies – the Council will appoint representatives to, and work with, community and other groups supporting residents of the town

Members are nominated at the annual Council Meeting to represent and support local community groups and organisations where the council has been invited to provide representation, subject to councillor availability.

The majority of these positions are historical, with the groups having been allocated a Councillor representative for a number of years. Requests from other groups or suggestions by Councillors are welcomed and will be considered by the Council as appropriate.

Nominated Councillors will attend meetings of the group and report back any activity, issues, comments or concerns to the Council for information. They will also endeavour to support the group's activities, the level of involvement the Councillor can offer being at their own personal discretion.

Foreign visitors to the town are encouraged, and on application by local organisations, a reception for visiting groups may be hosted on council premises.

- C5 Community Assets – the Council will manage the community assets in its ownership and that it is responsible for to support the development and delivery of community services, benefits and community wellbeing

The Council has the following community assets that it owns or is responsible for, including:

- Simmons Park, the skate park, the garden area at Fairplace, picnic area behind Lidl and the wildflower verge at Westbridge
- Public toilets at Fairplace and those in Market Street that are leased from West Devon Borough Council.
- The Town Hall, which is Grade II listed, and the Charter Hall
- The Cemetery adjacent to All Saints Church in which the first burial took place in 2009

Simmons Park is often used by groups/organisation for events to fundraise for their cause or to provide activities for the community to attend. The Charter Hall is utilised most Saturdays by local groups for fundraising coffee mornings, the facility is offered at a reduced rate for this purpose.

Other facilities are available for hire by local groups and others from further away, the majority of whom use them to hold events for the benefit of the community.

In order to improve the safety and wellbeing of residents and the community the installation of a CCTV system covering much of the town centre and Simmons Park has been provided by the Town Council.

- C6 Allotments - the council will support other bodies to maintain allotments to service the Parish as necessary

Allotments are provided and managed by Okehampton United Charities (OUC) for use by residents residing within the boundary of the town and hamlets councils. A grant request is submitted annually by the OUC to both councils covering the cost of the provision of the allotments.

Councils have a statutory duty to provide allotments and the arrangement with the OUC takes responsibility for the management of them from the councils, whilst still enabling the delivery of this facility for residents.

- C7 Burial Grounds – the council will maintain a burial ground to service the Parish, including making provision for additional burial facilities, as necessary

In 2006 the Council purchased a strip of land adjacent to All Saints Church for the provision of burials. Funding received from burials on this land is set aside in an earmarked fund for the purchase of future land when required.

West Devon Borough Council is responsible for the closed graveyards, and the other open graveyard is owned and managed by the Northmoor Ministry although the Town Council does cut the grass in the open graveyard.

- C8 Events – the council will seek to deliver events marking significant national occasions whether on an annual or occasional basis, and support where possible third-party events

The Council holds annual various Civic events that welcome public participation; the Civic Service and Mayor Choosing Ceremony for example and will make every effort to ensure these continue into the future.

In addition to the regular events, the Council will endeavour to mark significant occasions appropriately, taking into account the benefit to the community and costs.

Equally the Council works with other local organisations and attends events such as Remembrance Day and Edwardian Evening in an official capacity.

- C9 Emergency Plan – the council will strive to help coordinate responses to social and environmental emergencies that may arise

Okehampton Town Council has a Business Continuity Plan which sets out how it will continue to operate and provide services in the event its staff or buildings are affected in any way.

The Council will work with other organisations and stakeholders to support, where possible, a response to emergency situations that may arise on a local or national scale.

Democracy (D)

Okehampton Town Council consists of an elected body of local people to provide a strong voice on decisions and services that affect the everyday life of local people including:

- D1 Representation – the Council will act as democratically elected leader of, and advocate for, the interests of the community. Councillors will receive support in their roles as representatives, leaders and the delivery of participation and engagement in public life.

Okehampton Town Council consists of 14 Members who are either elected at the local Council elections which take place 4 yearly, the next being scheduled for May 2027, or co-opted in the event there is an unfilled vacancy or if a casual vacancy arises during that 4 year period.

Members are provided with an induction pack which comprises a variety of information including the schedule of meetings, policies and procedures, the Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and a boundary map. In order to assist Members settling into and understanding their role internal induction sessions are arranged by the Town Clerk. Members are also strongly encouraged to attend Devon Association of Local Councils courses, particularly those aimed at new Councillors and any that specifically relate to a committee they may be nominated to sit on; for example planning and finance.

The Town Clerk operates an 'open door' policy and Members are encouraged to make appointments to speak to her about any concerns or issues they may have, including about how the Council operates and expectations of them in their role as Councillor.

- D2 General Power of Competence (GPC) – the Council will seek to maintain the GPC in order that it has the fullest opportunity to act for, and in the interests of, the residents of the town.

The GPC, as set out in the Localism Act 2011, extends the ability of local Councils allowing them to do anything an individual can do although this is subject to statutory prohibitions, restrictions or limitations which must be complied with. For example, the Council could invest in domestic property or set up a business trading arm.

Okehampton Town Council reaffirmed its eligibility to hold the GPC, which remains in place until the annual meeting after the next ordinary elections, at its annual meeting May 2023. The criteria a Council must meet is that at least two-thirds of Members (10 for Okehampton Town Council) must have been elected and the Clerk must hold a relevant qualification, which includes the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA).

- D3 Engagement – the council will seek to engage with electors before making changes that affect the populace or relevant stakeholder groups. This will take place through Councillor Surgeries, the Annual Council Meeting and Town Assembly, Council and Committee Meetings, the Council website, social media and the press.

Councillor Surgeries, to which the other 2 tiers of Councils and other bodies such as the police can be invited to take part in. These surgeries are not held in August and December or in the run up to local elections in line with guidance issued. The Council is aware that daytime events are not suitable for everyone and will occasionally host a Saturday coffee morning or other event.

Members of the public are also welcomed to meetings of the Council and can make appointments to speak with Members or the Town Clerk at a time convenient to both parties. An Annual Town Assembly is normally held in March or April when Members are available to talk to residents about any issues, concerns or questions they may have.

Meetings and events are publicised in various ways which may include the website, social media, noticeboards and in the local paper.

Issues that affect the residents and/or stakeholder groups within the local community will be communicated by way of the means already stated, or if felt to be beneficial wider consultation events may be held or supported by the Council.

Policies and documents setting out how the Council will run and manage its functions efficiently, effectively and transparently are available on the Council website. These are regularly reviewed and include:

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Financial Management Risk Assessment
- Privacy and Data Protection Policies
- Subject Access Request Policy
- Strategic Plan
- Complaints Policy
- Audit Reports
- Budgets

D4 Civic/Ceremonial – the Council will seek to sustain civic and ceremonial traditions

Many of the Civic/Ceremonial events that are held or attended annually by the Council have an historical background. The Council seeks to sustain and uphold the traditions surrounding its own events, whilst taking into account that:

- the majority of its income is funded through the precept
- being conscious of its carbon footprint, and
- future sustainability

Town Council events include the Annual Mayor Choosing Ceremony and Civic Service.

A Civic Protocol/Guideline document setting out how these events are held to aid the continuity of these traditions has been developed.

Economy (Ec)

Okehampton Town Council will work to support the business community and other stakeholders within the local economy and promote footfall as well as embedding good practice in its roles as an employer, landlord, steward of community assets and service provider

Ec1 Economic Development – the Council will seek to support and/or deliver initiatives to promote, develop and maintain a healthy local economy and commercial sector

Okehampton is without a Chamber of Trade but does have active organisations who promote the work of local traders which encourages a healthy economy. The Town Council is working with West Devon Borough Council to ascertain the feasibility of the creation of a Business Improvement District.

A Town Guide, information boards and new signage to help promote footfall, especially between the town centre and railway station has been provided by the Town Council who also maintain public toilets and open spaces for the enjoyment and use of its residents and visitors.

The town centre was, and remains, relatively healthy in that there are few vacant commercial premises, the majority of the occupied properties consisting of independent businesses³.

The state of the economy and depth of any depression arising from the recent and ongoing crisis remains to be seen, and the Council will endeavour to support local groups and organisations throughout this period.

Ec2 Working Together – the Council will work with representative bodies, partners and public authorities to promote a vibrant and healthy local economy

The Council strives to work proactively with all bodies, particularly West Devon Borough Council and Devon County Council who constitute the other two tiers of councils in Devon.

Member representatives of WDBC and DCC regularly attend meetings of the Council and can be invited to join the Town Council Members at their regular Councillor Surgeries offering members of the public a chance to meet with them face to face.

Public consultations will be held by various means which may include social media, website, noticeboards and the press. Face to face public consultation events may also be held and to which other bodies may be asked to attend and/or participate in as necessary.

All representative bodies and members of the public are welcomed to meetings of the Council and to make appointments to meet with Members and the Town Clerk to discuss items of concern or suggestions they may have.

Ec3 Best Value – the Council will work to minimise Council costs and provide value for money services which are relevant, efficient, economic and effective. In doing so it will reflect good employment and business practices

Okehampton Town Council holds annual budget workshops when detailed reviews of each of its budget headings are undertaken to identify areas in which cost savings could be made in relation to its expenditure.

Quotations for goods and services are obtained where possible and in line with Financial Regulations in order to ensure best value is obtained, taking into account its origin and the carbon footprint of transportation of the item or persons.

Ec4 Income Generation – the council will manage its commercial assets to provide income streams on a commercial basis to support the development and delivery of community services and benefits. The council will also seek to develop new income streams as opportunities arise which contribute to the local economy and to maximise investment income.

Okehampton Town Council will undertake marketing of its facilities that are available for hire on a more proactive basis once external and internal improvements to enhance them have been completed. In 2022 the Council Chamber was enhanced to make it a more attractive wedding venue.

Commercial property rented/leased by the Council is managed with a view to supporting the community and its economy by providing affordable premises for local business use whilst ensuring that the premises are occupied and providing an income stream.

³ As evidenced in the Okehampton Town Benchmarking Report, June 2019

An Investment Working/Task & Finish Group has been created by the Council with a view to seeking and investigating the feasibility of possible new sources of income and to maximise income received from funds held in order to help offset expenses and minimise any precept increases. The group may also be tasked with reviewing the Council's sources of income with a view to establishing any potential increases.

Environment (En)

Okehampton has a strong identity and character due to its rich natural heritage. The Town Council will work to ensure this heritage is protected and enhanced for present and future generations, including those buildings and areas of land which it owns or is responsible for.

En1 Environment (general) – the Council will actively contribute to and promote policies and initiatives that support, protect and sensitively and sustainably develop the unique historic, build and natural environments of the town

The Council, in March 2020, adopted a Tree Policy setting out how it will respond as a consultee to tree related Planning Applications within the Council boundary, or just outside thereof. The individual circumstances of each application will be considered by the Planning Committee enabling a considered response to be provided.

A community led Neighbourhood Plan is in the process of being created jointly with the neighbouring parish of Okehampton Hamlets and working with the Dartmoor National Park. The working group comprises of Members of both Councils alongside members of the public. Its aim is to ensure that future developments are fit for purpose and the area in which they are proposed whilst giving consideration to the climate, biodiversity and the environment.

The town boundary falls, in the main, just outside of Dartmoor National Park but does contribute to consultations regarding its management and takes its protected status into consideration when responding to planning applications.

Much of the town is included within a conservation area which helps to ensure that its natural environment is protected including the Council owned Charter Hall, and Town Hall which is Grade II listed.

En2 Environment (Council ownership) – the Council will maintain and protect the heritage and natural assets in its ownership, and that it is responsible for, including through the maintenance of appropriate records, maintenance plans, inspections and works

In January 2022 the 10 year management plan for Simmons Park and Kempley Meadows was renewed by the Council. The plan is due for review on the following dates:

- i) by 31 December 2025;
- ii) by 31 December 2028;
- iii) by 31 December 2031, at which time the next ten-year management plan is to be produced.

In 2002 the formal part of Simmons Park and gardens were Grade II listed by Historic England which in turn give it enhanced protected status. In 2019 the park was awarded the 'Much Loved' status in the Fields in Trust UK Best Park awards having been placed within the top 20% of nominations across the UK.

Clapps Wood provides an area through which members of the public can take a walk. There is no specific management plan for this area of woodland, however a regular programme of inspection and maintenance is in place. In 2021 the area was replanted with native species following the felling of a significant number of the trees due to ash dieback disease

The grass verge at West Bridge which is owned and maintained by the Council is normally planted with wildflowers which, as well as creating an area welcoming those coming into the town, positively promotes biodiversity and a boost to the climate. Fairplace sensory garden was created in 2021 adding another area of insect friendly planting for the enjoyment of members of the public.

- En3 Trees – the Council will manage and maintain shrubs and trees on land which it owns or is responsible for, including the maintenance of inspection, arboricultural and planting schemes

Management of trees and shrubs within Simmons Park and Kempley Meadows is set out in the Management Plan.

Regular inspections of the trees on Council land, including Simmons Park and Clapps Wood, are undertaken by suitability qualified contractors to ensure their health and that they do not pose a risk to persons or property. Any work required is undertaken by competent persons.

- En4 Recreation – the Council will maintain, on land that it owns or is responsible for, existing areas of leisure and recreation purposes

With regards to recreation the Council owns and is responsible for Simmons Park, the skate park, BMX track and adjacent land, and Fairplace Gardens.

Simmons Park is widely used by residents, regular visitors and tourists and is maintained to a high standard providing extensive play and recreation areas. The Council is committed to maintaining all of its outdoor spaces for the enjoyment of the public.

The neighbouring Okehampton Community College use part of the land for sports as do other groups such as the Football Club, Okehampton Community Recreation Association and the Bowling Club.

The creation of a sensory garden at Fairplace and some enrichments to the Putting Green adjacent to Parklands Leisure Centre in Simmons Park were undertaken in 2021. It is hoped to enhance the old band stand base near the Chalet in Simmons Park in 2023 to add a pergola type structure that can be utilised for events such as art exhibitions or used for wedding photographs.

- En5 New Development – the Council will seek to inform and shape new development in the town to ensure sustainable and managed growth supported by the appropriate infrastructure, including working closely with the joint Okehampton Hamlets and Town Neighbourhood Development Plan.

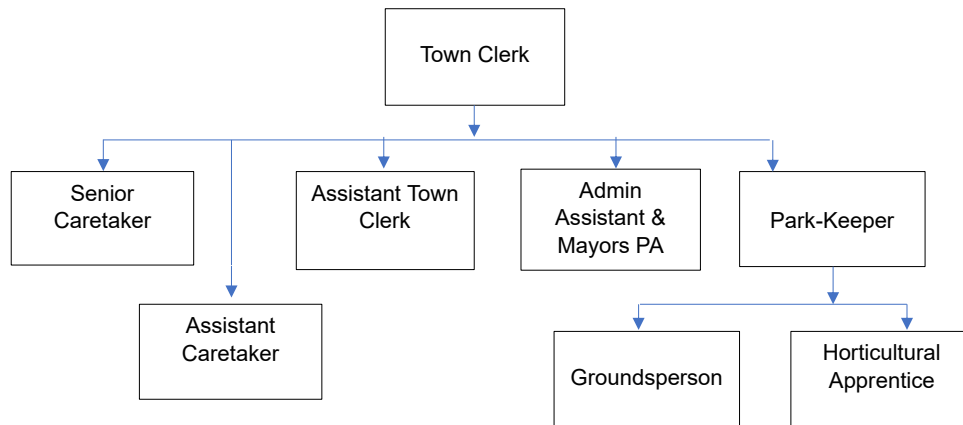
Okehampton Town Council continues to work with the community led Neighbourhood Plan Development Group which consist of members of both the Town and Hamlets Councils and members of the public who reside within the boundary of the 2 areas. It is hoped that West Devon Borough Council will assist with the production of the plan to aid its progress to completion.

The new plan must comply with planning legislation and once approved, will help to ensure that any new development fits the criteria and that new build properties are of the quality and type needed within the community. It will also help to address infrastructure to ensure that it can either cope with the increased demand or is sufficiently amended so that it is able to do so.

Workforce (W)

Staff Membership

In 2019 for the first time Okehampton Town Council resolved to employ a Horticultural Apprentice. This increased the number of employees to 8, all of whom play an important part in the efficient delivery of council services.



The Town Clerk, Park-Keeper and Apprentice are full time employees, the Apprentice being required to spend a day per week on college studies.

Management of all members of staff is the responsibility of the Town Clerk, with the Park-Keeper being the Line Manager for the other 2 members of Parks staff; the Groundsperson and Apprentice.

W1 Training and Support - the council will support employees and members to undertake their respective roles efficiently, and safely by providing them with training relevant to their requirements and to aid professional development.

Okehampton Town Council supports and encourages employee development through various means including, training and attendance at conferences and meetings that are relevant to their respective roles.

Annual development/appraisal meetings are held for all employees by their direct line manager. This is a two-way process where employees and the line manager contribute to the discussion enabling an opportunity for any concerns or issues to be raised and the identification of any training or skills that are needed.

Line management of the Town Clerk is through the Personnel Sub-Committee, although the Mayor and Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee have delegated authority to undertake the Annual Appraisal/Performance Review and are the 'go to' nominated persons for immediate queries/concerns.

The Town Clerk promotes an open environment encouraging regular dialogue with all employees on a day to day basis, allowing concerns or issues to be discussed and dealt with as they arise.

W2 Policy – the council will follow legislation and guidance ensuring that they are a good supportive employer

Okehampton Town Council has a number of staff related policies, including those listed which are regularly reviewed and updated as part of an ongoing process or as necessary. Employees are consulted during the review process by the Town Clerk; they are provided with draft copies of

policies at staff meetings which are held regularly on the first Tuesday of each month and given a timescale of at least 14 days in which to make comments or ask questions.

- Absence Management
- Bullying & Harassment
- Capability
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Discretions (Pensions)
- Equal Opportunities
- Flexible Retirement
- Grievance
- Leave
- Maternity, Paternity & Adoption
- Recruitment
- Safeguarding Policy
- Shared Parental Leave
- Social Media, IT and Phone Use Policy for Employees
- Uniform Policy for Employees

These, and other relevant policies are readily available for members of staff to access; copies being kept in the Town Hall reception and the parks office.

Councillors are supplied with copies of the National Association of Local Council’s publications ‘The Good Councillor’s Guide’ and ‘Being a Good Employer’ and are encouraged to attend training courses.

W3 Health & Safety - the council will ensure that it has, and keeps regularly reviewed, the necessary policies ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees and members, and provide the necessary training and personal protective equipment.

Responsibility for Health and Safety falls to all employees, who are asked to report any issues or concerns to the Town Clerk immediately on becoming aware of them.

Risk assessments are reviewed at least annually by the Town Clerk and Park-keeper and regular inspections of equipment, buildings and safety systems is undertaken.

The safety of employees is of the utmost importance and as such a Lone Working Policy has been adopted by Okehampton Town Council. Measures are taken to address issues and concerns as they arise to ensure that employees work conditions, safety and wellbeing is prioritised.

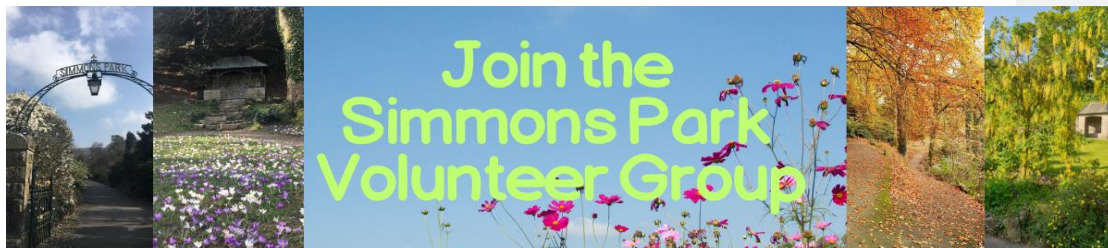
Social Context- Use and Events

Neon Run	Tue 23/05/2023 08:30	Tue 23/05/2023 15:00
Fair in the Park	Mon 05/06/2023 08:30	Tue 13/06/2023 12:00
Okehampton Celebrates event	Sun 09/07/2023 08:00	Sun 09/07/2023 22:00
Summer concert and picnic	Sat 15/07/2023 10:00	Sat 15/07/2023 13:00
Picnic and games afternoon	Sun 16/07/2023 12:30	Sun 16/07/2023 16:00
Park Run Test event	Thu 27/07/2023 18:00	Thu 27/07/2023 20:00
Operation Dartmoor Family friendly event	Wed 09/08/2023 12:00	Wed 09/08/2023 17:00
Maintenance	Thu 10/08/2023 08:00	Thu 10/08/2023 20:00
Wren Music	Sat 12/08/2023 14:00	Sat 26/08/2023 15:30
Rotary Summer Fair	Sun 27/08/2023 08:00	Sun 27/08/2023 18:00

Junk Music session: At green space at Skate Park	Wed 30/08/2023 10:00	Wed 30/08/2023 12:00
Park Run test event	Thu 31/08/2023 18:00	Thu 31/08/2023 20:00
Autumn Carnival Fair	Sun 15/10/2023 00:15	Mon 23/10/2023 08:00
Rescheduled Junk Music - rained off 2 August	Wed 25/10/2023 14:00	Wed 25/10/2023 16:00
PTFA Santa Run	Sun 10/12/2023 09:00	Sun 10/12/2023 14:00
Office Closed	Sun 24/12/2023 07:00	Mon 01/01/2024 19:00
Okehampton Lanterns Finale	Sat 24/02/2024 08:30	Sat 24/02/2024 21:00
PTFA Circus	Sun 16/06/2024 09:00	Mon 17/06/2024 16:15

Volunteering

A newly established parks volunteer group is being run by the Park Apprentice and supervised by the Park Keeper. The volunteers are helping with weeding and pruning in the park.



Okehampton Town Council

Okehampton Town Council

Volunteer Policy

Introduction

This policy has been prepared for the benefit of members of the public who may volunteer their time for Okehampton Town Council. This policy does not apply to Okehampton Town Council's relationship with voluntary organisations where other arrangements could apply.

Okehampton Town Council appreciates that volunteers contribute valuable assistance and experience that would otherwise not be available and in turn can themselves gain valuable working experience that can enhance their skills and enable self-fulfilment. It is therefore, important that Okehampton Town Council encourages the participation of volunteers whilst ensuring the safety and security of all parties.

Definition of Volunteer

A volunteer is a person who freely undertakes to perform a service, task or function that is not normally or traditionally performed as a full job and who does so without financial reward. A clear distinction exists between volunteers and those who are given a financial reward.

Any member of the public is welcome to volunteer their time and services to the Council for the purposes of litter picking, weeding or cleaning of items including signage. Other tasks may be allocated at the discretion of the Park-Keeper.

Being a volunteer does not excuse poor behaviour. Any concerns will be dealt with in accordance with Council policies.

Agreement

Volunteers will be required to complete a written agreement, consent form, provide contact details for themselves and those of another person in case of emergency, and any relevant health information.

Training

Volunteers will receive an induction by the Park-Keeper which will include health and safety to ensure they understand the environment they are to volunteer in and to clarify how the volunteer is expected to carry out their tasks.

Liability

For any council-led activity undertaken by a volunteer, Okehampton Town Council's insurance policies will apply. Volunteers should be aware that this insurance does not cover them for loss of earnings should they sustain an injury.

Equality

Okehampton Town Council's commitment to diversity and equality applies to volunteers and the Council values the contribution made by everyone, especially that made by unpaid volunteers.

Point of Contact

The Park-Keeper will be the main point of contact in working hours, which are normally as defined below, and to whom volunteers can go to with queries or concerns. The Town Clerk can also be contacted if the volunteer wishes to speak with another member of staff about any matters.

Monday to Thursday	8.30am to 4.30pm
Friday	8.30am to 1pm

Health and Safety

The induction process will include health and safety practices and requirements. Volunteers are recommended to carry with them a mobile phone at all times in case of emergency and not to work alone.

Volunteers must not under any circumstances undertake tasks on the riverbank or in the river itself.

The Council insurer stipulates that volunteers only undertake tasks during the working hours of Okehampton Town Council employees which are normally as stated in the section entitled 'Point of Contact'. Outside of these hours first aid equipment and assistance from Okehampton Town Council will not be available and volunteers undertaking tasks will not be considered to be volunteering for the Council.

Comments – From Trip advisor and Facebook

A beautiful town park with a lovely play area and river running through. So amazing as can continue up to Ball Wood and return along Tramlines or set forth from Fatherford onwards up the East Okement and out on to Dartmoor proper. A real gem

Lovely park for walking, picnicking or just sitting watching the world go by. Very well maintained and very clean.

We are fortunate to live in Okehampton and so visit Simmons Park frequently. It's a lovely place to relax and watch the world go by; it's beautifully kept by the groundsmen, has vast areas of grass where children and dogs can play and there is a good selection of equipment in the play area at the far end of the park which is fenced off so children can play safely watched by their adults. If you are adventurous there are numerous walks from the park. It is very pretty and has the river Okement running through. There is also access to a Bowls Club and Leisure Centre from the park. Come and visit, you will enjoy.

Visited Simmons Park to complete a Geocaching Adventure Lab as it was not far from the cottage we were staying at. We are a group of 6 friends from 18 to 50+ The park is very pretty with the river running alongside. Some interesting historical memorials etc and some beautiful cottages too. We particularly enjoyed the water garden and unleashing our inner child in the play park - they had a large maypole style swing which was suitable for adults. It was lovely seeing lots of different age groups and dog walkers etc all enjoying the autumn sunshine. Also pleased to note that no dog mess left on the ground in this park so obviously very considerate dog owners. A very enjoyable morning.

What a beautiful Park with some amazing history, a great place to have been able to visit on our holiday. Very lucky to have such a pretty place to enjoy walks.

Okehampton is very lucky to have such a wonderful park. Fine specimen trees, and fast flowing East Okement river with crystal clear water. Rockery with ponds supplied with water from the Moor. Walks for all ages and capabilities, plus a large children's play area. Well maintained by dedicated groundsmen

This is a beautiful park that has something for everyone. The river snakes along one side, the flowers and shrubbery provide colour all year round. Perfect for a walk - you can climb up the steep path to the restored station as well. Huge open space that's great for a bit of football, rounders, frisbee etc. Then there is the playground - all sorts of equipment for all ages - even fitness stages for us older ones. Add to that a bandstand and a Pavilion/coffee shop and watching teams play sport on the pitches and astro - it's perfect!