

Minutes of the Okehampton Town Annual Assembly held on Monday 10 April 2017
in the Charter Hall, Okehampton at 7.00 pm

The Assembly was chaired by Councillor Goffey, Town Mayor.

Town Council Members present were Cllrs Carpenter, Cummings, Cushing, Holt, Ireland, Leech, Rush, Vachon and Yelland in addition to 18 members of the public, including ward members Cllr Ball (DCC, WDBC) and Cllr Davies (WDBC).

In Attendance: P R Snell (Town Clerk)

Before business, prayers were offered by Councillor Rev'd Davies.

	Action
2017.1 <u>Apologies for Absence</u> - Apologies for absence were presented on behalf of Cllrs Marsh, Stephens and Tolley.	
2017.2 <u>Welcome and Introduction</u> - The Mayor, Cllr Jan Goffey, welcomed all to the town's Annual Assembly and presented a summary of the business to be transacted, drawing attention to copies of the agenda, minutes, annual report and summary of Fusion's presentation that were available on every table. Cllr Goffey made additional reference to: a. The Moor Otters Public Arts Initiative - The Council had agreed to sponsor an otter and pictures of the completed articles had recently become available. A small selection had been made available from which the Council could choose and pictures of the decorated otters were on display in the Charter Hall. Attendees were invited to express a preference in advance of the Council selecting an otter the following week. b. Works on Ball Hill Footpath - With reference to land owned by Okehampton United Charities, Devon County Council were due to commence maintenance and drainage works on the Ball Hill footpath in the near future. Some larches were also due to be removed. c. Mayors Awards - The Mayor invited attendees to put forward to her the name of any person who might be considered for a Town Mayor's Award, to reach the office by end of April (last working day 27 April for clarification).	
2017.3 <u>Minutes of Previous Assembly</u> - The Minutes of the Town Assembly held on 21 st March 2016 were agreed as correct on the proposition of Mr Lyn Evans, seconded Cllr Ireland.	
2017.4 <u>Presentation by Mr Smit, Fusion</u> - Mr Francois Smit (Sports and Partnerships Group Manager) gave a presentation on the Health and Wellbeing Partnership that Fusion, as a registered charity, has entered into with West Devon Borough Council. He was accompanied by Mr Simon Smith (Fusion's Area Business Manager). Parklands Leisure Centre was one	

of a group of leisure centres owned by West Devon Borough (WDBC) and South Hams District Councils that were leased to Fusion commencing 1 December 2016. Mr Smit gave an account of Fusion's business history and specialisation and emphasised that it would take approximately 12 months for the change-over to take full effect. A new Leisure Centre manager had been appointed and was now in role. Partnerships with OCRA and the College were being developed and there were plans for repairing and installing sustainable major plant solutions for pool, air handling and removable floor with the strategic aim of improving customer satisfaction. The key priorities were creating a spin studio, access control at reception and dry changing rooms. A question from the meeting asking for assurance that air handling in both the gymnasium and the dance studio be operational simultaneously was noted. The Mayor thanked both Fusion representatives for their presentation.

2017.5 Presentations by Council Committees -

Planning Committee - Cllr Leech presented a report on the Planning Committee's activities based on his annual report, adding an update on the Joint Local Plan consultation that was currently open. Questions arising on local planning issues were also addressed.

Property Committee - Cllr Vachon (Vice Chairman) reported on the Committee's activities, noting that a start had been made to repairing and repainting the external windows and that scaffolding would be erected this year to continue the project. Merlin Cinemas, as one of the Council's tenants, had gained approval for installation of a third screen and refurbishment of the toilets, the latter being a project they would progress in consultation with the Town Council in the near future. Cllr Vachon encouraged greater use of the Charter Hall, which was available for hire, along with the council chamber and committee room.

Parks Committee - Cllr Holt (Vice Chairman) presented a report on the Parks Committee's activities based on Cllr Marsh's annual report, highlighting the Devon Youth Games and a park CCTV installation planned for the current year.

Policy & Resources Committee - Cllr Yelland (Vice Chairman) summarised the work of the Policy & Resources Committee, emphasising the importance of receiving regular management accounts and recommending a budget and noting, in particular, that as Council Tax Support Grant was reduced, so the precept needed to increase simply to 'stand still'.

2017.6 Questions from the Public - There were two written questions submitted in advance. The following questions were addressed at the Assembly:

1. As Okehampton grows in population, what plans are there to address the parking problems in Okehampton? Will Mill Road car park remain or be developed for housing? Station Road residents have seen traffic

increase considerably over the last few years, in part due to being used as a car park. Is it time for a residents parking scheme to be considered?

Answer - Councillors suggested that Mill Road Car Park was underutilised, which resulted in cars being inconsiderately or badly parked on pavements and in residential roads elsewhere. A limited-scale traffic management study had been completed early in 2016 and was currently awaiting implementation by Devon County Council, but a proposal to extend double yellows on Exeter Road (De Brionne Heights) had proved contentious and the change in highways contractor from SWH to Skanska had caused delays. Mill Road Car Park had been considered for housing development and had subsequently been withdrawn. Implementation of a residents parking scheme would not guarantee that residents would be able to park near their homes and would very likely simply shift the parking problem to another street. The most effective way of alleviating parking problems was speaking with neighbours on a one-to-one basis to help inform the bigger picture.

An associated question noted that an intermediate charge (2-3 hours) would be helpful at Simmons Park. It was agreed to put this to the Parks Committee.

Clerk

2. A link between Crediton Road and Exeter Road is badly needed. Although Devon County Council (DCC) show it as critical on their planning list, there is no sign of it happening soon. What is the Town Council doing to promote action on this link?

Answer - The Town Council have been actively pursuing this matter with both DCC and WDBC Devon Borough Council for a number of years. However, the funding for the road is directly associated with development of parcels 2 and 3 in the East of Okehampton Master Plan. Until the land has been purchased by a developer and development is under way the funding for this link road is unlikely to be available.

There was a 20 minute refreshment break, during which members of the public were encouraged to put their questions to Council committee representatives or to individual councillors.

2017.7 Concluding remarks - The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and bringing questions to the assembly.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 8.30 pm.

Signed as a true record of the Assembly