

**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 26th February 2018 at 7pm in the Council Chamber,
Town Hall, Okehampton**

Members Present: Councillor Mrs J Goffey (Mayor)
Councillor Dr M Ireland (Deputy Mayor)
Councillor Miss C Holt
Councillor A Leech (Chairman, Planning)
Councillor Mrs J Carpenter
Councillor B Tolley
Councillor Mrs J Yelland (Chairman, Policy & Resources)
Councillor Mrs S Parkins
Councillor P Vachon
Councillor Mrs C Marsh (Chairman, Parks)

In Attendance: Canon Tim Newcombe
Cllr Ball (DCC)
Cllr Rev M Davies (WDBC)
PC N Walker
Mr Watts, Barclays Bank
Ms E Passmore
Mrs E James (Town Clerk)

Before business, Cllr Goffey welcomed Elizabeth Passmore to the meeting who presented the Council with a coffee table which originated from the 'Okehampton Train'. The coffee table had been given to her grandfather, Walter Henry Passmore, when Mayor of Okehampton on his naming of the locomotive, Okehampton', on 12th June 1947.

Ms Passmore left the meeting following thanks by Cllr Goffey and the Councillors.

Also before business, Prayers were offered by Canon Tim Newcombe

550 **Expressions of Interest** – None

551 **Apologies for Absence** – Cllr's Cummings, Cushing, Rush and Weekes

552 **Deferment of Business** – None

553 **Visiting Speakers** –

PC Nathan Walker addressed the Council on the subject of graffiti which had recently been a more prevalent issue within the town. The Police were working with other bodies including Okehampton College to identify the offenders and passed around some posters requesting information. The possibility of a graffiti wall was suggested by PC Walker as a potential way of providing a safe space for the encouragement of those with artistic skills whilst helping to keep other areas of the town graffiti free.

Cllr Marsh suggested that Room 13 may also be able to assist with such a project. To be further considered by the Council at the next meeting.

Mr Watts, Barclays Bank Community Branch Manager reported that he had attended the meeting to explain the reasons for the closure of the Okehampton branch of the bank in May. The decision to close had not been taken lightly and had been made by himself rather than at head office.

Action

Clerk

Reasons for a decline in footfall had started in around 1987 with the introduction of debit cards, followed by direct debits for bill payments approximately 20 years ago, employees being paid by BACS instead of by cash or cheque and monthly instead of weekly, internet/mobile/telephone banking more recently, cash machines and cash back facilities when purchasing goods all of which reduced visits to branches.

The Post Office could be used, of which there were 10 in the catchment area, but there would be no mobile banking facility within Okehampton. Mr Watts passed around some payment fobs to Cllr's and left the meeting along with PC Walker.

554 Members' Questions – None

555 West Devon Borough Council - Cllr Davies reported that from 2018/19 WDBC would not receive any funding from the Government leaving an increasing deficit in the coming years. WDBC had approved a Council Tax increase of 2.99% for 2018/19.

The Governance Review initiated by Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council, and subsequent proposal by the Town Council, had been considered and there would be no change from existing arrangements.

The Okehampton WDBC Office would be closing at the end of March and WDBC would no longer accept cash or cheques which would result in significant savings.

Cllr Ball advised on his voting for the Governance Review.

Cllr Yelland advised that the closure of the Okehampton WDBC Office would result in a saving of approx. £82,000 and that it had been proposed to convert the building to dwellings for emergency housing. It was hoped there would still be a local presence in some form. £35,000 saving would be made from the stopping of receipt of payments by cash and cheque. The office in Tavistock was also being evaluated.

556 Devon County Council – Cllr Ball updated the Council on various issues:

The Business Park remarketing period had closed and offers had been made. Forthglade had used local businesses where possible for their building work and had recruited 25 new members of staff. Currently there would be no access from Crediton Road. The Skills/Sport Trust were in the planning stage.

Transport, there had been a delay due to changes in staff but an officer had been assigned to investigate the three main junctions. A traffic survey would be undertaken in March and would include video surveying. Recent temporary traffic light failures in the centre of the town had been resolved, the issue having been battery failure.

Natwest would be providing a minimal mobile service from Waitrose car park but the details were not yet known.

Cllr Ball left the meeting.

557 Adoption of Minutes of Committees and Members' Questions arising thereon -

- 557.1 Policy & Resources Committee meetings held on 18th December 2017 and 8th January 2018 - adoption proposed by Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Tolley and **agreed**.
- 557.2 Property Committee meeting held on 4th December 2017 - adoption proposed by Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Yelland and **agreed**.
- 557.3 Parks Committee meeting held on 20th November 2017 - adoption proposed by Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Tolley and **agreed**.
- 557.4 Planning Committee meetings held on 29th and 27th November, 18th December 2017 and 8th January 2018 - adoption proposed by Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Holt and **agreed**.
- 558 **Full Council Meeting** - The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 15th January 2018 were received, signed and **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded by Cllr Ireland.
- 559 **Policies/Documents** –
- 559.1 Complaints Policy – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded by Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the policy.
- Lone Working Policy – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded by Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the policy.
- 559.2 Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Personnel Sub-Committee – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded by Cllr Holt, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the ToR.
- 560 **Annual Town Assembly and Report for 2017/18** – The format of the assembly was agreed to be the same as the previous year with the addition of an opportunity for members of the public to address questions to the Town Council as well as individual Councillors.
- On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded by Cllr Marsh, it was **RESOLVED** to invite a member of the public to speak regarding the Railway Jacobs report.
- A motion to suspend Standing Order 3 (z) to permit extension of the meeting was proposed by Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Leech, and **agreed**.
- 561 **Code of Conduct** – Cllr’s Leech and Yelland declared an interest
- NALC Survey – responses to be forwarded to the Clerk
- Training Session at WDBC, Tavistock – Cllr’s to forward interest in attending to the Clerk.
- 562 **Plastic Waste Reduction** – The Clerk suggested that the Council should investigate the local indicates. Cllr Marsh advised that this subject was on the next Chamber of Trade agenda. Further investigation to be undertaken.
- 563 **School Consultation** – Cllr’s to forward comments to the Clerk for submission.

Clerk

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Clerk

564 **Neighbourhood Plan Working Group** – On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded by Cllr Marsh, it was **RESOLVED** to reduce the quorum of the group from 6 to 4.

565 **Civic Diary** – The Mayor reported on events attended during December 2017 and January 2018

566 **Reports of Council Working Groups** –

566.1 Destination Okehampton – No meeting had been held

566.2 Charities – Cllr Yelland reported that she and the Clerk had met with a specialist accountant who had agreed to take on the work free of charge. A report was awaited.

566.3 Buildings and Structures – A meeting had been scheduled for March.

557 **Reports on Current Activities by Community Groups with Town Council Representation** -

557.1 OkeRail Forum – Cllr Ireland reported on a meeting held on 25th January in which the Jacobs report had featured, but was not finalised. The trial service will likely run 7 days a week on a 2 hourly basis, better connections and a later return train from Exeter for the Sunday Service were also being investigated. The special train from Okehampton would run in April.

Standing Orders were suspended on the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded by Cllr Yelland, to allow a member of the public to speak.

Cllr Davies commented on the situation with regards to the track between Okehampton and Exeter.

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Vachon, Standing Orders were reinstated.

557.2 Neighbourhood Plan Group – Cllr Yelland reported the the grant funding for the consultant had been returned and the contract cancelled as the work had not been able to be completed. An alternative consultant was being sought.

558 **Questions Arising from Member Reports** – Questions to be emailed to the Clerk.

559 **Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items** -

(i) Dartmoor National Park Forum – The Link Member was Cllr Ball

(ii) Northern Parishes Link Committee – Cllr Goffey reported that a meeting had been held last week.

(iii) Okehampton Health and Wellbeing Alliance – In the absence of Cllr Cushing, Cllr Goffey advised that Chemotherapy for some patients was now being offered from Okehampton by Force. The RD&E had extended visiting times and a new X-ray machine had been sited in Okehampton.

(Members of the public left the meeting)

PART TWO ITEMS

It was **RESOLVED** that under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item as it involves the likely disclosure of sensitive and confidential information. Proposed by Cllr Ireland, seconded by Cllr Yelland.

	Action
560 <u>Traffic and Infrastructure</u> – Ongoing, as reported at Min Ref 556 by Cllr Ball.	
561 <u>Community Governance Review</u> – Cllr's Yelland and Leech declared personal interests. The decision made by WDBC was noted and discussed.	
562 <u>WDBC Mayoral Awards 2017/18</u> - Nominations to be forwarded to the Clerk for submission.	
563 <u>Caretakers</u> – Job Descriptions and Contracts as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee were APPROVED on the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded by Cllr Vachon.	
564 <u>Staffing</u> – On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Tolley, as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee the permanent appointment of Mrs E James as the Town Clerk was APPROVED . On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Tolley, as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee the award of one scale point increase in salary from February 2018 was APPROVED for the completion of CiLCA.	

The meeting closed on Part Two and ratified decisions taken on the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Ireland.

The meeting was closed at 9.27pm

Councillor Mrs J Goffey
Mayor