

**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on  
Monday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

**Members Present:** Councillor Mrs J Carpenter (Mayor)  
Councillor Mrs C Marsh (Chairman, Parks)  
Councillor D Weekes (Chairman, Property)  
Councillor Mrs J Yelland (Chairman, Policy & Resources)  
Councillor Dr M Ireland  
Councillor Miss C Holt  
Councillor B Tolley  
Councillor P Vachon  
Councillor Mrs V Cushing  
Councillor Mrs J Goffey  
Councillor T Cummings  
Councillor B Rush

**In Attendance:** Mrs E James (Town Clerk)  
Mrs C Ellis (Assistant Town Clerk)  
Mr D Arulvasagam (WDBC)  
Cllr P Saunders (WDBC)  
Rev Liz Singleton  
Cllr K Ball (DCC)  
Cllr M Davies (WDBC)  
1 member of the public

Prior to commencement of the meeting Prayers were offered by Rev Liz Singleton for those who wished to take part.

**664**     **Expressions of Interest** – None

**665**     **Apologies for Absence** – Cllr Leech

**666**     **Visiting Speaker** – Mr Arulvasagam reported on WDBC's assets and development plans that were relevant to Okehampton.

It was planned to close the public toilets in Market Street and the site, including the taxi rank would be redeveloped as a hospitality unit, although this was subject to legalities, planning permission and the relocation of the taxi rank through consultation. The proposal would bring 25 jobs to the town and would be let to the occupier by WDBC thereby turning a 'cost' into an 'income generator'. There was no equivalent size site already in the town. The bus stop would remain in situ.

Questions and comments were posed by Cllrs and included the issue of the relocation of the taxi rank to a site large enough, the number of cafés already in existence in the town and what research/feasibility studies had been carried out.

Not all of the issues regarding the Old Mill site had been able to be overcome and it was reported that the site was not suitable for housing or hotel development. An offer for the site had been agreed and sale completion was anticipated in the next few weeks, the plans of the purchaser were not known. There was a covenant attached to the sale whereby any value generated would go towards Charitable or Youth Services in the town.

From initial consultation regarding the One Public Estate project, only one scheme for housing met the criteria. The proposed development was on

**Action**

grassland at the site of Okehampton Hospital and funds for the project would go towards a viability study to provide up to 80 properties.

A question from Cllr Leech regarding the possibility of some form of Community Land Trust development was read out by the Clerk. Mr Arulvasagam responded that he would be happy to work with the community should such a scheme come forward.

**667** **Deferment of Business** – A member of the public put forward his views on different subjects concerning the town.

**668** **Members Questions** – None

**669** **West Devon Borough Council** – Cllr Davies reported that dog fouling in some areas was still an issue as was emptying of the dog waste bins. It had been noted that some bins were filling up within hours of being emptied as members of the public were taking their waste from home and disposing of it in these bins.

An email from Cllr Leech concerning the updating of the WDBC Standards Policy which was soon to be undertaken and an overview of budget cuts WDBC had seen from central Government to the tune of 38.2% over the last 4 years was read out.

**670** **Devon County Council** – Cllr Ball had provided the Clerk with a copy of his report which would be circulated to Cllrs. The report included the budget and highlighted the cuts made and that by 2020 direct government funding will have reduced to £540K from £135M in 2013.

Cllr Ball's report also touched on Highways Funding, Skanska's performance, the Rail link to Okehampton and confirmed that funding was in place for the Sunday train to run in the summer of 2019 and plans to reinstate the service was in the hands of GWR, the new Primary School which was on track to open in April 2019, the Business Park and the Hospital and Okehampton Health Partnership.

Cllr Ball asked that any questions were emailed to him  
(Cllr Ball, Cllr Sanders and Mr Arulvasagam left the meeting)

**671** **Questions Arising from Members Reports** – Cllr Marsh asked about WDBC's presence at the Ockment Centre and Waitrose, if it was being used and if the service was going to remain. Cllr Yelland responded that the Task & Finish group looking into the impact of the closure of the office in St James' Street had met on 15<sup>th</sup> January and would be meeting again on 29<sup>th</sup>. The difficulty contacting WDBC by phone was also raised.

A question from Cllr Leech to be emailed to Cllr Ball asking if a date for a report on a traffic flow survey by DCC Highways had been provided.

Clerk

**672** **Adoption of Minutes of Committees and Members' Questions arising Thereon -**

**672.1** Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2018 - adoption proposed by Cllr Vachon, seconded Cllr Cushing and **AGREED**

**672.2** Parks Committee meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2018 - adoption proposed by Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Ireland and **AGREED**  
(Mr Rush left the public seating area of the Council Chamber and joined the meeting in his capacity as a Cllr)

672.3 Planning Committee meetings held on 29<sup>th</sup> October, 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> November, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> December 2018 - adoption proposed by Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Cushing and **AGREED**

673 **Full Council Meeting Minutes** – The minutes of the Town Council meetings held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2018 and 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019 were received, signed and **APPROVED** on the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded by Cllr Holt.

674 **Matters Arising**  
**Town Marketing** – Cllr Vachon reported upon the open public meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January regarding the marketing proposal for the town which had been made him as an individual not as a Councillor or behalf of the Council.

The meeting had been well attended by both residents and businesses who were keen to know more about the proposals. A forum would be established over the next few week to further investigate suggestions that had been made at the meeting.

675 **CCTV**

675.1 **Parks** – Cllr Marsh reported that quotes and additional information for a scheme in the Park were awaited.

675.2 **Town** – Emailed notes from Cllr Leech were read out; a quotation had been received along with a comprehensive specification for the original town centre scheme, which would be compatible with the requirements of the PCC, and a further quote incorporating the Park was awaited. The PCC representative was aware of the quotation and was looking to include Okehampton in the next round of discussions.

676 **Budget and Precept 2019/20**

676.1 On the proposition of Cllr Weekes, seconded by Cllr Goffey, it was **RESOLVED** to ratify the recommendation of the Policy & Resources Committee to accept Option 5 of the budget paper, with a precept amount of £249,753, the total budget being £263,535.

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded by Cllr Yelland, it was **RESOLVED** to make a press release regarding the budget following recent press and social media headlines. The draft prepared by the Clerk was agreed with the addition of another bullet point regarding the Councils input into planning decisions made by WDBC.  
(*Rev Singleton left the meeting*)

Clerk

676.2 On the proposition of Cllr Rush, seconded by Cllr Cummings, it was **RESOLVED** not to roll over any unspent budget elements from this year into the 2019/20 budget.

677 **800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Market Charter in 2020** – Consideration of the creation of a Working Group to plan the celebration was deferred until May following the elections.

Clerk

678 **Government Future of High Street Fund** – On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to create a Working Group to investigate the feasibility of submitting a proposal. The WG would consist of Cllrs Rush, Marsh, Yelland and Goffey.

Clerk

679 **WDBC Mayoral Awards 2018/19** – On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded by Cllr Vachon, it was **RESOLVED** to nominate Les Agar for his

fundraising efforts for the Dartmoor Rescue Group in the Over 18/ Organisation category.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Weeks, it was **RESOLVED** to nominate Okehampton Carnival for their efforts in keeping the Carnival going each year in the Over 18/Organisation category.

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded by Cllr Cummings, it was **RESOLVED** to nominate Okement Rivers Improvement Group for their work keeping the river and surrounding area clean and tidy for the Green Award.

Clerk

A motion to suspend Standing Order 3 (bb) to permit extension of the meeting was proposed by Cllr Vachon, seconded Cllr Ireland, and **agreed**.

**680** **Civic Service** – The Clerk reported that Rev Singleton had agreed to the service being held in Fairplace Church at 10.30am on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2019. On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded by Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to thank Rev Singleton and agree the slightly earlier time.

Clerk

The Civic events attended in December by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor were noted.

**681** **Play Area Resurfacing** – The Parks Committee’s resolution to accept a quote in the sum of £4,575 for the resurfacing of one of the play areas was noted.  
*(Cllr Davies left the meeting)*

**682** **Policies/Documents** –

**682.1** On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Yelland, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the documents listed below en bloc, following staff consultation where required, and as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee:

- Councillor Induction Policy
- Shared Parental Leave Policy
- Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy
- Honorary Freeman (Freewoman) Policy
- Operation London Bridge Policy

It was further agreed not to purchase portraits of HM Queen Elizabeth or HRH Prince Philip in relation to Operation London Bridge Policy and that agreement from St James’ Chapel for the laying of flowers was to be sought.

Clerk

**682.2** On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Weeks, it was **RESOLVED** to approve Exclusive Right of Burial in Okehampton Cemetery Policy as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee. It was noted that agreement to this policy was required by the Rector of All Saints Church before it could come into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019.

Clerk

**683** **Payment of Invoices** – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Ireland, the schedule of payments was **APPROVED**.

**684** **Reports of Council Working Groups** –

**584.1** **Charities** – A response, as circulated, had been received from Wellers Headleys. Cllr Marsh reminded the Council that it had previously been agreed to merge the 2 Charities but not to change to status to that of a CIO.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Marsh it was **RESOLVED** to request clarification on the 2<sup>nd</sup> to last paragraph of the letter and seek an answer to a question regarding conflict of interest that had not been addressed.

Clerk

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

**685.1 OkeRail Forum** – Cllr Ireland reported that a small Executive Group had been set up.

**685.2 Neighbourhood Plan Group** – There had been no meeting to report on.

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

**686.1 Dartmoor National Park Forum** – There had been no meeting to report upon.

**686.2 Northern Parishes Link Committee** – There had been no meeting to report upon.

**686.3 Okehampton Area Health and Wellbeing Alliance** – Cllr Cushing reported that a meeting had been held on 12<sup>th</sup> December. Notes of the meeting to be circulated by the Clerk.

Clerk

**687 Dartmoor Local Plan Consultation** – This additional agenda item was brought forward to this point in the meeting for discussion.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Weekes it was **RESOLVED** to approve the draft response that had been prepared by Cllr Ireland and the Clerk.

Clerk

**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 Cummings, seconded by Cllr Goffey.

**688 Apprenticeship** – On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded by Cllr Marsh, it was **RESOLVED** to ratify the recommendations of the Policy & Resources Committee to employ a Horticultural Apprentice.

Clerk

**689 Market Charter** – Cllr Marsh reported on investigation she had undertaken into the town's charters.  
*(Cllr Cummings left the meeting)*

On the proposition of Cllr Weekes, seconded by Cllr Goffey, it was **RESOLVED** that charges as considered would be imposed.

Clerk

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded by Cllr Weekes, it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part Two, move back into Part One and ratified decisions made in Part Two.

The meeting was closed at 9.30pm

**Councillor Mrs J Carpenter  
Mayor**