

**Minutes of Okehampton Town Annual Assembly
held at 7pm on Monday 1st April 2019 in the Charter Hall, Okehampton**

The Assembly was chaired by Councillor Carpenter, Town Mayor.

In Attendance: Town Council Members; Cllr's Carpenter, Yelland, Goffey, Holt, Ireland, Leech, Rush, Vachon, Marsh and Weekes
18 members of the public
Mr B Horner, Devon County Archaeologist
Mrs E James, Town Clerk

Prayers were offered for those who wish to take part by Rev Cllr M Davies

2019.1 Apologies for Absence - Apologies for absence were presented on behalf of Town Council Members Cllr's Tolley, Cushing and Cummings, and DCC Member Cllr Ball.

2019.2 Welcome and Introduction – The Mayor, Cllr Janet Carpenter, welcomed those present to the Annual Assembly, drawing attention to copies of the agenda, minutes, and annual report that were available on tables.

2019.3 Minutes of Previous Annual Town Assembly – The Minutes of the Town Assembly held on 26th March 2018 were agreed as correct on the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded by Cllr Marsh, and signed by Cllr Carpenter.

2019.4 Presentation by Mr Bill Horner, Devon County Archaeologist – Mr Horner introduced himself and commenced the presentation by giving an outline of Roman history. The Roman Fort in Okehampton was first discovered in the 1970's and an excavation took place in the mid 1970's when some evidence of the existence of the Fort including pottery and the ramparts were found. Further investigations were undertaken in 1979 when the outer ditch of the Fort and more pottery was found confirming the existence of the Fort.

In 2014, following the initial housing development plans, a Geophysical Survey of an area in the location of the Fort was undertaken. This was followed by trial trenches in which 8m wide stone areas were located; being the substructure and kerbstones of the Roman road, along with pottery and roof tiles.

2017 saw further investigations and evidence of buildings on the site. Planning permission for development was given, but the Roman Road would be preserved and a full dig of some areas was agreed, the rest of the site being striped and finds mapped. Finds included Roma Amphorae (storage vessels/pots) which may have contained Olive Oil, and pottery originating from Exeter and the Lizard Peninsula, Gallic Samian ware, glass beads and bottles. The site was thought to be similar to that of Vindolanda which was a Roman Auxiliary Fort just south of Hadrian's Wall in northern England.

The Roman Road was being preserved and would be a green area through the development site with a buffer on each side. An area of the road, where a new access road would be created, had been fully excavated and was being reconstructed, using the original stone. An interpretation panel would be provided by the reconstructed road and another at the new

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school. An exhibition was in the Museum of Dartmoor Life and an academic report would be written up and entered into a journal.

Questions were posed by members of the public which included; the source of water for the settlement and how large the Fort would have been; Mr Horner advised it was estimated that the Garrison would have contained around 500 persons with several hundred others living in the settlement outside its boundary. A further question about the running and maintenance of the site following the development was asked. It was advised that the Fort was privately owned by the landowner but the Roman Road through the development would be able to be visited by members of the public.

2019.5 Councillors – Councillors, including the Committee Chairman and the Mayor, would be available to speak to any members of the public at the end of the meeting and they would be happy to answer any questions.

2019.6 Questions from the Public – No written written questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting.

Questions were invited from the floor:

Q.A question was posed about the graffiti on the blue bridge along Exeter Road and what was being done about it.

Cllr's responded that it had been painted over and an artist had been working to paint it with some artistic graffiti. It was advised that the bridge was outside of the Town Council boundary and falls within the parish of Okehampton Hamlets.

2019.7 Conclusion and Thanks – The Mayor, Cllr Carpenter, thanked everybody for taking the time to attend.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 7.50pm.

Signed as a true record of the Assembly
