

**Minutes of a remote meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 20th April 2020 at 7pm**

Members Present: Councillor J Yelland (Mayor)
Councillor T Leech (Chairman, Planning)
Councillor C Marsh (Chairman, Parks)
Councillor B Tolley (Chairman, Policy & Resources)
Councillor G Button
Councillor J Goffey
Councillor C Holt
Councillor M Ireland
Councillor P Jessop
Councillor D Penna
Councillor D Sanger
Councillor D Travers

In Attendance: Mrs E James (Town Clerk)
1 Member of the public

	Action
<p>827 <u>Standing Orders</u> – On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Sanger, it was RESOLVED to approve the revised Standing Orders permitting the holding of remote meetings as set out in the Coronavirus Act 2020 incorporating an amendment on page 4.</p>	Clerk
<p>828 <u>Apologies for Absence</u> – Apologies tendered by Cllr Tucker due to not having access to a computer were approved on the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Sanger (2 abstentions, 2 against).</p> <p>Apologies from Cllr M Davies, WDBC, were noted.</p>	
<p>829 <u>Deferment of Business</u> – None</p>	
<p>830 <u>Members Questions</u> – None</p>	
<p>831 <u>West Devon Borough Council</u> – Cllr Leech reported that WDBC staff members had been working 12 hour days, 7 days a week in order to process the grant applications relating to COVID-19 and get the funding out quickly. Waste collections were continuing as normal, an increase in the amount had been noted which was putting additional strain on the service.</p> <p>Cllr Yelland advised that WDBC had set up a hotline to the Community Coordination Team, for those who did not have internet access, which was open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday – 01822 813683. An answerphone service was available out of hours.</p> <p>A local action support fund had been set up with grants of up to £250 available.</p> <p>WDBC had created a Community Response Team who were working in 6 clusters groups with each cluster being assigned dedicated officers. These officers would be working closely with each clusters' local Ward Members, in supporting their local communities.</p> <p>communitycoordination.covid19@swdevon.gov.uk</p> <p>WDBC had received £29,000 from the government to assist with the crisis, was funding the local action support fund.</p>	
<p>832 <u>Devon County Council</u> – No report</p>	
<p>833 <u>Questions Arising from Members Reports</u> – Cllr Goffey commented that</p>	

it was disappointing there had been no contact from DCC prior to the article in the Okehampton Times regarding town centre congestion.

834 Adoption of Minutes of Committees and Members' Questions arising Thereon –

834.1 Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 10th February 2020 - adoption proposed by Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Goffey

834.2 Parks Committee meeting held on 20th January 2020 - adoption proposed by Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Ireland

A vote was taken en-bloc of both items Ref 834.1 and 834.2 and **agreed**.

835 Full Council Meeting Minutes – The minutes of the Town Council meetings held on 24th February and 23rd March 2020 were received and **APPROVED** on the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Holt, noting that they would be signed at a later date.

Clerk

836 Weekly Briefings and Emergency Committee – Notes and minutes of the meetings were noted.

837 Coronavirus (COVID-19) - Deferred until later in the meeting as Cllr Yelland left the meeting temporarily due to internet issues.

Agreed that the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Ireland, would Chair the meeting until the return of Cllr Yelland.

838 Councillor Vacancy – The Clerk reported that following the notice of casual vacancy arising from the resignation of Mr Vachon on 10th March 2020 the calling of an election was not required. Expressions of interest would be advertised at a future suitable date.

Clerk

839 Planning Applications – Noted that the following decisions had been made under delegated powers by Cllr Leech and the Clerk following consultation with members:
3940/19/ADV – Support
0160/20/HHO – Support
0689/20/TPO – Support

(Cllr Yelland returned to the meeting and retook the Chair)

840 COVID-19 – The items on the previously circulated paper were considered:

The grant application submitted by the Clerk to Devon Communities, Devon Coronavirus Response and Recovery Fund had been successful and the Council had been awarded £500. The Clerk advised the funding could be used to assist local groups and volunteers including the support of food banks and organisations working to combat hardship including child hunger, community response coordination and volunteer costs. On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to delegate decisions in relation to received applications, which could be by way of email, to the Clerk in conjunction with the Chair of the P&R Committee or the Mayor.

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Goffey, it was **RESOLVED:**

- to approve the virement of £3,000 from general reserves to a new

budget heading 'COVID-19 Grants' which could be reviewed as necessary

- to approve the draft protocol prepared by the Clerk
- the maximum amount per application being £100
- to delegate decisions in relation to received applications, which could be by way of referral from Okehampton Citizens Advice, to the Clerk in conjunction with the Chair of the P&R Committee or the Mayor

Ass. Clerk

Protocol prepared by the Clerk for the provision of administrative assistance by the Council to the Okehampton Coronavirus Support Group was **APPROVED** on the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Ireland. It was noted that the assistance would only be provided when the duties of a specified member of staff permitted.

Cllr Button advised that Cllr Ball (DCC), who was working with the support group, was investigating the requirement of insurance for the group.

841 Coronavirus Act 2020

The Clerk reported that the Act permitted the holding of remote meetings by Council until May 2021 and removed the requirement for councils to hold an Annual Meeting prior to May 2021.

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** not to hold an annual meeting prior to May 2021 and that all associated roles, including that of the Mayor's Cadet, continue without change for the 2020/21 Mayoral year. Any Member who wished to stand down from a nominated role may do so in writing to the Clerk following which they vacant position would be filled by resolution of the Council or relevant Committee.

842 Insurance Renewal – It was noted that the Council's insurance had been renewed as set out in the previously circulated report. On the proposition of Cllr Sanger, seconded Cllr Goffey, it was **RESOLVED** to extend the contract for a further 3 year period.

Clerk

843 Audit Reports – The Clerk reported that items highlighted for recommended action in the interim report had been actioned.

844 2019/20 Year End and Audit Requirements – The Clerk reported that both the Council's financial year end closedown and internal audit would be undertaken remotely and that the Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 had been amended permitting an extension of time for the return of the Annual Governance and Accountable Return and associated regulations.

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

845 Finances –

Cllr Marsh reported that she had not undertaken bank reconciliation or online payment audits since the last report due to COVID-19 restrictions.

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Holt, the schedule of payments was **APPROVED** as were the payments made under delegated powers and as agreed at the Weekly Briefings held on 30th March, 6th and 14th April 2020.

It was noted that standing orders had been set up for staff salary payments to be made in April, May and June.

On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the reinvest the balance of the maturing Nationwide Business 1 Year Saver Account into another similar account. Noted that no other investigation had taken place in relation to obtaining a better interest rate due to difficulties that would be met opening a new account at this time.

Clerk

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Goffey, it was **RESOLVED** that Cllrs Tolley and Leech be appointed signatories of the Nationwide Accounts in conjunction with the existing signatories, Cllrs Goffey and Marsh.

Ass. Clerk/
Clerk

A review of the investments was deferred until the next meeting in order for Members to review the papers.

Clerk

- 846** **Approval of Mayors Charity Account for 2019/20** – The account was reviewed, and it was resolved that £1,403.26 be donated to Mayors chosen charity, OkePads

Ass. Clerk

- 847** **Asset Register** –
Cllr Marsh reported that she had undertaken an audit of the paintings and 1 had been added, a further audit of the regalia would be completed when the situation permitted.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the register as at 31st March 2020.

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 Yelland, seconded by Cllr Leech.

(The member of the public left the meeting)

- 848** **Okehampton Town Council Mayoral Award** – On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Goffey, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the 4 nominations received and which would be presented at a future date to be agreed. In addition, the Clerks recommendation that the Mayor's Cadet receive a certificate annually was **AGREED**.

- 849** **Urgent Items** – The Clerk reported that she had received a letter of resignation from the Admin Assistant, Miss Bacon, who would be retiring at the end of May.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Goffey, it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part Two

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.05pm

Councillor Mrs J Yelland
Mayor