

**Minutes of a remote meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 1st June 2020 at 7pm**

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

In Attendance: Mrs E James (Town Clerk)

- 040** **Apologies for Absence** – Apologies from Cllr M Davies, WDBC, and Cllr K Ball, DCC, were noted
- 041** **Deferment of Business** – None
- 042** **Members Questions** – None
- 043** **West Devon Borough Council** – Cllr Leech reported that WDBC were continuing to work to provide help and support in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. Cllr Leech was the Wellbeing Portfolio holder which was looking towards coming out of the crisis and recovery plans – build back better towards recovery. A meeting held earlier in the day to look at asking residents what the Council does well, what it could do better, what the Council is doing that it doesn't need to. Some vulnerable residents are still falling through the gaps.
WDBC's income from Council Tax has reduced over the last month. Domestic violence, children's concerns and housing benefit claims are amongst those that have increased. A letter to the government highlighting the costs issues to Councils has been signed. There have been changes at WDBC with the resignation of Cllr Davies from the Conservative party meaning that there is no overall majority.
- Cllr Yelland advised that links for help and assistance were on WDBC's website. A discretionary grant had been released but there were specific regulations about how it could be spent.
- 044** **Devon County Council** – No report
- 045** **Questions Arising from Members Reports** –
The lack of recent reports from DCC was commented upon
- A query relating to the content of the food parcels provided to the shielded was raised. The parcels were delivered for WDBC by a company based in Cornwall. Cllr Button advised that the Foodbank would consider supplementing the food parcels for a short period of time on request.

Action

It was requested that DCC provide information in their report at the next meeting regarding the recent poor report the Children's Services has received and what is being done to combat the issues.

Clerk to forward the queries to the relevant persons.

Clerk

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

046.1 Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 27th April 2020 - adoption proposed by Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Goffey

047 Full Council Meeting Minutes – The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 11th May 2020 were received and **APPROVED** on the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Ireland, noting that they would be signed at a later date.

Clerk

048 Matters Arising – The Clerk reported that the Solicitor had been appointed to investigate Cemetery management and advice was awaited.

049 End of Year Bank Reconciliation/Balance Sheet – The Clerk reported that the 2019/20 Year End Financial Closedown had taken place remotely in May and the internal audit was due to take place remotely on 3rd June.

Cllr Tucker commented upon the number of accounts which the Clerk advised could be reviewed later in the year along with the reserves and explained the need for some of the accounts.

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Holt (2 abstentions), it was **RESOLVED** to approve the document for the year ending 2019/20, subject to no changes being required by the internal auditor. Arrangements for signing outside of the meeting to be made.

Clerk/Cllr
Yelland

050 Finances – The schedules were read out by the Clerk for those who were unable to see them. Cllrs Marsh and Holt declared an interest, being Members of the Community Archive Group

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Penna (2 abstentions), the schedule of payments was **APPROVED** as were the payments made on 26th May 2020.

051 Policies/Documents – On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Sanger, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the following policies as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee:

- Financial Regulations
- Financial Risk Assessment
- Freedom of Information Publication Scheme
- Investment Strategy
- Internal Control Statement
- Reserves Policy
- Strategic Plan 2019-2023
 - Community
 - Economy
 - Environment

052 COVID-19 –

052.1 The Clerk reported that she was awaiting contact from WDBC regarding a meeting to discuss how the different levels of Council could work together to facilitate and help the businesses and residents of the town recover from

the crisis, including the governments initiative in relation to the reallocation of roadspace for active travel.

On the proposition of Cllr Tucker, seconded Cllr Button, it was **RESOLVED** to create a Working Group to work with WDBC to assist the business and community in recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. The WG would consist of Cllrs Button, Goffey, Penna, Marsh, Travers, Tucker and the Clerk who would draft a Terms of Reference for approval at the next meeting of the Council.

An initial meeting of the WG to be arranged as soon as possible.

Clerk

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Goffey, it was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Ball, DCC and a Highways representative be invited to the next meeting with a view to the provision of information relating to the Reallocation of Roadspace for Active Travel initiative.

Clerk

052.2 On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the use of the Charter Hall by Okehampton Primary School subject to prioritisation to regular users, existing bookings and agreement in relation to cleaning and other issues.

Clerk

052.3 On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Jessop, it was **RESOLVED** to respond to the letter to Town and Parish Councils from Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP requesting clarification with regards the level of Council the funding was intended for and how it was to be distributed.

Clerk

052.4 Council noted that DCC and WDBC had recommenced charging and enforcement of parking, including in Simmons Park.

052.5 The Clerk reported that the skatepark would be reopening the following day.

052.6 The Clerk reported that clarification with regards payment for cleaning of the toilets over the last few weeks was awaited from WDBC and that WDBC were considering reopening their public toilets in the near future. A potential issue with the use of the Wallgate Units (hand washing and drying units) was raised by the Clerk and it was noted that these were installed in the toilets at Fairplace.

On the proposition of Cllr Goffey seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** that the public toilets in Market Street only be reopened in line with the reopening of WDBC's facilities, subject to the provision of a satisfactory cleaning regime and risk assessments by WDBC.

Clerk

052.7 The Clerk reported that it was planned to reopen the office to the public on a limited basis from the week commencing 15th June 2020, subject to government guidance. It was anticipated the office would be open on Tuesdays, the hours to be confirmed. The provision of a screen in reception was being investigated.

Clerk

052.8 It was noted that the furlough pay claim for April had been received and May's was awaited. The Business Tax Relief application for the Charter Hall had been rejected.

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

053	<p><u>COVID-19 Hardship Grant Fund</u> – A proposal to amend the previous resolution, Min Ref 840, permitting applications for the grant to be made from the Okehampton Coronavirus Support Group through Cllrs Button and Travers who were members of the group was considered having met the criteria as set out in Standing Orders in relation to previous resolutions.</p> <p>On the proposition of Cllr Travers, seconded Cllr Goffey (2 abstentions), it was RESOLVED that referrals be permitted through Cllrs Travers and Button from Okehampton Coronavirus Support Group as well as Citizens Advice, and that any applications be reviewed and agreed by the Clerk in conjunction with the Mayor and the Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee or the relevant deputies in the event that any of the 3 are unavailable.</p>	Clerk
054	<p><u>Councillor Surgery</u> – On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Penna, it was RESOLVED to hold remote Councillor Surgeries until such time as it was possible to revert to previous arrangements on the third Thursday of the month.</p>	Clerk
055	<p><u>General Data Protection Regulations</u> – The Council noted that a review of information held had been undertaken and noted information and guidance previously circulated to all Members in relation to compliance with GDPR.</p>	
056	<p><u>Roof Replacement Project</u> – On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Penna, it was RESOLVED to approve the previously circulated documentation relating to the appointment of an appropriately qualified company to oversee and run all aspects of the project, for action as soon as possible.</p>	Clerk
057	<p><u>Hanging Basket Competition</u> – It was noted that the competition had been postponed until 2021 and that the Parks staff had provided baskets for the Town Hall.</p>	
058	<p><u>Asset Register</u> – On the proposition of Cllr Tucker, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was RESOLVED to approve the addition of the newly purchased van to the register.</p>	Clerk
059	<p><u>Reports of Council Working/Task & Finish Groups</u> –</p>	
059.1	<p>A report prepared by the Clerk listing the existing Working/Task & Finish Groups was considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment – on hold due to the uncertainty of the economic climate • IT – to recommence on a limited basis • Markets, Fairs and Charters - On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Tucker, it was RESOLVED not to hold an event in 2020, and that the group be suspended to reconsider possibilities at a later date • VE & VJ Day – Meeting to be held to discuss options for an event in August 2020 • Open Space, Sports and Recreation – on hold • Climate Change – on hold • Charities – on hold due to the required physical signing of documentation by all trustees • Strategic Plan – it was noted that policies relating to all strands had been completed and on the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was RESOLVED to dissolve the WG at this time, to be reformed in May 2022 for a review of the plan prior to its renewal in May 2023. 	Ass. Clerk
		Ass. Clerk
		Clerk

059.2 Charities – On hold

Climate Change – On hold. Cllr Goffey reported that she had attended a Zoom meeting of the local Councils Climate Change Group.

Strategic Plan – Work complete and group dissolved, to be reformed in May 2022.

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

Neighbourhood Plan Group – On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** that the group obtain a quote from the appointed consultant for completion of the plan.

Clerk/ Cllr
Leech

061 Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items -

Okehampton Matters – Cllr Tolley reported that he had been in contact with Insp Sloman and it was hoped that a virtual meeting would be arranged in due course.

062 Urgent Items – The clerk reported that WDBC was undertaking a consultation relating to Dog Control Orders, the parks staff would be commencing the use of the Body-Worn CCTV Cameras on 8th June and there had been minor vandalism in Simmons Park over the last few days.

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 Ireland.

063 Security – On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the changes as recommended by the Clerk in relation to security matters.

On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to exit and ratify resolutions made in Part Two.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.10pm

**Councillor Mrs J Yelland
Mayor**