

**Minutes of a remote meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 11th May 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)

Action

- 001** **Interests** – The following interests were declared:
Cllr Leech – Min Ref 016 personal interest being a member of WDBC Standards Committee and stated that he had not taken part in any issues that related to Okehampton Town Council
Cllr Marsh – Min Ref 012.4 being a member of the Archive Group
- 002** **Urgent Items** – The Clerk reported that following the government announcement that it was hoped to reopen schools on 1 June she had been in touch with Okehampton Primary School to ascertain if they needed extra space and if use of the Charter Hall would be advantageous to them. Any proposal would need to be approved by Council.
- A response was awaited from WDBC in relation to the Council's eligibility for apply for Business Rates Relief.
- The public toilets in Market Street and Fairplace remained closed as they were classed as high touch, and therefore high-risk areas. Following consultation with the Property Committee Chairman, Cllr Goffey, padlocks had been fitted to all of the doors as the toilets, although locked, had still been being accessed and used without authorisation.
- 003** **Apologies for Absence** – Apologies from Cllr M Davies, WDBC, were noted and the Clerk reported that Cllr Ball, DCC, had not been able to find the link to attend the meeting and had logged off his computer before it was able to be resent.
- 004** **Deferment of Business** – None
- 005** **Members Questions** – None
- 006** **West Devon Borough Council** – Cllr Leech reported that WDBC continued to prioritise COVID-19 and staff had been working 7 days p/week to process grant funding applications as quickly as possible. To date approx. £12M had been granted to small businesses in West Devon. Full meetings of WDBC had ceased until June when basic essential business would resume at meetings.

A meeting had been held in the last week with Geoffrey Cox, MP when the difficulties the South West would meet in coming out of lockdown were discussed.

(Cllr Button arrived)

WDBC anticipated a financial shortfall of approx. £3M by October 2020, £600K had been received from the government so far. Homelessness was an ongoing issue as was environmental health matters the policing of which may fall to WDBC in the future due to cuts. The policing of social distancing within businesses may also revert to WDBC. Some self-employed persons were falling through the gaps and a separate fund, which was discretionary, was being devolved to local authorities which could be used to assist them.

Cllr Yelland reported that Planning was recommencing, and a meeting would be held in June.

A report regarding a parking review had been deferred at the last meeting of WDBC. The review was to ensure that the provision of car parks was cost neutral to WDBC, the impact to Okehampton was expected to have been low with just a small increase at Mill Road.

007 Devon County Council – No report

008 Questions Arising from Members Reports – None

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

009.1 Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 16th March 2020 - adoption proposed by Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Goffey

010 Full Council Meeting Minutes – The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 20th April 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.

011 The Annual Council Meeting and Mayor Choosing event would not be going ahead and in lieu of the speech that would normally be made by the Mayor, Cllr Yelland reported that she was making a press release, as agreed with the Clerk.

012 Finances –

012.1/2 The schedules were read out by the Clerk for those who were unable to see them.

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Leech, the schedule of payments was **APPROVED** as were the payments made under delegated powers on 4th May 2020.

012.3 The Council's investments as at 31st March 2020 were reviewed and **APPROVED** on the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Holt.

012.4 Cllrs Holt, Ireland, Leech and Marsh, being members of relevant groups declared personal interests.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Tolley (3 abstentions), it was **RESOLVED** that:

- i) £1,800 be vired from general reserves to the Mayors Allowance budget for 2020/21

Clerk

- ii) The £1,800 be divided between regular Charity group users of the Charter Hall who had lost bookings of the hall, and therefore income, between 14th March and 16th May 2020 due to COVID-19 and the Terry Bennet Centre. The amounts to be paid by BACS where possible

Clerk/
Ass. Clerk

013 **Dispensation** – A dispensation granted by the Town Clerk for 2020/21 permitting those Members who are also Trustees of the Council’s Charities to take part in discussions and vote on related matters was noted.

014 **Policies/Documents** –

014.1 On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the following policies as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee:

- Body-Worn CCTV Policy & Operational Procedural Guidelines
- Body-Worn CCTV Privacy Impact Statement
- Body-Worn CCTV Incident Log
- Document Retention Policy
- Strategic Plan 2019-2023
 - Climate Change and Biodiversity
 - Democracy

014.2 On the proposition of Cllr Holt, seconded Cllr Penna, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group Expenditure Protocol, subject to agreement by Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council (OHPC), noting that any costs would be split 81.5% Okehampton Town Council and 18.5% OHPC.

Clerk

015 **Cemetery Management, All Saints Church** – On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was **RESOLVED** to seek legal advice as recommended in the Clerk’s report.

Clerk

016 **Complaints Against Councillors** – The Clerk advised that as there was no confidential information within the report the item was not being discussed within Part 2.

A complaint had been received by the Clerk regarding 2 Members. The issue did not relate to activities undertaken as Cllrs and the complainant was advised to contact WDBC Monitoring Officer if they wished it to be investigated further. It is believed that it was not progressed.

2 complaints, 1 of which was made by the Town Clerk, relating to the same incident in September 2019 were made to the Monitoring Officer, WDBC, against a Member of the Council. Both complaints were referred for investigation by an independent person and ex-Cllr Vachon was found to have breached 3 areas of the Code of Conduct; 4(a) you must treat others with courtesy and respect, 5(c) you must not bully any person and 5(h) you must not conduct yourself in a manner or behave in such a way so as to give a reasonable person the impression that you have brought your office or the Council into disrepute.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.55pm

Councillor Mrs J Yelland
Mayor