

**Minutes of a remote meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 29th 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: Cllr J McInnis (DCC)
Cllr K Ball (DCC)
Cllr M Davies (WDBC)
Mrs E James (Town Clerk)

089 **Apologies for Absence** – None

090 **Deferment of Business** – None

091 **Members Questions** – (Cllr Travers arrived)

A Member commented upon a potentially inappropriate social media post by a Member in a personal capacity, since removed. Members were advised that complaints about Councillors should be referred to the Monitoring Officer at WDBC.

092 **West Devon Borough Council** – Cllr Davies reported that a meeting of the Audit Committee had been held the previous week, the resulting report from which was good. The Climate Change and Biodiversity group was getting back on track. Litter was being left behind, particularly in areas such as on Dartmoor. WDBC had discretionary grant of between £1,000 and £25,000 available and a pop-up business school had been jointly arranged by WDBC and South Hams District Council.

Cllr Leech advised that the discretionary grant was now in the second of three phases, the first phase having been under submitted. A new IT system making it easier for those with disabilities had been released. Workshops were being organised, one of which being Building Back Better. The first virtual Planning Meeting was scheduled to take place on 30th June which he was attending as a WDBC Member, Cllr Goffey was attending on behalf of the Town Council to speak in relation to 2 planning applications. The COVID19 Emergency Fund had been under subscribed but it was envisaged that there would be more uptake in the future.

Cllr Yelland reported that following the approval of the Joint Local Plan in 2019 the supplementary documentation had been approved on 9th June. With more businesses and facilities opening on 4th July WDBC were working on a plan for action if there were further outbreaks of COVID19. Fusion were planning to reopen their facilities when guidance permitted them to do so. A corporate webinar for licensed premises planning to reopen had been held, the notes of which were available on WDBC's website.

Action

093 **Devon County Council** – Cllr Ball’s report had been previously circulated. In particular Cllr Ball advised of upcoming Highways work in and around the town in the next few weeks.

Cllr McInnes (DCC) was introduced and reported upon the recent inadequate Ofsted report that had been received in relation to Children’s Services. As well as being negative points which were being addressed, there had been positives. The number of children in care was currently in the region of 780, the number had reduced during COVID19 but was beginning to rise. Devon currently had the highest number of children in the Country who were back in school; years reception, 1 and 3 in primary education. There was no government guidance to date as to how all children could go back to school in September 2020.

Members posed questions to Cllr McInnes which included plans for funding of early help – Cllr McInnes advised that DCC were trying to strengthen the help for those on the edge of care which was primarily teenage aged children/young persons. The % of the children’s service budget in relation to DCC’s budget was queried. Cllr McInnes to provide the information to the Clerk for circulation.

(Cllr Button left the meeting)

094 **Questions Arising from Members Reports** – Concern relating to security and vandalism at Aalen House was raised. Cllr Yelland advised she would report the issue to WDBC who had previously taken action through Environmental Health.

Cllr Yelland

Cllr Ball was asked about proposed financial cuts of £400m from DCC’s health budget. Cllr Ball advised he would make enquiries and respond through the Clerk.

Cllr Ball

095 **Adoption of Minutes of Committees and Members’ Questions arising Thereon** –

095.1 **Policy & Resources Committee** meeting held on 18th May 2020 - adoption proposed by Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Goffey.

095.2 **Planning Committee** meetings held on 3rd February, 9th March and 18th May 2020 - adoption proposed by Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Ireland.

096 **Full Council Meeting Minutes** – The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 1st June 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

(Cllr McInnes left the meeting)

097 **Matters Arising** – It was noted that Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council had agreed the Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group Expenditure Protocol as previously approved by the Council.

098 **Internal Audit Certificate and Report** – The previously circulated report was noted, the only recommendation being that the van purchased in March be added to the Asset Register for the year ended 31st March 2020. The Clerk explained that the van had been paid for as the COVID19 lockdown came into force and was only able to be collected in June, hence the omission which had since been rectified. Cllr Yelland congratulated the Clerk and Assistant Clerk on the report.

(Cllr Ball left the meeting)

099 **Annual Governance Statement 2019/20** – Members considered the Council’s internal control processes and their effectiveness, and the statements numbered 1 to 8 were read out separately by the Clerk, the papers having previously been circulated. Following each statement Members considered and **agreed** a response of ‘yes’ to each one.

Statement 9 was read out by the Clerk who explained that historically the Council had answered ‘N/A’ but in 2017/18 had made a ‘yes’ response on the advice of the Internal Auditor, following which the External Auditor had advised the response was incorrect. In 2018/19 the response by the Council had been ‘N/A’. As work on the Charities was still ongoing Members **agreed** that the response be ‘N/A’.

On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to approve a ‘Yes’ response to statements 1 to 8 and ‘N/A’ to statement 9. Cllr Yelland and the Clerk to make arrangements for the signing of the documentation following the meeting.

Cllr Yelland/
Clerk

100 **Accounting Statements 2019/20** – On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the accounting statements for 2019/20 which had previously been circulated to Members. Cllr Yelland and the Clerk to make arrangements for the signing of the documentation following the meeting.

Cllr Yelland/
Clerk

101 **Admin Officer and Councillor Vacancies** – It was noted that both vacancies had been advertised and that co-option for the Councillor vacancy would be considered at the next meeting of the Council.

102 **Police Council Advocate Scheme** –

102.1 On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Goffey as representative to the scheme.

102.2 On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** feedback would be reported to the Property Committee.

103 **Public Space Protection Orders, Dog Control Articles Consultation** – A proposal for a complete ban on dogs in all areas of the Kempley Meadows side of Simmons Park and dogs on leads on the other side of the river was made by Cllr Penna, seconded Cllr Tucker.
(Cllr Davies left the meeting)

Comments made during debate included the difficulties that would arise enforcing the ban including concern for members of staff, and the public footpath which ran through the area. Following a vote of 4 in favour and 8 against the proposal was rejected.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the following response to the consultation:

- To support WDBC’s proposals to introduce new orders:
 - Dog walkers must carry dog bags or other container to collect dog waste
 - Restrict amount of dogs that can be walked to four at a time
 - Dogs to be kept on leads on roads within 30mph speed zones
- To request a specific Dogs on Leads Order is adopted on the Kempley Meadows and Cricket Fields side of Simmons Park incorporating the playing/pleasure field, children’s play areas, Bowling Green, Putting

Green and areas used by the College, in accordance with the Trustees resolution made at a meeting on 15th June 2020

Clerk

104 **Code of Conduct Consultation** – Cllr Leech declared an interest being the Chairman of WDBC’s Standards Committee.

On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Tucker (1 abstention), it was **RESOLVED** to create a Task & Finish Group consisting of Cllrs Goffey and Jessop, and the Assistant Clerk. The group to prepare a response for consideration at the next meeting.

Ass. Clerk

105 **Skatepark** – On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Goffey, it was **RESOLVED** to approve a request from BT Openreach to site a new pole adjacent to the skatepark and to request that, if possible, they provide a power supply that could be used by the Council in the future as a CCTV connection point.

Clerk

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

106 **Cemetery Management** – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to create a Task & Finish Group consisting of Cllrs Marsh, Jessop, Goffey, Tolley and the Clerk to consider the options and report back to Council. Rev Cook to be invited to a future relevant meeting.

Clerk

107 **Policies/Documents** –

107.1 On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Holt (1 abstention), it was **RESOLVED** to approve the following policies as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee:

- COVID19 Grant Policy and Application Form
- Data Security Breach Response Policy and Procedure
- Privacy Notices x 2
- Privacy Policy
- Subject Access Request Policy

107.2 On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Tucker, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the previously circulated Terms of Reference for the COVID19 Recovery Working Group.

108 **Finances** –

108.1 **Payment of Invoices** – (Cllr Marsh declared an interest being a Director of Meldon Viaduct who were a payee on the list).

On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Tolley (2 abstentions), the schedules of payments for 22nd and 29th June 2020 were **APPROVED**.

It was commented that advertising in the Okehampton Times was expensive and the need should be reconsidered in the future.

108.2 On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Goffey, it was **RESOLVED** that purchases relating to the approval of applications for the Council’s COVID19 Grants could be made by arrangement through invoice to the Council or by use of the Lloyds Debit Card.

109 **Meeting Schedule** - On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Jessop, it was **RESOLVED** to revert back to the previously approved meeting schedule from 13th July 2020 noting that the Property Committee would meet on 20th July instead of the Trustees who had recently met.

Clerk

- 110 **Former NatWest Building, Fore Street Okehampton** – The previously circulated report which detailed the upcoming sale of the property by auction was noted
- 111 **Reports of Council Working/Task & Finish Groups -**
111.1 **Charities** – On hold
- 111.2 **Climate Change** – On hold.
- 111.3 **COVID19 Recovery** – A meeting had been held and the next was scheduled for later in the week. Consideration of recommendations from the group was deferred until the next Committee meeting.
- 112 **Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items -**
Okehampton Matters – Cllr Tolley reported that a virtual meeting had been held on 17th June. Insp Sloman had commented that the Council's newly acquired BodyCams would act as a good deterrent. The reopening of pubs on 4th July was causing some concern. In relation to COVID19 they had been concentrating on large gatherings of people and 2nd homes. The next meeting was on 30th September 2020.
- (Cllr Marsh left the meeting)*
- 113 **Reports on Current Activities by Community Groups with Town**
Council Representation -
Neighbourhood Plan Group – Cllr Leech reported that the consultant had been contacted and advised that a plan could be put together based on the funding available; the more funding, the more in depth the plan. Once approved, plans could be updated on a 2 yearly basis. There was the slight possibility of grant funding being available although this the application process was time consuming, and a response from WDBC's Officer, D Smith, who was reviewing progress to date was expected later in the week.
- (Cllr Tucker left the meeting)*
- The Clerk advised the earmark funding set aside for this project was just over £7,000. It was noted that there would be future additional costs for the consultation process.
- On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Goffey, it was **RESOLVED** that the consultant be asked to prepare a basic plan up to the sum of £10,000, and that Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council be asked by Cllr Leech to agree to fund part of this cost as set out in the Financial protocol.
- 114 **Urgent Items** – Cllr Yelland reported that having liaised with Rev Cook the Civic Service scheduled for 20th September 2020 would be unlikely to go ahead, and there was the possibility of some involvement in an event over the weekend of 23rd to 25th October 2020 instead.

Cllr Leech/
Clerk

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.30pm

Councillor Mrs J Yelland
Mayor