

**Minutes of a remote meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 27th July 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

In Attendance: Mrs E James (Town Clerk)
 Cllr K Ball (DCC)
 2 members of the public

	Action
<p>162 <u>Declaration of Interests</u> - Cllr Goffey declared a personal interest in Min Ref 172 and advised that she would leave the meeting for the duration of that item of business.</p>	
<p>163 <u>Urgent</u> – Cllr Yelland advised that an Extraordinary meeting of full Council would be taking place at 3.30pm on Thursday 30th July 2020 for which the agenda had been circulated. Members were requested to advise the Clerk their availability.</p> <p>Cllr Yelland reported that Cllr Tucker had resigned from her position on the Council earlier that day.</p>	Members
<p>164 <u>Apologies for Absence</u> – Apologies tendered by Cllr Davies, WDBC, were noted.</p> <p>It was noted that in line with NALC recommended best practice Members absent without apologies at meetings to which they were required to attend would be recorded in the minutes.</p>	
<p>165 <u>Deferment of Business</u> – None</p>	
<p>166 <u>Members Questions</u> – None</p>	
<p>167 <u>West Devon Borough Council</u> – Cllr Leech reported that WDBC were due to discuss the possibility of the reopening of Leisure Centres and how the new Vermin contracts would operate.</p> <p>Cllr Yelland reported on the third tranche of Government COVID19 funding to Councils that had been announced. The funding would help to cover loss of income where losses were more than 5% of the planned income from sales, fees and charges, but not commercial income, the government would refund 75p of every £1 lost. A WDBC Budget meeting was due to be held in September at which the current year’s budget would be reviewed.</p>	
<p>168 <u>Devon County Council</u> - Cllr Ball advised he would circulate information following the meeting in relation to DCC’s preparation in the event of a second spike of the pandemic in which DCC were leading in the region. Cllr Ball reported on an email he had received earlier in the day detailing</p>	

possible further funding for highways in relation to bikes and pedestrians which would be forwarded to the Clerk.

- 169 **Questions Arising from Members Reports** – A question was posed to Cllr Ball regarding the potential highways funding and if it would include the provision of cycle racks. Cllr Ball to ascertain the answer.

Cllr Ball was asked about a timescale for the proposed public consultation regarding traffic in Okehampton.

(Cllr Ball left the meeting)

- 170 **Adoption of Minutes of Committees and Members' Questions arising Thereon** –

170.1 **Policy & Resources Committee** meeting held on 16th June 2020 - adoption proposed by Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Goffey.

170.2 **Planning Committee** meeting held on 1st June 2020 - adoption proposed by Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Tolley (1 abstention, Cllr Marsh had not been in attendance).

170.3 **Property Committee** meetings held on 17th February and 16th March 2020 - adoption proposed by Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Holt.

171 **Full Council Meeting Minutes** – The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 29th June 2020 were received and **APPROVED** on the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Holt, noting that they would be signed at a later date.

Clerk

172 **Co-option of Councillor** – Cllr Goffey, who had previously declared an interest, left the meeting.

(A member of the public left the meeting)

The Clerk read a statement from Cllr Ireland advising that an anonymous letter he had received in relation to this item of business had been destroyed and would not influence his decision. Cllr Yelland advised she had also received an anonymous letter, the contents of which would not be considered or influence decision making.

The Clerk reported that 2 applications for the vacancy on the South Ward had been received. Following debate during which Members spoke in support of the candidates, voting took place and Ann Wood was co-opted.

(A member of the public briefly returned and then left the meeting)

173 **Matters Arising** –

173.1 **WDBC Public Space Protection Orders, Dog Control Articles Consultation** – Responses received to date had been previously circulated and would, along with others received, be forwarded to WDBC after 31st July for them to take into account along with the enforceability of the proposals.

Clerk

174.2 DCC's response to queries from the Council regarding the allocation of Government COVID19 funding to local councils, previously circulated, was noted.

- 175 **Anti-Social Behaviour** – It was noted that occurrences of anti-social behaviour in the town and Simmons Park appeared to be increasing. On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk write to the Police & Crime Commissioner highlighting the increase and in support of local officers, a recent article from the Okehampton Times to be included.
- Cllr Goffey advised that since appointment as representative to the Police advocate scheme no information had been received.
- Clerk
- 176 **Code of Conduct Consultation** – Cllr's Leech and Yelland declared a personal interest being members of WDBC Standards Committee.
- It was noted that some of the document related to higher levels of Council and those who operate politically. On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Ireland (3 abstentions), it was **RESOLVED** to submit the drafted response.
- Clerk
- 177 **West Devon BT Payphone Kiosk Removal Consultation** – On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to object to the removal of the phone box on the junction of Station Road and Tors Road (01837 52479) on the following grounds:
- that although recent average monthly calls had been 0, in the 12 months up to September 2019 there had been 19 calls made from the phone box and it was not clear if the reduction was due to the impact of the COVID19 pandemic
 - it is the first kiosk from a popular access point to/from Dartmoor, the mobile signal in the area is poor and the facility is vital for emergency calls for incidents on Dartmoor
- Clerk
- 178 **DCC Special Schools Consultation** – To be discussed under Part 2 Confidential items of business
- 179 **Fairplace Public Toilets** – It was noted that as Cllr Tucker, who had made one of the proposals required to bring the item back for consideration within 6 months, had resigned from the Council the item could not be considered. It was agreed that should the Clerk receive proposals from other Members by Friday 31st July 2020 an extraordinary meeting could be arranged to take place on Monday 10th August.
- The Clerk advised that an engineer was expected to attend to investigate the Wallgate unit hand washing facility on 29th July.
- (Cllr Button arrived)*
- 180 **Councillor Surgeries** – Cllr Sanger reported that no members of the public had joined the remotely held surgeries. Face to face surgeries had been attended by members of the public although not extensively.
- On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to continue with the Surgery remotely in September and that it be further considered at full Council on 28th September 2020.
- Cllr Tolley agreed to be one of the hosts in September.
- Clerk/Cllrs
- 181 **Civic Event** – Cllr Yelland reported that Mayor Choosing and the Civic Service had both been cancelled and there were outstanding presentations from May to be made.

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Marsh it was **RESOLVED** that the Mayor and Clerk make arrangements as appropriate for an event or Mayoral presentation to be made in the autumn.

Cllr Yelland/
Clerk

182 **Policies/Documents** –

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

- Uniform Policy for Employees

183 **Finances** –

183.1 **Payment of Invoices** – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments and ratify the payment for the purchase of the new tractor as approved by the Policy & Resources Committee on 13th July 2020.

183.2 On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Holt, it was **RESOLVED** to create a Task & Finish Group to review the budgets attributed to each Committee and full Council, and to approve the Terms of Reference with an amendment that the Deputy Mayor and/or Committee Vice Chairmen attend in the absence of the Mayor and/or Committee Chairmen.

Clerk

183.3 The Clerk reported that financial losses incurred due to the COVID19 pandemic to date had not impacted as severely as previously anticipated. Losses for the first quarter of the financial year amounted to Simmons Park car parking income £6,226, bookings and other income £4,313. Income from the Waitrose car park had increased over the first quarter of 2019/20 rather than the expected losses. Some members of staff had been furloughed although most were now back at work, it was not completely clear if the Council would be entitled to keep the furlough income and could be additional lost funds.

183.4 A press release dated 2nd July by Robert Jenrick MP outlining a financial package of support to local councils was noted. The package was thought to be aimed at higher tiers of councils and it was unclear if it would reach town and parish level.

184 **Reports of Council Working/Task & Finish Groups** -

184.1 **Charities** – On hold, however the Trustees had signed paperwork that was approved prior to the lockdown relating to the merger of the 2 charities.

184.2 **Climate Change** – On hold.

184.3 **COVID19 Recovery** –

Marketing of the town - Cllr Goffey reported that the Moorlander were redesigning free of charge, and printing a map of the town that would be circulated with the 4th September issue. Printing costs were £495 for 5,000 copies or £850 for 10,000.

On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Penna it was **RESOLVED** to pay the printing costs for 10,000 of the maps from the £5,000 gifted to the Council by WDBC to assist in the reopening of the high streets.

Clerk

Communal Seating – On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Marsh it was **RESOLVED** to purchase, or refund the cost on the production of receipts, 3 x bistro style tables each with 2 chairs and 2 x blackboard style A boards up to an amount of £250 from the £5,000 gifted to the Council by WDBC to assist in the reopening of the high streets. The

items were for use by all of the community in the area outside of St James' Church and all responsibility for storage, use, insurance, permits, licences or any other requirements would fall to the community group.

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

184.4 Cemetery Management – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Travers it was **RESOLVED** that the preferred option was to transfer the land to the Church and that the Council would pay the legal costs. Should this not be agreed by the Church or it was established that it was not possible for any reason the options would be reconsidered by the Council.

Clerk

184.5 VE/VJ Day – The group had met and considered the possibilities for holding an event on 15th August which due to COVID and other organisations ability to support anything at this time was not recommended.
On the proposition of Cllr Sanger, seconded Cllr Jessop, it was **RESOLVED** not to hold an event and to disband the group as it had completed its purpose.

185 Reports on Current Activities by Community Groups with Town Council Representation - Neighbourhood Plan Group – Cllr Leech reported that a remote meeting was being held on 29th July with members of Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council, WDBC Officers and the Consultant to go through paperwork and to agree a way forward to enable progression of the plan.

186 Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items - Okehampton Matters – The next meeting was scheduled for 7th October

(Member of the public left the meeting)

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 Ireland, seconded by Cllr Jessop.

187 Merlin Cinema – Correspondence received from the Cinema was considered. On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Jessop it was **RESOLVED** to offer some assistance.
On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Leech it was further **RESOLVED** that the assistance be subject to legal advice and to use the solicitor appointed to review lease.

Clerk

188 DCC Special Schools Consultation – Cllr Yelland advised that the item had been moved to Part 2 due to confidential correspondence received from DCC and reminded Members not to discuss the information outside of the meeting.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Goffey, it was **RESOLVED** to support the consultation in principle, and requested that the Council be kept informed of progress.

Clerk

The meeting was taken out of Part Two and decisions taken ratified on the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Tolley.

189 **Urgent Item** – Cllr Goffey reported on a recent press release by Lord Berkeley regarding a report to Ministers in relation to the rail projects. Cllr Goffey urged Councillors to write in support of the Okehampton to Exeter rail link and it was noted that the Council had written in support earlier in the year.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.23pm

Councillor Mrs J Yelland
Mayor