

**Minutes of a remote meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on  
Monday 21<sup>st</sup> December 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 T Abbots  
Councillor C Holt  
Councillor M Ireland  
Councillor P Jessop  
Councillor B Matravets  
Councillor D Sanger  
Councillor A Wood

**In Attendance:** Mrs E James (Town Clerk)  
Councillor M Davies (WDBC)  
1 member of the public

Prayers were offered by Cllr Rev Davies

**532** Interests – None

**533** Apologies for Absence – Apologies tendered by Cllr Button due to a family celebration were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Ireland seconded Cllr Leech. It was noted that Cllr Travers had advised that she would be attending late due to work commitments.

**534** Deferment of Business – None

**535** Members Questions – None

**536** West Devon Borough Council – Cllr Davies reported that the Climate Change and Biodiversity strategy had been approved, five different business grants were being managed, there had been an update on the JLP and a 6 year housing land supply had been agreed.

(a member of the public arrived)

A Leisure Grant aimed at supporting leisure centres was available and a draft of the spending settlement had been produced. WDBC were in receipt of a lower tier service grant which was £70K less than that previously received. The Government referendum capping limit had been set at 1.99% or £5 for 2021/22, with no limit to town and parishes. The housing bonus received by WDBC would be in the region of £192K for 2021/22, and the rural services grant approx £487K. A 5<sup>th</sup> tranche of covid funding amounting to approx. £287K would be available in April 2001.

Cllr Leech reported on a housing consultation plan that was now out, advised that WDBC would have Officers available over Christmas to assist the most vulnerable and the help/emergency line would be covered. A COVID Marshall would also be available throughout Christmas. A Vulnerability Officer had been appointed and would assist with locating the most vulnerable in the community.

**Action**

Cllr Yelland reported that residents along the rail line had received letters from Network Rail with details of work that was due to be undertaken on the rail line, including work at the station in 2021.

537 **Devon County Council** – Cllr Ball was not present and no report had been received.

538 **Questions Arising from Members Reports** – Cllr Goffey requested that information on WDBC's latest work on climate and biodiversity be uploaded to the website and noted disappointed that Cllr Ball was not present and had not attended DCC's recent finance meeting.

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

539.1 **Policy & Resources Committee** meetings held on 9<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020 - adoption proposed by Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Goffey and **approved**.

539.2 **Planning Committee** meetings held 15<sup>th</sup> September, 5<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> November and 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020 - adoption proposed by Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Tolley and **approved**.

540 **Full Council Meeting Minutes** – The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 were received and **APPROVED** on the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded by Cllr Marsh noting that they would be signed at a later date.

540 **Committee Membership and External Body Representative Nomination** – On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Marsh the following Committee Membership appointments were **RESOLVED**:

- Councillor Abbots – Planning and Parks Committees
- Councillor Matravers – Planning and Policy & Resources Committees

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Abbots as representative on the Northern Links Group.

Clerk

The Clerk advised that the Okehampton Coronavirus Support Group was missing from the list of Council Representatives on External Bodies and would be added, Cllr Button being the nominated representative.

541 **Matters Arising** –

541.1 **Anti-Social Behaviour** – The Clerk reported that issues appeared to have been remaining low in recent weeks although there had been reports of mopeds being driven in the park on a recent occasion and broken bottles were often found.

542 **Civic Dinner** – On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to agree the change of date from 5<sup>th</sup> March to 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2021 although it was doubtful the event would be able to go ahead due to the pandemic.

Clerk

543 **WDBC Parking Charges Increase** – Cllrs Yelland and Leech declared personal interests being Members of WDBC.

It was noted that WDBC were increasing parking charges from March 2021 and that this would affect Mill Road car park in Okehampton only.

544 **Management Agreement** – The Clerk reported that she was awaiting clarification in relation to VAT, assets and insurance. On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to defer the item of business until clarification was received.

Clerk

(Cllr Davies left the meeting)

545 **2021/22 Budget and Precept** – It was noted that the 2021/22 Council Tax Base for Okehampton Town had been confirmed as a decrease of 1.64%. The Clerk advised that equated to an increase of £2.09 p/annum on a Band D property to retain the same amount of income as in the current financial year.

Council services which included the maintenance and running of 2 sets of public toilets, the purchase and installation of a CCTV system which was expected in March 2021, the necessity of the replacement of the Charter Hall Roof and more recently the identification Ash Tree dieback in Clapps Wood, which had not been budgeted, and general cost rises meant the precept request would need to be increased.

The final draft budget, as previously recommended by Council Committees, would equate to an increase of £8.80 p/annum (£0.73 p/month), on a Band D property.

The Clerk advised that the Policy & Resources Meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> January would be last opportunity for amendments to be proposed for the budget and precept which was required to be resolved at full Council on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

It had been confirmed that the Government did not intend to set referendum principles for town and parish councils in 2021/22 meaning increases would not be capped.

546 **Finances** – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Tolley it was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments.

547 **COVID19 Grant Proposal** – Deferred to later in the meeting due to the absence Cllr Travers who had submitted the proposal

548 **Census 2021** – Members noted that the next Census was due in March 2021. A Census Manager had been appointed and would be making a presentation to Council in February.

549 **Policies and Documents** – On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Asbestos Management Plan as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee.

Clerk

550 **Reports of Council Working/Task & Finish Groups -**  
550.1 **Charities** – The group had not met and there was a possibility the group would be dissolved in May.

550.2 **Climate Change** – A meeting had been scheduled to take place the following day to review the Devon Carbon Plan consultation.

550.3 **COVID19 Recovery** – The group had met to discuss EU grant funding for the safe reopening of high streets sourced by WDBC. WDBC had agreed to provide mobile hand sanitiser units for the town centre along with supplies of sanitiser and the provision of banners. On the proposition of

Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the banner design and purchases which would be made through WDBC.

Clerk

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

**551.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group** – A draft report had been received from the consultant which needed to be reviewed by the group before approval of the invoice. It was noted that the group needed to undertake some work before it could progress to the next stage.

**552 Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items -**

**552.1 Okehampton Matters** – Cllr Tolley advised the next meeting was on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021

**552.2 Okehampton COVID19 Support Group** – No report had been received.

**553 Grant Policy Proposals** – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to defer the item until the next meeting due to the absence of Cllr Travers.

Clerk

(A member of the public left the meeting)

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 Leech, seconded by Cllr Ireland.

**554 CCTV** – Cllr Leech reported that the scheme was progressing well. The majority of agreements with land/property owners had been given, others were awaited. The Police & Crime Commissioner had not fully responded to a query in relation to additional funding for connection to a monitoring hub and it was noted that grant applications were about to be applied for as listed on the previously circulated report.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Goffey it was **RESOLVED** to approve items A to D on the previously circulated report including the appointment of a monitoring hub following submission of grant applications, despite not having been able to obtain 3 quotations.

On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to offer refunds to properties for the use of electricity at an amount up to £50 p/annum

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Marsh it was **RESOLVED** to include an amount of £2,000 in the budget for 2021/22 for the retrieval of footage. It was noted that a policy needed to be written and approved in relation to the types of requests that the Council would retrieve footage for and any associated charges that would be made.

Clerk

On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to move back into Part 1 and ratify resolutions made.

The Chairman thanked Members, the Town Clerk and her Team for their hard work over the last year which had been particularly challenging and difficult, and closed the meeting at 8.22pm

**Councillor Mrs J Yelland  
Mayor**