

**Minutes of a remote meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on  
Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 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 G Button  
Councillor M Ireland  
Councillor P Jessop  
Councillor B Matravers  
Councillor D Sanger  
Councillor D Travers  
Councillor A Wood

**In Attendance:** Mrs E James (Town Clerk)  
Cllr K Ball (DCC)  
Cllr N Jory (Leader of WDBC)  
Mr A Bates (Chief Executive, WDBC)  
Ms S Gibson (Head of Placemaking, WDBC)  
Cllr M Davies (WDBC)  
1 Member of the Public

A minute's silence was held in remembrance of Mrs Maureen McDonald who was a previous Town Councillor and Mayor in 2011 following which Prayers were offered by Cllr Rev Davies.

**607**      **Apologies for Absence** – Apologies tendered by Cllr Holt who was ill were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Goffey.

**608**      **Deferment of Business** – None

**609**      **Members Questions** – None

**610**      **Placemaking** – Cllr Jory, Mr Bates and Ms Gibson from WDBC were welcomed.

(Cllr Davies left the meeting)

Members received a presentation from Ms Gibson on Placemaking and collaborative working in respect of this subject which was followed by questions raised by Members.

(Cllr Ireland arrived)

It was noted that WDBC would be developing its corporate strategy in coming months, that they recognised Okehampton as being a key town within the Borough and would welcome future collaborative working with the Town Council.

(Cllr Jory, Mr Bates and Ms Gibson left the meeting)

**611**      **West Devon Borough Council** – Cllr Leech reported on items including the Covid19 situation that was taking up significant amounts of time, and that WDBC was looking to see what services could be reduced during the

**Action**

pandemic. There was an outbreak of the virus amongst recycling and waste collection services staff which had resulted in staff shortages. A fly tipping investigation within the borough had been successful and resulted in a prosecution.

There was a proposal for an increase in parking charges which would affect only the Mill Road car park in Okehampton. It was reported that if car parking was made free, WDBC would have to increase the council tax by 22% in order to stand still and retain the same amount of income. WDBC Councillors were being provided with laptops in place of surface pro equipment which was being donated to primary schools in the borough. Budgets were in the process of being set and WDBC would be able to set balanced budget for 2021/22.

- 612** **Devon County Council** – Cllr Ball highlighted some of the issues within his report which had been previously circulated:  
The vaccination process was going well, more ways of delivery were being opened up, and testing in schools was progressing.  
A list of mental health support services and links were available on DCC’s website along with information about nationwide Codeword ANI for domestic abuse.  
A Library collect service had resumed.  
Railway engineers’ trains had been travelling the line between Okehampton and Exeter and the Parkway Station proposal was being worked on.  
Rollout of LED street lighting was continuing.

**613** **Questions Arising from Members Reports** – None

(Cllr Ball left the meeting)

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

- 614.1** **Policy & Resources Committee** meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020 - adoption proposed by Cllr Travers, seconded Cllr Button and **approved**.
- 614.2** **Property Committee** meetings held on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020 - adoption proposed by Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Ireland and **approved**.
- 614.3** **Full Council Meeting Minutes** – The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2020 were received and **approved** including the amendment of the meeting date from 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 to 21<sup>st</sup> December 2020, on the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded by Cllr Tolley noting that they would be signed at a later date.

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

**615** **2021/22 Budget and Precept** –

- 615.1** Budget papers as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee and an additional option provided by the Clerk following the unsuccessful application to Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council for funding assistance for the cost of the running of public toilets were considered.

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded by Cllr Goffey (3 abstentions), it was **RESOLVED** to approve the budget which included the additional cost for public toilets. The precept amount to be requested from WDBC being £295,708 which amounted to an increase of 4.83% or £0.12 p/week on a Band D property.

Clerk

**615.2** On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Goffey, it was **RESOLVED** to roll forwards any funds remaining in the Grant and Covid Hardship Grant budgets at the end of the 2020/21 financial year in order to provide additional funds for grants during the 2021/22 financial year, subject to an extension of the Covid Hardship Grant policy being approved.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Wood, it was **RESOLVED** to roll forward funds remaining at the end of the 2020/21 financial year as listed on the schedule included at the end of the minutes, in order to prevent that amount being requested again through the precept for work that it was hoped would be complete in 2020/21 some of which had been delayed due to the Covid19 pandemic.

**616** **Finances** – On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded by Cllr Travers, it was **RESOLVED** to the approve schedule of payments.

**617** **Asset Register** – On the proposition of Cllr Travers, seconded Cllr Marsh it was **RESOLVED** to nominate Cllr Goffey to undertake an annual audit check of elements of the asset register as may be possible due to the pandemic and lockdown. Cllr Travers to be included if the situation allows.

**618** **CCTV** – The Clerk provided an update in relation to grant applications submitted, that responses from most were awaited and Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council had declined the request.

**619** **COVID19 Grant Proposal** – Cllr's Button, Travers and Wood declared personal interests being members of the Okehampton Coronavirus Support Group.

It was noted there was a 5 week delay for the receipt of Universal Credit and for the period March to October 2020 there had been a 90% increase in claims for Universal Credit.

A proposition by Cllr Travers, seconded Cllr Button, to remove the wording '.....who have exhausted all other possibilities (have applied, and been turned down for other grants, and sources of funding; ie WDBC's grants) .....

(A member of the public left the meeting)

**620** **Management Agreement** – Cllr Yelland reported that the Trustees had met on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and specialist VAT advice relating to Charities was being sought.

**621** **Interim Devon Carbon Plan Consultation** – On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to delegate the choosing of 3 items from Section 6 to Cllr Goffey, being the Chairman of the Climate Working Group, and to submit the draft response.

**622** **Devon Communities Together Climate Emergency Planning Survey** – On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to approve and submit the draft response.

**623** **South Hams & West Devon Draft Housing Strategy Consultation 2021 – 2026 “Better Homes, Better Lives”** – On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Yelland it was **RESOLVED** to submit the draft response.

- 624**     **Public Space Protection Orders – Dog Control Articles** – Correspondence received from WDBC was considered and it was noted that the main change would be that dog walkers must carry the means to pick up faeces. On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Matravers it was **RESOLVED** to thank WDBC for their work on the consultation and to agree with the outcome.
- 625**     **Rural Market Town Group** – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to accept the free trial offer until end July, to appoint Cllr’s Goffey and Leech as Council representatives who would report to Council prior to the end of the trial for consideration of whether to continue the membership.
- 626**     **Fairplace Garden** – On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Yelland it was **RESOLVED** defer the item of business to next Council meeting due to the lateness of the time.
- 627**     **Policies and Documents** – On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Councillor/Employee Protocol as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee incorporating amendments following staff consultation.
- 628**     **Annual Town Assembly** – Cllr Yelland advised that the legislation permitting virtual meetings expired on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and there had been no indication as to whether it would be extended by the Government. It was noted that Network Rail had agreed to attend the meeting to present plans for the reinstatement of the rail service. On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to plan for a virtual event on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021.
- 629**     **Civic Dinner** – It was noted that the Civic Dinner would not be going ahead in 2021 due to the pandemic.
- 630**     **Reports of Council Working/Task & Finish Groups -**  
**630.1**     **Charities** – No meeting had been held but work was progressing.
- 630.2**     **Climate Change** – Cllr Goffey reported on crisp packet recycling and would forward details to the Clerk.
- 630.3**     **COVID19 Recovery** – The Clerk reported that the banners had arrived, and arrangements would be made for them to be hung.
- 630.4**     **Charter Hall Roof Replacement** – A bat survey had identified evidence of bats and an emergence survey was required to be undertaken in the Spring.
- 631**     **Reports on Current Activities by Community Groups with Town Council Representation -**  
**631.1**     **Neighbourhood Plan Group** – Cllr Leech reported that meetings had been held recently and the plan was progressing well. Maps had been updated, WDBC’s lead officer had reviewed the draft report drawn up by the consultant and subsequent amendments.
- 632**     **Members’ Reports and Requests for Agenda Items -**  
**632.1**     **Okehampton Matters** – Cllrs Tolley and Wood had attended the meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> January. Insp Sloman had reported on issues including the Covid impact on staffing numbers and a 30% crime decrease during lockdown.

Covid concerns mainly comprised of large groups, visitors to second homes, visitors and groups on Dartmoor at weekends.  
 Insp Sloman also reported on antisocial behaviour, speed watch, rural crime, the increase in domestic violence over lockdown and the G7 summit in Cornwall in the summer.  
 A CCTV update was provided to the meeting.

**632.2 Okehampton COVID19 Support Group** – Cllr Button reported that the phone line was still open 7 days per week and it was not as busy as during the first lockdown, enquiries were mainly related to shopping, prescriptions and signposting to other agencies.  
 The group had started a fuel poverty initiative. Funding for the group had come from Devon Communities fund, Western Power and Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council, were providing activity packs for home learning, wellbeing packs, loaning out games, were working in partnership with the Community Kitchen by assisting with funding, slow cooker families, had a book and jigsaw exchange and were working with the foodbank.  
 The number of volunteers had dropped and they had been discussing the formalisation of the group through a CIC.

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 Leech.

**633 Town Centre Consultation** - (Cllr Button left the meeting)

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to respond to DCC requesting that they hold a further consultation event once Covid restrictions had lifted and it was safe to meet face to face, and that they commissioned a local university to assist with the creation of the consultation documentation.

Clerk

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

The Chairman closed the meeting at 10.25pm

**Councillor Mrs J Yelland**  
**Mayor**

**Budget Rollover Recommendations**

Department	Budget Code	Description
Democratic	102/4029	Civic clothing and regalia
	102/4171	Localism/NP Support
Administration	101/4055	Legal & Professional Fees
Parks	302/4055	Legal & Professional Fees
	302/4037	Inspections (Water & Bridges)
	302/4076	Wildlife Interpretation Board
	302/4042	Pillbox Refurbishment
	302/4143	Repainting railings etc
	302/4453	Replacement matting play areas
Property	201/4055	Legal & Professional Fees
	201/4150	General Maintenance (Town Hall)
	202/4150	General Maintenance (Charter Hall)
	302/4150	General Maintenance (MH/LMH)