

**Minutes of a remote meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 22nd February 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 Matravets
Councillor D Sanger
Councillor D Travers
Councillor A Wood

In Attendance: Mrs E James (Town Clerk)
Cllr M Davies (WDBC)
Census Engagement Manger for West Devon
1 Member of the Public

A minute's silence was held in remembrance of Mrs Brenda Savage who was a previous Town Councillor and Mayor in 1980 and 1981 following which Prayers were offered by Cllr Rev Davies.

Action

- 676 **Interests** – Cllr Ireland declared a personal interest Min Ref 689 being a member of the committee.

(A member of the public arrived)
- 677 **Apologies for Absence** – Apologies from Cllr Ball, DCC, who was attending a meeting in another parish were noted.
- 678 **Deferment of Business** – None
- 679 **Members Questions** – None
- 680 **Census 2021** – The Census Engagement Manager for West Devon was welcomed and outlined the purpose and process for the gathering of the data which was undertaken every 10 years. The first census had been held in 1801, the most recent in 2011. The 2021 census date was 21st March and since 1920 there had been a legal obligation for its completion.

Paper copies could be requested for those who were unable to complete it digitally. The Engagement Manager advised that any issues could be forwarded to her by the Clerk.

Data should be available within 12 months and accessible from the datashine and ons.gov.uk websites.

(Census Engagement Manager left the meeting)
- 681 **West Devon Borough Council** – Cllr Davies reported that the Police & Crime Commissioner and DCC elections would be going ahead on 6th May 2021. 19th April was the deadline for registering to vote, postal voting was being encouraged.

£4K from the Seamoor Lotto had been donated to local schools for computers and WDBC had also donated unused IT equipment.

The results of the 2020 Business Rates Consultation had been expected in March but were delayed by government. The government had intimated that the budget due on 3rd March would contain continued discounts for the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors for a further period of time.

Cllr Leech, Mayor of WDBC, was congratulated for the chairing of a large meeting the previous week. It had been agreed to extend financial support to some groups. The precept for 2021/22 would increase by £5 p/year, 2.11%. The new homes bonus funding had been put towards the revenue budget for 2021/22. A 5th tranche of Covid19 funding had been announced by government of which WDBC had received £281,404 which had been earmarked to protect against Covid19 losses in 2021/22.

Cllr Leech reported that council tax was collected by WDBC on behalf of others including town and parish councils and the police. WDBC only kept approx. 12p of every £1 collected.

Cllr Yelland advised that a grant had been received but there were stipulations as to how it could be used including strategic, economic recovery projects for towns in the borough.

682 **Devon County Council** – A report received earlier in the day from Cllr Ball had been circulated prior to the meeting.

683 **Questions Arising from Members Reports** – It was noted that Cllr Ball's report had not been received until late that afternoon and contained information about the budget and railway.

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

684.1 **Policy & Resources Committee** meeting held on 11th January 2021 - adoption proposed by Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Sanger and **approved**.

684.2 **Planning Committee** meetings held on 14th December 2020 and 11th January 2021 - adoption proposed by Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Jessop, and **approved**.

685 **Full Council Meeting Minutes** – On the proposition of Cllr Button, seconded Cllr Goffey (1 abstention) amendment of Min Ref 632.2 of the minutes of 25th January 2021 were **RESOLVED** to be amended to read as follows: "...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..."

(Cllr Jessop left the meeting)

The minutes of the Town Council meetings held on 9th November 2020 and 25th January 2021 including the amendment were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded by Cllr Ireland.

(A member of the public arrived, and Cllr Jessop re-joined the meeting)

686 **CCTV** – Cllr Leech reported that all local agreements were in place and discussions were ongoing with the monitoring hub to get the BT connection and policies completed. Cllr Leech and the Clerk were due to give a presentation to

Okehampton United Charity in relation to the grant application. £300 in grants had been awarded from WDBC members.

(Cllr Holt arrived)

- 687 **Fairplace Garden** – Cllr Leech presented his proposal for changes in this area to add a statue and to the surrounding fencing advising that he would like to ask the community for their thoughts and seek funding.

On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Wood (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to refer the proposal to the Parks Committee for a fuller debate, recommendations to be made to full Council.

Clerk

- 688 **Placemaking** – On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Goffey it was **RESOLVED** not to use the previously created task and finish group (Min Ref 495) but to create a new Placemaking Working Group the membership of which would consist of Cllrs Abbots, Button, Leech, Matravers and Travers.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Wood, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the draft terms of reference including amendment to membership.

Clerk

- 689 **Restoring Your Railway: Ideas Fund Round 3** – On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Leech (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to support the project by way of letter and the contribution of £300 towards the costs from the Rail Resilience budget.

Clerk/
Ass.
Clerk

690 **Policies and Documents** –

- 690.1 On the proposition of Cllr Jessop, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the following policies and documents as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee:

- Cemetery Rules and Regulations
- Cemetery Brochure
- Cemetery Schedule of Fees and Charges
- Cemetery Memorial Management Policy
- Cemetery General Risk Assessment
- Health and Safety Policy
- Lone Working Policy

(A member of the public left the meeting)

- 690.2 On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Travers it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Grave Digging Policy and Procedures as recommended by the Cemetery working group subject to agreed amendments.

- 690.3 On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Goffey, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the revocation of the Exclusive Rights of Burial Policy from 31st March 2021, currently used for the reservation of plots for future burials only, as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee.

(Cllr Button left the meeting)

- 690.4 On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Matravers, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the extension of the COVID19 Grant Policy for the 2021/22 financial year as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee.

691 **Management Agreement** – On the proposition of Cllr Yelland who reported that the Trustees had met a few days previously with a VAT Expert, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to defer the item of business.

692 **The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020** - On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Jessop, it was **RESOLVED** to lobby Rt Hon Robert Jenrick, copying in the local MP, requesting an extension of the legislation permitting the virtual meetings of local councils past the expiration date of 6th May 2021.

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.

693 **Meeting Schedule Amendment** – On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to:

- approve amendments to scheduled meeting dates to enable the Mayor Choosing/Annual Council Meeting to be held virtually prior to the expiration of legislation permitting virtual meetings of local councils,
- to swap the dates of the Annual Town Assembly and Full Council in March subject to the attendance of Network Rail.

Clerk

694 **Commonwealth Day, 8th March 2021** - On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** that the Mayor, in conjunction with the Clerk, issue a press release to include the statement that would normally be read out in place of the usual event.

Mayor/
Clerk

695 **Annual Town Assembly and Report for 2020/21** –

695.1 On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the format of the Assembly and it was noted that Network Rail would be giving a presentation on the reopening of the Okehampton to Exeter passenger rail service.

695.2 On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded by Cllr Jessop it was **RESOLVED** to approve the annual report.

Clerk

696 **Finances** – The following Councillors declared personal interests being members of the relevant groups and abstained from voting on the related payments:

- Cllr Marsh – Duke of Edinburgh, Okement Rivers Improvement Group, Archive Group, Okehampton United Charity
- Cllr Ireland - Okehampton United Charity, Archive Group
- Cllr Holt – Archive Group
- Cllr Wood - Okement Rivers Improvement Group
- Cllr Yelland - Okehampton United Charity

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded by Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to the approve schedule of payments, those who had declared an interest abstaining from the related payment.

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

697.1 **Climate Change** – No meeting had been held.

697.2 **COVID19 Recovery** – No meeting had been held.

- 697.3 **Charter Hall Roof Replacement** – Cllr Goffey reported that she had met with the Architect and an Engineer to review the ventilation system the previous week. A drone survey of the roof had also been undertaken.
- 698 **Reports on Current Activities by Community Groups with Town Council Representation** -
- 698.1 **Neighbourhood Plan Group** – Cllr Goffey reported that she had been working on the draft plan and the consultant had suggested that it could be ready for S.14 consultation by April. Cllr Goffey had written part of the plan; Cllr Leech had provided maps and Cllr Wood of Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council had provided photos.
- 699 **Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items** -
- 699.1 **Okehampton Matters** – There had been no further meeting to report upon, the next was on 28th April.
- 699.2 **Okehampton COVID19 Support Group** – No meeting had been held.
- 699.3 **Devon Climate Emergency Group** – Cllr Goffey had begun a course at Exeter University and was awaiting to hear directly from the group. On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** that future reports would be made to the Property Committee.
- 699.4 **Rural Market Town Group** – Meeting invitations had been received for the Members and for a Clerk's group. On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** that future reports would be made to the Planning Committee.

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 Ireland.

- 700 **Cemetery Liability** - On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Jessop it was **RESOLVED** to approve the draft agreement and for it to be sent to the relevant party.
- 701 **Town Centre Consultation** – (Cllr Marsh left during this item of business)
- Correspondence from DCC in relation to the consultation was considered. On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Goffey it was **RESOLVED** that the Council would continue to liaise with Highways requesting improvements particularly in relation to the reinstatement of the rail link to Exeter and congestion in and around the town centre.

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

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.20pm

Councillor Mrs J Yelland
Mayor