

St James Street proposals for debate 2021:

Looking back, the original Destination Okehampton Group was set up to promote Okehampton and to try to make it look better by having regular walks around the town to see if we could influence shop and building owners to spruce up their properties. Our Town Council Carpark was renovated on the back of this.

One of the initiatives of the group was to try to promote the town as a destination for those wanting to walk on Dartmoor. We called this 'Okehampton the Gateway to Dartmoor'. Unfortunately this did not get very far, as it was overtaken by the railway issues. It is now time to resurrect it, not just here in the Chamber, but as part of the vision for Okehampton and the Neighbourhood Plan.

I am fully aware that the area around the St James Street toilets has been debated and a decision to make it a sensory area has been agreed, but a local resident has suggested that we could also use this area to help promote access to the Moor in the same way as Jim the Walker does, but he is mainly hidden from view to most visitors.

The idea is to remove the newly planted central tree and plant it in the land further down St James Street, and replace it with a statue of some walkers pointing towards Dartmoor. The photo attached to this presentation is just an idea of what it could be. Colours, scale etc. can all be agreed at a later date.

The other thing regarding this area is the awful metal fencing that was introduced by WDBC, which has always looked out of place and is certainly not in keeping with any of the other fences nearby.. I understand that granite posts were to have been installed, but something went wrong and the fences came instead. It would now be a good time to put this right, and take this opportunity to remove the metal fences and carry out what was originally intended. The other Photograph shows what this could look like.

This presentation is for debate only, and to see if the OTC agrees with this in principle. If it does, then a separate group could be set up (maybe resurrect Destination Okehampton, but with residents as well) to take forward a full design and a case that can go out for funding.

Comments please?