



Okehampton Town Council



Okehampton Town Council  
Town Hall  
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[www.okehampton.gov.uk](http://www.okehampton.gov.uk)

## NEWSLETTER – November/December 2021

Sign up to receive the newsletters electronically by visiting the Council's [website](http://www.okehampton.gov.uk).

### Councillor Paul Jessop

Councillor Paul Jessop joined the Council in 2019. He has lived in the area for almost ten years after being moved to Devon by his employer, Royal Mail, and is very happy to discover what a lovely county Devon is.

Councillor Jessop has always enjoyed being involved with local activities, such as the MenSing choir, and regularly volunteers at the Dartmoor Folk Festival. Always willing to be involved in supporting local matters, since joining the Council Paul has sat on two committees, Planning and Parks, as well as being one of the trustees for Simmons Park, and volunteering his time on a number of working groups to look at the best ways for Okehampton Council to provide cost-effective services, such as much-needed IT upgrades or making sure the council always works towards being environmentally friendly.



Councillor Jessop started a smallholding just before the first Covid lockdown took place last year and suddenly found himself adding stock fencing, sty-building and a few other unexpected skills to his CV!

He is pleased to share the news that at the first two farrowings the happy arrival of 14 piglets took place. Mothers and babies all doing well.

### Reopening of the Dartmoor Line passenger rail service and 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations

The Mayor of Okehampton was joined by the Mayor of West Devon at celebrations of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Okehampton's railway. On Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> October there was a ceremonial key presentation at the station as part of the events organised by OkeRail.



Anniversary celebrations were quickly followed on 12<sup>th</sup> October with an announcement by Network Rail of the reopening date of the service between Okehampton and Exeter on 20<sup>th</sup> November.

### Civic Service

On Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September the annual Mayor's Civic Service was held in Fairplace Church. This was a scaled back event without the usual procession led by Okehampton Excelsior Silver Band.



The collection was divided between Fairplace Church and the Mayor's Charity, Dream A-Way, each receiving £71.12.

## Council Finances and Audit Reports

Okehampton Town Council is audited twice yearly by an Internal Auditor, someone appointed by the Council who is independent, impartial and competent, and who has a good knowledge of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), and an External Auditor.

Mrs James, the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer says *“I am pleased to be able to report to you that the External Auditor’s Report and Certificate for the 2020/21 financial year was returned to the Council in September with no recommendations or comments made. An interim audit was carried out by the Internal Auditor on 13<sup>th</sup> October when again no issues were raised with the exception of a comment about the Charitable Trust which is already known and being addressed. Audit reports are available on the [website](#) and from the office.”*

Budget Workshops for the Councillors were hosted by the Clerk and Assistant Clerk during September in preparation for the 2022/23 budget and precept setting process. Each of the Committees who are responsible for a budget (Policy & Resources, Parks and Property) will be reviewing their budgets at meetings during November and December. Their recommendations will be considered by Full Council on 20<sup>th</sup> December and a final decision will be made at the January meeting. Once the budget has been set the precept, which is the difference between expected income and expenditure and collected by WDBC as part of the Council Tax, will be set.

## Remembrance Parade and Service

Rev Cook will be hosting an external service around the Memorial in the Churchyard of All Saints Church at 11am on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November.

Space will be limited and there will be a scaled back Parade to the Church from Fore Street which will consist of representatives from each group and organisation.

There will be a rolling road closure between the town centre and Church before and after the service to accommodate the Parade.



The last Remembrance Parade was in 2019 when Cllr Yelland was the Mayor.

## Clapps Wood – Ash Dieback

Work to fell the trees infected with ash dieback is planned to commence in November, date to be confirmed. It is the intention of the Council to replant the woodland and a scheme is being drawn up.

Remaining trees, which will suddenly find themselves without the shelter they previously had, will be regularly checked for stability meaning that some may need to be pruned or felled for safety purposes.

## Looking for somewhere to hold your ceremony or award event?

Why not think about booking the Council Chamber which has been improved with the addition of plants, and chair covers to enhance the setting. A table covering is being made to fit and will complete the enhancements.

Ribbons for the chairs are available in blue as shown or burgundy, or we can arrange for your own to be used for no additional charge.



## Council Cemetery Memorial Inspection

Okehampton Town Council staff undertook a routine inspection of the memorial stones in August to ensure that the Cemetery is a safe place for the public to visit and staff to work.

One headstone was identified as needing attention, and the relatives of the late Christine McKenna are requested to contact the Council.

For further information or if you have any concerns, please contact the office.

## Carnival

A message from the Mayor, Cllr Bob Tolley,

*"I would just like to thank Karen and all of the Carnival*

*Committee for organising and executing a first-class carnival this year under difficult circumstances.*



*I would also like to thank those participating, both young and old, for dressing up and getting involved, and all those organisations that facilitated it's smooth and safe transition through their stewarding and traffic control.*

*Jill and I, during both processions, were delighted to see so many people with smiling faces. During the course of the evening procession, aside from hearing young voices saying, 'Its Father Christmas' or 'Is he a King', the thing we heard the most was the laughing voices on happy faces of cheerful people, enjoying their communities' traditional activities, celebrations and silly antics.*

*It was great to see some normality again. So, to the committees, participants, stewards, spectators and Okehampton, well done.*

*Bob & Jill Tolley"*

## Rainbows and Brownies visit the Town Hall

In October the Mayor hosted the Rainbows and Brownies who were working towards their Citizenship Badge and presented Promise Badges to new recruits.

## Do you know which Council does what and who to report issues or concerns to?

**Not sure - don't worry you are not alone!**

WDBC have produced a handy guide, a copy of which can be collected from the Town Hall.

The Town Council provides services including:

- Public Toilets at Fairplace and Market Street
- Simmons Park, including litter and dog waste bins, the play area, meadow, woodland, ponds and carpark
- Provides some of the litter/dog waste bins and benches throughout the town
- Clapps Wood, Skate Park and BMX Track
- Cemetery at All Saints Church
- Sensory garden at Fairplace
- Seating area behind Lidl
- West Bridge verge wildflowers and seating
- CCTV system in the town and park
- Charter Hall and Grade II listed Town Hall

## Christmas in Okehampton

### Christmas Lights

The Town Council have agreed to work with Everything Okehampton to ensure the ongoing provision of the fabulous Christmas lights that have been provided by the group since the closure of the Chamber of Trade a few years ago.

New lights are being purchased by the Town Council at a cost in excess of £23,000, to replace those that have reached the end of their useful life. Everything Okehampton, who have been raising funds for these, will be gifting the money to the Council to meet the cost, and will be working with the Council to achieve continuation of the lights for the benefit of the town and those who have donated towards the cost.

### Mayors' Carols on Edwardian Evening

Come and join the Mayor at 7pm on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> December outside of St James' Chapel for Carols.



### Christmas Trails

Free trail sheets based on Carols, 'The Holly and the Ivy' and 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' will be available in early December from the Town Hall and [website](#). There will be a small prize for those completed correctly and returned to the Town Hall by 20<sup>th</sup> December.

## Council Grants Awarded

The Council has a budget of £37,358 this year for the award of grants supporting community organisations and groups for the benefit of the residents of Okehampton. Contact the office for details or find them on the [website](#):

The following grants were awarded in September and October:

- Okehampton District Community Transport Group - £1,000 to enable the group to continue without increasing fees
- 2443 Okehampton Sqn RAF Air Cadets - £500 towards two flight simulators

## Coming Up...

9 <sup>th</sup> November	Friendly Circle (Charter Hall)
10 <sup>th</sup> November	Dixon Noon Valuation Day (Council Chamber)
14 <sup>th</sup> November	Remembrance Parade and Service
18 <sup>th</sup> November	Councillor Surgery (Council Chamber)
19 <sup>th</sup> November	Abba Tribute Band (Charter Hall)
20 <sup>th</sup> November	Rotary Coffee Morning (Charter Hall)
21 <sup>st</sup> November	Humming Birds (Charter Hall)
25 <sup>th</sup> November	NHS Blood Donation Session (Charter Hall)
27 <sup>th</sup> November	Inner Wheel Coffee Morning (Charter Hall)
1 <sup>st</sup> December	Dixon Noon Valuation Day (Council Chamber)
2 <sup>nd</sup> December	Edwardian Evening
2 <sup>nd</sup> December	PTFA Edwardian Evening (Charter Hall)
4 <sup>th</sup> December	Okehampton Primary School PTFA Santa's Breakfast (Charter Hall)
5 <sup>th</sup> December	Excelsior Silver Band Concert (Charter Hall)
7 <sup>th</sup> December	Friendly Circle (Charter Hall)
11 <sup>th</sup> December	Carnival Committee Coffee Morning (Charter Hall)
15-17 <sup>th</sup> December	Courtenay Players (Charter Hall)
18 <sup>th</sup> December	Lions Coffee Morning (Charter Hall)
18 <sup>th</sup> December	New Jersey Boys (Charter Hall)

**The office in the Town Hall will be closed from 4pm Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> December until 9.30am Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022.**

Messages, post and emails will be checked on working days over the holiday period.

'Free after 3pm' parking in Simmons Park on weekdays and all-day Saturdays throughout December

## Town Council Meeting Dates

### November

1 <sup>st</sup>	Extra Ordinary Full Council Meeting in the Council Chamber
8 <sup>th</sup>	Property Committee followed by the Planning Committee (applications only)
15 <sup>th</sup>	Policy & Resources Committee followed by Budget Meetings for all Committees
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Full Planning Committee
29 <sup>th</sup>	Full Council

### December

6 <sup>th</sup>	Policy & Resources Committee
13 <sup>th</sup>	Parks Committee
20 <sup>th</sup>	Full Council

Council meetings normally start at 7pm are currently being held in the Charter Hall and are occasionally subject to change. The [website](#) or noticeboard in the Victorian Arcade should be checked for up-to-date information.

## Contact Us

Emma James, Town Clerk  
[clerk@okehampton.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@okehampton.gov.uk)

Caroline Ellis, Assistant Town Clerk (Accounts)  
[accounts@okehampton.gov.uk](mailto:accounts@okehampton.gov.uk)

Abi Horn, Admin Officer and Mayor's Assistant (Bookings)  
[admin@okehampton.gov.uk](mailto:admin@okehampton.gov.uk)

James McGahey, Park-Keeper  
[parks@okehampton.gov.uk](mailto:parks@okehampton.gov.uk)

## Your Councillors

Cllr Bob Tolley (Town Mayor)  
Cllr Deborah Sanger (Deputy Mayor)

Cllr Terry Abbots	Cllr Greta Button
Cllr Jan Goffey	Cllr Carole Holt
Cllr Dr Michael Ireland	Cllr Paul Jessop
Cllr Tony Leech	Cllr Christine Marsh
Cllr Brendan Matravers	Cllr Debra Travers
Cllr Julie Yelland	Cllr Ann Wood

Details of how to contact individual Councillors can be obtained from the Office or website.