

**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 29th November 2021 at 7pm in the Charter Hall, Market Street, Okehampton**

Members Present: Councillor B Tolley (Mayor)
Councillor M Ireland (Chairman, Planning Committee)
Councillor D Sanger (Chairman, P&R Committee)
Councillor D Travers (Chairman, Parks Committee)
Councillor A Wood (Chairman, Property Committee)
Councillor T Abbots
Councillor G Button
Councillor J Goffey
Councillor C Holt
Councillor P Jessop
Councillor T Leech
Councillor C Marsh
Councillor B Matravers
Councillor J Yelland

In Attendance: Mrs E James (Town Clerk)
Councillor L Samuel (DCC)

Action

- 500 **Apologies for Absence** – Apologies tendered by Cllrs Davies and Ball (WDBC) were noted.
- 501 **Declarations of Interest** – None
- 502 **Deferment of Business** – None
- 503 **Members Questions** – None
- 504 **West Devon Borough Council** – Cllr Leech reported on items including the covid situation whereby the wearing of masks in shops and on public transport would become mandatory from 30th November. Letters had been sent to MP's requesting backing for fairer funding from the government including an increase of the Levelling Up fund, and in relation to the adult health and social care crisis, further assistance for the NHS and care homes. Second homes in relation to the housing crisis were being considered although it wasn't thought to be too big an issue within West Devon.
- 505 **Devon County Council** – Cllr Samuel commented on the successful reopening of the rail service between Okehampton and Exeter and congratulated OkeRail and others involved in the project. She requested that any related traffic issues be forwarded to her through the Clerk.
- Cllr Samuel advised, following an enquiry from the Clerk, that the seating area outside of the Plymouth Inn belonged to DCC who did not have a budget for its maintenance and would be happy for the Council to take over the area. The Clerk requested the relevant DCC contact details.
- 506 **Questions Arising from Members Reports** – Cllr Samuel was thanked for the comprehensive report that was forwarded prior to the meeting.
- 507 **Adoption of Minutes of Committees and Members' Questions arising Thereon** –
- 507.1 **Property Committee** meeting held on 2nd August 2021 - adoption proposed by Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Goffey and **approved**.

507.2 Policy & Resources Committee meetings held on 20th September and 11th October 2021 - adoption proposed by Cllr Sanger, seconded Cllr Ireland and **approved**.

207.3 Planning Committee meetings held on 6th and 13th September, 4th and 11th October and 8th November 2021 - adoption proposed by Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Jessop and **approved**.

208 Full Council Meeting Minutes – The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 25th October 2021 were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded by Cllr Yelland and signed by Cllr Tolley.

509 Rail Reinstatement, Traffic and Parking – It was noted that DCC had made an Experimental Amendment Order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 in relation to Station Road following the reopening of the rail station. Any comments in relation to the Order needed to be made to DCC by 27th April 2022.

New leaflets with the train timetable and bus service from 12th December 2021 were available.

510 CCTV – Cllr Leech reported that the cameras were up and running and BT Openreach were working on the connection to the monitoring hub.

511 2022/23 Budget – The Clerk reported that the Cemetery valuation for business rates had been received and been back dated to 2017.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Jessop (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to amend the Parks Budget to include anticipated income from Simmons Park Charity and expected expenditure for the cemetery business rates. Further review of all committee budgets to be undertaken at a later date in conjunction with the final budget and precept setting for the 2022/23 financial year.

Clerk

The Clerk advised that in view of increasing pandemic infection rates it may be prudent to bring forward the date at which the budget and precept would be set to earlier in January or as soon as possible after the Council Tax Base had been received from WDBC.

512 Okehampton & Hamlets Neighbourhood Plan Group –

512.1 It was noted that the Terms of Reference previously approved by the Town Council had been adopted by Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council

512.2 The Council noted that Cllr Leech had resigned from the group. No members came forward to fill the vacancy which would be revisited at the next meeting.

Clerk

Cllr Goffey requested to raise an item relating to this item of business within Part 2 later in the meeting.

513 Okehampton & Hamlets Community Archive Project – Cllr's Ireland and Marsh declared an interest being members of the group. Cllr Goffey declared an interest being involved on behalf of the Museum of Dartmoor Life.

The Clerk provided an update on progress which had focused on providing secure storage for the Archive Group's documentation and potentially securing a location for the permanent storage of the archive documentation. A meeting comprising of the Clerk's from Okehampton United Charity and the

Town and Hamlets Parish Council's to begin the drafting of a business plan was taking place in December.

On the proposition of Cllr Jessop, seconded Cllr Leech (3 abstentions) it was **RESOLVED** to support the Community Archive Group by providing storage space for the initial period of up to one year.

Clerk

514 **Policies and Documents** – On the proposition of Cllr Leech seconded Cllr Sanger it was **RESOLVED** to approve the following policies and documents as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee:

Clerk

- Absence Management Policy
- Bullying & Harassment Policy & Procedure
- Capability Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Expenses Policy (Staff)
- Grievance Policy
- Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policies
- Shared Parental Leave Policy
- Simmons Park and Kempley Meadows Management Plan
- Waste Management and Recycling Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

515 **Terms of Reference** – On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Holt it was **RESOLVED** to approve the following Terms of Reference:

Clerk

- Property Committee
- Parks Committee

516 **Finances** – Cllr Marsh declared an interest in the Christmas Lights being a member of Everything Okehampton.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Wood (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments.

Ass. Clerk

517 **Councillor Surgery** – It was commented that no members of the public had attended since the surgeries recommenced in the spring, but that it made Councillors available for the public to meet during the week without having to make an appointment. Councillors were often present at Coffee Mornings held by others in the Charter Hall.

On the proposition of Cllr Button, seconded Cllr Matravers it was **RESOLVED** to trial a booking system from January in conjunction with holding Saturday Coffee Mornings when the Charter Hall was available. To be reviewed in six months.

Clerk

518 **Okehampton Primary School**

518.1 Cllr's Matravers and Travers reported they had recently attended a Citizens Coffee morning hosted by the school which focused on environmental and community issues.

518.2 On the proposition of Cllr Travers, seconded Cllr Goffey it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Travers as Council representative to attend School Council meetings and other events, another Member to attend in the event she was unavailable.

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Goffey, it was **RESOLVED** that reports would be made to full Council.

(Cllr Abbots left the meeting)

Clerk

- 519 **Council Meetings** - On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Leech (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to continue to hold Council meetings in the Charter Hall, to be reviewed in April 2022.
- 520 **Complaints** – The Clerk reported that the Monitoring Officer at WDBC had recently received and investigated complaints about two Town Councillors. Both Councillors had been found not to have breached the Code of Conduct.
- 521 **Civic Diary Report** – The events attended by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor during October were noted.
- 522 **Reports of Council Working/Task & Finish Groups -**
- 522.1 **Climate Change** – Cllr Goffey reported that the group had not met recently. She had attended a meeting of the Devon Donut collective and had been tasked with investigating compost making.
- 522.2 **Charter Hall Roof Replacement** – Further investigation work had been undertaken and a structural engineer's report received which indicated the loading that could be put on the roof structure in relation to potential changes to the ventilation system and provision of a lightweight catwalk in the ceiling void.
- 522.3 **Placemaking Working Group** – Cllr Matravers reported that WDBC Officers had been gathering informal feedback from businesses owners about the feasibility of setting up a Business Improvement District or Chamber of Trade and would be reporting to the Council at a later date.
- 522.4 **Memorandum of Understanding Task & Finish Group** – Initial meeting to be arranged.
- 523 **Reports on Current Activities by Community Groups with Town Council Representation -**
- 523.1 **Neighbourhood Plan Group** – Cllr Button had attended the last meeting and reported that work on the plan was progressing and that she had been assigned some tasks relating to affordable homes.
- 524 **Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items -**
- 524.1 **Okehampton Matters** – Cllrs Goffey and Wood were attending a meeting the following week. Cllr Goffey had attended a police advocate meeting at Police Headquarters, Middlemoor.
- 524.2 **Okehampton COVID19 Support Group** – Cllr Button reported that need was increasing, and a meeting was being held the following day. A particular issue was the obtaining of emergency prescriptions from pharmacies and additional volunteers were needed to assist with prescription collection.
- 524.3 **Okehampton & Hamlets Community Archive Project** – A report had been provided earlier in the meeting.

(Cllr Samuel had left the meeting prior to this point)

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 Ireland, seconded by Cllr Sanger.

525 **Neighbourhood Plan** – Cllr Goffey informed the Council of the reasons she had not attended recent meetings of the group but would again be participating.

526 **Urgent Items** –

526.1 The Clerk reported that an accident involving a member of staff had occurred whilst at work on 24th November.

526.2 It was commented there had been some negative feedback on social media from users of the rail service that shops were not open until later in the day or, in some cases, not at all on a Monday. The lack of formal business forum meant that there was no way of drawing the businesses together. This was a fantastic opportunity for local businesses, the majority of which were unique, and they needed to seize the opportunity.

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Sanger it was **RESOLVED** to move out of Part 2.

The meeting was closed at 8.37pm

Councillor Tolley
Mayor