

**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 27th September 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

In Attendance: Mrs E James (Town Clerk)
Cllr Samuel (DCC)
2 Members of the Public

Action

300 **Apologies for Absence** – On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Holt, it was **RESOLVED** to approve apologies tendered by Cllr Yelland due to illness.

Apologies tendered by Cllr Davies, WDBC, were noted.

301 **Declarations of Interest** - Cllr Marsh declared a personal interest in relation to Min Ref 311.

302 **Deferment of Business** – A member of the public addressed the Council and advised that he was planning to start a new town bus service which would tie in with the rail timetable and schools. The service could expand to outlying areas in time.

303 **Members Questions** – None.

304 **West Devon Borough Council** – Cllr Leech reported that the proposed three weekly household waste collection trial had ceased. No final decision about whether it would be taken forward permanently had been made as the Government were reviewing waste collection policies. Current issues with missed waste collections were being caused by driver shortages and covid related problems.

The West Devon Plan consultation had concluded and was being considered by WDBC on 28th September. Climate change and biodiversity were also due to be considered.

Parklands and Meadowlands Leisure Centres were both open.

305 **Devon County Council** – Cllr Samuel thanked the Mayor for the invitation to the Civic Service. A letter from the Council to DCC about highways issues in the town was addressed; including inappropriate parking in Fore Street by delivery drivers and relining. Problems could be reported online. Road conditions around the town were mainly good and all had regular safety inspections. A written response would be sent to the Clerk.

DCC's Cabinet would be looking to secure further funding for the new Special School for which planning permission had been granted. Due to increased costs the project had been delayed.

306 Questions Arising from Members Reports – None

307 Adoption of Minutes of Committees and Members' Questions arising Thereon –

307.1 **Policy & Resources Committee** meetings held on 12th July and 16th August 2021 - adoption proposed by Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Goffey and **approved**.

307.2 **Planning Committee** meetings held on 7th June, 12th July, 2nd and 9th August 2021 - adoption proposed by Cllr Abbots, seconded Cllr Jessop and **approved**.

308 Full Council Meeting Minutes – The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 23rd August 2021 were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded by Cllr Ireland and signed by Cllr Tolley.

309 Rail Reinstatement, Traffic and Parking – A Cllr had received a letter in relation to work due to be undertaken on Station Road at the end of October, which was due to commence on the weekly waste collection day.

310 CCTV – The cameras had all been installed and were operational, with minor alterations required to be undertaken.

311 Future of the Christmas Lights – Cllr Marsh reported that Everything Okehampton had taken over the provision of Christmas Lights when the Chamber of Trade had ceased. The lights need to be replaced and the small Christmas trees throughout the town centre would not be provided in 2021 due to insurance and health and safety implications. There would be a large Christmas tree outside St James' Church. The total cost quoted for the replacement of the lights was a minimum of £23,545 + VAT. The Council was requested to consider purchasing the lights, the cost of which could be reclaimed through grants.

On the proposition of Cllr Travers, seconded Cllr Wood, it was **RESOLVED** to defer the proposal to the Policy & Resources Committee for consideration on receipt of a written report and quotations.

Clerk

312 Afghan Refugees – Cllr Leech reported that WDBC did not have any available housing and would review the situation in the Autumn. Cllr Samuel, DCC, was requested to ascertain the situation in Devon.

Clerk

313 Okehampton & Hamlets Neighbourhood Plan Group –

313.1 A letter from Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council in relation to the Terms of Reference were considered.

On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Ireland (2 abstentions), it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerks of both Councils be involved as minute takers, and act as the 'gatekeepers' and liaison for communication with outside bodies and professionals. The Town Clerk would only take minutes or act as the Gatekeeper during normal working hours. It was noted that this would incur additional costs for the clerking time and consideration as to how costs would be covered would need additional consideration.

Clerk

On the proposition of Cllr Button, seconded Cllr Jessop (2 abstentions), it was **RESOLVED** to nominate Cllr Button as a member of the Group.

Clerk

The inclusion of a target completion date of 31 st March 2022 was agreed .	
313.2 On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Ireland (1 against), it was RESOLVED that Cllr Tolley and the Clerk respond to the letter dated 12 th September from the Chairman of the Group.	Cllr Tolley/ Clerk
313.3 On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Goffey, it was RESOLVED to approve the employment of the Consultant for an additional day's work at the cost of approximately £500 subject to a review of the Draft Plan and agreement of the group prior to it being forwarded to the Consultant.	Clerk
313.4 There were no further updates provided.	
314 Public Toilets -	
314.1 The Committee noted that Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council had agreed to consider funding towards the running of the public toilets as part of their 2022/23 budget setting process.	
314.2 It was noted that WDBC had not responded to the Councils agreement to renew the lease for the Market Street toilets and that the cleaning contract extension until 31 st March 2022 had been agreed.	
315 Moor Otter - On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Goffey, it was RESOLVED to nominate Cllr Tolley to attend the celebration event on 11 th October 2021.	
316 Okehampton Town and Hamlets Council's Informal Meetings – It was noted that Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council had agreed to informal meetings between the Mayor/Chairman of the Councils and the Clerks.	Clerk
317 Zip Wire – At the request of two Councillors in accordance with Standing Orders the previous decision not to apply to Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council for a grant was reconsidered, it having been ascertained that the maximum amount had been increased.	
On the proposition of Cllr Abbots, seconded Cllr Wood, it was RESOLVED to apply for a grant of £1,000 from Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council towards the replacement of the zip wire.	Clerk
318 Car Park Agreement - At the request of two Councillors in accordance with Standing Orders, and on the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was RESOLVED to revisit the proposed terms of the agreement following comments received from Okehampton College after investigation by the Clerk.	Clerk
319 Memorandum of Understanding - On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was RESOLVED to create an internal Task & Finish Group to explore the option of seeking a Memorandum of Understanding with Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council to promote collaborative working. The members of the group being Cllr's Abbots, Marsh, Matravers, Travers and Wood.	Clerk
(2 members of the public left the meeting)	
320 External Audit Report and Certificate -	
320.1 It was noted that the External Audit Report and Certificate had been returned with no issues or comments raised.	

- 320.2** On the proposition of Cllr Jessop, seconded Cllr Wood, it was **RESOLVED** that the Notice of Conclusion of Audit be displayed on the Council noticeboards for one month from the date of publication, 8th September 2021. Clerk
- 321** **Finances** –
- 321.1** On the proposition of Cllr Travers, seconded Cllr Jessop it was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments.
- 321.2** Councillors agreed that the budget workshops had been useful and informative and that they should continue to be held annually. Clerk
- 322** **Policies and Documents** - On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to approve the following policies and documents as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee: Clerk
- Equal Opportunities Policy
 - Honorary Freeman (Freewoman) Policy
 - Memorial Management Policy
 - Recruitment Policy
 - Safeguarding Policy
 - Standing Orders
 - Wood/Logs Policy

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

- 323** **Terms of Reference** -
- 323.1** On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Holt it was **RESOLVED** to approve the following Terms of Reference as recommended by the Policy & Resources and Planning Committees: Clerk
- Policy & Resources Committee
 - Personnel Sub-Committee
 - Planning Committee
- 323.2** On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Marsh it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Terms of Reference for the Emergency Committee incorporating an amendment. Clerk
- (A member of the public left the meeting)
- 324** **Committee Membership** -
- 324.1** On the proposition of Cllr Jessop, seconded Cllr Matravers (2 abstentions) it was **RESOLVED** to agree the following changes: Clerk
- Cllr Leech moved from the Planning Committee to the Policy & Resources Committee
 - Cllr Goffey moved from the Policy & Resources committee to the Planning Committee.
- 324.2** On the proposition of Cllr Travers, seconded Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Jessop Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee. Clerk
- 325** **Civic Diary Report** – The events attended by the Mayor in August were noted.
- 326** **Events** –
- 326.1** **OkeRail 150th Anniversary Celebrations** – It was noted that events were taking place on 2nd and 3rd October 2021. The Clerk would forward details. Clerk

- 326.2 Remembrance Parade and Service** – Sunday 14th November 2021. On the proposition of Cllr Jessop, seconded Cllr Sanger (6 abstentions) it was **RESOLVED** that a small procession take place incorporating representatives from each group/organisation to enable social distancing in line with the invitation list for the recent Civic Service. It was noted that arrangements for the event had fallen to the Town Council.
- 326.3 Edwardian Evening** – Thursday 2nd December 2021 – The Clerk confirmed that the Mayors Carols would take place at 7pm by St James' Church, subject to any covid restrictions or guidance.
- 327 Council Meeting Location** - On the proposition of Cllr Sanger, seconded Cllr Ireland (1 against) it was **RESOLVED** to continue to hold Council meetings in the Charter Hall and that this be reviewed at the next meeting of full Council.
- 328 Reports of Council Working/Task & Finish Groups -**
- 328.1 Climate Change** – Cllr Goffey reported that a Great Big Green Week Coffee Morning had been held by others in the Charter Hall on 25th September.
- 328.2 Charter Hall Roof Replacement** – The Clerk reported that investigation work had been undertaken and that a meeting with the project manager was being arranged.
- 328.3 Placemaking Working Group** – Cllr Abbots reported that at the last meeting two other Officers from WDBC had been brought in to assist with the project. It was noted that the WDBC Officer had requested £20,000 of funding from WDBC to assist and that they were working towards a consultation with the business community.
- 328.4 Archive Working Group** – The Clerk reported that the initial meeting was being held in October.
- 329 Reports on Current Activities by Community Groups with Town Council Representation -**
- 329.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group** – Discussed earlier in the meeting
- 330 Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items -**
- 330.1 Okehampton Matters** – Cllr Leech reported that the new WDBC Officer would be restarting the group.
- Cllr Goffey had received an invitation to attend a Police Advocate meeting in October.
- 330.2 Okehampton COVID19 Support Group** – Cllr Button advised the group was still operating and undertaking community work as well as covid related matters.
- 331 Urgent Item** – The Clerk reported that DCC had released the report from the consultation undertaken last autumn which had been circulated earlier that day.

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 Jessop, seconded by Cllr Abbots.

- 332 Okehampton & Hamlets Neighbourhood Plan Group** – The Clerk raised concerns about emails she had received from members of the group. On

the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Jessop (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to support the Clerk's decision not to undertake work for the group outside of her normal working hours and agreed that the letter from the Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council would go some way to alleviating the issues previously raised within Part 2.

Clerk

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Abbots it was **RESOLVED** to move out of Part 2 and ratify decisions made therein.

The meeting was closed at 9.45pm.

Councillor Tolley
Mayor