

**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on  
Monday 25<sup>th</sup> October 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 T Leech  
Councillor C Marsh  
Councillor B Matravers  
Councillor J Yelland

**In Attendance:** Mrs E James (Town Clerk)  
Cllr Davies (WDBC)

**Action**

- 401 Apologies for Absence** – Apologies tendered by Cllr Jessop for personal reasons were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Matravers.
- 402 Declarations of Interest** – None
- 403 Deferment of Business** – None
- 404 Members Questions** – None
- 405 West Devon Borough Council** – Cllr Davies reported that missed waste collections were related to covid and the shortage of lorry drivers. The main focus was black bag waste collection. Each WDBC Cllr had a Locality Budget of £500, WDBC also had community grants available. The Audit Committee had reported that interest in the SeaMoore lotto had decreased. The 20-year Plan for West Devon had been adopted and the Bridestowe & Sourton Neighbourhood Plan had been made and accepted.
- Cllr Yelland had met with an MP and discussed the Levelling Up Fund bid for the Parkway Station and second home ownership. The MP would take up both issues with the relevant ministers.  
Information about the development of Parcel 4A and the variation planning application in relation to S106 and affordable housing had been considered at a meeting of WDBC's Planning and Development Committee.
- Cllr Leech advised that WDBC had declared a housing crisis and were looking at how they could alleviate some of the issues.  
Being the health and wellbeing lead for WDBC Cllr Leech reported that Covid infection rates in West Devon were increasing and that Okehampton was a hot spot. Special measures were being made available and an Officer was working closely with local schools to help reduce the number of cases.  
Cllr Leech had met with leaders and Chief Executive Officers of Councils in the Southwest and reported concerns that had been raised about adult social care and the NHS.
- 406 Devon County Council** – Apologies from Cllr Lois (DCC) were noted.

407 **Questions Arising from Members Reports** – None

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

408.1 **Parks Committee** meetings held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April and 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021 - adoption proposed by Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Holt and **approved**.

409 **Full Council Meeting Minutes** – The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021 were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded by Cllr Yelland and signed by Cllr Tolley.

410 **Rail Reinstatement, Traffic and Parking** – The Council noted that the passenger service would be commencing on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and a copy of the initial timetable was provided by Cllr Ireland.

411 **Afghan Refugees** – No update was available.

412 **CCTV** – Cllr Leech reported that the fixed cameras were working, and the mobile camera currently situated behind Lidl was about to be connected. BT had commenced the fibre cable connection work at the Town Hall, a completion date was awaited. Electricity connection to the column in the Skate Park was more complicated but was being investigated. Phase 2 would be progressed when DCC had replaced lighting columns.

Cllr Travers reported that a member of the public had advised the CCTV had improved their quality of life since installation by reducing incidents of antisocial behaviour. The Clerk read an email from local Police Officers that corroborated the comment.

413 **Simmons Homes Trustee Nomination** – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Yelland a motion to appoint Cllr Abbots was not carried.

On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Matravers as Trustee to Simmons Homes for a term of 4 years.

Clerk

414 **Okehampton & Hamlets Neighbourhood Plan Group** – The Clerk advised that revised Terms of Reference for consideration had not been received.

Clerk

415 **DCC Town Centre Traffic Consultation 2020** – It was suggested that the Council continue lobbying DCC for the provision of a relief road. It was noted that the traffic situation needed consideration and action taken prior to the commencement of the rail service. It was noted that the town had been gridlocked the previous week due to roadworks in East Street.

On proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillors pass comments in relation to the traffic situation and the consultation report to Cllr Goffey who would raise them at the next HATOC meeting.

Councillors

416 **Zip Wire Replacement** – The Clerk advised that the result of the application to Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council was awaited and that a further grant application had been made to WDBC for assistance with the cost of the replacement equipment.

On the proposition of Cllr Travers, seconded Cllr Wood, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the additional cost of the replacement zip wire at the total cost of £16,061.62.

Clerk

- 417 **Interim Internal Audit Report** – A copy of the report was provided to all Councillors. It was noted that the only comment raised related to the Charity, the issues was already known and in the process of being resolved.
- 418 **Finances** - On the proposition of Cllr Matravers, seconded Cllr Holt it was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments.
- 419 **Okehampton Train Painting** – A painting of an Okehampton Train commissioned by Mr J Dean in celebration of the recent 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the start of the rail service and gifted to the Council was viewed by Councillors. The Council expressed their thanks and gratitude to Mr Dean for his thoughtful gift and requested that the Clerk to write to him. Clerk
- 420 **Cricket Field, Simmons Park** – Cllr Leech declared a personal interest, being a member of WDBC's Planning and Development Committee.
- The concerns of Okehampton Town Council's Planning Committee which included the perception that the field was not available for public use were noted.
- On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Goffey, Standing Orders were suspended to permit Cllr Yelland, Chairman of the Trustees of the Kempley Meadows and Cricket Field Charity, to speak.
- Cllr Yelland advised that she had declared an interest at WDBC and would not be taking part in planning application decision. The reasons for the Trustees decision to permit the erection of additional and higher fencing around the cricket field was explained. They included the need to safeguard the students and staff of Okehampton College, and in response to concerns raised by Ofsted and the Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust. The College had been requested to ensure the field was available out of school hours for general use.
- On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Wood, Standing Orders were reinstated.
- On the proposition of Cllr Travers, seconded Cllr Ireland (7 abstentions) it was **RESOLVED** to write to the Trustees outlining the concerns and requesting consideration be given to signage advising when the area was available for public use. Clerk
- 421 **Memorandum of Understanding Task & Finish Group** - On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Goffey it was **RESOLVED** to approve Cllr Yelland's appointment as an additional member of the group. Clerk
- 422 **Civic Diary Report** – The events attended by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor in September were noted.
- 423 **Christmas Office Opening Hours** – The public office opening hours were noted.
- 424 **Council Meeting Location** -
- 424.1 On the proposition of Cllr Matravers, seconded Cllr Ireland 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. Clerk
- 424.2 The Clerk advised that following consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Committee the meeting scheduled to take place on 1<sup>st</sup> November

2021 had been moved to 8<sup>th</sup> November due to a week-long booking of the Charter Hall.

The Clerk also brought to the attention of the Council that an extra ordinary meeting would be taking place on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021 in the Council Chamber to consider two urgent items of business.

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

**425.1 Climate Change** – Cllr Goffey reported that a meeting was being held the following week.

**425.2 Charter Hall Roof Replacement** – A meeting with the architect had taken place the previous week and an engineering company was considering options for the ventilation system. The Working Group was due to meet again later in the week.

**425.3 Placemaking Working Group** – The Clerk reported that she was waiting for a list of proposed meeting dates from the WDBC Officer.

**425.4 Okehampton and Hamlets Combined Archive Project Working Group** – The Clerk reported that an initial meeting with other potential interested groups and organisations had taken place. It would be a large project if it went ahead, for which grant funding would need to be sourced.

**425.5 Memorandum of Understanding Task & Finish Group** – Initial meeting to be arranged.

**426 Reports on Current Activities by Community Groups with Town Council Representation -**

**426.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group** – Cllr Button reported that she had attended the most recent meeting when feedback on the draft report had been considered and amendments agreed.

**427 Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items -**

**427.1 Okehampton Matters** – Cllrs Goffey and Wood were waiting for a meeting date.

**427.2 Okehampton COVID19 Support Group** – Cllr Button advised that despite an increase in the infection rate the group had not seen a large increase in requests for assistance.

**428 Urgent Item** – The Clerk reported that due to a last-minute situation only one Councillor had hosted the last Councillor Surgery. She reminded Councillors that for safeguarding reasons two members were required to host the surgeries. Volunteers to host the Surgery on 18<sup>th</sup> November were requested. Councillors

(Cllr Davies left the meeting)

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.

**429 FUTURE OF THE CHRISTMAS STREET LIGHT DECORATIONS – CLLR MARSH DECLARED A PERSONAL INTERESTING BEING A MEMBER OF EVERYTHING OKEHAMPTON.**

**429.1** Consideration was given to the previously circulated report and updated quotation. It was noted that only two quotations for the same specification had been able to be sourced. The future implication that all costs and responsibility for the lights may need to be borne by the Council, including those that Everything Okehampton had agreed to cover, was noted.

On the proposition of Cllr Abbots, seconded Cllr Wood (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to purchase the lights at the cost of £23,994.62, the cost of which would be covered by a donation from Everything Okehampton. The lights would be owned by the Council who would also need to ascertain appropriate insurance cover.

**429.2** On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Goffey (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** that the Policy & Resources Committee be delegated responsibility for the Christmas lights, including the holding of the budget. Clerk

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

The meeting was closed at 8.30pm

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**Councillor Tolley**  
**Mayor**