

**Minutes of Okehampton Town Council Meeting held on
Tuesday 3 June 2014 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton
at 7.00 pm**

Members Present: Councillor P Vachon (Town Mayor)
Councillor K Ball
Councillor T Cummings
Councillor M Davies
Councillor Mrs J Goffey
Councillor Dr M Ireland
Councillor A Leech
Councillor C Letchford
Councillor Mrs M McDonald
Councillor Mrs C Marsh
Councillor B Stephens
Councillor Mrs J Yelland

In Attendance: Mr P R Snell (Town Clerk)
Mr B Thompson (Head of Transport Co-ordination
Services, Devon County Council)

Before proceeding with business, prayers were offered by Councillor Reverend M Davies.

33. **Apologies for Absence** - Apologies for absence were presented on behalf of Councillor D Weekes and Councillor R Boyce.
34. **Deferment of Business** - Mr Bruce Thompson, who had agreed to attend the meeting to present Devon County Council's view on the railway alternatives currently being pursued, confirmed that Devon County Council (DCC) would be supportive of an option where there was demonstrable benefit to the local economy.

There were currently 5 upper-tier SW councils working together on a theme to overcome problems of resilience both east and west of Exeter.

Mr Thompson indicated that there was a need to build consensus across the South West in order to exploit the potential for connectivity in north and west Devon compared with the Dawlish avoidance option.

The strategy should await the Network Rail study currently in progress, build a good business case for the Northern Alternative Route, demonstrating the benefits for Torridge, North Cornwall and West Devon and drawing on prospects for good journey times together with connectivity with the Waterloo line.

The Mayor thanked Mr Thompson for his informative presentation and allowed time for questions and comment, which included the following points:

- the Northern route was intended to be an alternative, not a replacement;
- Okehampton and its hinterland as far as North Cornwall had no alternative to bus and car and journey times were increasing due to traffic density;
- Okehampton Town Council, through its own working group, had attracted more than 20 representatives from Councils across the area to put together its own

report on the Northern alternative rail solution. Again it was emphasised that the case should be business orientated, building consensus.

The Mayor again thanked Mr Thompson who left the meeting at 7.40 pm.

There were no other questions from members of the public present.

35. Members' Questions - None.

- 36. West Devon Borough Council -** Councillor Ball reported that 2 coach bays had been marked out in Mill Road Car Park and, in conjunction with a local coach company, manoeuvring trials had been carried out. Although there were no significant issues within the car park, turning in could present problems and the Borough Council had offered spaces within the car park to avoid any blocking at the Dartmoor Windows area. After feasibility studies had been completed, the proposed Traffic Order would present a 21-day consultation period. Councillor Ball reported that the response had been overwhelmingly positive.

Councillor Leech reported he had moved from the Borough's Communities Committee to the Resources Committee. Councillor Ball had remained on the Communities Committee.

- 37. Devon County Council -** Councillor Ball reported that various consultations were in process. The Youth Report would be going to cabinet shortly and the Library Consultation was under way. Substantial saving still had to be found and Councillor Ball encouraged all individuals to take part in the on-line consultations.

Councillor Mrs Goffey had attended the consultation on the library, where there were 4 members of the public present.

Councillor Mrs Marsh asked if there had been any determination of the land at the 'Opportunity Okehampton' site as there were businesses in the town wishing to relocate. Councillor Ball agreed to follow up this enquiry.

38. Adoption of Minutes of Committees and to Receive Questions from Members Thereon -

- 38.1 Policy and Resources Committee held on 14 April 2014 -** Adoption proposed by Councillor Letchford, seconded by Councillor Mrs Goffey and approved.

- 38.2 Parks Committee held on 14 April 2014 -** Adoption proposed by Councillor Mrs Marsh, seconded by Councillor Ireland and approved.

- 39. Full Council Meeting Minutes -** The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 6 May 2014 were received, signed and approved on the proposition of Councillor Vachon, seconded by Councillor Mrs Marsh with all in favour.

40. Matters Arising -

- 40.1 Investment of Funds** - The Clerk reported that the Policy and Resources Committee had continued to consider possibilities for deposit investment, but there were few opportunities open to corporates, the higher interest rates being available to personal account holders only. The search for opportunities continues and will be reported back through the Policy and Resources Committee.
- 41. Civic Diary Report** - The Town Mayor reported on his timetable of appointments over the preceding two weeks which included various coffee mornings, attendance at the Mayor Choosing at Barnstaple, attendances at Okehampton United Charities and Charities of Holditch meetings, and forthcoming presentation of the grant cheques to the Museum of Dartmoor Life and the Tourist Information Service.
- 42. Destination Okehampton** - Councillor Ireland summarised the recently compiled report, Option II, and a follow-up meeting held on Monday 2 June, which was attended by 24 persons, including representatives from parish and town councils in North Devon, North Cornwall and West Devon. It had been agreed at the meeting that Okehampton Town Council should be the lead Council in the project to develop the business case for Option II and to find consultant support. It was agreed that the report should be circulated to all Councillors and that a proposal for funding should come to the next available Council meeting.
- 43. West Devon Connect - 12 July 2014 in the Charter Hall** - The Clerk reminded Councillors of the annual event which will be attended by a number of West Devon agencies. Councillors Davies and Leech volunteered to staff the Town Council stall. Other Councillors would consider their availability.
- 44. Town Council Accounts for Year Ended 31 March 2014** - The Clerk reported that the accounts were awaiting internal audit report which would be available for a special meeting on 16 June 2014.
- 45. Chamber of Trade - Evening Events** - The Clerk reported that the Chamber of Trade had approached the Council for permission for street performers and retail licences or permits. In response, he had advised the Chamber that the Council would, as in the past, be supportive of the Chamber's initiative for evening events, but that the Town Council did not issue permits or street licences for performance or for trading. The Chamber had been advised to co-ordinate their activities in such a way as to ensure that any prospective retailers reported to them in advance.
- 46. Election of Representatives to Other Bodies -**
- 46.1 Devon Association of Local Councils - Larger Councils Sub-Committee** - Provision was made for one Councillor and the Town Clerk to attend these meetings. Councillor Davies volunteered and this was approved by all.
- 46.2 Dartmoor National Park Forum** - Councillor Mrs Marsh had attended the meeting the previous evening and reported that the Forum had received an update on the National Park Management Plan and on a project looking at the effect of the First

World War on families. She also volunteered to continue as the Council's representative on the Forum, and this was agreed by all.

- 46.3 Rural Sounding Board - Information from the Rural Services Network** - After discussion, it was agreed that Councillor Mrs Goffey and Councillor Leech would be the Council's representatives on this on-line Sounding Board.
- 47. New Electoral Arrangements for West Devon Borough Council** - The Council noted receipt of the draft recommendations and appreciated the challenge of creating wards with a population of 1,400. It was noted that, as the response to the original consultation had been made in conjunction with Okehampton Hamlets, a Working Party including Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council should be set up in order to consider a response to the draft recommendations. It was agreed that Councillor Leech would lead and co-ordinate a small Working Group to respond to the recommendations.
- 48. Council Publications** - It was noted that leaflets relevant to Charter Hall and Simmons Park were now in short supply and it was agreed to refer renewal of these publications to the Property Committee and to the Parks Committee respectively.
- 49. Members' Reports** -
- (i) Dementia Awareness - Councillor Mrs Goffey reported on a meeting that had taken place earlier in the day, with a focus on the Dementia Awareness Day scheduled for Friday 11 July at Charter Hall.
 - (ii) Northern Parishes Links Committee - Councillor Cummings reported that a meeting was scheduled for the following Thursday.
 - (iii) Okehampton Matters - Councillor Mrs McDonald reported that the Chamber of Trade had considered using a radio system, but this was not a favoured solution. Nothing further at present was happening with the town's CCTV proposals, although the Chamber had expressed an interest in reviewing this decision. Councillor Leech was taking this forward with the Chamber. Councillor Davies reported on the proposed closure of the police station office in connection with the public. There had been a number of reported problems with the telephone number 101, as this would in Okehampton be the only method of contacting the police other than by the emergency number or the website. It was reported that travellers at the Industrial Estate had been given notice to leave.
 - (iv) Okehampton Vision Steering Group - no meeting.
 - (v) West Devon/Okehampton Liaison Group - no meeting. Next meeting scheduled for mid July.

The meeting closed at 8.42 pm.

Councillor P Vachon
Town Mayor