

**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 31st January 2022 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 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: Cllr L Samuel (DCC)
8 Members of the Public
Mrs E James (Town Clerk)

Action

- 642** **Declarations of Interest** – Cllrs Yelland and Leech declared personal interests in Min Ref 657 being Members of WDBC.
Cllr Ireland declared a personal interest in Min Ref 646 and 652, being Chairman of OkeRail.
- 643** **Apologies for Absence** – Apologies tendered by Cllr Travers due to personal reasons were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Marsh.
Apologies tendered by Cllrs Ball and Davies (WDBC) were noted.
- 644** **Deferment of Business** – The Chairman of the Royal British Legion introduced himself and outlined his thoughts for the future and how the branch could work with the Council. A meeting with the Town Clerk to be arranged.
- 645** **Members Questions** – None
- 646** **Visiting Speaker** – A member of OkeRail presented suggestions to the Council about how the town could grasp the opportunity to increase footfall to the area that the reopening of the passenger rail service had brought.

(Cllr Button arrived)

Councillors commented on the proposal and thanks was given for the time and effort that had been put into the presentation.
- 647** **West Devon Borough Council** – Cllr Yelland reported on items including the following:
A meeting had been held between WDBC, DCC and government representatives from the Dept of Transport, Dept for Business, Energy & Industrial Society and Dept for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities. The aim of the meeting was for feedback to be given to WDBC as to why the bid to the Levelling Up Fund for the WD Transport Hub which would have provided funding for the Parkway Station had been successful. Further information would be circulated when available.

Works to the hedge of the Persimmon development on Exeter Road did not conform with the approved Landscape and Ecological Management Plan and was being investigated by the enforcement team.

Work was due to be undertaken to the planning portal on 4th February and it would be unavailable for a short period of time.

The administering and payment of the Hospitality and Leisure Grants was on track and WDBC had paid out £503,369 to date.

A Superlinks meeting had been held on 8th December and thoughts on the frequency of the Links meetings had been requested.

Devon Community Foundation, commissioned by the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner, were offering short term grants (between £1,000 - £10,000) for projects and initiatives raising awareness of drug use or diverting people from becoming involved in illegal drugs activity

Cllr Leech reported that he had been working with developers in relation to the blockage at Kellands Lane and was hopeful that in the spring there would be some development to report.

- 648** **Devon County Council** – Cllr Samuel’s written report had been circulated prior to the meeting. She further reported that DCC was undertaking budgeting work and some locality funding was available.

(Cllr Samuel left the meeting)

- 649** **Questions Arising from Members Reports** – None

- 650** **Adoption of Minutes of Committees and Members’ Questions arising Thereon** –

- 650.1** **Property Committee** meeting held on 6th December 2021 - adoption proposed by Cllr Holt, seconded Cllr Button and **approved**.

- 650.2** **Policy & Resources Committee** meeting held on 6th December 2021 - adoption proposed by Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Matravers and **approved**.

(3 members of the public left the meeting)

- 651** **Full Council Meeting Minutes** – The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 20th December 2021 were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Abbots, seconded by Cllr Ireland, and signed by Cllr Tolley.

- 652** **OkeRail Presentation** – It was noted that the Placemaking Working Group was working with WDBC to establish what support the local business community wanted or needed and how this could be achieved. A new Town Guide was in the process of being prepared for publication.

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** that the Placemaking WG progress the publication of the Town Guide, investigate the feasibility and development of suggestions including the provision of a litter bin between the station and the town, a defibrillator at the station, finger signposts directing visitors to the town and other places of interest.

(A member of the public left the meeting)

- 653** **CCTV** – Replacement of lighting columns by DCC was awaited. The issue of signal dropout in Simmons Park was thought to have been resolved.

Clerk

The Clerk reported that the connection to the monitoring hub had been completed the Okehampton end of the scheme and that a meeting was due to be held with the hub on 4th February 2022.

654 **NHS Ambulance Waiting Times** – Responses received following a letter of concern sent to Mel Stride MP were noted. It was commented that First Responder numbers in the area had decreased and that an ambulance based in Okehampton would help to reduce waiting times for those needing to use the service.

655 **Rural Housing Crises** – A proposal by Cllr Goffey was considered. On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to write to Mel Stride MP in support of the report from Tim Farron MP highlighting the local issues. Cllr Goffey to prepare the letter in conjunction with the Clerk.

Cllr Goffey/
Clerk

656 **Fore Street Resurfacing Work** – The Council noted that resurfacing work was proposed to take place in April/May and that it could include full or partial closure of Fore Street. The work included the proposed removal of the granite sets that edged the disabled/loading bays and the removal of the bricks defining the crossings by the traffic lights.

(A member of the public left the meeting)

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Ireland (1 abstention), it was **RESOLVED** to agree to the removal of the granite sets that edged the disabled/loading bays as they were in poor repair and a trip hazard.

Clerk

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Leech (1 against, 1 abstention), it was **RESOLVED** to agree to the removal of the brick crossings by the traffic lights, and request their replacement with anti-skid or other similar surfacing in order to rean the character of the town and prevent a large expanse of plan tarmac.

Clerk

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Matravers, it was **RESOLVED** to suggest that road closures during school holidays impacted heavily on businesses. To minimise the impact partial road closures be implemented instead of a full closure. Evening working was preferred for the same reason. Drains throughout Fore Street should be cleared as part of the resurfacing work.

Clerk

657 **Market Street Public Toilet Lease** – Cllrs Leech and Yelland declared personal interests being members of WDBC.

The Clerk reported that the outgoings referred to were in accordance with the existing lease and consisted of the utility and other costs that may be incurred for repairs and maintenance to the facility.

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Marsh (2 abstentions), it was **RESOLVED** to accept the 6 year lease without consulting a Solicitor as the conditions were the same as within the existing lease, and to approve the execution of the lease by use of the Council Seal.

Clerk

658 **Civility and Respect Project** - On the proposition of Cllr Jessop, seconded Cllr Wood, it was **RESOLVED** to support the project and adopt the Bullying and Harassment Statement as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee.

Clerk

659 Policies and Documents:

659.1 On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Goffey, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the following documents as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee:

- Asbestos Management Plan
- Dealing with the Press/Medial Policy
- Financial Regulations
- Financial Risk Assessment and Management Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Snow and Ice Management Policy
- Simmons Park Booking Form
- Simmons Park Terms and Conditions of Hire
- Simmons Park Hire Policy

Clerk

659.2 Cllr Wood declared a personal interest living within Okehampton Hamlets and being the spouse of Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council's Chairman.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Yelland (1 abstention), it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Terms of Reference for the Memorandum of Understanding Task & Finish Group.

Clerk

660 **Covid19 Signage** – Correspondence received from a member of the public requesting removal of covid signage throughout the town was considered. It was noted that infection rates in Devon were still rising and the danger from the pandemic was still present. The Council's responsibility was to keep residents and visitors safe, the case level in Okehampton remained high and was a fairly critical situation.

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

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to not to remove the covid signs and to reconsider the matter later in the Spring.

Clerk

661 **Public Space Protection Orders for Dog Control** – A response from Okehampton College to the proposals in relation to the playing field was considered. It was noted that there was no actual change from the existing regulations and that it was in line with WDBC's Order.

On the proposition of Cllr Jessop, seconded Cllr Wood, it was **RESOLVED** to respond in line with the above comments.

Clerk

662 **Finances** – On the proposition of Cllr Abbots, seconded Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments.

663 **Simmons Park Charity** – It was noted that the Simmons Park Charity and Kempley Meadows & Cricket Field Charity merger had been completed on the 1st November 2021 and was known as the Simmons Park Charity which had been incorporated.

664 **Asset Register** - On the proposition of Cllr Jessop, seconded Cllr Goffey it was **RESOLVED** to approve additions totalling £26,583.83, and disposals at £36,302, as listed on the previously circulated report.

Ass. Clerk/
Clerk

665 **Civic Dinner** - It was noted that Councillors were provided with complimentary tickets as they were required to attend to host the event. On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Goffey it was **RESOLVED** to approve the allocation of free tickets to the event as follows:

Town Councillors, the three Mace Bearers who had undertaken duties within Mayoral year and the Town Clerk who would be on duty, would receive a full complimentary ticket.

The Mace Bearer who had not undertaken any duties would receive a ticket at a discounted rate of 50%.

Clerk

(Cllr Marsh left the meeting)

- 666 Civic Diary Report** – The event that the Mayor had been due to attend in January had been cancelled. The Deputy Mayor had attended a Burns Night event.
- 667 Complaint** – The Clerk reported that she had been informed by WDBC's Monitoring Officer that a Code of Conduct Complaint against a Town Councillor had been received. The complaint had not been upheld.
- 668 Reports of Council Working/Task & Finish Groups -**
- 668.1 Climate Change** – Cllr Goffey reported that a meeting was due to be held and bamboo toilet paper was being investigated.
- 668.2 Charter Hall Roof Replacement** – Cllr Goffey advised that progress was being made and meetings were scheduled.
- 668.3 Placemaking Working Group** – The Clerk reported that WDBC Officers were consulting with the business community and would be reporting to full Council on 28th February 2022.
- 668.4 Memorandum of Understanding Task & Finish Group** – The first meeting had been held in January when the aim of the group had been considered and the draft Terms of Reference drawn up.
- 669 Reports on Current Activities by Community Groups with Town Council Representation -**
- 669.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group** – Recommendations for changes to the draft document had been made and was due to be further reviewed at the next meeting
- 670 Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items -**
- 670.1 Okehampton Matters** – Cllrs Goffey and Wood advised there had not been a meeting to report upon.
- 670.2 Okehampton COVID19 Support Group** – Cllr Button advised that the group was still busy, some people were still shielding and not leaving their homes.
- 670.3 Okehampton & Hamlets Combined Archive Project** – The Clerk reported that she had met with the Clerks of Okehampton United Charity and Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council in January when they had been joined by members of Devon Communities Together who had outlined how they could potentially assist with the project. The Devon Heritage Centre had also indicated that they may be able to assist and had invited the Clerks to visit, a date for which was being arranged.
- 670.4 Okehampton Primary School** – Cllr Travers had no information to report.
- 671 Royal Garden Party Nomination** – On the proposition of Cllr Jessop, seconded Cllr Sanger, it was **RESOLVED** to nominate Cllr Leech and a guest to be entered into the draw for tickets to the event on 25th May.

Clerk

(Remaining members of the public 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 Leech, seconded by Cllr Yelland.

- 672 **Declaration of Interest** – Cllr Yelland declared a pecuniary interest in Min Ref 674.

- 673 **Legionella Monitoring Contract** - On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Wood, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation of the Property Committee to award the contract to Rock Compliance. Clerk

- (Cllr Yelland left the meeting.)

- 674 **Market Street Public Toilets Repairs and Maintenance** - On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation of the Property Committee to award the contract to WJ Avery. Clerk

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Goffey it was **RESOLVED** to move out of Part 2 and ratify decisions made therein. The meeting was closed at 9.05pm.

Councillor Tolley
Mayor