

**Okehampton Town Council**  
**Full Council Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022**  
**Meeting Report**

<b>Date:</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> April 2022
<b>Name:</b>	Emma James

**Visiting Speaker – To receive a presentation from Dartmoor National Park Association in relation to a National Heritage Lottery Funding Bid**

DNPA are currently in the process of developing a stage 1 bid to the National Lottery Heritage fund after a successful expression of interest. Our proposal is a wide-ranging partnership programme that will work to address urgent societal needs (climate and ecological crisis, health and wellbeing, social deprivation) with a landscape scale focus on three of Dartmoor's river catchments – Okement, Erme and Yealm and the Dart. Our proposal is organised under three themes

1. Connecting Dartmoor – community outreach and connecting people to heritage
2. Dynamic Dartmoor – restore and enhance natural systems in collaboration with farmers and land managers
3. Laying foundations for the future – developing opportunities for the next generation, new ways of funding and more opportunities for people to enjoy Dartmoor sustainably

Within the third theme we are including a project to pilot gateway towns, these towns are identified as town hubs in the recreation strategy that is included in the National Park Partnership Plan (Management Plan). Currently we are exploring the idea of including Ivybridge, Princetown and Okehampton in the bid as pilot gateway towns. This will mean different things for each town and will seek to address different issues or needs that are relevant to each location. Opportunities that we would like to explore in gateway towns are:

- Create tourism and economic opportunities for the towns through links to the natural heritage of the area
- More accessible to a wider range of people
- Sustainable modes of onward travel
- Connecting people with nature

**Ukraine Refugees – To consider what support the Council could provide within the town including the nomination of a Member to be the Council's local Support Group representative**

The Council could for example consider the following:

- Providing a free space for refugees and/or Okehampton Support Group to meet on a weekly, or other agreed, basis
- To nominate a Member to be the Council's representative to Okehampton Support Group if this is acceptable to them

**DALC Rural Roads Survey** – To consider the aim of the survey and resolve if to agree that speed limits for rural roads, especially single-track lanes, should be lowered, and if so to what extent.

**NOTE** – the surveys asks if there is support for the speed limit to be lowered to 30mph



DALC is running a Rural Roads survey to gather views of our members' on the issue of speed on rural roads, specifically single-track lanes.

DALC's County Committee considers policy matters relating to parish and town councils in Devon and is considering the issue of speed on rural roads. The County Committee has set up a Task and Finish Group to gather more information, and is conducting an [online survey](#) to gather the experiences of local councils in Devon. Responses to this survey will inform any future DALC policy position in this area.

The issue of speed on rural roads, especially single-track lanes, is one that often concerns local communities. Vehicles moving at high speeds on narrow roads are not only a potential safety hazard to other road users but can discourage active travel methods such as walking and cycling. For these reasons and others it is not uncommon for parish and town councils to request a lower speed limits for these roads near their communities, or to propose that all rural roads of a certain type (usually single track lanes) should have lower speed limits.

Speed limits are a matter of national policy and Devon County Council operates within the Department for Transport's regulations. The national policy is clear that on rural roads the national speed limit of 60mph should apply, that it is a maximum not a desirable speed, and that road users should moderate their speed according to local conditions. Local variations to the national speed limit are regarded as confusing to drivers and likely to raise, rather than lower, the risk of collisions. As such, exceptions to the national speed limit on rural roads are only applied to stretches of road with a significant reliable record of speed related accidents. It would require a change of national policy to allow for lower speed limits on rural roads within Devon, and to affect this change will require long and extensive discussion with both national and local bodies.

As such, any decision to adopt a policy position regarding speed limits on rural roads should not be taken lightly, and we would like to gather as many views as possible on this issue from our members before making any further decisions, and would be grateful if you could [complete the survey](#).

**Approval of Mayors Charity Account – To resolve to approve the Mayor’s Charity Account as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.**

<b>Mayors Charity Bank Account 2020/2022</b>				
		DR	CR	Balance
09/11/2020				
	B/F Balance		£6.23	£6.23
02/08/2021	500022		£283.45	£289.68
06/10/2021	500023		£71.12	£360.80
10/11/2021	500024		£10.00	£370.80
15/02/2022	500025		£300.00	£670.80
02/03/2022	500026		£25.00	£695.80
02/03/2022	500026		£6.50	£702.30
30/03/2022	500028		£317.07	£1,019.37

**2022/23 Meeting Schedule – To consider the draft meeting and Civic Events schedule for ratification at the Annual Council Meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

- Policy & Resources Meetings have been reduced to bi-monthly
- Applications only Planning Committee Meetings have been removed (except for those in August and October that do not follow other meetings). This is because receipt of planning applications for consideration is sporadic and often those arranged are cancelled and additional meetings are needed. It is recommended that they are arranged as necessary.

**Schedule of Meetings and Civic Events Council Year 2022/23 DRAFT**

<b>2022</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Officer</b>
11 May (Wed)	Mayor Choosing	EJ
16 May	Full Planning Committee	CE
23 May	<b>Full Council</b>	EJ
30 May	Trustees	CE
4 June (Sat)	Queens Jubilee Event	EJ
6 June	Property Committee	EJ
13 June	Policy & Resources Committee	EJ
20 June	Parks Committee	EJ
27 June	<b>Full Council</b>	EJ
4 July	Full Planning Committee	CE
18 July	Policy & Resources Committee	EJ
25 July	<b>Full Council</b>	EJ
8 August	Planning Committee (Applications only if needed)	CE
22 August	<b>Full Council</b>	EJ
5 September	Property Committee	EJ
12 September	Policy & Resources Committee	EJ
18 September (Sun)	Civic Service (TBC)	EJ
19 September	Full Planning Committee	CE
26 September	<b>Full Council</b>	EJ
3 October	Parks Committee	EJ
10 October	Trustees	CE
17 October	Planning Committee (Applications only, if needed)	CE
31 October	<b>Full Council</b>	EJ
7 November	Property Committee	EJ
13 November (Sun)	Remembrance Parade and Service	EJ

14 November	Policy & Resources Committee	EJ
21 November	Full Planning Committee	CE
28 November	<b>Full Council</b>	EJ
1 December (Thu)	Edwardian Evening (TBC)	EJ
5 December	Parks Committee	EJ
12 December	<b>Full Council</b>	EJ
<b>2023</b>		
9 January	Property Committee	EJ
16 January	Policy & Resources Committee	EJ
23 January	Trustees	CE
30 January	<b>Full Council</b>	EJ
6 February	Parks Committee	EJ
20 February	Full Planning Committee	CE
27 February	<b>Full Council</b>	EJ
3 March (Fri)	Civic Dinner	EJ
6 March	Property Committee	EJ
13 March	Policy & Resources Committee	EJ
20 March	Trustees	CE
27 March	<b>Full Council</b>	EJ
3 April	Annual Town Assembly	EJ
17 April	Policy & Resources Committee	EJ
24 April	<b>Full Council</b>	EJ
4 May (Thu)	(LOCAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS – OTC/WDBC)	
8 May	Nominations Meeting	EJ
10 May (Wed)	Mayor Choosing (meeting held at 12noon)	EJ

**Policies and Documents – To resolve to approve the Internal Control Statement as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee**



### Introduction

Okehampton Town Council (the Council) is a local authority funded largely by public money. The Council is responsible for ensuring its financial business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and includes arrangements for the management of risk.

The Council is required to review at least annually the effectiveness of its system of financial control. This is informed by the work of the internal auditor and Policy and Resources Committee, who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal audit environment, and also any comments made by the external auditors in their annual report.

### The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The Council's system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure. It cannot provide an absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of

those risks being realised, the impact should they be realised, and to manage them effectively and economically.

The system of internal control accords with the practices set out in the most recent version of the Governance and Accountability in Local Councils: A Practitioners' Guide.

### **The Internal Control Environment**

The Council has adopted Financial Regulations which set parameters for the Council's financial operations. The Council has appointed the Town Clerk as the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) who implements financial systems and controls.

The Council uses Omega Financial software (supported by RBS Software Solutions) to process transactions and monitor performance against budget. Payroll is undertaken in-house. Banking services are provided by Nationwide, National Westminster and Lloyds Banks, with the Lloyds account being the primary one.

An independent internal audit service is provided by IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd and the Council's internal monitoring is undertaken by the Policy and Resources Committee. Monthly audits of bank reconciliations, online BACS payments and those made by debit card are undertaken by a nominated Councillor. The Town Clerk undertakes quarterly checks including invoicing, petty cash, parking permit sales and the use of the fuel card.

Any issues raised by the Internal Auditor, nominated Councillor or Clerk are reported to the Council and agreed actions are monitored to ensure that they have been carried out and actioned within agreed timescales. Additionally, the Council seeks and receives appropriate property, legal, insurance and health and safety advice as appropriate to manage risk.

The Council is responsible for:

- Establishing and monitoring the achievements of the authority's objectives
- The facilitation of policy and decision making
- Ensuring compliance with established policies, procedures, laws and regulations
- Identification and management of risk
- Ensuring that best value and value for money are achieved in all purchases
- Ensuring all committees receive regular and up to date reports on financial activities under their direction
- Ensuring performance is regularly monitored against financial and operational budgets
- Control and reports on the financial management of the Council

### **Review of Effectiveness**

The Council through the RFO has responsibility for conducting a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and the internal audit process.

The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is monitored by:

- The work of officers within the Council reporting to the RFO
- The Town Clerk is the Council's RFO who acts as the Council's legal advisor and administrator. The Clerk is responsible for administering the Council's finances, for advising on compliance with laws and regulations which the Council is subject to, and for managing risks. The Clerk also provides advice to help the Council ensure that its procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.
- Those elected members of the Policy and Resources Committee have particular responsibilities within this area. The committee generally meets on a monthly basis. Members of the committee monitor financial systems and procedures, budgetary control and carry out regular reviews of financial matters. Minutes of the committee meetings are circulated to all members of the Council and are accepted by full Council at meetings,
- A Councillor is nominated annually at a meeting of the full Council to undertake quarterly checks of BACS payments, bank reconciliations and debit card spend.
- The work of the Internal Auditor, an independent person specialising in local council matters, reports to the Council on the adequacy of its records, procedures, systems, internal control and risk management.

- The External Auditors in their annual report.

Any concerns about the effectiveness of the system of internal control are investigated and action taken as appropriate.

**Terms of Reference – To resolve to approve the Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Working Group**



**Membership**

The core constitution of the Group shall consist of the Councillor's nominated by the Council and the Town Clerk.

The Chairman of the Group shall be chosen from the Members serving on the Group which will meet during normal working hours.

**Purpose**

On 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022 it was resolved by the Council to petition the town residents to establish their views about the council's boundary.

The initial role of the group is to explore the ways in which to do this and to draft the content of the consultation documentation for consideration.

**Reporting**

This is a non-decision making group who shall report and make recommendations to full Council as and when necessary.