

**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 21st March 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, Policy & Resources Committee)
Councillor A Wood (Chairman, Property Committee)
Councillor T Abbots
Councillor J Goffey
Councillor C Holt
Councillor P Jessop
Councillor T Leech
Councillor C Marsh
Councillor J Yelland

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

Action

831 **Declarations of Interest** – Cllr Marsh declared an interest in Min Ref 850.

832 **Apologies for Absence** – Apologies tendered by Cllr Travers due to personal matters and Cllr Matravers who was on a course were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Yelland.

Apologies tendered by Cllr Davies (WDBC) and Cllr Samuels (DCC) were noted.

Cllr Button was absent.

833 **Deferment of Business** – None

834 **Members Questions** – None

835 **Visiting Speaker** – A member of the public addressed the council about their work and objectives to create a plastic free community, one of the objectives being to obtain the support of the Town Council. A community litter pick was being held on 26th March in conjunction with Ockment Rivers Improvement Group and Community Roadside Action Group.

836 **West Devon Borough Council** – Cllr Leech reported on items including Citizens Advice whose top issue was benefit tax credit.

(2 members of the public left the meeting)

The Fusion annual report was due to be discussed at WDBC on 22nd March. General use of some facilities was up by 70%. A visit had been undertaken the previous week by WDBC and the major issues had been addressed, there were some outstanding which would be resolved when finance allowed. Other items reported included service charge increases on housing association residents and that covid infection rates were again increasing. The situation in Ukraine and how Districts and Boroughs would be assisting in providing accommodation was being ascertained.

837 **Devon County Council** – The Clerk advised that Cllr Samuels had apologised for not having provided a report and one would be circulated later in the week.

838 **Questions Arising from Members Reports** – Cllr Marsh tabled photographs of some issues within Parklands Leisure Centre. Cllr Leech agreed to follow these up and report back to the Council.

Disappointment was voiced that some of Okehampton's West Devon Members didn't attend any of the Town Council meetings.

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

839.1 **Property Committee** meetings held on 24th January and 14th February 2022 - adoption proposed by Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Yelland and **approved**.

839.2 **Policy & Resources Committee** meeting held on 14th February 2022 - adoption proposed by Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Ireland and **approved**.

840 **Full Council Meeting Minutes** – The minutes of the Town Council meetings held on 28th February and 7th March 2022 were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Holt, and signed by Cllr Tolley.

841 **Plastic Free Community Presentation** – It was noted that the Council had a Climate Working Group that was working on matters including plastic use reduction. The Council had stopped using single use plastic cups in around 2019 and did not use disposable cutlery.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Goffey it was **RESOLVED** to support the group in their efforts to reduce plastic use in the town.

Clerk/
Ass. Clerk

842 **CCTV** – The Clerk reported that the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner had confirmed the grant of £15,000 towards the scheme was still available and that details of how to apply were awaited.

Commencement of Phase 2 was dependant on replacement of the lighting columns by DCC Highways.

843 **Cemetery Access** – The Clerk reported that she was making further enquiries to try to establish ownership of the bridleway and was awaiting a response. Legal advice received from NALC confirmed that as the bridleway did not just give access to the Church but also to other properties and the Council's Cemetery, the Council could contribute towards its repairs.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to contribute a third of the cost of pothole repair, but the Town Council did not accept responsibility or accept liability for the bridleway. The Council could not place an order for the work due to insurance limitations.

Clerk

844 **The Devon, Plymouth and Torbay Devolution Deal** – It was commented that the Council needed to be particularly mindful of housing and development. On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to recommend that DALC approach West Devon Borough Council to work with them on this issue and that town and parish councils should maintain their status and structure.

Clerk

845 **Placemaking** – Cllrs Leech and Yelland declared personal interests being Members of WDBC.

The report provided by WDBC's Officers was considered. Concern was raised that only 13% of the businesses surveyed were in favour of the creation of a BID. It was commented that small businesses who didn't pay

business rates would not be eligible to vote but equally would not be required to contribute to the scheme. The sum of £15,000 requested to be earmarked by the Council for the project in the 2022/23 financial year had not been budgeted. The opportunities that would be available to businesses should a BID be created were considered. It was felt important that the businesses should have the opportunity to decide if a BID should be created or not.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Goffey it was **RESOLVED** to support the proposal and approve the £2,000 requested for the feasibility study following which the results would be considered and a decision made whether to continue with the project.

Clerk

846 **Okehampton Show 2022** – It was noted that the Policy & Resources Committee had approved attendance at the show by two employees representing the Council, the Clerk and a member of the Parks team.

847 **Policies and Documents** - The Clerk advised that some local town councils required grant applications to be made prior to the commencement of a financial year and recommended that any such change to the policy would take time to fully review and consider.

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Jessop, it was **RESOLVED** to consider grant applications on a quarterly basis for the 2022/23 financial year, and request that Policy and Resources review the policy and procedure for the 2023/24 financial year.

Clerk

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

848 **Finances** – On the proposition of Tolley, seconded Cllr Holt it was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments.

849 **Insurance Renewal** - On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Jessop it was **RESOLVED** to approve the renewal quotation at the sum of £20,456.29, noting that this was the last of a three-year agreement.

Clerk

850 **Pavilion in the Park Lease** – Cllr Tolley declared a personal interest being a Trustee of OCRA.

On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Ireland (2 abstentions) it was **RESOLVED** to approve the appointment of a Solicitor to review the lease at the cost of up to £500 and to nominate Cllr Wood to provide the other information requested by the Solicitor.

Clerk/
Cllr Wood

851 **Civic Diary Report** – Events attended by the Mayor during March were noted.

852 **Annual Town Assembly** – Councillors noted that the assembly was being held at 7pm on Monday 28th March in the Charter Hall.

853 **Covid19** -

853.1 It was noted that covid signage within the town was being removed following the relaxation of government guidance.

853.2 On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to continue meeting in the Charter Hall until it was closed for roofing work whereupon meetings would revert to being held in the Council Chamber.

854 Reports of Council Working/Task & Finish Groups -

854.1 Climate Change – Cllr Goffey reported that a WDBC meeting was due to be held in the next few weeks.

854.2 Charter Hall Roof Replacement – The Clerk reported that a meeting with the Project Manager was due to be held on 24th March.

854.3 Placemaking Working Group – A report from WDBC had already been considered.

854.4 Memorandum of Understanding Task & Finish Group – Group paused

854.5 Community Governance – A meeting was due to be held on 30th March 2022.

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

855.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group – Cllr Goffey advised there was no update to report.

856 Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items -

856.1 Okehampton Matters – Cllr Wood reported that a meeting had been held the previous week and did not feel it had been constructive.

856.2 Okehampton COVID19 Support Group – No report was available.

856.3 Okehampton & Hamlets Combined Archive Project – The Clerk reported that the working group was due to meet in early April and would consider feedback from the recent visit to the Devon Heritage Centre.

856.4 Okehampton Primary School – No report was available.

857 Urgent Items – The Clerk reported that the Coffee Morning in aid of the Ukraine crises had raised £3,570 which had been sent to the Red Cross. An individual donation in the sum of £500 had since been received and would be forwarded to the Red Cross in due course along with any other donations received.

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.

858 Town Council Mayoral Awards - On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to nominate the persons as noted by the Clerk.

859 Queens Platinum Jubilee – Cllr Marsh, Ireland, Yelland and Tolley declared interests being Trustees of OUC.

On the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to book the marquee and toilets that were reserved as follows:

- Marquee from Brooklands Events - £1,872.72
- Toilets from Exmoor Luxury Loos - £345

Clerk

The Clerk reported that grant applications had been made for event funding to the Arts Foundation and Awards for All. The Arts Foundation had advised that due to the large number of applications received, funding would be limited. On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Jessop it was **RESOLVED** a grant

application be made to the OUC, subject to award of another grant being received.

Clerk

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

Councillor Tolley
Mayor