

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

<b>Date:</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> July 2022
<b>Name:</b>	Emma James

**Minor Injuries Unit and Hospital Beds – To consider a report from Cllr Leech and resolve to lobby MP’s requesting the reinstatement of an MIU and reprovision of hospital beds in Okehampton Hospital allowing treatment locally and ease bed blocking at RD&E**

Report from Cllr Leech:

A recent report that I have been reading, that is all about the issues with the local Ambulance Trust, states that to get over some of the issues, all areas should take up the RD&E rapid patient assessment and Triage model to alleviate the waiting times. However, from anecdotal evidence, the waiting times at the RD&E are no better than anywhere else.

The report goes on to say that the review highlighted the importance of Minor Injuries Units (MIUs), and that MIUs with regular service hours should be available across Devon. We had a very good MIU at the Hospital here in Okehampton until the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) reviews closed them down or moved them to Medical Centres.

Would it be possible for Okehampton Town Council to agree to lobby for a new MIU to be reinstated within our hospital and run directly by the RD&E, so that local people can receive treatment locally, instead of having to travel to Exeter and clog up the system there?

I would also ask for the Hospital beds to be reinstated here, as this would not only also ease the bed blocking at RD&E but would also help those who have to travel long distances to see their loved ones, with all the financial costs and carbon that this creates.

**Pets as Prizes – To consider correspondence sent to Cllr Leech about the practice of giving away pets as prizes and resolve to ensure that it does not happen on land that the Council is responsible for**

Dear Councillor Leech,

As a concerned constituent and animal lover, I am writing to you today about the outdated practice of giving away pets - namely goldfish - as prizes.

While many believe this outdated practice belongs in history books and has no place in modern society, I was saddened to find out that this is still all too commonplace.

Across England and Wales each year, swathes of goldfish are sadly left hanging in unsuitable plastic bags at fairgrounds and fetes. Many of them are won by children or their parents, who are unprepared to take on a pet, simply as the result of winning a game. I’m sure you’ll agree that pet ownership is a huge responsibility, and not one that should ever be prized off to the public.

As the summer season approaches and more public events take place, I am very worried about pets being given away on council owned land. This is bound to leave the wrong impression on the

general public, and could have unwanted (and preventable) consequences for the animal. This is where I'm hoping you can help.

As an animal lover, I feel strongly that more needs to be done to protect these animals, many of whom will sadly die before they actually reach their new homes. Goldfish are easily stressed and very often fish that are won as prizes suffer miserably from shock, oxygen starvation or from changes in water temperature.

While I understand that the practice of giving away pets as prizes, particularly goldfish, has long gone on and may bring enjoyment to some, acquiring an animal to be kept as a pet should be the result of careful planning and prior consideration. Additionally, action on this matter may also deter people from awarding other pets as prizes, protecting other popular pets such as dogs. Animals are big prizes that can come at an even bigger cost.

The RSPCA supports measures taken by local authorities to end this outdated practice on Council owned land, which will ensure their welfare and raise public awareness of the issue.

I write to ask you to please work with the RSPCA who have drafted some [suggested text for a motion](#). This could form the basis of a proposal to the local authority to take more action on this issue. It would be great if you could encourage your fellow councillors to pass a motion similar to this to improve animal welfare in this area.

Further information regarding this campaign can be found in the RSPCA's briefing document for elected representatives [here](#). The RSPCA launched a public campaign last year, with thousands of supporters taking action. A total of 24 local authorities have secured a ban so far, following the groundswell of support for this campaign. Will you please join them?

Please take action on behalf of animals and join the other local authorities in England and Wales that have already pledged to put a stop to this. Pets as prizes is a no-win situation for animals and their potential new owners.