

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Okehampton Town Council Parks Committee
held on Monday 16 June 2014 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber,
Town Hall, Okehampton**

Committee Members Present: Councillor Mrs C Marsh (Chairman)
Councillor Dr M Ireland
Councillor D Weekes
Councillor P Vachon (Town Mayor)
Councillor A Leech (Chairman, Planning)
Councillor Mrs M McDonald (Chairman, P& R)

Other Members Present: Councillor T Cummings
Councillor B Stephens

In Attendance: P R Snell (Town Clerk)

72. **Apologies for Absence** - Apologies for absence were presented on behalf of Councillor K Ball, Councillor M Davies, Councillor Mrs J Goffey.

73. **Deferment of Business** - (for comment by the public) - There were no comments or questions raised by members of the public present.

74. **Members' Questions** -

(i) Councillor Leech had noted that a national bee survey was currently underway and enquired if the Park-keeper would get involved. It was agreed to investigate the requirements of the survey and to see if the Park-keeper had resources to undertake this study.

(ii) Councillor Leech reported he had had another complaint about the state of the grass in the formal side of the Park. After discussion, it was agreed to review the areas under the current policy and to report back at the next meeting.

75. **Minutes** - The minutes of the Parks Committee meeting held on Monday 16 June 2014 were approved and signed by the Chairman on the proposition of Councillor Ireland, seconded by Councillor Leech.

76. **Matters Arising** -

76.1 **Sophia Simmons' Headstone** - The Clerk reported that he had heard from the Diocesan Advisory Committee giving approval in principle for the replacement of a headstone, subject to their receipt of full details of the proposed replacement stone and details of the commissioning engraver. It had also been heard through the Diocesan Committee that the All Saints Parochial Church Committee had not been informed of the nature of replacement headstone proposed. After discussion, it was agreed to share all relevant communications with the PCC.

76.2 **First World War Commemoration** - The Clerk reported that the poppy planting had been carried out as planned. The Chairman commented that whilst the poppies were growing vigorously at West Bridge in parts and in Simmons Park, those at the graveyard were not taking as well.

76.3 Dog Fouling and Dog Control - The Chairman reported that she and Councillor Letchford had attended a briefing at West Devon Borough Council concerning the introduction of the proposed new Dog Control Byelaws. The proposed Byelaws were about to go to public consultation and it was agreed to await the outcome of consultation. It was generally agreed at this stage that the most appropriate Byelaw for Simmons Park would be Dogs on Lead by Direction.

The Chairman further reported on requests she had received for additional dog bins on the Link Road and on Crediton Road. Whilst a possible site had been identified on the Link Road, a site on Crediton Road was still under investigation. The Chairman confirmed that the cost of both installing and maintaining dog bins in these areas was within the budget. It was agreed to progress this. The Chairman further reported that she was keen to institute a trial of a 'doggy bag' stand within Simmons Park. The Clerk reported that he had spoken to the Park-keeper on this subject and they were looking for a possible solution.

76.4 BT Phone Box - The Clerk reported that all connections, both at ground level and above, had now been disconnected from the box and it was physically clear for removal. There was further consultation required concerning the reinstatement of the pavement once the box had been removed. The Clerk would report further at the next meeting.

76.5 Signage - The Clerk reported that a composite list for new and replacement signs was in progress. The Chairman agreed to provide the relevant information to ensure that new signage would be within the planning limitations.

77. Park Bookings -

- (i) The Committee noted the Okehampton Area Children's Centre Big Toddle on 18 June 2014.
- (ii) The Committee agreed a request from Exeter City Football Club in the Community for events on 5 & 6 August and 27 & 28 August 2014.
- (iii) The Committee agreed the proposal to host Scott May's Daredevil Stunt Show on Friday 8 August 2014. The Clerk reported on the result of negotiations with Scott May on this matter. Proposed by Councillor Mrs McDonald, seconded by Councillor Vachon with all in agreement.

78. Open Spaces -

- (i) The Chairman reported that there was no new information at this time on the potential transfer of open space areas from West Devon Borough Council.
- (ii) The Clerk reported on a recent meeting he had attended with the Chairman, Devon County Council Officers and Mr Robert Flexman at the South West Highways Office in Okehampton. The County Council were in the early stages of creating a Road Warden Scheme, along the lines of the Snow Warden Scheme that had been introduced some years previously, in an effort to engage local councils and residents with responsibilities that the County budget was increasingly difficult to cover. There was no hard information at present, and any development would be reported back. It was agreed to revisit the Snow Warden Scheme to see if insurance and equipment requirements were appropriate.

79. **Contracted use of Park Resources** - The Clerk reported that a local agreement to provide occasional mowing services for the cricket field adjacent to Simmons Park had been agreed with Mr Lord, on behalf of OCRA. The Committee noted the arrangements.
80. **Land Adjacent to the Skate Park** - It was agreed to place this item at the end of the agenda for discussion under Part Two.
81. **Fairplace Wives Group** - The Clerk reported on a letter received from the Fairplace Wives Group. The Fairplace Wives and Friends Group was, this year, celebrating its 50th Anniversary and to commemorate the event, the Group had offered the Town Council a donation towards planting a group of yellow daffodil bulbs in Simmons Park. It was agreed to accept this generous offer.
82. **Rooks in the Park** - The Clerk reported that a complaint had been received about the noise of rooks nesting in Simmons Park. During the ensuing discussion, the Committee noted that rooks were part of the Park's history and their attempted removal would make the situation worse. (Minute 35.4/2010 refers.) On the proposition of Councillor Ireland, seconded by Councillor Mrs McDonald, it was agreed to maintain the current policy. All in agreement.
83. **Simmons Park Guide** - Stocks of the Simmons Park Guide were diminishing and it was agreed to maintain the leaflet layout fundamentally as it was, but with the inclusion of minor amendments. Proposed by Councillor Mrs McDonald, seconded by Councillor Leech, with all in agreement.
84. **Members' Reports** -
- (i) Children's Centre - no update.
 - (ii) North Dartmoor Search and Rescue Group - Councillor Ireland reported there had been two call-outs, one to Hatherleigh and one to Ball Hill. There had been a committee meeting and there was a new ongoing training programme.
 - (iii) Okehampton Community Archive - Councillor Stephens referred to the current challenges of storage, limited space and the need for increasing computerisation. For the rest of this year the primary focus was on commemoration of the First World War.
 - (iv) Okehampton Community Recreation Association (OCRA) - Councillor Weekes said there was nothing to report other than the forthcoming Annual General Meeting on 18 June.
 - (v) Parklands Leisure Centre Users' Group - no meeting.
 - (vi) Tennis Court Management - no meeting.
 - (vii) Youth Issues/Room 13 - the Chairman reported that there would be a consultation the following day on youth issues in the Ockment Centre and also that Okehampton would be a hub for youth provision in the Devon County overall plan.

PART TWO ITEMS

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 items as they

involve the likely disclosure of sensitive and confidential information. Proposed by Councillor Ireland, seconded by Councillor Leech.

Item under discussion - 80. Land adjacent to Skate Park - After discussion of the issues, it was proposed to come out of Part Two, proposed by Councillor Ireland, seconded by Councillor Leech with all in favour.

Meeting closed at 8.00 pm

Councillor Mrs C Marsh
Chairman