

**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 31st October 2022 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

Members Present: Councillor B Tolley (Mayor)
Councillor C Marsh (Chairman, Parks Committee)
Councillor A Wood (Chairman, Property Committee)
Councillor J Yelland (Chairman, Policy & Resources Committee)
Councillor T Abbots
Councillor C Holt
Councillor A Fisher
Councillor M Ireland
Councillor T Leech
Councillor B Matravers

In Attendance: Mrs E James (Town Clerk)
1 member of the public

Action

376 **Apologies for Absence** – Apologies tendered by Cllr Goffey were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Yelland.

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

377 **Declarations of Interest** – None

378 **Public Participation** – None

379 **Members Questions** – None

380 **West Devon Borough Council** – Cllr Yelland reported that WDBC had a dedicated website page with details of help available in relation to the cost-of-living crisis, they were about to commence electoral register canvassing and would be visiting properties in the borough. The required annual estimate of rough sleepers in the local area for 14/15 November would be submitted to the relevant authority and the information used to inform ongoing work. Some affordable homes that had become available within the Hamlets had been advertised through Devon Home Choice.

Cllr Leech reported that proposals to assist with the cost-of-living crisis would be considered by WDBC on 1st November and included 3 priorities;

- direct support
- working with partners, businesses and communities via voluntary organisations
- signposting and sharing information

Cllr Leech was continuing to push for a resolution to the land blockage at Kellands Land and provided an update with regards to the playing field at St James' Primary School.

The result of the Levelling-Up fund bid for the transport hub was expected imminently.

381 **Devon County Council** – The Clerk read an update provided by Cllr Samuel who was focusing on the traffic and parking issues in Station Road. She had stressed the importance of the Levelling up funding for Okehampton to Mel Stride MP and advised that her localities budget was open to applications.

- 382 **Questions Arising from Members Reports** – None.
- 383 **Adoption of Minutes of Committees and Members' Questions arising Thereof** –
- 383.1 **Policy & Resources Committee** meeting held on 18th July 2022 - adoption proposed by Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Tolley and **approved**.
- 383.2 **Parks Committee** meetings held on 20th June and 22nd August 2022 - adoption proposed by Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Abbots and **approved**.
- 383.3 **Planning Committee** meetings held on 8th and 25th August and 5th September 2022 - adoption proposed by Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Wood and **approved**.
- 384 **Full Council Meeting Minutes** – The minutes of the Town Council meetings held on 26th September and 17th October 2022 were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Marsh, and signed by Cllr Tolley.
- 385 **Deputy Mayor** – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** not to appoint a Deputy Mayor for the rest of the Mayoral Year.
- 386 **Co-Option** – The Clerk reported that no applications had been received to date.
- 387 **Community Governance** – Cllrs Leech and Yelland declared personal interests being Members of WDBC.

It was noted that the petition for a review had been presented to WDBC by the Clerk on 27th September 2022. On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Ireland (2 abstentions) it was **RESOLVED** to dissolve the working group.

- 388 **Cost of Living Crisis** – It was commented that any group or organisation who met the eligibility criteria could apply to the Town Council for a grant. A list of warm spaces being offered in the town, as they became known, was being compiled and was available in the Town Hall, website, newsletter and on social media.

It was commented that the Ockment Centre was considering what assistance they would be able to offer including over the Christmas period and the Probus Club would be financially supporting the warm hub at the London Inn.

- 389 **Rail Impact Survey** – On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Matravers, it was **RESOLVED** to approve in principle that a survey be undertaken to ascertain the impact the rail service has had on businesses in the town which was being prepared by Cllr Ireland.
- 390 **Finances** – Cllrs Marsh and Wood declared an interest, being members of groups receiving a grant.

A query was raised about the outstanding payment of £165.45 to HMRC from 2018/19. The Clerk read a report prepared by the Assistant Clerk which explained the situation which had arisen when payroll had been outsourced and had been discussed with the internal auditor during their last visit.

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Abbots (2 abstentions), it was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments.

Cllr Ireland

391 **Investments** – Cllr Yelland, being a member of the working group, explained the reasoning for the proposals as set out in the previously circulated report and recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee, which were to maximise the interest return for the funds held in bank accounts. The Clerk reported that enquiries were being made with regards investment with the CCLA.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Wood, it was **RESOLVED** to approve item a) of the report to merge the accounts held at Nationwide in that offering the higher interest return.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Wood (1 abstention), it was **RESOLVED** to approve item b) of the report to transfer funds from NatWest to Nationwide in order to maximise income from interest.

Clerk/ Ass.
Clerk

392 **Simmons Homes** - On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to nominate Mr Drew for a further term.

393 **Policies and Documents** - On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Yelland, it was **RESOLVED** approve the amendment to Standing Orders as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee.

394 **Civic Diary Report** – Cllr Tolley reported he had attended events including the Get Changed coffee morning, opening of Goosey Fair, Carnival Judging, WDBC's Civic Service, presented a grant cheque to St James Primary School presented the U12's with their rugby strip which incorporated the town crest, Tavistock Town Council's Civic Service, Get Changed Spooktacular performance and the Community Transport Coffee Morning.

395 **Coronation of King Charles III** - On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to create a working group to include members of Everything Okehampton to come up with proposals and once agreed to make the arrangements for an event to celebrate the Coronation on 6th May 2023.

Admin
Officer

396 **Committee Membership** - On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Fisher sit on Policy & Resources and Property Committees.

397 **New Councillor Mentor** - On the proposition of Cllr Matravers, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** that Cllr's Leech, Marsh, Tolley and Yelland be mentors for any new Councillors.

398 **Simmons Park Charity** - On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Yelland, it was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Fisher to be a Trustee of the Charity.

399 **Working Group Membership and Town Council Representatives** - On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the following changes to the nominated representative on external groups:

- Dartmoor National Park Forum – Cllr Marsh
- Fairtrade – Cllr Wood
- Covid 19 Support Group – representative no longer required as the group was gradually running down
- Ukraine Support Group – Cllr Leech to be a temporary link with WDBC and the group
- Primary School – The Clerk reported that the feasibility of the creation of a Junior Council was being investigated that this could be a link to all the

Okehampton schools through the DMAT. It was agreed that a nominated representative was not required and that if a request to attend an event was received from any of the schools the Mayor would attend.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to approve changes to working group membership with the inclusion of Councillors as follows:

- Investment – Cllr Marsh
- Climate Change – Cllr Wood

400 Reports of Council Working/Task & Finish Groups -

400.1 Climate Change – Cllr Leech reported that the Assistant Clerk had compiled a list of work that the Council had considered and done to take steps to reduce the councils carbon footprint.

400.2 Charter Hall Roof Replacement – Cllr Leech advised a meeting was being held on 3rd November with the Project Manager.

400.3 Placemaking Working Group – Work to establish the feasibility of the creation of a Business Improvement District was ongoing.

400.4 Community Governance – Group dissolved, Min Ref 387.

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

401.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group – The Regulation 14 consultation had commenced, and it was reported by Cllrs Yelland and Wood that the event on 22nd October appeared to have been well attended. Copies of the documentation were available in the Town Hall and on the Neighbourhood Plan website.

402 Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items -

402.1 Okehampton Matters – Cllr Wood had been unable to attend the most recent meeting, the next was on 18th January 2023.

(Member of the public left the meeting)

402.2 Okehampton Primary School – Representative no longer required, see Min Ref 399.

402.3 Okehampton Ukraine Support Group – No representative.

403 PART 2 Confidential Matters - On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Leech 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 which were CONFIDENTIAL by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council.

404 Charter Hall Roofing Project – Cllr Yelland declared a pecuniary interest and left the meeting.

The Clerk reported that the store room roof was leaking badly and damage to items stored within was possible. Alternative storage locations were considered.

Quotations for roofing repairs to the Charter Hall and Cinema had been sought in August 2022 and the Clerk reported that an estimate had only been

received from one of the three companies invited to quote. Due to the difficulty in gaining access to the roof to establish the amount of work required the company had provided an estimate only and the figure could change because of this and increase in costs since it was received. On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Wood, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the estimate from WJ Avery at £3,289.

Cllr Yelland returned to the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Order 3 (bb) to permit extension of the meeting following a proposal by Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Yelland.

405 **Electrical Quotations** – The Clerk reported that following required inspection of some council properties, quotations for work highlighted had been sought. Of the three companies contacted only one had provided a quotation and she apologised for having omitted some of the costs from the report. Due to the urgent nature of some items, on the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Wood (1 abstention), it was **RESOLVED** to give the Clerk delegated authority to appoint AJ Electrics for urgent work required in accordance with the quotation, for an amount of up to £10,000.

Clerk

406 **Staffing Matters** – The Clerk left the meeting.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendations made by the Policy & Resources committee on 24th October 2022.

The Clerk returned to the meeting.

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Wood it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part 2 and ratify decisions made therein. The meeting was closed at 8.45pm.

Councillor Tolley
Mayor