

**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 26th September 2022 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

Members Present: Councillor B Tolley (Mayor)
 Councillor D Sanger (Deputy Mayor)
 Councillor P Jessop (Chairman, Planning Committee)
 Councillor A Wood (Chairman, Property Committee)
 Councillor J Yelland (Chairman, Policy & Resources Committee)
 Councillor C Holt
 Councillor M Ireland

In Attendance: Mrs E James (Town Clerk)
 4 members of the public
 Councillor L Samuel (DCC)

A minute of silent reflection was held to mark the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II on 8th September 2022

Action

266 Declarations of Interest – None

267 Apologies for Absence – Apologies tendered by Cllrs Marsh, Abbots, Leech, Goffey and Matravers were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Wood.

Apologies from Cllr Davies (WDBC) were noted.

Cllr Travers was absent.

268 Declarations of Interest – None

269 Public Participation – None

270 Members Questions – Cllr Ireland advised that he would be bringing a draft survey for the town businesses to ascertain the impact the reinstatement the passenger rail service between Okehampton and Exeter has had to the next meeting of the Council for consideration.

Cllr Ireland reported it had been brought to his attention that busses including the 5A, 6 and 6A Stagecoach services were being scaled back. Cllr Samuel (DCC) offered to investigate and report back to the Clerk.

Cllr Samuel
(DCC)

271 Visiting Speaker – Representatives from Read Easy outlined the work of the charity following which questions were posed by Councillors.

272 Read Easy, Okehampton – It was commented that Read Easy could contact Citizens Advice and other organisations including Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council to raise awareness of their work.

(1 member of the public left the meeting)

273 West Devon Borough Council – Cllr Yelland reported that the finalised version of the Devon Carbon Plan would be available to the public from 27th September and that WDBC were working with Citizens Advice and Tindle Newspaper (Okehampton Times) to provide relevant information.

274 Devon County Council – Cllr Samuel thanked the Mayor and Clerk for their work to rearranging the Civic Service into one that commemorated and remembered HM Queen Elizabeth II so quickly. DCC was estimating a £17

million shortfall at the end of the financial year, and she had recently had the opportunity to again raise the need for the Parkway Station with an MP.

- 275 **Questions Arising from Members Reports** – None.
- 276 **Councillor Co-option** – The two applications received were considered and following a vote it was **RESOLVED** to co-opt Mr Fisher to the Council.
- 277 **Adoption of Minutes of Committees and Members' Questions arising Thereon** –
- 277.1 **Property Committee** meeting held on 6th June 2022 - adoption proposed by Cllr Holt, seconded Cllr Jessop and **approved**.
- 278 **Full Council Meeting Minutes** – The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 22nd August 2022 were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Ireland, and signed by Cllr Tolley.
- 279 **Community Governance** – It was noted that the Petition was due to be presented to WDBC by the Clerk on 27th September. The Clerk reported that documentation from a boundary review in 1984 had been located in the council's archives in which WDBC had suggested a boundary change not dissimilar to that proposed in the petition.
- 280 **Minor Injuries Unit and Hospital Beds** –
- 280.1 Information from a recent Political Engagement Webinar was considered.
- 280.2 A response from Mel Stride, MP, following the Council's request for the reinstatement of an MIU and reprovision of hospital beds in Okehampton Hospital allowing treatment locally and to ease bed blocking at RD&E was considered.
- It was commented the MP did not appear to be pushing the case for the reopening of beds especially as the response indicated that the current approach should allow people to recover in a community setting that was familiar to them. Poor public transport and potential further reduction in services meant that visitors could find it even more difficult to travel, and the cost of living crisis may mean people could not afford to visit.
- 281 **Antisocial Behaviour** - A response from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner following the Council's letter in relation to antisocial behaviour and the reopening of the Okehampton Police Desk was considered.
- News that the police desk would be reopening in June 2023 was welcomed however it was commented that communication was lacking, there not having been an Okehampton Matters meeting for some time.
- (1 member of the public left)
- 282 **Cost of Living Crisis** – The possibility of the provision of a warm space was suggested. Councillors were asked to give this and other ideas some thought for the next meeting.
- 283 **SAAA Central External Auditor Appointment** - On the proposition of Cllr Jessop, seconded Cllr Wood, it was **RESOLVED** to remain opted into the scheme.
- 284 **Finances** - On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments, including those that were

Cllrs

paid under delegated powers since the last Committee meeting at the beginning of the September.

285 Meeting Dates

285.1 On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to amend the following meeting dates:

- a) Nominations (Informal) Meeting from 8th to 15th May 2023
- b) Annual Council Meeting and Mayor Choosing from 10th to 17th May 2023

285.2 The following rescheduled meeting dates were noted:

- a) Policy & Resources Committee from 12th September to 24th October 2022
- b) Planning Committee from 19th September to 17th October 2022

(Cllr Samuel left the meeting)

286 Okehampton Show 2023 - On the proposition of Cllr Jessop, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to approve Council attendance at the show in 2023 in line with the arrangements for 2022 whereby the stand be staffed by the Clerk, Park-Keeper and another member of staff, and either joining with WDBC or obtaining a separate plot as necessary.

287 Simmons Park Charity - On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Sanger, it was **RESOLVED** to approve a change to clarify Clause 2.2 of the Management Agreement as proposed by the Trustees as follows: that a review take place not less than three months before the fourth anniversary of the date of the agreement (August 2025).

288 Town Events – On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Yelland, it was **RESOLVED** that Council policy would be to put up flags and bunting throughout the town for Council events only. Not-for-profit organisations and Charities could apply for a grant from the council to assist with the cost of such activities.

(1 member of the public left the meeting)

289 Council Owl Mascot - On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** that the mascot be used for marketing appropriate child-based community engagement events.

290 Civic Diary Report – To note events attended by the Mayor during September included the unveiling of a Polish Camp Plaque in Red Lion Yard, Torrington Civic Service, presentation of a cheque to Okehampton Table Tennis Club and attendance at a Ten Tors thank you supper. Following the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II, the Proclamation was read outside of St James' Church on 12th September and a commemorative service in place of the Civic Service was held on 18th September.

Cllr Tolley requested to record his thanks and appreciation to Mrs James, (Clerk), Mrs Horn, Mrs Ellis, Mr Dean, Mr Tucker, Mr Peek and Mr McGahey, for all the time and hard work they put in over the difficult period ensuring Okehampton was able to provide a first-class response to the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II.

291 Working Group Membership and Town Council Representatives - On the proposition of Cllr Jessop, seconded Cllr Wood, it was **RESOLVED** to defer nomination of a representative to the following groups to the next meeting:

- Climate Change Working Group

- Placemaking Working Group
- Okehampton Primary School
- Okehampton Ukraine Support Group

292 Reports of Council Working/Task & Finish Groups -

292.1 Climate Change – No meeting had been held. The Big Green event held on 24th September in the Charter Hall had been very successful.

292.2 Charter Hall Roof Replacement – To be considered in Part 2

292.3 Placemaking Working Group – No update to report.

292.4 Community Governance – Previously considered above

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

293.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group – Cllr Sanger reported that a meeting had been held on 21st September when a date for the commencement of the Regulation 14 Consultation, 22nd October, had been agreed.

294 Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items -

294.1 Okehampton Matters – No meeting had been held to report upon and it was not known when the next meeting was due to be held.

294.2 Okehampton Primary School – No representative.

294.3 Okehampton Ukraine Support Group – No representative.

(A member of the public left the meeting)

295 PART 2 Confidential Matters - On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Yelland 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 are 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.

296 Charter Hall Roofing Project – Cllr Wood and the Clerk reported on the tender opening and the progress to date. Cllr Wood and the Clerk were meeting later in the week to investigate grant funding possibilities.

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the seeking of grant funding from any source including the National Lottery, and to approve a proposal from Cllr Goffey for a sponsor a slate appeal.

Cllr Goffey/
Clerk

On the proposition of Cllr Jessop, seconded Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part 2 and ratify decisions made therein. The meeting was closed at 8.35pm.

Councillor Tolley
Mayor