

**Minutes of Okehampton Town Council Policy and Resources Committee Meeting
held on Monday 16th January 2023 at 7.33pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

Committee Members Present: Councillor J Yelland (Chairman)
Councillor B Tolley (Mayor)
Councillor C Marsh (Chairman, Parks)
Councillor B Matravers (Chairman, Planning)
Councillor C Botton
Councillor A Fisher

Other Members Present:

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

Action

584 **Apologies for Absence** – Apologies tendered by Cllr Wood who was unwell were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Fisher.

Apologies tendered by Cllrs Abbots, Holt, Goffey, Ireland and Leech, who were not members of the committee were noted.

585 **Declarations of Interest** – Cllrs Yelland, Marsh, Fisher and Tolley declared personal interests in relation to Min Ref 590.2, all being members of Okehampton United Charity.

586 **Public Participation** – None

587 **Members' Questions** – None

588 **Minutes** – On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 14th November, with an amendment to Min Ref 440 to include the wording 'for King Charles III Coronation', and 5th December 2022 which were signed by Cllr Yelland.

589 **Grant Feedback** – It was noted that documentation requested by the Committee prior to the release of funds awarded to Okehampton Army Cadets in February 2022 and a subsequent letter of reminder had not been responded to. It was commented that should that funding be needed for an application by another group the award amount would be considered for redirection and the offer to the Army Cadets would not be carried forward to the 2023/24 financial year.

Feedback from Everything Okehampton, received after the publication of the agenda, for the grant of £2,000 awarded in December 2022 was noted.

590 **Grant Applications**

590.1 **Okehampton Fairtrade Group** - On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Fisher, it was **RESOLVED** to award a grant of £140 towards the hosting of an event during Fairtrade Fortnight 2023.

Clerk

590.2 **Okehampton United Charity** – Due to the number of Councillors who had declared an interest at Min Ref 585 this item was deferred to Full Council.

Clerk

591 **Policies and Documents**

591.1 On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Matravers, it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the following policies to full Council for adoption following staff consultation including the purchase of Covid test kits for staff within the Absence Management Policy:

- Absence Management Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Leave Policy
- Social Media, IT and Phone Use Policy for Employees
- Training and Development Policy for Employees and Councillors
- Uniform Policy for Employees

Clerk

591.2 On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Fisher, it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the following policies to full Council for adoption incorporating amendments to the Flag Flying Policy to include the addition of flying the Union Flag during visits by the Twinning Association:

- Asbestos Management Plan (as produced by Environmental Services who were contracted to undertake the annual inspection)
- Complaints Policy & Procedure
- Flag Flying Policy
- Grant Policy
- Treasury & Investment Policy and Strategy
- Waste Management and Recycling Policy

Clerk

592 **Finances**

592.1 Cllr Marsh reported that the audit of the bank reconciliation, online payments, direct debits, and debit card transactions had been carried out earlier in the day and all was in order. Petty cash had not been audited.

592.2 A query was raised about the electricity costs in Simmons Park. The Clerk advised this had been brought to the attention of the Parks Committee a few months previously. It had been attributed to the running of the pond pumps which at that time were costing approximately £90 p/month and the old-style heaters in the office which had since been replaced.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Fisher, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the management accounts, as circulated, for month ended 30th November 2022 (month 8).

592.3 On the proposition of Cllr Matravers, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to approve payments in accordance with the schedule.

593 **Devon Pension Fund** – The DCC report, previously circulated, which advised the funding level was at 98% compared to 91% in 2019 and that the employer contribution rate was increasing from 1st April 2023 by 0.8% was noted.

594 **Investments** – Cllr Yelland reported that members of the working group had met with a representative from the CCLA on 24th November. The CCLA had a AAA credit rating and over 700 parish and town councils invested with them. It had been ascertained that the Public Sector Deposit Fund was the most suitable; its yield was calculated daily and was 2.84% net of all charges on the day of the meeting.

The Clerk had checked with the internal auditor who was satisfied the account was suitable and a local council who was happy with their service.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Fisher, it was **RESOLVED** to recommend to full Council that some funds were moved to a CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund.

Clerk

The Clerk reported that the move of funds NatWest to Nationwide had still not been actioned by NatWest and it was **agreed** that the council should request that they meet the loss of income from interest.

Ass.
Clerk

- 595 **Coronation of King Charles III, 6 May 2023** – Cllr Fisher reported there would be a Coffee Morning in the Charter Hall when the Coronation would be screened, followed in the afternoon by a bring and share street party. Pens were being purchased for those in primary education the cost of which partly be shared by the town council.

The Clerk advised that an order for tables and chairs for the afternoon street party had been placed at the cost of £635.17 and that it was hoped they could be stored overnight in All Saints Church Hall, for which there would be a charge.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Fisher, it was **RESOLVED** to approve a request from Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council to join the working group and be involved in the events, and that the Clerk and/or Everything Okehampton apply for a grant towards the costs accordingly.

Clerk

596 **Reports of Council Working/Task & Finish Groups –**

596.1 **Investment** – As above at Min Ref 594.

596.2 **King Charles III Coronation** – As above at Min Ref 595.

597 **Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items –**

597.1 **Citizens Advice** – Cllr Yelland reported that Citizens Advice were still trying to recruit volunteers to the Okehampton office. Their opening hours were changing from February 2023 and a drop-in service would be available on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays for the most vulnerable, digitally excluded or emergency issues. Face to Face appointments would continue to be available on all three days.

597.2 **DALC Larger Councils Sub-Committee** – Cllr Yelland and Clerk had attended the meeting on 17th November when a number of matters had been considered including the cost-of-living crisis. The next meeting was on 10th February.

597.3 **Fairtrade** – No report

597.4 **Twinning Association** – No report

(A member of the public left the meeting)

598 **On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Fisher 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.**

599 **Outstanding Balances** – The report was not available.

600 **Staffing Matters** – The Clerk reported that the Apprentice, Mr Peek, was due to complete the Level 2 Horticultural apprenticeship within the next few months and had accepted the Council's offer to continue to Level 3.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** that:

- on commencement of Level 3 an updated contract in line with that used for other staff members be issued

- that the pay for Level 3 be in line with the national guidelines relevant to apprenticeships
- to increase Mr Peek's current rate of pay for Level 2 in accordance with national guidelines, that the increase be backdated to the relevant date.

Clerk

On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded Cllr Matravers, it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part Two.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.20pm.

Cllr Yelland
Chairman

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