



Okehampton Town Council



Okehampton Town Council  
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[www.okehampton.gov.uk](http://www.okehampton.gov.uk)

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## NEWSLETTER - APRIL 2023

Sign up to receive the newsletters electronically by visiting the Council's [website](http://www.okehampton.gov.uk)

### 3<sup>rd</sup> April, Annual Town Assembly

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, a meeting of the parish of Okehampton Town will be held at 7pm on 3<sup>rd</sup> April in the Charter Hall.

This is a meeting for the residents of the town. It is an opportunity to find out what the Council has been doing and what its plans are for the forthcoming year.

Unfortunately, the planned Cyber Security presentation from Devon and Cornwall Police Cyber Protect Team has been cancelled as the presenter has been injured in an accident. Read Easy will still be sharing information about the work of the group. Stepping in to fill the gap is James McGahey, the Park-Keeper, who will be talking about the work the Parks Team does and a representative from DCC about the Okehampton Community Fridge.

### Coronation of King Charles III, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Working together Okehampton Town Council, Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council and Everything Okehampton are organising events to celebrate the Coronation. Everyone is welcome to attend these events - do come and join in.

#### Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May Morning

On Saturday morning at a time to be confirmed yet by Buckingham Palace the Coronation of King Charles III will be screened in the Charter Hall. During the morning a coffee morning will also be taking place with refreshments provided by the Inner Wheel.

Why not come down to the Charter Hall and watch the coronation in the company of old friends and new and share the memories of this rare occasion.

#### Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May Afternoon

In the afternoon the celebrations continue. Moving out into St James' Street and around St James' Chapel there will be a bring and share street party. St James' street will be closed between 2pm and 5pm with tables and chairs set out for everyone to join in the street party. The local food businesses will have food available to purchase if you don't want to bring something from home. The Town Crier will be announcing the programme during the day. There will be musical entertainment during the afternoon from Terrie May McNulty of Nightingale Music and others.

#### Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May Morning

The Rev Stephen Cook will be holding a service to commemorate the Coronation of King Charles III in All Saints Church.

#### Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May Afternoon

Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council will be holding a cream tea in Meldon Village Hall (time to be confirmed)

Bandstand and Trees As part of the Coronation Okehampton Town Council are in the process of reconfiguring the old bandstand in the park to add a new structure on the base. The bandstand has a plaque dedicating it to the Coronation of King George V so it was felt that this was the ideal place to have a memorial to the late Queen as well as to the Coronation of King Charles III. Planting around the base will be improved with several of the King and Queen Consort's favourite plants.

Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council will be planting trees to add to the Queen's Green Canopy scheme.



## Online Booking Facility

The Town Council is pleased to be able to announce the launch of its new online booking facility. Simmons Park, the Charter Hall, Council Chamber and Committee Room can now be booked directly through the new facility which will be available on the Council website in the next few days.

As well as being able to book a room or Simmons Park, you will be able to see what's happening in the Charter Hall or other facilities managed by the council.

Don't worry - if you aren't online or do not wish to use it you can still complete a paper form, ring us or pop into the office as usual.

## Town and Parish Council Elections – 4 May 2023

Voters are now required to take photo ID to be able to vote - details can be found on the [Electoral Commission website](#).



## Simmons Park News

James, the Park-Keeper has provided an update on happenings in the park:



With some rather damp weather in the past couple of months a lot has still been accomplished and spring is in full flow in the park. Progress has been made on the rose garden with new gravel laid around it, a number of new roses planted and also the benches in there getting a much needed repaint with the final three to finish.

The typhoon swing has been closed for the past month while we renewed all the inner working on it and the tension ropes at the top. We are just waiting for parts to arrive to renew the seats so all moving parts will be new on it and we hope for it to be open for the Easter Holidays.

Within the past month a range of colour has started to show itself in the flower beds with some warmer days recently making it feel like spring has arrived. Considering how wet it was during their flowering period it was a very good year for the crocus which again have spread in all areas they are sited which is all part of the management we have in place to encourage these to spread back to the amount there was in the park many years ago. Also the daffodils, snowdrops, primrose and magnolia stellate by the main gate are now flowering and the bluebells aren't far away.



A number of flowering cherry trees have been planted in the park bordering the car park which in time should in time give a nice colour to people's arrival into the park in spring. Also, a number of native species have been planted into areas where the diseased Ash trees once were.

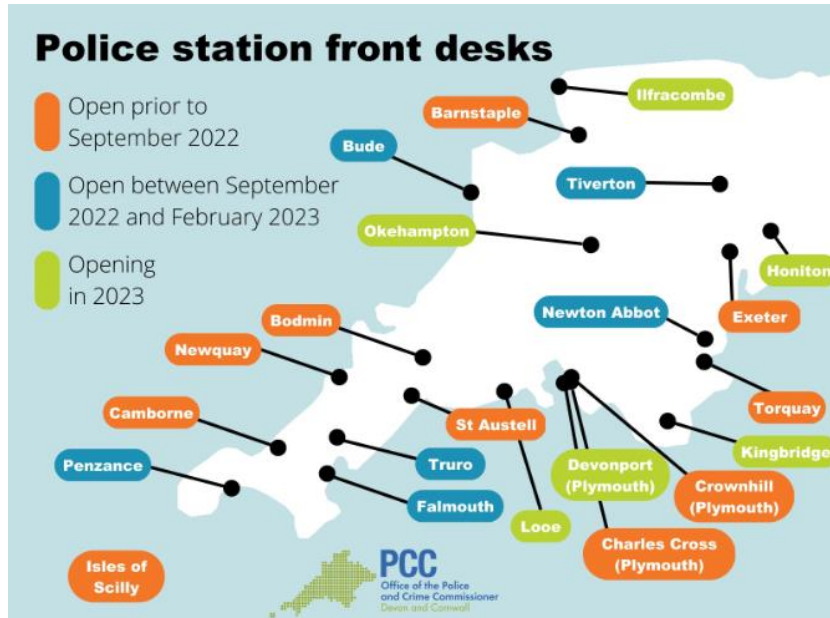
Also, the ponds are now teeming with life with a lot of pond-skaters, caddisfly and dragonfly larvae and with the majority of the tadpoles hatching the newt numbers in the ponds are on the rise again. This is all part of why the dogs aren't allowed in the ponds to protect the life in them and the dogs being on leads has aided this with plants growing now in the ponds and species numbers up.

The bird boxes are back up around the park and are getting a wide variety of interest from a number of species and we hope the pair of nuthatches will be back in the boxes this year after they had a successful year last year in one of our boxes.

With conditions hopefully warming and drying up in the next month we have the wildflower area by Westbridge to rotavate and apply an overseed to. At the skatepark we will be carrying out some running resurfacing repairs to and hopefully finish the outdoor painting before the grass mowing begins in full force.

If you see me in the park or around the town, I'm always happy to answer questions you may have.

James McGahey  
Park Keeper Simmons Park



## Simmons Park Book Swap

The book swap in the park is looking a little empty. If anyone has unwanted books, please add them to the collection.



## Okehampton Police Desk Reopening

Alison Hernandez, Police & Crime Commissioner has confirmed that the police enquiry office in Okehampton will be reopening in the 2023/24 financial year between the hours of 10am - 3pm Monday to Saturday.

## Public Emergency Alerts

**A siren-like alert will be sent to smartphone users across the UK next month to test a new government public warning system. More information can be found on the [Government website](#).**

The alert allows the government and emergency services to send urgent messages warning the public of life-threatening situations like flooding or wildfires.

The test is expected to take place in the early evening of 23 April.

Phone users will have to acknowledge the alert before they can use other features on their devices. A message will appear on the home screens of people's devices during the test, with vibration and a loud warning sound that will ring for about 10 seconds, even if the phone is set to silent.

The system - which became operational on Sunday - is being modelled on similar schemes used in the US, Canada, Japan and The Netherlands. Emergency alerts work on all 4G and 5G phone networks and will not include older "non-smart" phones, the government said.

Messages would only ever come from the government or emergency services and will initially focus on the most serious weather-related events, with the ability to get a message to 90% of mobile users within the relevant area.

Terror alerts could be added to the list of potential events that would trigger a notification. The messages will include details of the area impacted and instructions about how to respond. They will only be sent where there is an immediate risk to life and many people may not receive an alert for months or years.

People can opt out by searching their device settings for emergency alerts and then turning off severe and extreme ones.

## Town Council Grants

In the 2022/23 financial year which came to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> March, the Council had £29,000 budgeted for the award of grants supporting not-for-profit community organisations and groups for the benefit of the residents of Okehampton. The total amount of grants awarded within that year amounted to £26,922.63.

The process for applying for a grant from the Council has now changed, details can be found on the [website](#) along with the new forms and policy or obtained from the office. £29,000 is budget for the award of grants in this new 2023/24 financial year.

## Coming up in April

- 1<sup>st</sup> Friendly Circle Coffee Morning (Charter Hall)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Town Assembly (Charter Hall)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Friendly Circle (Charter Hall)
- 5<sup>th</sup> Craft Market (Charter Hall) (to be confirmed)
- 8<sup>th</sup> Rotary Coffee Morning (Charter Hall)
- 13<sup>th</sup> NHS Blood Donation Session (Charter Hall)
- 15<sup>th</sup> Community Transport Coffee Morning (Charter Hall)
- 29<sup>th</sup> Carnival Coffee Morning (Charter Hall)

## May

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Friendly Circle (Charter Hall)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Craft Fair (Charter Hall) (to be confirmed)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Elections (Charter Hall)
- 6<sup>th</sup> Coronation of King Charles III events
- 18<sup>th</sup> NHS Blood Donation Session (Charter Hall)
- 20<sup>th</sup> Trek 26 South Devon Coffee Morning (Charter Hall)
- 27<sup>th</sup> OkeRail Coffee Morning (Charter Hall)

## Town Council Meeting Dates

### April 2023

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Town Assembly (Charter Hall)
- 17<sup>th</sup> Policy & Resources Committee
- 24<sup>th</sup> Full Council

### May 2023

- 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Council Meeting and Mayor Choosing event (3pm)
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Full Council

Meeting dates for the remainder of 2022/23 Mayoral Year along with that for 2023/24 can be found on the [website](#). Some Planning Committee Meetings have been scheduled; others will be convened as needed in order to meet deadlines for submission of comments.

Council meetings normally start at 7pm and are held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Fore Street. Occasionally meetings are subject to change, the [website](#) or noticeboard in the Victorian Arcade should be checked for up-to-date information.

Charter Hall is available to book for all sorts of functions – from dance or martial arts lessons, music events or formal dinners.



## Livestreaming of Council Meetings

Meetings of Committees and Full Council are now being livestreamed through the Council Facebook page.

**Simmons Park Easter Trail sheets available from the Town Hall, book swap or the website.**

## Contact Us – 01837 53179

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Abi Horn, Admin Officer and Mayor's Assistant  
(Bookings and Invitations for the Mayor)  
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James McGahey, Park-Keeper  
[parks@okehampton.gov.uk](mailto:parks@okehampton.gov.uk)

## Your Councillors

Cllr Bob Tolley (Town Mayor)

Cllr Caleb Botton	Cllr Allenton Fisher
Cllr Jan Goffey	Cllr Carole Holt
Cllr Dr Michael Ireland	Cllr Tony Leech
Cllr Christine Marsh	Cllr Brendan Matravers
Cllr Ann Wood	Cllr Julie Yelland

Individual Councillors contact details can be obtained from the Office or website.