

**Minutes of an Okehampton Town Council Parks Committee Meeting held on  
Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022 at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

**Committee Members Present:** Councillor C Marsh (Chairman)  
Councillor T Abbots (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor B Tolley (Mayor)  
Councillor A Wood (Chairman, Property)  
Councillor J Yelland (Chairman, Policy & Resources)  
Councillor C Holt  
Councillor M Ireland

**Other Members Present:** Councillor A Fisher

**In Attendance:** Mrs E James (Town Clerk)  
Mr J McGahey (Park-Keeper)  
4 members of the public

		<b>Action</b>
<b>503</b>	<p><b><u>Apologies for Absence</u></b> – Apologies from Cllrs Leech and Matravers were <b>approved</b> on the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Wood.</p> <p>Apologies tendered by Cllr Goffey who was not a member of the committee were noted.</p>	
<b>504</b>	<p><b><u>Declarations of Interest</u></b> – None</p>	
<b>505</b>	<p><b><u>Public Participation</u></b> – A member of the public addressed the council about the land adjacent to the skatepark.</p> <p>(2 members of the public left the meeting)</p> <p>A member of the public spoke about the possibility of siting a 2-minute foundation litter picking station in Simmons Park.</p>	
<b>506</b>	<p><b><u>Park Keeper</u></b> – Mr McGahey provided an update which included that many of the benches had been refurbished, the beds by the ponds had been cleared ready for winter and composting, and work to clear other areas of garden was in progress. Hedges had been trimmed and the Cemetery had been made ready for winter. The bird boxes had been collected for maintenance, there were plans to build an owl box and to provide bat boxes the following year as there were at least 2 species in the park. Some overgrown roses had been removed from the rose garden and would be replaced.</p>	
<b>507</b>	<p><b><u>Members' Questions</u></b> – None</p>	
<b>508</b>	<p><b><u>Minutes</u></b> - Minutes of the Parks Committee meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022 were <b>APPROVED</b> to be signed by the Chairman on the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Tolley.</p>	
<b>509</b>	<p><b><u>Parks Bookings</u></b> - The following events scheduled to take place in Simmons Park were noted:</p> <p>11<sup>th</sup> December 2022    PTFA Santa Run 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2023      OCRA Schools Cross Country 25<sup>th</sup> February 2023     WREN Music Lantern Procession</p>	

510	<p><b><u>2 Minute Foundation Litter Picking Station</u></b> – This item of business was brought forward with the agreement of the Committee.</p> <p>On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Wood it was <b>RESOLVED</b> to suspend Standing Orders permitting a member of the public to speak on this item.</p> <p>Correspondence from a member of the public requesting that a litter-picking station be sited in Simmons Park was considered and Councillors asked questions of the member of the public who was present.</p> <p>It was commented that consideration needed to be given to the disposal of any litter collected and insurance cover for those who used the station to collect waste as they would be classed as volunteers for the owner of the station. The Clerk raised concern about the potential danger of litter picking along the riverbank.</p> <p>On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Yelland it was <b>RESOLVED</b> to reinstate Standing Orders.</p> <p>On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> to support the project in principle subject to provision of insurance and suitable resolutions to the other issues raised.</p> <p>(A member of the public left the meeting)</p>	Clerk
511	<p><b><u>Simmons Park Information Boards and Town Signage</u></b> – The Clerk reported that the outcome of the planning application for the information board in Simmons Park was expected at the end of December and permission was awaited from DCC to add footpath signage in identified locations. A draft of the map to be placed at the Railway Station was reviewed and some minor amendments suggested.</p> <p>On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve the purchase of finger posts as outlined in the previously circulated report, if permission was received, A3 signs at the two footpath entrances into the park from Station Road and that the Clerk seek further grant funding from Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership.</p>	Clerk
512	<p><b><u>Viewing Platform behind Lidl</u></b> – The Park-Keeper reported that the platform, supporting structure and fencing was becoming poor although it was currently safe for use. Quotations for required work to be provided at the next meeting.</p>	Park-Keeper
513	<p><b><u>Free After 3pm Parking</u></b> – The Committee noted that the annual ‘free after 3’ parking on weekdays and all day at weekends throughout December had been offered in Simmons Park.</p>	
514	<p><b><u>Bin and Bench Audit</u></b> – The Clerk reported that the audit of council owned bins and benches was complete and a conversation with WDBC had been initiated with regard to ensuring that the council was being correctly charged for collection.</p>	
515	<p><b><u>Verti Drainage</u></b> – The Park-Keeper reported that this was not required as the area did not suffer high impact from sport use. It was <b>agreed</b> that this be undertaken as and when needed in the future.</p>	

516	<b>Wildflower Planting</b> – Cllr Marsh suggested some additional planting that could be incorporated alongside the wildflower verge in West Street. An update to be provided at the next meeting.	Cllr Marsh/ Park- Keeper
517	<b>Land Adjacent to Skatepark</b> – The Clerk reported that a draft lease for the previously considered use of the land had been received. The Committee <b>agreed</b> to defer this item to be discussed confidentially later in the meeting.	
518	<b>Cemetery</b>	
518.1	<b>Burials</b> - A summary of burials totalling 10 since 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2022 was noted.	
518.2	<b>Schedule of Fees 2023/24</b> - The Committee considered the schedule of fees to be charged for the 2023/24 financial year. The Committee <b>agreed</b> to defer this item to be discussed confidentially later in the meeting.	
518.3	<b>Grave Markers</b> - The Committee <b>agreed</b> to defer the item to be discussed confidentially later in the meeting alongside other items relating to the cemetery.	
519	<b>2023/24 Budget</b> – The draft budget was scrutinised and emailed comments from Cllr Leech considered.  The Clerk advised the actual business rates for 2023/24 had been ascertained and for Simmons Park car park were increasing by £948 to £5,489, whilst the Cemetery rates were remaining the same at £122.  On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> to recommend the budget to full Council for consideration with the following amendments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• changes in line with the business rates as detailed above</li> <li>• reduce the tools &amp; equipment budget to £1,000, as it was suggested that replacement of fuel operated machinery with battery operated alternatives could be funded from the Climate Change budget</li> <li>• verti drainage to be removed from the budget</li> </ul>	Clerk
520	<b>Bowling Club Agreement</b> – The Committee <b>agreed</b> to defer this item to be discussed confidentially later in the meeting	
521	<b>Cemetery Land Purchase</b> – The Clerk reported that a decision following an offer made on a piece of land was awaited.	
522	<b>Payment of Invoices</b> – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Holt, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve the schedule of payments.	
523	<b>Reports of Council Working/Task and Finish Groups -</b>	
523.1	<b>Cemetery Management</b> – No meeting had been held	
524	<b>Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items -</b>	
524.1	<b>Dartmoor National Park Forum</b> – Cllr Marsh had been unable to attend the last meeting.	
524.2	<b>Everything Okehampton</b> – Cllr Marsh reported Edwardian Evening had been successful and well attended, and the Christmas lights looked exceptionally good. Fundraising events including a successful black tie dinner had been held, tote bags and calendars were being sold. They would be supporting the Council with events celebrating the Coronation of King Charles III in May and a Charter Anniversary in July.	

524.3	<u>North Dartmoor Search &amp; Rescue Team</u> – Cllr Ireland had no information to report.	
524.4	<p><u>Okehampton Community Recreation Association (OCRA)</u> – Cllr Tolley advised a meeting had been held the previous week. The Manager was working with the Town Clerk to undertake a survey of sport and recreation, the accounts had been audited and they were seeking a Warm Hub grant.</p> <p>Cllr Yelland offered congratulations to Everything Okehampton and the volunteers who had assisted with Edwardian Evening.</p>	
524.5	<u>Okehampton &amp; District Community Transport Group</u> – No report.	
524.6	<u>Parklands Leisure Centre Users Group</u> – No meeting had been held	
524.7	<p><u>Beacon Path Sticklepath to Okehampton</u> – No report.</p> <p>(Remaining members of the public left the meeting with the exception of the Park-Keeper who was permitted to remain.)</p>	
525	<p><b>Part Two Confidential Items</b> – On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Holt, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> 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.</p>	
526	<p><b>Land Adjacent to Skate Park</b> – The draft lease provided by the proposer was considered by the Committee.</p> <p>On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> to progress with the potential lease of the land and that the following actions be undertaken by the Clerk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lease to be sent to Stephens Scown for review</li> <li>• Letter to be sent to the proposer advising that planning consent for change of use would be needed, that the lease was being forwarded to the Solicitor for review, that the area identified in the plan attached to the lease did not all belong to the Council and the plans would need to be revised, that required information be provided by the end of January 2023 for review by the Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023.</li> </ul>	Clerk
527	<p><b>Cemetery – Grave Markers</b> - On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Wood it was <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve the purchase of 25 ‘reserved’ grave markers at £17 each as outlined in the report.</p>	Clerk
528	<p><b>Stone Mason</b> - A report from the Clerk in relation to the placement of a Memorial Stone in the Cemetery within twelve months of a burial, which contravened council policy was considered.</p> <p>On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Wood, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Clerk write to the Stone Mason outlining the contraventions and reminding them of council policy.</p> <p>On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Abbots, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> to suspend Standing Order 3 (bb) to permit the extension of the meeting.</p>	

**529 Cemetery Fees 2023/24** – A report comparing the current fees with those of nearby Cemeteries was considered.

On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was **RESOLVED** to increase the fees for interments as follows for the 2023/24 financial year, to take effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023:

	<b>Residents</b>	<b>Non-Residents</b>
<b>Coffin</b>	£200	£370
<b>Ashes</b>	£120	£300

Clerk

**530 Bowling Club Agreement** – The Clerk reported that the cost of the licence for the extraction of water from the river had risen from £25 in 2021/22 to £115 for 2022/23.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** that a meeting be arranged with the Bowling Club Chairman, Chairman of the Parks Committee and Clerk to discuss the situation in relation to the supply of water and maintenance that the Council undertook for the benefit of the Club.

Cllr Marsh/  
Clerk

**531 Old Band Stand Base** – Quotations received for enhancement of the base by the creation of a pergola type structure were considered and it was noted that only one company had submitted a quotation.

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Wood, it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Sam Dunn Fabrication, subject to the following:

- amendments to be made to the design to incorporate some features from the existing park railings, and other items which could include the addition of a weather vein and the Council Crest
- planning consent, if required
- consent from Simmons Park Charity
- agreement of the person who bequeathed a sum of money which would be used for this project

Cllr Marsh/  
Clerk

**532 Car Park Agreement** – Cllr Marsh reported that she and the Clerk had met with representatives from the DMAT to discuss the agreement.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was **RESOLVED** to:

- ascertain from DMAT the terms under which they would consent to the termination of the agreement
- if necessary, liaise with DCC
- recommend to full Council the termination of the agreement and the associated terms

Clerk

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Wood, it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part Two and ratify decisions made therein. The meeting was closed at 9.50pm

**Councillor Marsh**  
**Chairman**