

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Okehampton Town Council Parks Committee  
held on Monday 21 July 2014 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber,  
Town Hall, Okehampton**

**Committee Members Present:** Councillor Mrs C Marsh (Chairman)  
Councillor K Ball (Vice Chairman)  
Councillor Dr M Ireland  
Councillor D Weekes  
Councillor P Vachon (Town Mayor)  
Councillor A Leech (Chairman, Planning)  
Councillor Mrs M McDonald (Chairman, P & R)  
Councillor Mrs J Goffey (Chairman, Property)

**Other Members Present:** Councillor Mrs J Yelland

**In Attendance:** P R Snell (Town Clerk)

133. **Apologies for Absence** - Apologies for absence were presented on behalf of Councillor M Davies.

134. **Deferment of Business - Presentation on Renewable Energy Opportunities for Communities by Andrew Shadrake, Senior Associate, DARE** - Mr A Shadrake gave a brief presentation on the purpose of the Devon Association for Renewable Energy (DARE), providing practical advice for Renewable Energy Community Fund projects. Currently working with Plymouth City Council to provide an energy community to reduce fuel poverty and allow profits to be applied to local projects, Mr Shadrake highlighted the achievements of Okehampton College in reducing its commercial power demand significantly over a five-year period.

At present the Rural Community Energy Fund was awarding grants of up to £20,000 to fund a feasibility study for willing communities, with the possibility of a further loan of up to £130,000 to fund projects identified by the report.

Questions identified that Devon County Council was not involved in this project due to differences of view, but that the domestic spend in Okehampton was assessed as some £3million. This was money that left the local community, whereas a local community energy project would create the opportunity for this to be spent locally. It was noted that any possible study only made sense if it involved Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council as well as the Town Council. Representatives of Okehampton Bowling Club asked if it would be possible to use the clubhouse roof. Mr Shadrake concluded his presentation by confirming that a feasibility study would provide independent advice to address such questions. The Chairman thanked Mr Shadrake for his presentation.

135. **Members' Questions** - None.

136. **Minutes** - The minutes of the Parks Committee held on Monday 16 June 2014 were approved and signed by the Chairman on the proposition of Councillor Dr M Ireland, seconded by Councillor P Vachon with all in favour.

**137. Matters Arising -**

**137.1 Sophia Simmons' Headstone** - Nothing to report.

**137.2 First World War Commemoration** - The Clerk reported that a grant of £250 from the Locality Fund had been received and applied for the planting of poppy and other seeds at various places in the town and Park. The Chairman expressed the Council's gratitude to Councillor Ball.

**137.3 Simmons Park Leaflet** - Nothing to report.

**137.4 BT Phone Box** - The Clerk reported that the telephone box had now been removed and located at the compound in Simmons Park. The cost for sandblasting and repainting was awaiting confirmation.

**137.5 College Car Park Alterations** - The Clerk reported that he was awaiting confirmation of a date to effect the necessary works from the contractor. He further reported that the routing of the electrical supply to the parking ticket machine was inconclusive. It would be necessary to have an electrical contractor on site when the ticketing machine was moved.

**138. Park Bookings** - The Clerk reported that no formal applications had been received. Councillor Mrs McDonald reported that there were several advertising banners showing a fete on 31 August sponsored by the Co-op. She had spoken to the Co-op Manager, who would be in contact with the Clerk in the near future.

**139. Open Spaces -**

(i) Transfers from West Devon Borough Council - The Chairman reported that while some information had been received on the cost of managing the toilets in Okehampton, further meetings were required in order to determine what size of dowry would accompany any potential transfer particularly for the toilets at Fairplace, in order for them not to be an ongoing liability for the Council. The Chairman confirmed that there was still a matter of ongoing discussion concerning the total extent of potential transfers from the Borough Council.

(ii) Soft testing process for delivery of leisure services in West Devon - Councillor Leech reported on the meeting he had attended at the College with OCRA. At the time of the meeting, no details were known. However, interested parties had until 23 June to submit a declaration of interest. OCRA accordingly submitted a holding declaration of interest in order to obtain further information.

**140. Works Completed or in Progress -**

**140.1 Tractor Mower Attachment Purchase** - The Clerk reported that the replacement mower attachment had been ordered and delivered.

**140.2 Tree Survey** - The Clerk reported that the tree survey in Simmons Park had been carried out and that the report was awaited in the next few days.

- 140.3 Play Area and Skate Park Safety Inspections** - The Clerk reported that the safety reports had been received and that he was currently discussing the comments made with the Park-keeper in order to identify priorities. The reports themselves would be circulated to Parks Committee Members in due course.
- 140.4 Play Area Equipment Replacement** - Two items of equipment had been agreed for replacement due to breakage (wear and tear). The items were being replaced on a like for like basis from the same supplier due to the sub-ground level fixings.
- 140.5 Cemetery Fencing** - The repairs to the rotted wooden posts at the new cemetery site had been commissioned and the work was expected to be carried out within the next few days.
- 140.6 Vertidrainage at Simmons Park** - The Clerk reported that contractors had been issued with an order to provide one day's vertidrainage services at Simmons Park, the date was yet to be confirmed. Councillor Weekes suggested that for the future, the same contractor might be approached as currently supplied services to the football club to provide a further comparative quote.
- 140.7 Waste Collection Contract** - The Clerk reported that the new contract with Devon Contract Waste had just begun and the regular contract with Biffa had now been terminated. The Clerk drew attention to the divergence of approach between West Devon Borough Council and Simmons Park. The Borough Council was now encouraging dog walkers to use normal litter bins for dog waste rather than leaving dog waste beside full dog bins. However, the Devon Contract Waste contract required that dog waste was not included with normal litter. Notices had been placed on waste bins accordingly. After discussion, it was generally agreed that the benefits of using a full recycling contractor outweighed the inconveniences of the previous contract.
- 140.8 Wild Flower Planting Areas** - The Chairman reported that the wild flower areas at West Bridge, the Skate Park and Simmons Park had been very successful and received many positive comments. The prepared areas at the church had not fared quite as well.
- 141. Repair of Play Area Surface** 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 item as it involved the likely disclosure of sensitive and confidential information. Proposed by Councillor Mrs McDonald, seconded by Councillor Mrs Goffey and agreed.

After discussion of the issues it was proposed to come out of part two, proposed by Councillor Mrs McDonald, seconded by Councillor Mrs Goffey with all in favour.

It was agreed to award the contract for the repair of the play area surface to Higgs-SMP on the proposition of Councillor Mrs McDonald, seconded by Councillor Mrs Goffey, with all in agreement.

- 142. Park Walkabout** - The Chairman reported that during a recent Park walkabout which included the Town Mayor and Clerk as well as the Park-keeper, certain areas had been identified for new or replacement signage. There was a pressing need for at least

one additional dog bin in Simmons Park, at the edge of the rose triangle adjacent to the new bandstand, and an additional bin on the Link Road in the vicinity of North Road. Precise positioning of this bin would be in consultation with South West Highways. The Chairman confirmed that both the cost of purchasing these bins and of emptying them was within the existing budget provision. The Chairman further reported investigations into the provision of dog waste bag stands to be positioned close by existing dog waste bins. After discussion on the type of dog waste bag stands that would be required, and of the costs of manufacturing them, it was agreed that a possible joint approach with Okehampton Hamlets to the TAP fund might provide a suitable solution.

After discussion on a suitable length of grass on both the formal side of the Park as well as the recreation area, whilst preserving a suitable wild growth area, it was generally agreed that the area around the Simmons monument should be more formally cut on a frequent basis. It was further agreed that the banks and slopes in the woodland were good areas for the regeneration of wild flowers.

**143. Community Energy Cooperative** - After discussion of the matters raised during Mr Shadrake's presentation, and on consideration of the possibility of a fully-funded feasibility report, it was resolved to support the commissioning of an integrated feasibility study for Okehampton Town and Hamlets subject to the approval of Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council, and to recommend this to the full Council. Proposed by Councillor Ireland, seconded by Councillor Ball and agreed. It was noted that the revised presentation, when received, would be forwarded to all Councillors with an explanatory note.

**144. Members' Reports** -

- (i) Children's Centre - Councillor Leech advised there would be a report at the next meeting.
- (ii) North Dartmoor Search and Rescue Group - Councillor Ireland reported on an ongoing review of governing documents and procedures, an audit of training skills, introduction of 25 and 40 year long service certificates, road closure training and the postponement of opening of the new building. There would be an open day when building works were completed.
- (iii) Okehampton Community Archive - Councillor Vachon would give a report at the next meeting.
- (iv) Okehampton Community Recreation Association (OCRA) - No meeting.
- (v) Parklands Leisure Centre Users' Group - No meeting.
- (vi) Tennis Court Management - No meeting.
- (vii) Youth Issues/Room 13 - The Chairman reported that consultations were ongoing on the future provision.

Meeting closed at 8.48 pm

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**Councillor Mrs C Marsh**  
**Chairman**