

**Minutes of an Okehampton Town Council Parks Committee Meeting held on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023 at 7.25pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

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

**Other Members Present:** Councillor R Colman  
 Councillor T Cummings  
 Councillor M Harding

**In Attendance:** Mrs E James (Town Clerk)  
 Mr J McGahey (Park-Keeper)

	<b>Action</b>
118 <b><u>Apologies for Absence</u></b> – Apologies tendered by Cllrs Bird and Rogers who were not members of the committee were noted.	
119 <b><u>Declarations of Interest</u></b> – None	
120 <b><u>Public Participation</u></b> – None	
121 <b><u>Park Keeper</u></b> – Mr McGahey provided an update which included replanting of the sensory garden with a variety of plants and the addition of hellebores and hollyhocks in Simmons Park to add winter colour. A grant application to Wild About Devon for funding for bat boxes, hedgehog houses, bug hotels, and pond plants amongst other items had been successful. In time he hoped to set up a trail for children linked into wildlife in Simmons Park. An award from Devon Wildlife Trust had been received. Benches in the rose garden had been repainted and new roses had planted earlier in spring. Three people had signed up to the Volunteer Group at the induction day, and one other since.	
122 <b><u>Members’ Questions</u></b> – None	
123 <b><u>Minutes</u></b> - Minutes of the Parks Committee meeting held on 6 <sup>th</sup> February 2023 were <b>APPROVED</b> to be signed by the Chairman on the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Tolley.	
124 <b><u>Parks Bookings</u></b> –	
124.1 Events that had either taken place or were scheduled to take place in Simmons Park, subject to receipt of the necessary paperwork, were noted.	
124.2 On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve a request from Wren Music to hold a Junk Music session at the Skate Park from 10am to 12noon on 30 <sup>th</sup> August 2023, subject to receipt of necessary paperwork.	
On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Wood, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> not to agree a request from Friends of Okehampton Primary School to hold	Clerk

	<p>a Fireworks event in Simmons Park on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2023 due to concern about noise in the centre of a residential area, the heritage and conservation status of the park and potential impact on wildlife.</p>	Clerk
125	<p><b>Allotments</b> – Cllr Weekes requested consideration be given to the provision of more allotments as there was a long waiting list. He referred to a business interest and declared a pecuniary interest.</p> <p>(Cllr Weekes left the room)</p> <p>On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Fisher, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> not to provide more allotments as there were already three sites in the town and no provision in the budget for the creation of more.</p> <p>(Cllr Weekes returned)</p>	
126	<p><b>Play Areas</b> – Cllr Weekes referred to a business interest and the item was deferred to a future meeting should a request be received by the Clerk.</p>	
127	<p><b>Simmons Park Play Equipment</b> – Councillors commented on a recent visit to the play area and noted two items of equipment in need of maintenance and little used that could potentially be removed, those being the climbing pole and standing rocker see-saw.</p> <p>Cllr Marsh declared an interest being a Trustee of Okehampton United Charity who had indicated they may be willing to fund replacement or new play equipment.</p> <p>On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Fisher, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> to obtain costings for potential new items as sourced by the Park-Keeper; see-saw options, a wheelchair swing, the Chilli Farm tractor and combine harvester for consideration at the next meeting.</p>	Park-Keeper/ Clerk
128	<p><b>Play Equipment Inspection Reports</b> – The Park-Keeper reported the RoSPA Playsafety annual inspections of the play areas and skate park had been undertaken in March 2023. Remedial work required was minor and almost complete however the climbing pole and tyre swing had been highlighted; the climbing pole as having slight movement and the tyre swing as needing new parts.</p>	
129	<p><b>Litter Bins</b> – Cllr Leech had received a request from a member of the public for the provision of additional litter bins at the Okehampton Primary School footpath.</p> <p>On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Marsh it was <b>RESOLVED</b> that WDBC be asked if they would be willing to empty a bin partway up the path if the request was supported in the future by the Council.</p>	Clerk
130	<p><b>Electricity Costs</b> – Energy reducing options including hydro power and solar were commented upon, noting that hydro power was costly and solar was not feasible at the ponds because of trees.</p> <p>On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Yelland (1 against), it was <b>RESOLVED</b> to install a smart meter to enable the monitoring of usage.</p>	Ass. Clerk
131	<p><b>Alms House</b> – Cllrs Marsh, Cummings and Fisher declared interests.</p>	

- On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Leech (1 abstention), it was **RESOLVED** to approve a request for permission to construct a patio area at the rear of Chalet Treloar providing the slabs were in the same position as existing concrete surfacing and there would be no cost to the Council. Clerk
- A further request for fencing would be considered at the next meeting. Clerk
- 132 **Dog Waste** – On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to respond to correspondence from a member of the public noting comments therein and request WDBC’s Dog Warden visit when possible. Clerk
- 133 **Hedgehog Highway Project** – On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was **RESOLVED** to purchase a box of 50 Hedgehog Highway surrounds to highlight the importance of hedgehogs and their declining numbers, and resale of the items at cost price. Clerk
- 134 **Progress Reports and Updates**
- 134.1 **Simmons Park Information Boards and Town Signage** – The Committee noted the boards and signs had been received and installed.
- 134.2 **Smoke Free Playgrounds** – It was noted DCC would be providing Town Councils within West Devon new free signage for play areas.
- 134.3 **Wild About Devon Community Wildlife Fund** – A grant application submitted by the Park-Keeper had been successful and £387 was awarded for the purchase of items including pond planting, bat and hedgehog boxes, and bug hotels.
- 134.4 **Wildlife Gardening Award** – The Park-Keeper had been successful in an application for a Devon Wildlife Gardening Award for which a small plaque had been received.
- 134.5 **Viewing Platform behind Lidl** – Recent vandalism to the structure which was waiting replacement had been reported to the police.
- 134.6 **Picus Tree Inspection** – A specialist picus tree inspection of the TPO Oak tree on the boundary of the Bowling Club had been undertaken in April 2023 and little deterioration of its condition was evident.
- 134.7 **Volunteer Group** – An update had previously been provided by the Park-Keeper.
- 135 **Cemetery**
- 135.1 **Burials** - The summary of burials was noted, and the Clerk reported there were believed to only be six cremation interment plots left within the Graveyard managed by All Saints Church.
- 135.2 **Wayleave** – A wayleave from the National Grid for permission to install one stay wire along the fence line had been agreed. This was in place of routing of a cable around the bottom end of the cemetery as previously agreed by the Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Order 3 (bb) to permit extension of the meeting following a proposal by Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Marsh.

- 136 **Payment of Invoices** – On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Fisher, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments.
- 137 **Terms of Reference** – On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Fisher it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the document to Full Council.
- 138 **Reports of Council Working/Task and Finish Groups -**  
 138.1 **Cemetery Management** – A meeting was being held the following week.
- 138.2 **Putting Green Improvements** - A meeting was being held the following week.
- 139 **Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items -**  
 139.1 **Dartmoor National Park Forum** –Cllr Marsh reported there was a meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> July.
- 139.2 **Everything Okehampton** – Cllr Marsh reported that on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> July an event celebrating the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a Town Charter alongside other anniversaries was being held in Simmons Park.
- 139.3 **Okehampton Community Recreation Association (OCRA)** – Cllr Tolley advised there had not been a meeting since April. OCRA were holding events on 9<sup>th</sup> July for Fields in Trust as part of the anniversary celebrations.
- 139.4 **Okehampton & District Community Transport Group** – Cllr Leech reported on IT issues experienced earlier in the day. Additional volunteer drivers were needed.
- 139.5 **Parklands Leisure Centre Users Group** – Cllr Marsh advised there had not been a meeting. Cllr Leech was pushing for a meeting to be arranged. Solar panels were to be fitted to roof, it was hoped the Café may open towards end of the summer and referrals from GP's were increasing.
- (Cllr Weekes left the meeting)
- 140 **Part Two Confidential Items** – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Ireland, 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.
- (The Park-Keeper and other councillors in attendance were permitted to remain.)
- 141 **Ponds** – (Cllr Weekes returned)
- The Clerk reported on a matter recently highlighted and correspondence with another party. No action was agreed by the Committee with exception of the checking/updating of the Risk Assessment.
- 142 **Old Bandstand Base Enhancement** – It was reported the structure had been erected earlier in the day.

Clerk

Admin  
Officer/  
Clerk

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| 143 | <p>On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Fisher, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> that four separate commemorative plaques in the style in keeping with others in the park, including on the Pillbox be purchased</p> <p><b><u>Tyre Swing</u></b> – Quotations for replacement of the tyre swing were considered. On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> to accept the quotation from HAGS at the cost of £8,410.</p> | Admin<br>Officer/<br>Clerk<br>Park-<br>Keeper/<br>Clerk |
| 144 | <p><b><u>Cycle Racks</u></b> – Item deferred for consideration of alternative locations. It was noted that planning consent may be required for their installation. Site meeting to be arranged.</p>   | Clerk   |
| 145 | <p><b><u>Carpark Relining</u></b> – Item deferred for consideration of alternative locations for a motorcycle parking bay. Site meeting to be arranged in conjunction with that for the cycle racks.</p>   | Clerk   |
| 146 | <p><b><u>Bowling Club</u></b> – A request for reconsideration of a decision in relation to the provision of a free parking permit was considered.</p> <p>On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Yelland, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> that the previous decision remain unchanged.</p>  | Clerk   |

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Fisher it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part Two and ratify decisions made therein. The meeting was closed at 9.45pm

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**Councillor Holt**  
**Chairman**