

**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 26th June 2023 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

Members Present: Councillor A Fisher (Mayor)
Councillor C Holt (Chairman, Parks Committee)
Councillor T Leech (Chairman, Planning Committee)
Councillor A Wood (Chairman, Property Committee)
Councillor J Yelland (Chairman, Policy & Resources Committee)
Councillor L Bird
Councillor R Colman
Councillor M Ireland
Councillor C Marsh
Councillor B Tolley
Councillor S Weekes

In Attendance: Mrs E James (Town Clerk)
Inspector Conway, Devon and Cornwall Police
Councillor L Samuel (WDBC)
3 members of the public

Action

- 81 **Apologies for Absence** – Apologies tendered by Cllr Calder, WDBC, were noted.
- 82 **Declarations of Interest** – None
- 83 **Public Participation** – None
- 84 **Members Questions** – None
- 85 **West Devon Borough Council** – Cllr Leech reported that WDBC were still in limbo following the elections in May and the by-elections which had concluded last week. The new council should be fully formed by the end of June.
- 86 **Devon County Council** – Cllr Samuel advised a new Neighbourhood Highways Officer was in post and would forward details to the Clerk. DCC would be holding a Governance Review and she would be part of the review group.
- 87 **Questions Arising from Members Reports** – An update on DCC proposals for on-street parking charges was requested. Cllr Samuel advised she would be attending a meeting on 27 June and there would be a presentation to the council at later date.
- Quality of recent repair work to a pavement in Vicarage Road which appeared unnecessary was commented upon and feedback requested from Cllr Samuel. It was noted that an area of paving near Hunters Gate had also been repaired, the quality of the work was poor and tarmac already lifting.
- Progress on work for the provision of the Okehampton Parkway Station was requested. Cllr Samuel reported that work was progressing and was on track for completion within 18 months.
- 88 **Visiting Speakers** – Inspector Conway addressed the council and introduced himself as the new section Inspector for West Devon, having been in post for approximately 6 months.

West Devon was 1 of 27 sectors in Devon and Cornwall, the third safest in the country. Current priorities were drugs, road safety (drink driving and speeding) and anti-social behaviour. Building public confidence, encouraging teams to be visible and take pride in their performance was also a priority. The front office

would be reopening in Okehampton this financial year and Simmons Park was currently a priority with patrols between midnight and 3am as well as at other times.

(Cllr Weekes arrived)

There were over 50 officers and staff in West Devon, split between Okehampton and Tavistock. Data was updated at the end of each month. May's data included the following:

363 incidents recorded in May, which was under the Force average. Reports of antisocial behaviour totalled 39, down by 5 from May 22, again under the Force average.

1671 incidents reported since May 2022 which was under force average and figures for the previous year. Of this 135 were related to anti-social behaviour, 146 last year.

10 reported crimes in Okehampton in the last two weeks.

Questions and comments including the following were posed by Councillors:

- Officers were welcome to attend Councillor Surgeries if possible.
- Police presence in Simmons Park on 9 July for the 400th Anniversary Celebrations would be welcomed.

(Insp Conway left the meeting)

89 Adoption of Minutes of Committees and Members' Questions arising Thereof –

89.1 Planning Committee meetings held on 21 November 2022, 23rd January, 20th February, 13th and 27th March, 17th April and 2nd May 2023 - adoption proposed by Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Tolley and **approved**.

89.2 Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 17th April 2023 - adoption proposed by Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Wood and **approved**.

90 Full Council Meeting Minutes – The minutes of the Town Council meetings held on 17th, 22nd and 30th May 2023 including an amendment to those of 22nd May removing Cllr Cooper's name from the list of attendees and increasing the number of members of the public present to 3 were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Holt, to be signed by Cllr Fisher.

91 Co-option of Councillors – On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to hold a paper ballot for the co-option of Councillors to fill the three vacancies.

Voting for each of the three vacancies was undertaken separately and the were filled by co-option as follows:

- Vacancy 1 – Terry Cummings
- Vacancy 2 – Michael Harding
- Vacancy 3 – Lynne Rogers

(The meeting paused whilst Cllrs Fisher, Leech, Tolley and Weekes left briefly to deal with a disruption in the building.)

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was **RESOLVED** to consider the Committees the newly elected Councillors would sit on at the next meeting of the Council.

Clerk

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was **RESOLVED** to that Cllr Cummings would represent the South Ward and Cllrs Harding and Rogers the North Ward.

92 **2022/23 Year End Reports and Audits**

92.1 **End of Year Bank Reconciliation/Balance Sheet** – On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Weekes it was **RESOLVED** to approve the bank reconciliation/balance sheet for the year ended 31st March 2023 which was signed by the Mayor and Clerk/RFO.

92.2 **Internal Audit Certificate and Report** – The Clerk reported that the certificate and report had been received which confirmed the Council had met its responsibilities during the year, copies of which had been provided for Members. On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the observations, certificate and report.

The three observations raised by the auditor, which did not affect the overall result of the audit, were as follows:

- Fidelity insurance cover increase – quotation for additional cover as recommended had been requested by the Clerk for consideration by the Council at the next meeting.
- Bank statement not available at 31st March 2023 for the Skate Project account, the balance in April 2022 being £2,499.35 – Consideration was given to the auditors recommendation that the account be closed. On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Yelland, it was **RESOLVED** to close the account and transfer the funds to the main Lloyds account ensuring the funds remained earmarked for the Skatepark.
- Car park income relating to 2022/23 not accrued at year end – The Clerk explained the reasons including that this was because the value of income was not known at 31st March 2023. **Agreed** no action to be taken.

Clerk

92.3 **AGAR Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2022/23** – Councillors considered the Council's internal control processes and their effectiveness, and the statements numbered 1 to 8 were read out separately. Councillors considered each statement and **agreed** a response of 'yes' to each one and N/A to statement 9 which was also read out.

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to approve a 'Yes' response to statements 1 to 8 and 'N/A' to statement 9. Cllr Fisher and the Clerk signed the statement.

92.4 **AGAR Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2022/23** – On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the accounting statements which were signed by Cllr Fisher.

92.5 **Electors' Rights** – On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the dates for the Electors Rights, the period commencing on 28th June 2023 and ending on 8th August 2023.

93 **Okehampton United Charity – Nomination of Trustee** – On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to nominate Cllr Bird as Trustee to Okehampton United Charity to fill the casual vacancy following the Ex Officio appointment of Cllr Fisher. Not carried

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to defer the decision to the next meeting.

Clerk

94	Finance – It was noted the invoice from Drainology related to work undertaken in March 2023. On the proposition of Cllr Weekes, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was RESOLVED to approve the schedule of payments.	
95	Policies and Documents –	
95.1	Policies - On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Wood, it was RESOLVED to approve the Business Continuity Plan as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee. The Work Experience Policy would be considered following staff consultation.	Clerk
95.2	Terms of Reference - On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was RESOLVED to approve the following Terms of Reference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Committee • Planning Committee • Policy & Resources Committee • Personnel Sub-Committee 	Clerk
96	Charter Hall Roofing Project – Cllr Leech reported the scaffolding design was holding up the project and needed to be dealt with urgently. The Clerk was requested to report back to the Project Manager. An item relating to a quotation for decorating was deferred to Part 2 for consideration.	Clerk
97	Emergency Planning – On the proposition of Cllr Weekes, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was RESOLVED to create a Task & Finish Group to work on the creation of an Emergency Plan and to liaise with Launceston Town Council, and others at their invitation. The group to consist of Cllrs Marsh, Weekes, Colman, Wood and an Officer.	Clerk
98	20's Plenty for Devon – On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Leech (2 abstentions), it was RESOLVED to join the campaign for a reduced speed limit in cities, towns and villages in Devon. Cllrs Marsh and Cummings agreed to attend meetings that may arise on behalf of the Council.	
99	Active Travel Project – Correspondence providing an update on the West Devon Borough Council and South Hams District Council cycling and walking project was considered. On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Bird, it was RESOLVED to appoint Cllrs Weekes and Marsh to represent the Council at any meetings that may arise.	
100	DCC Urban Renewal/Regeneration Project – The Clerk reported that a meeting of the group was expected to be convened in July.	
101	Business Improvement District – A meeting was taking place on 6 th July to receive a presentation and report on progress.	Cllrs/ Clerk
102	Councillor Surgery – Following a discussion about how attendance could be encouraged it was agreed that the Clerk ask residents for their views.	Clerk
103	Civic Diary – Cllr Fisher reported on events attended which included a Civic Service, Mayor Choosing, opening of a litter picking station and presentation of grant cheques. It was RESOLVED to suspend Standing Order 3 (bb) to permit extension of the meeting following a proposal by Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Ireland.	
104	Reports of Council Working/Task & Finish Groups –	
104.1	Climate Change - No meetings had been held.	

104.2 **Neighbourhood Plan Review** – It was reported that the review group had met and noted some amendments for consideration of the Neighbourhood Plan Group and to request clarification that the queries raised by WDBC had been resolved. **Agreed** feedback to be sent to the group.

Clerk

105 **Reports on Current Activities by Community Groups with Town Council Representation** -

105.1 **Neighbourhood Plan Group** – Cllr Wood had attended the last meeting when progress on the plan had been discussed.

106 **Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items** -

106.1 **Rural Market Town Group** – No meetings had been held.

(Those in attendance except for Councillors and the Clerk left the meeting.)

107 **PART 2 Confidential Matters** - On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Leech 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 were **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.

108 **Security**

Insurance Subjective, Safe – The Clerk reported the safe had been delivered and installed at reduce cost due to it being a cancelled special-order item of non-standard colour.

109 **Regalia** – The Clerk reported the Council's insurer was in agreement with arrangements for security of regalia when in possession of the Mayor at this time but that it may become an issue in the future. Insurance arrangements needed to be reviewed annually in May.

110 **Charter Hall Roofing Project** – A quotation for decorating work was rejected. On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was **RESOLVED** a letter of undertaking to decorate the external Red Lion Yard elevation of the Charter Hall/Cinema building once the roofing work had been completed to be sent to the property owner. Clerk to inform the owner of Red Lion Yard and obtain quotations nearer completion date of the roofing work.

Clerk

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part 2 and ratify decisions made therein. The meeting was closed at 8.50pm.

Councillor Fisher
Mayor