

**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 31st July 2023 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

Members Present: Councillor A Fisher (Mayor)
 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 T Cummings
 Councillor M Harding
 Councillor M Ireland
 Councillor C Marsh
 Councillor L Rogers
 Councillor B Tolley

In Attendance: Mrs E James (Town Clerk)
 Cllr L Samuel (DCC)
 1 member of the public

Action

- 186** **Apologies for Absence** – On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** approve apologies tendered by Cllr Holt (ill health) and Cllr Weekes (personal).
- 187** **Declarations of Interest** – Cllrs Marsh, Ireland, Fisher and Tolley declared an interest in Min Ref 196, all being Trustees of Okehampton United Charity.
- 188** **Public Participation** – None
- 189** **Members Questions** – None
- 190** **West Devon Borough Council** – Cllr Leech reported on matters including the new railway station. WDBC would be holding the funds for the transport hub for which there would be a consultation at a later date. Cllr Leech remained the lead member for health and wellbeing, a new WDBC group had put together list of ideas for consideration in the coming months and they continued to help as many people as possible in relation to the cost-of-living crisis within existing resources, both financial and staff.
- 191** **Devon County Council** – Cllr Samuel had circulated a report earlier in the day. The meeting with DCC in relation to the on-street parking proposal had been rearranged to 17th August. The Dartmoor National Park appeal against the wild camping ban had been won.
- 192** **Questions Arising from Members Reports** – Cllr Samuel was asked to provide an indication of when the resurfacing work in Station Road scheduled for this financial year would be undertaken.

Cllr Leech was requested to confirm that Okehampton would be treated in accordance with Tavistock in relation to support being given for the consideration of DCC's on-street parking charges proposal.

Cllr Samuel was requested to ensure consideration was given to integrated transportation to the new railway station and transport hub allowing busses access to the station at the appropriate times.

Cllrs
 Leech/
 Samuel

- 193 Adoption of Minutes of Committees and Members' Questions arising Thereof –**
- 193.1 Parks Committee** meeting held on 6th February 2023 - adoption proposed by Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Leech and **approved**.
- 193.2 Policy & Resources Committee** meeting held on 19th June 2023 - adoption proposed by Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Wood and **approved**.
- 193.3 Property Committee** meeting held on 6th March 2023 - adoption proposed by Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Rogers and **approved**.
- 194 Full Council Meeting Minutes** – The minutes of the Town Council meetings held on 26th June and 12th July 2023 were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded by Cllr Cummings, to be signed by Cllr Fisher.
- 195 Committee Membership** – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded by Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** that newly co-opted Councillors sit on Committees as follows:
- Cllr Cummings Property and Planning Committees
 - Cllr Harding Parks and Property Committees
 - Cllr Rogers Parks Committee
- 196 Okehampton United Charity – Nomination of Trustee** – Proposers and seconders were received for two candidates following which a vote took place and it was **RESOLVED** to nominate Brendan Matravers as Trustee to Okehampton United Charity to fill the casual vacancy following the Ex Officio appointment of Cllr Fisher. The appointment ending on 18th October 2025.
- 197 Business Improvement District** – The previously circulated consultant's report which indicated creation of a BID would be feasible was considered in conjunction with the projected £25,000 cost of progression to the next stage. This excluded the cost of design and printing of the business plan which potentially could be covered by the levy if the BID was successful. It was commented it was strongly believed a BID would support the business community.
- WDBC had suggested the £25,000 cost be split equally between the Town Council, Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council and WDBC. OHPC were meeting on 1st August and would be considering the proposal.
- On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was **RESOLVED** to progress with the project on the basis that the Town Council would pay a third of the cost which would be invoiced in the 2024/25 financial year to allow it to be budgeted.
- 198 DCC Urban Renewal/Regeneration Project** – It was commented the business case did not include the creation of an electric hub in conjunction with the transport hub and that the old pie factory site could be redeveloped to house a hotel. It was also suggested the mountain bike track in Abbeyford Woods could be reinstated, although this area fell outside of the town boundary.
- Cllr Tolley reported the project which had been instigated by DCC had commenced in March. The regeneration board included businesses, organisations, the town and hamlets councils. A meeting had been held on 20th July the next being in September.
- 199 DCC On-Street Parking Charges Proposal** – The meeting with DCC had been delayed until 17th August.

Clerk

Clerk

Clerk

It was commented that as the town fell within a conservation area a heritage impact assessment could be required and a planning term 'clutter' may apply. These points could be considered by the council when responding formally to the consultation.

- 200** **Community Governance Boundary Review** – The consultation had been delayed by West Devon Borough Council with initial recommendations now scheduled to be considered by WDBC on 3rd October 2023.

The Clerk reported the Clerks and one other representative from the Town Council and Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council had been invited to a meeting with WDBC's the People and Community Advisory Group in late August. Following consultation with Cllr Fisher a long-standing Councillor who was familiar with the background of the review would be invited to attend with the Clerk.

Clerk

Cllr Leech advised a dispensation he had sought from WDBC about the review had been partly approved and he was able to discuss matters but not vote.

- 201** **Charter Hall Roofing Project** – Information which was contractual would be considered within Part 2.

- 202** **Okehampton Fairtrade Group** – On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Harding, it was **RESOLVED** to continue to support the group enabling them to apply for Fairtrade status renewal.

Clerk

- 203** **Okehampton Carnival**

- 203.1** Consideration was given to a request from the Carnival Committee that they be exempt from the council's grant application process as there was an historical agreement in relation to funding between themselves, the council and Anderton and Rowland Fair. The Clerk reported investigation had revealed there had been a verbal agreement some years previously but there appeared to be no written records held by any party.

On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendations on the previously circulated report as follows:

- The autumn Anderton and Rowland Fair fee be reduced in line with that for the spring, that being £650, including VAT.
- The Carnival Committee and Fair come to a direct agreement in relation to a donation without unnecessary involvement of the Council.
- The Carnival Committee continue to apply for any additional funding they may consider necessary in line with the Council's grant policy.

Clerk

- 203.2** On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded Cllr Harding, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the sponsorship of a senior and junior carnival float prize at the cost of £20 each on an annual basis.

Clerk

- 204** **Finance** – Cllr Fisher declared an interest having submitted an expense claim.

On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments.

- 205** **Insurance** – On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Bird, it was **RESOLVED** to increase the Fidelity/Commercial Crime Limit of Indemnity cover as recommended by the Council's insurer at the additional cost of £71.55 for the remainder of the insurance policy.

Clerk

- 206** **Councillor Surgery** – Ways of encouraging members of the public to attend the monthly surgeries were considered. Only 1 response to a survey had been

received, the response being that surgeries continue to be monthly on a morning in the Town Hall, in accordance with existing arrangements.

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to continue to host surgeries in the existing format and that councillors could additionally arrange separate surgeries at an alternative location and time providing a minimum of two councillors were available to be present.

Cllrs

207 Policies and Documents –

207.1 Policies - On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to approve following as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee and following staff consultation:

- Tree Policy
- Work Experience Policy

Clerk

207.2 Terms of Reference - On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Bird, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the following Terms of Reference:

- Parks Committee
- Property Committee

Clerk

208 Council Meeting Dates – On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to swap the Property Committee and Trustees October meeting dates as follows:

- 9th October 2023 - Trustees
- 16th October 2023 – Property Committee

On the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Clerk's request to be absent from the the Full Council meeting on 22nd April 2024 and that it be clerked by the Assistant Clerk, Mrs Ellis.

Clerk

209 Civic Diary – Cllr Fisher reported on events attended during July which included Holsworthy Pretty Maids, a school music concert, Friendly Circle meeting, presented grant award cheques, opened the Library children's holiday reading club and the new chemist, attended Okey Music Day, a book launch, and Okehampton Police Station ahead of the reopening of the public front desk by April 2024.

210 Reports of Council Working/Task & Finish Groups –

210.1 Climate Change – Cllr Wood reported there had been a meeting the previous week, when recommendations arising from the Energy Performance Certificate reports had been considered and that further work on this would be done.

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

211.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group – no meeting

212 Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items -

212.1 Rural Market Town Group – Cllr Leech would be attending a meeting later in the week.

212.2 20's Plenty for Devon – Cllr Cummings reported on a recently attended meeting. The aim was to promote a reduced speed limit in Devon initially, and it was more effective and efficient to manage across an area rather than in singular streets.

212.3 Active Travel Project – Cllr Marsh had attended a meeting earlier in the month. Slides to be circulated.

(Members of the public left the meeting)

213 **PART 2 Confidential Matters** - On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Tolley 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.

214 **Charter Hall Roofing Project** – Quotations received for the external Red Lion Yard elevation decorating were considered. On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded Cllr Wood, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation from Classic Builders, that being the most cost effective, at the sum of £5,886.

It was agreed to invite the Project Manager to an informal meeting to discuss the delays and best way forward for consideration by Full Council at a meeting as soon as possible.

Clerk

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part 2 and ratify decisions made therein. The meeting was closed at 8.30pm.

Councillor Fisher
Mayor