

Minutes of an Okehampton Town Council Parks Committee Meeting held on Monday 4th September 2023 at 7pm 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 J Yelland (Chairman, Policy & Resources)
Councillor L Rogers
Councillor B Tolley
Councillor S Weekes

Other Members Present:

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

		Action
246	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> – Apologies tendered by Cllrs Harding (work), Ireland (personal) and Wood (personal) were APPROVED on the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Rogers.	
247	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> – Cllr Weekes declared a potential interest in the scattering lawn.	
248	<u>Public Participation</u> – None	
249	<u>Park Keeper</u> – Mr McGahey provided an update on matters including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grass cutting that had been the main task in recent months,• The first volunteer day had taken place and a large area of weeds had been cleared. The next volunteer day was on 20th September, the group had increased to around 10 volunteers.• The recently approved tyre swing was being installed later in the week.• A pond dipping afternoon had been held in conjunction with Dartmoor National Park. Approximately 35 young persons had taken part and a variety of species had been found.• The stone wall along the top path in Simmons Park would be rebuilt the following week.	
250	<u>Members' Questions</u> – None	
251	<u>Minutes</u> - Minutes of the Parks Committee meeting held on 3 rd July 2023 were APPROVED to be signed by the Chairman on the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Marsh.	
252	<u>Reports and Updates</u>	
252.1	Viewing Platform behind Lidl – The structure had been replaced.	
252.2	Bridleway No 2 – A Modification Order amending the route of the Bridleway in the vicinity of All Saints Church had been published by DCC.	
252.3	Antisocial Behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The donated China Girl Tree in the centre of the sensory garden at Fairplace had been vandalised on 9th August, police were investigating the incident which was captured on CCTV. The donating person was likely to replace the tree.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chalet Treloar had suffered criminal damage over the weekend of 18th August. • The bus shelter on the Exeter Road/Limehayes Road junction had suffered vandalism. 	
253	<u>Park Bookings</u> –	
253.1	Events that had either taken place or were scheduled to take place in Simmons Park, subject to receipt of the necessary paperwork, were noted.	
253.2	On the proposition of Cllr Rogers, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was RESOLVED to approve a request for a company to produce part of a film in Simmons Park, requesting that the location was given credit on the film and that a donation for use of the park was made to Simmons Park Charity.	Clerk
254	<u>Simmons Park Carpark</u>	
254.1	Relining – The Committee noted the car park had been relined following an offer by a company who had materials to spare. This work was agreed by the Clerk following consultation with the Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the cost to the Council being materials only at a reduced rate and agreed by the Committee. As part of this work the footpath marking along the access road had been extended.	
254.2	Motorcycle Parking Bay and Cycle Rack Locations – (Cllr Weekes left the meeting for a short time.)	
	On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Fisher, it was RESOLVED to purchase a hoop style cycle racks, made by either Men in Sheds or another metal fabricator in a style to fit the location, colour to match Simmins Park railings.	Clerk
	On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Yelland, it was RESOLVED to agree the location of a motorcycle parking bay and cycle rack as identified on a previously circulated map.	Park-Keeper/ Clerk
255	<u>Simmons Park</u>	
255.1	Simmons Park Bowling Club – The Club had approved and signed a revised agreement including the taking over of maintenance and replacement costs of the river extraction pump. Correspondence from the Club relating to parking permits was noted.	
255.2	Electricity – A smart meter was due to be installed in the Parks Office on 21 st September.	
255.3	Tree Work - Hi-Line would be undertaking tree work in Simmons Park on behalf of the National Grid. The Park-Keeper was requested to be on site at the time to supervise the work to ensure it was done sympathetically.	Park-Keeper
255.4	River Extraction Licence 14/50/007/0066 – The Clerk reported the Licence still included permission for extraction of water for the filling of a paddling pool which had been demolished several years ago.	
	On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was RESOLVED to cancel the Licence which would still allow the extraction of up to 20 cubic metres of water per day, a maximum of 7,300 cubic metres per year, resulting in the saving of the annual licence fee.	Clerk

255.5	Walnut Tree – A request to plant a Walnut Tree in Simmons Park as a memorial to JJ Newcombe was considered. On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was RESOLVED to approve the request providing it was planted in the meadow due to its eventual size.	Clerk
255.6	Putting Improvements – A draft business case that could be used for grant applications towards the cost of the project was considered. On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Yelland, it was RESOLVED to progress with the project through the working group.	Admin Officer/ Clerk
255.7	Green Flag Application – A draft application for the designation of Simmons Park as a Green Flag Park was considered. On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Leech, it was RESOLVED that Cllr Marsh to review the document for further consideration of the Committee at the next meeting.	Cllr Marsh/ Admin Officer
255.8	Bandstand – On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was RESOLVED to agree the addition of a round finial to the top of the new structure adjacent to Chalet Treloar, subject to planning consent which would need to be obtained.	Clerk
256	<u>Cemetery</u>	
256.1	Burials - The summary of burials was noted. There was believed to only be two cremation interment plots remaining within the Graveyard managed by All Saints Church.	
256.2	Land Purchase – The Clerk report she had: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered interest in any available land to purchase in the area with local Estate Agents • Was consulting with the Exeter Diocese Property Department in relation to any possibilities in Okehampton, including Glebe Land 	
256.3	Annual Memorial Inspection – The annual inspection had been undertaken and no memorial stones requiring urgent action had been identified.	
256.4	Scattering Lawn – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Rogers, it was RESOLVED to agree in principle the creation of a scattering lawn for human cremated remains at the lower end of the existing Cemetery. The Working Group to finalise a proposal for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee.	Admin Officer/ Clerk
257	<u>Policies and Documents</u> - On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Rogers, it was RESOLVED to recommend the Cemetery Fees for 2024-25 to the Policy & Resources Committee for consideration, subject to amendments including revision of the definition of a 'resident'.	Clerk
	On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was RESOLVED to recommend the Cemetery Rules and Regulations Policy to the Policy & Resources Committee for consideration.	Clerk
	On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was RESOLVED to defer a decision in relation to the Outdoor Area Inspection Policy for clarification of how often bridges should be inspected.	Clerk

	On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was RESOLVED to recommend the Simmons Park Memorial Management Policy to the Policy & Resources Committee for consideration.	Clerk
	On the proposition of Cllr Rogers, seconded Cllr Fisher, it was RESOLVED to recommend the Snow and Ice Management Policy to the Policy & Resources Committee for consideration.	Clerk
258	<u>Finance</u>	
258.1	Payment of Invoices – On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Rogers, it was RESOLVED to approve the schedule of payments.	
258.2	2024/25 Budget – Cllrs who attended the Budget Workshop on 29 th August commented it had been a productive session and a reduction of some cost elements had been identified.	
258.3	Staff Training – On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Rogers, it was RESOLVED to agree the additional courses required for Parks staff over the winter months.	Clerk
259	<u>Reports of Council Working/Task and Finish Groups -</u>	
259.1	Cemetery Management – A meeting was to be arranged.	
259.2	Putting Green Improvements – A meeting was to be arranged.	
260	<u>Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items -</u>	
260.1	Dartmoor National Park Forum – Cllr Marsh had attended a meeting. The main agenda items related to control of dogs on the moors, the linking of footpaths, their improvement and use.	
260.2	Everything Okehampton – Cllr Marsh reported a Coffee Morning was being held in October, a Dinner on 17 th November and Edwardian Evening on 30 th November. A 2024 Calendar would be available to purchase.	
260.3	Okehampton Community Recreation Association (OCRA) – Cllr Tolley had attended a meeting. The Memory was café going well, and the next meeting was on 15 th October.	
	It was RESOLVED to suspend Standing Order 3 (bb) to permit extension of the meeting following a proposal by Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Leech.	
260.4	Okehampton & District Community Transport Group – Cllr Leech reported more volunteer drivers were needed due to additional passenger requirements. The Manager was leaving towards the end of September and an advert for the vacancy had been placed.	
260.5	Parklands Leisure Centre Users Group – There had not been a meeting. Cllr Leech advised he was meeting with Fusion later in the week as a WDBC Cllr and would make enquiries about the situation.	
261	<u>PART TWO CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS</u> – On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Fisher, 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 was permitted to remain.)

- 262** **Memorial Stone Mason** - The Clerk reported on a matter which had been resolved.
- 263** **Alms Houses** – On the proposition of Cllr Rogers, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** not to approve requests for the construction of a patio area at the rear of a property or for the construction of a privacy fence as the area was public space. Dog excrement to be cleared immediately, Parks Staff would not be undertaking work in the area unless it was clear. Clerk
- 264** **Simmons Park Play Equipment** – Cllrs Marsh, Fisher, and Tolley declared personal interests being Trustees of Okehampton United Charity.
- Information and costs for play equipment as requested at the last meeting were considered. On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Rogers (2 abstentions), it was **RESOLVED** to pass all ideas and information to Okehampton United Charity for consideration by Trustees. Clerk
- 265** **Bridge Inspections** – The Park-Keeper reported that an inspection had been completed free of charge by Marine Civil Solutions. The written report was awaited, the initial summary indicated some repair work had been identified. Quotations would be obtained for consideration by the Committee. Park-Keeper
- On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Rogers, it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk write to the Dartmoor Multi-Academy Trust to request removal of a tree from the river that could pose a risk to one of the bridges. Clerk
- 266** **Tree Removal Quotations** – Two quotations for £850 had been received. On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Fisher, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation from Adam of Eden Tree Care who had previously undertaken work for the Council. Clerk
- 267** **Bus Shelters** – On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was **RESOLVED** to accept an agreement from Fernbank Advertising for replacement and management of the Council owned bus shelters subject to inclusion of a clause transferring ownership of the new bus shelters to Okehampton Town Council should the company go into liquidation. Clerk

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Weekes it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part Two and ratify decisions made therein. The meeting was closed at 9.05pm.

Councillor Holt
Chairman