

**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 18th September 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 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)

Absent: Councillor S Weekes

Action

287 The resignation of Cllr Wood due to health reasons was noted and she was thanked for the time and commitment given to the Council.

288 **Apologies for Absence** – None

289 **Declarations of Interest** – The following declarations were made:

- Cllr Yelland, Min Ref 303, pecuniary interest being payee of an expense claim.
- Cllr Leech – Min Refs 297, 299 and 302, personal interest being a Member of WDBC.
- Cllrs Marsh, Fisher, Tolley and Ireland – Min Ref 309, all being Trustees.

290 **Public Participation** – None

291 **Members Questions** – Cllr Ireland reported on attendance at a GWR conference the previous week, a full report would be circulated by the Clerk.

Cllr Colman advised members of the public had commented on a perceived lack of service from the GP Surgery and availability of NHS Dentists. It was noted a meeting was being held in early October with a representative from the One Devon NHS when these matters could be raised.

292 **West Devon Borough Council** – Cllr Leech reported on matters including:

- Issues relating to footpaths, including housing developments to the east of Okehampton.
- Several reports were due to be considered at a WDBC Hub Committee meeting on 19th September including renewal of the climate change commitment, support for young persons leaving the care system aged 16 or 18 and continued support, planning system improvement update, progress relating to housing problems, proposed changes to council tax reduction scheme, capital and revenue budget monitoring, medium term financial strategy.

Comment was made about the lack of attendance at meetings by WDBC Ward Members.

293 **Devon County Council** – A report from Cllr Samuel had previously been circulated.

- 294 **Questions Arising from Members Reports** – Comment was made about reference to financial support for bus services within Cllr Samuel’s report.
- 295 **Adoption of Minutes of Committees and to Receive Questions from Members Thereon**
- 295.1 On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the **Parks Committee** meeting held on 3rd July 2023.
- 296 **Full Council Meeting Minutes** – The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 21st August 2023 were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Ireland, to be signed by Cllr Fisher.
- 297 **Business Improvement District** – Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council (OHPC) had agreed a split of fees for progression of the project based on a percentage of overall rateable values of businesses. The split being 74% OTC / 26% OHPC. The Town Council had already contributed £7,000 to the project leaving the amount of £3,212 which would be invoiced in the 2024/25 financial year to allow it to be budgeted.
- On the proposition of Cllr Harding, seconded Cllr Yelland, it was **RESOLVED** to proceed with the project on the basis of the above costings.
- 298 **DCC On-Street Parking Charges Proposal** – The Clerk reported on progress in relation to collaborative working with the other affected Councils. On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** a joint letter from affected councils who wished to be included be sent to DCC, at the discretion of the Clerk in conjunction with the Mayor, and a survey of businesses, residents, and others be undertaken to establish initial views.
- 299 **Community Governance Boundary Review** – On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to write to the Ward members, copying in the Chair of the Advisory Group and the Leader of WDBC, briefly outlining the history behind the request for a boundary review and the reasons why. Ward Members to be invited to an informal meeting to give them an opportunity to ask any questions and gain a deeper understanding of the issues the council faces.
- 300 **NHS Devon Integrated Care System** – Councillors noted an informal meeting with a Locality Director had been arranged for 4th October.
- 301 **Charter Hall Roofing Project** – Deferred to Part 2.
- 302 **Public Space Protection Order** – On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Colman (1 abstention), it was **RESOLVED** to support and work with the Police Neighbourhood Team Leader on an application to WDBC in 2024 to obtain a PSPO covering Okehampton with the aim of tacking anti-social behaviour.
- 303 **Finance** – (Cllr Yelland left the room)
- On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments.
- On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Holt, it was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Marsh undertook audits of bank reconciliations following the resignation of Cllr Wood, until such time as Full Council nominated a Councillor to take up this role.
- (Cllr Yelland returned)

Clerk

Clerk

Clerk

Clerk

304	<u>External Audit 2022/23</u>	
304.1	The External Auditors Report and Certificate which raised no concerns or matters for attention was noted. Cllr Yelland offered her congratulations to staff on a very good audit report which evidenced council finances were very well kept and the Council was managed to a high standard.	
304.2	On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded Cllr Leech, it was RESOLVED the Notice of Conclusion of Audit be published on 19 th September 2023 for 14 days.	Clerk
305	<u>Internal Auditor Appointment</u> – On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Colman, it was RESOLVED to ratify the appointment of IAC Audit and Consultancy as the council's internal auditor for the second of a three-year agreement which commenced in 2022/23 at the cost of £770 p/annum.	Clerk
306	<u>Insurance</u> – Following issues at Clevedon Town Council, Councillors were required to disclose to the Clerk if any of the statements in the previously circulated meeting report related to them. Councillors not present would be contacted individually by the Clerk.	Cllrs/ Clerk
307	<u>Policies</u> – On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was RESOLVED to approve the following policies as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accident and Incident Reporting Policy & Procedure • Biodiversity Duty Policy • Cemetery Fees for 2024-25 • Cemetery Rules and Regulations Policies • Co-Option Policy • Grant Policy • Simmons Park Memorial Management Policy • Snow and Ice Management Policy • Workplace Stress Management Policy 	Clerk
308	<u>Simmons Park Charity (1101388)</u> – Appointment of Okehampton Town Council as Sole Trustee of the Charity by Trustees on 4 th September 2023 was noted. The Clerk reported she was experiencing difficulty accessing the online account and contacting the Charity Commission, and was unable to update the details on the Charity Commission website.	
309	<u>Election of a Nominated Trustee to Okehampton United Charity</u> – Three nominations were received, one of which was rescinded. Following a vote Cllr M Ireland was nominated as Trustee for the term of 4 years, commencing in October 2023.	Clerk
310	<u>Freedom of Information Request</u> – The Clerk reported that a FoI request for information relating to IT equipment and related software had been responded to.	
311	<u>Mace Bearer</u> – Cllr Fisher advised that Mr Basil Jones had resigned from the role of Mace Bearer after more than 20 years of service which would be formally acknowledged on Edwardian Evening.	
312	<u>Mayors Civic Diary</u> – Cllr Fisher reported on events attended which included Rotary summer fair, Friendly Circle, Meldon Eco Day, Green Drinks in Eco Hub, Dartmoor Drop fundraising event and the Council's Civic Service.	
313	<u>Civic Events</u> - Cllr Fisher advised he would be hosting a fundraising golf event on 29 th May 2024 in place of a Civic Dinner.	

- 314 **Reports of Council Working/Task & Finish Groups –**
314.1 **Climate Change** – A meeting had been held and a report was provided by Cllr Leech who suggested the Council worked on improving its property utilising initially the EPC reports obtained earlier in the year and considering improvements to the Charter Hall. Quarterly Council recycling reports were requested to be made.

Clerk/
Ass.
Clerk

The Inner Wheel were supplying litter pickers for local groups to clean up the areas in which they lived. It was commented that solar panels were believed to be almost totally unrecyclable.

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

- 315.1 **Neighbourhood Plan Group** – The Clerk reported the Regulation 16 Consultation had commenced and there was a meeting of the Clerks and Chair on 20th September to consider its publication.

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

- 316.1 **Rural Market Town Group** – Cllr Leech had not been to a meeting of the group but had attended meetings through the Rural Services Network.
- 316.2 **20's Plenty for Devon** – No meeting had been held. 20mph restrictions were active in the majority of areas in Wales that that had been previously designated 30mph. It was queried if this was good for economy or pollution levels.

- 316.3 **Active Travel Project** – No meeting.

- 317 **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.

- 318 **Charter Hall Roofing Project** – The Clerk reported on storage of slates. On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to obtain Solicitors advice.

Clerk

- 319 **Boiler** – A report from the Clerk and correspondence received in relation to potential issues with the flu was considered. Cllrs Colman and Harding would initially investigate and report back.

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part 2 and ratify decisions made therein. The meeting was closed at 8.10pm

Councillor Fisher
Mayor