

**Okehampton Town Council
Parks Committee 20th November 2023
Meeting Report**

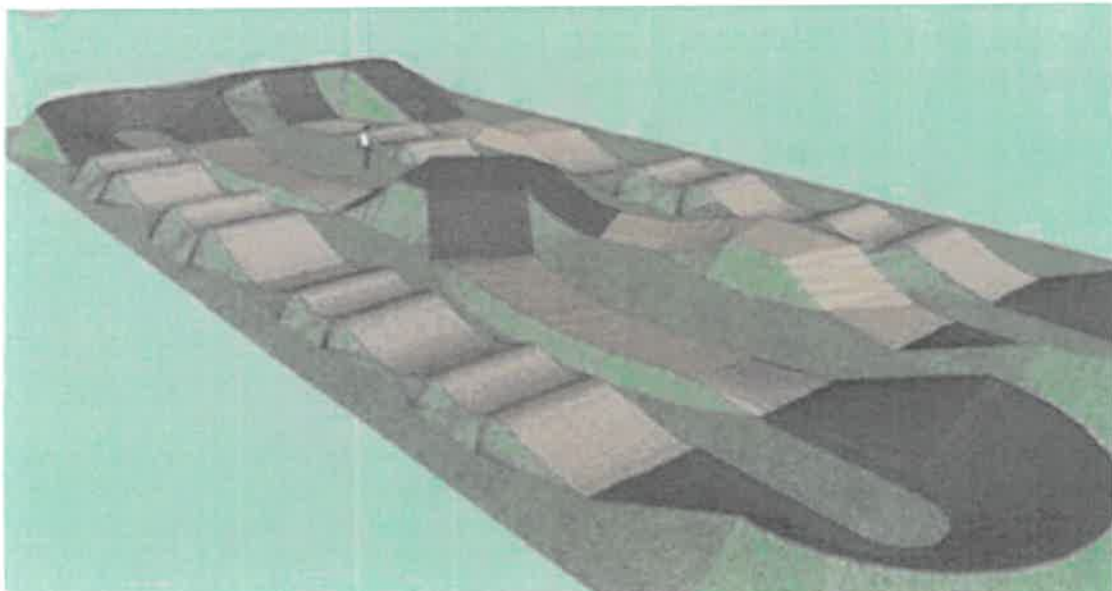
Date:	13 November 2023
Name:	Emma James

Bookings - To note events that have either taken place or are scheduled to take place in Simmons Park, subject to receipt of the necessary paperwork

Mondays (November/December)	OCRA Homeschooling group
17 th – 20 th November	Film production
22 nd November	OCRA Enliven Project Filming (Okey Memory Café)
10 th December	PTFA Santa Run
12 th December	OCRA Enliven Project Filming (Okey Memory Café)
24 th February 2024	Wren Music Lantern Finale

Skatepark and BMX Track – To consider correspondence from a young member of the public and feedback from a subsequent meeting

Hello I am here to ask something for the local town of Okehampton I think that it is time that the skatepark of Okehampton had a upgrade so making it so there are safety checked jumps or maybe changing it all to concrete and draining systems. As a local mountain biker myself I and lots of others often come out and the pump track is flooded which is annoying and hard to ride. The scooter part of the skatepark is fine and should stay the same. But there is so much space at the pump track that could be used for so much more maybe discuss it with some of the councillors of a new design with actual jumps. Some of the pump track is boring. In meaning that its really just pumps and it would be good for some actual jumps and if u feel that it wont be family friendly make 2 types of pump tracks and easy and hard one. On to another point I don't know if I should or if you but it would be awesome to build northshore abyford how it used to be made by proper trail builders and checked as it would be great to have it back from over 17 years ago. That is just about it please take the time to read this and give me back a reply whenever u can and it will be greatly appreciated (and I am sorry if I emailed the wrong person it is the email I saw on the Okehampton council website)

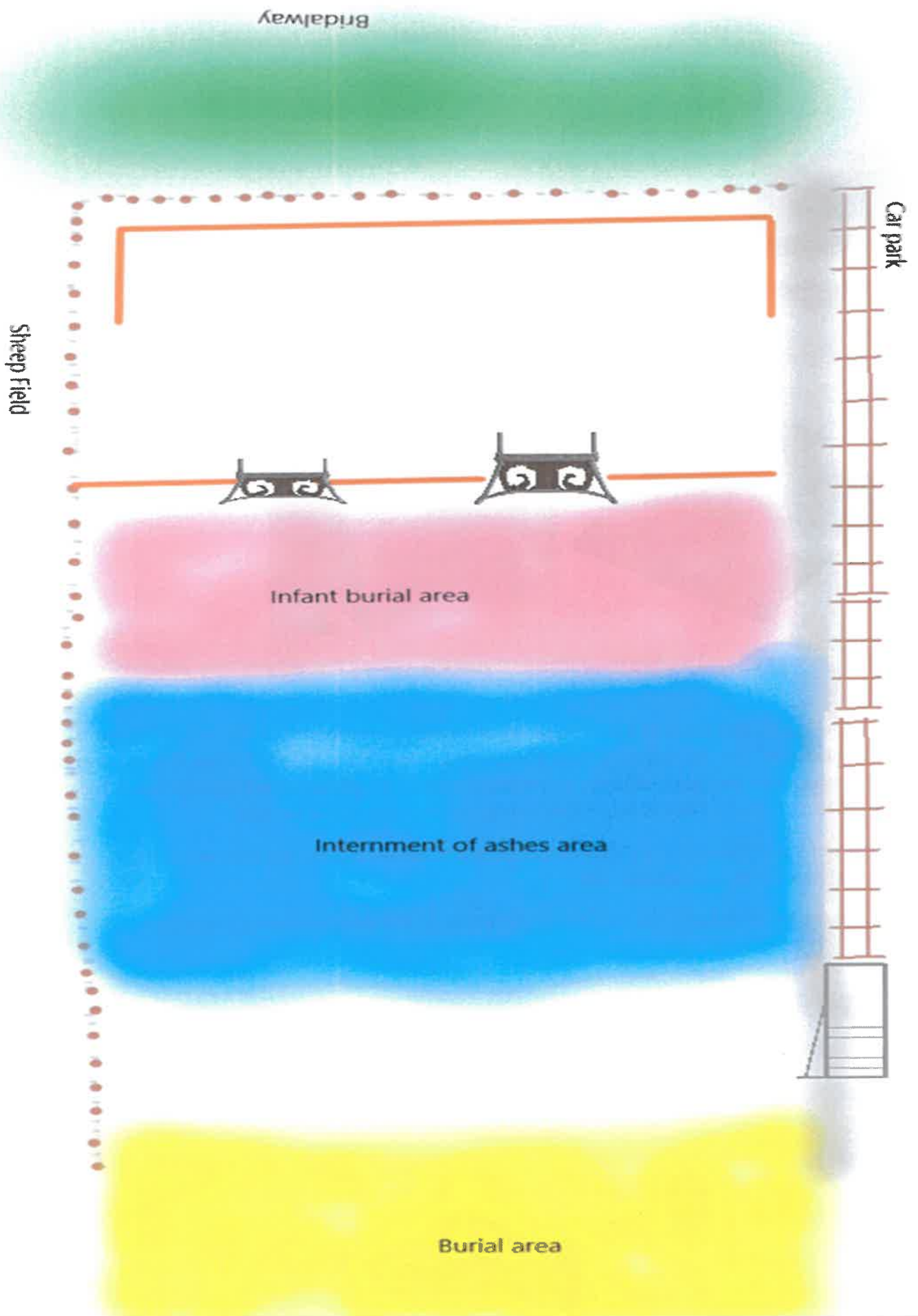


Burials - To note the summary of burials.

	21-22	22-23	23-24
New Burials	10	7	8
Reopening's	4	4	2
Ashes (within a grave)	0	1	1
Total burials/cremated remains	14	12	11
New Memorials			9
Additional Inscriptions			4

5 more applications for memorials have been received but permits not yet issued.

Cemetery Meeting Report - *Scattering lawn*



The scattering lawn needs to feel apart of the cemetery and not an isolated forgotten corner. The wicker hurdles will create a barrier between the areas but still allow visitors to look over towards the rest of the cemetery.

The infant burial area head stones must not exceed 0.61m high x 0.48m wide (2ft x 1½ ft)



And the cremation area only allows tablets 0.48m x 0.48m (1½ ft x 1½ ft) in size.



This leaves the area open all the way up to the burial area and makes it feel all part of the same area without segregation.

The 4ft tall willow hurdles will screen the bottom of the scattering lawn from the bridlepath and make it slightly less exposed. The trees will need to be raised slightly and one tree has ash die back that needs to be felled. The parks team will compliment this end with some planting – plants that are happy in shade and require little maintenance. This will help it look less like the forgotten end of the field.

At the top end the willow hurdles will only be 3ft high and so will provide a divide between scattering and infant burials but will not obscure the view.

The hurdles will be divided with two benches so visitors can sit and look over the scattering lawn.

Item Price Qty Subtotal



Recycled Plastic Outdoor Bench Date

£549.75 Inc VAT
£458.12 Ex VAT

2

£1,099.49 Inc VAT
£916.24 Ex VAT

Colour: Brown
Bench Width: 1900mm

Summary

Estimate Shipping and Tax

Subtotal	£916.24
Tax	£183.25
Shipping (Standard (Inc VAT) - Manufacturer Surcharge)	£23.99

Order Total **£1,123.48**

Update Shopping Cart

Proceed to Checkout

Request a Quote



Low in stock, only 2 left

£320.00

Local taxes included (where applicable)

Ornate Scroll Design Green Park Bench/Traditional Garden Bench, Three Seater Bench, Garden Furniture/Comfort & Beauty/Outdoor Robust Bench
BeneCountryForge ★★★★★

✓ Arrives soon! Get it by 13:15 Nov if you order today

Add your personalisation *

Please enter a contact number I can pass onto the couriers:

256

Make 3 payments of £106.66. Klarna. [Learn more](#)
18+, T&C apply, Credit subject to status.
Must be 18+, credit subject to status. T&Cs apply.

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Item details

Handmade

Materials: Cast Iron, Fibreglass, Wood, Metal



Hazel Hurdle Fence Panel 1.82m x 1.2m (6ft x 4ft) - Handwoven by Papillon™

£239.94

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📦 Order by 3pm for delivery in 3-4 working days

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Willow Hurdle Fence Panel 1.82m x 0.9m (6ft x 3ft) - Handwoven by Papillon™

£143.96

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Sub-total	£383.90
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Total **£408.89**

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6 x 4 ft hurdles

4 x 3 ft hurdles

2 x 6ft bench

£1225.90 + Vat

Memorial Bench – To consider a request for the placement of a memorial bench in the Cemetery



Suggested locations for memorial bench

A bench will fit opposite the grave requested B19-08 but it is quite tight.

Where the hedge ends it is slightly wider and a bench would fit here better.



Weed Spraying Replacement

For the past couple of years, I've been looking into methods to prevent the park using herbicide to spray the weeds and move onto a much more wildlife friendly version that doesn't include glyphosate.

Currently the park and other areas owned by the council get about 4 applications of spraying a year which cost around £50 for the chemical, a week's wages for myself and £150 refresher every 3 years.

The pros to continuing with this is that it is known to work. Only spot treatment is carried out which minimises the danger to bees and other insects and requires no extra work afterwards the weeds die off and disappear in 2/3 weeks depending on time of year and conditions. The cost is also already budgeted for this and is regularly under budget with only one tub of herbicide used a year mixed with water.

The only cons to this system are its effects on bees and other insects but this is mitigated by spot treatment, it only being carried out on days when quick drying is certain. But also, the public perception of this being used hence I have been looking into other options in the past few years.

Other options I have looked at to replace this with a wildlife friendly solution consist of-

A gas burner system on wheels.



This has a gas tank on a trolley and a triggered burner that after a couple of seconds the heat destroys the cells of the plant meaning it shrivels over time.

Pros to adopting this system.

It is a quick method which would take a similar amount of time to the weed spray currently used.

It is wildlife friendly unless said insect is on the plant when burning takes place, but this could be mitigated to an extent.

Cons to this system

A new unit would have to be purchased at £2,850.

The gas canister costs £107 new and £52 to be refilled. The refill works out at a similar price to the chemical but having demo' d this system I feel more gas would be used than chemical currently is so you could possibly be looking at 3 refills a year.

The current treatment can be left once sprayed and will break down and disappear this system would require another member of staff to walk behind and remove the weeds afterwards with a tool or by hand meaning this method is more time consuming and requiring more staff hours/extra member of staff. Some smaller weeds can be completely burnt off, but this requires using a lot more gas and the operation taking twice as long. But it would still be a requirement for an extra member of staff to follow behind to remove the bigger weeds.

This method also doesn't last as long as it heats up any seeds in the soil speeding up germination so means more than the current number of treatments would be required taking up more staff hours.

This system also can appear quite dangerous and may worry members of the public, the end of the nozzle doesn't get hot though so dog interactions shouldn't be an issue.

Hot water weed control.



Pros to this system.

Similar number of applications per year as spraying but this only requires petrol and water.

No chemicals so wildlife friendly the water is applied at 98C so would still affect any wildlife on the plant so mitigation could be brought in to prevent larger insects being on the plant when applying the water.

Can be applied in wind and rain and around water courses, no need for PPE or any chemicals so will mean spraying can be carried out at any time and weather, far less restricting than the current method and except for the petrol costs on the small generator, it would work out slightly cheaper per year than current method of application.

Improved public perceptions as not using chemical.

This machine can also have a pressure washer fitting to it which with heat can remove graffiti, chewing gum and clean surfaces with far better results than cold water.

Plant seeds are also destroyed in application preventing quick regrowth.

Cons to this system.

New unit would have to be purchased at £49,232 not including a trailer for it to be permanently on which would cost another £2,000.

Another fuel powered machine when the council is trying to move towards greener methods such as battery power. An electric version is available but at a greater cost.

Would require the tractor to move the trailer around restricting what other work can be carried out. This isn't an issue with the current method.

Although this kills the weeds off to keep the site tidy another member of staff would need to go along and remove them a week after treatment.

Conclusion

Overall, I don't feel for the amount of weed control that is carried out annually that the cost of either of these options to the council and taxpayer is viable. As much as it would be great to say the council is chemical free the cost and with the work force at my disposal it is just not possible. It is already carried out in a method that mitigates harm to park users and wildlife and I feel this method is to be stuck with until a more cost effective but also manpower effective method comes onto the market. I will continue to monitor this and if a new method becomes available then I will bring it to the council's attention.



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Outdoor Area Inspection Policy

External areas belonging to the council will suffer degradation due to intended and unintended use and this can also be exacerbated by general weathering. It is important we, as a council, regularly inspect the areas under our control to ensure they remain safe for the public to use.

Okehampton Town Council will keep a record of areas which have been inspected and this policy will adapt following the outcome of these inspections. If considerable damage is found during each inspection it may be necessary to increase the frequency and likewise if there is little or no damage the frequency will reduce.

Play Areas – Simmons Park

- There is an annual independent play area inspection undertaken by an accredited company.
- Weekly play area inspection - documented.
- Daily litter pick

Pathways and Car Parks

- Monthly detailed inspection for wear and tear such as potholes – documented
- Daily walk of the park – not documented
- Car parks should be checked weekly for potholes, general visibility of road marking and car parking bays – documented within the weekly check sheet
- Traffic calming measures are regularly checked for wear and tear on a monthly basis - documented as part of the weekly car park check
- The following items are readily available for cold weather action:
 - Caution slippery surface signs
 - Rock salt and scoop
 - Shovels
 - Warm clothing
- In snowy or icy conditions the Council's Snow and Ice Management Policy should be referred to.

Bridges

- Bridges will be inspected annually by external consultants and their report will be promptly acted upon
- General bridge surfaces will be treated like any other pathway with a weekly documented inspection
- Slippery surfaces will be treated accordingly

Riverbanks

- Riverbank inspections are monthly and increasing to weekly during the summer months

Trees

- Daily inspections during windy conditions – not documented
- 3 yearly, or as advised, inspections by accredited persons - documented

Buildings, Benches and Bus Shelters

- Weekly inspections of buildings – documented
- Weekly inspections of benches within Simmons Park – documented
- Benches other than in Simmons Park inspected 3 monthly (quarterly) - documented
- Bus shelters when passing/or at least 3 monthly (quarterly) - documented.

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