

**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 22nd January 2024 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

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

In Attendance: Mrs E James (Town Clerk)
Cllr L Samuel (DCC)
2 Members of the Public

Action

- 531 Apologies for Absence** – Apologies tendered by Cllr Leech (health) and Cllr Harding (work) were approved on the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Yelland.

Apologies tendered by Cllrs Calder, Dexter and Vachon (WDBC) were noted.
- 532 Declarations of Interest** – None
- 533 Public Participation** – The Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group addressed the Council. Comments from the Regulation 16 Inspector had been considered by the group the previously week for consideration of the Council.
- 534 Members Questions** – None
- 535 West Devon Borough Council** – A report received from Cllr Vachon earlier in the day had been circulated.
- 536 Devon County Council** – Cllr Samuel had circulated a report earlier in the day and highlighted some matters including the budget and work as Cabinet Member for SEND.
- 537 Questions Arising from Members Reports** – Cllr Marsh requested a report from WDBC Members about the current situation at Parklands Leisure Centre including issues with water and air temperature. A date for a meeting with the Manager was also requested.

Cllr Yelland requested an update from Cllr Samuel about DCC's Pay and Display Parking proposals and if implementation had been included in the budget. Cllr Samuel advised a Cabinet Decision was expected in March and she would report to Council in February.
- 538 Adoption of Minutes of Committees and to Receive Questions from Members Thereon**
- 538.1** On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Cummings, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the **Planning Committee** meetings held on 6th November, 4th and 20th December 2023.

538.2 On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the **Policy & Resource Committee** meetings held on 13th and 20th November 2023.

538.3 On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the **Personnel Sub-Committee** meeting held on 13th November 2023.

539 **Full Council Meeting Minutes** – The minutes of the Town Council meetings held on 11th December 2023 and 8th January 2024 were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Rogers, seconded by Cllr Tolley, to be signed by Cllr Fisher, including correction of the date of the later meeting to read 8th January 2024.

540 **Community Governance Boundary Review** – WDBC would be considering comments and proposals received during stage 4 of the consultation process on 20th February 2024.

541 **Okehampton Second Railway Station** – On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Yelland, it was **RESOLVED** to submit a response to DCC advising that the Town Council strongly believed the station should be named Okehampton Parkway, as it had been known throughout the planning process.

Clerk

(Cllr Weekes left)

542 **Consultations**

542.1 **DCC Pay & Display On-Street Parking Charges Proposal** – The response submitted was noted. It was believed DCC would be considering the proposal at a Cabinet meeting on 13th March 2024.

(Cllr Weekes returned).

542.2 **West Devon Borough Council Corporate Strategy Consultation** – The response submitted was noted.

542.3 **Peninsula Transport Draft Transport Strategy Consultation** – It was commented that rail links were particularly important and should be represented more thoroughly within the document. Councillors could respond as individuals.

543 **Business Improvement District (BID)** – BID workshops were being held on 29th and 30th January 2024.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Bird, it was **RESOLVED** to approve a request from WDBC that an Okehampton Town Council Officer provide administrative support to the Steering Group in the form of scheduling of meetings and taking of minutes for up to 6 months.

Clerk

544 **Neighbourhood Plan** - Cllr Colman reported the majority of comments from the Regulation 16 Inspector were smaller items that could easily resolved. It was commented there was no mention of the WDBC Playing Pitch Strategy or green spaces within the plan and no policies relating to renewable energy.

On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded Cllr Bird (1 against), it was **RESOLVED** to agree the recommendation of the Steering Group that Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council be the lead council.

Clerk

545 **Postal Service** – Correspondence received from the Royal Mail in response to concerns raised about postal delivery delays by a member of the public was noted.

Clerk

546	<u>Charter Hall Roofing Project</u> – The work was due to commence on 19 th February 2024.	
547	<u>Town Hall and Building Windows</u> – It was noted that an application to the Architectural Heritage Fund for a grant had not been successful. On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Colman, it was RESOLVED to approve the commencement of a window condition survey and provision of a specification of work by the previously appointed contractor.	Clerk
548	<u>Town Centre Traffic Issues</u> – On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Fisher it was RESOLVED to delay consideration of a proposal that DCC undertake a town centre traffic survey until April.	Clerk
549	<u>Interim Internal Audit</u> – The Clerk reported the Internal Auditor had attended just before Christmas. It was noted that no items of non-compliance had been raised and action was being taken in relation to the four recommendations made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banks were being asked to confirm signatory changes • Award of Charter Hall roofing work had been updated on Contracts Finder • Policy & Resources Committee would review interest rates alongside investments. • A Councillors Expenses Policy was to be considered later in the meeting. 	
550	<u>2024/25 Budget and Precept</u> –	
550.1	2024/25 Budget – On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Colman, it was RESOLVED to approve the budget recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee.	
550.2	2024/25 Precept - On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Holt, it was RESOLVED to approve a precept requirement of £444,996 which amounted to an increase of 5.59%, or £0.20 p/week for a Band D property.	
551	<u>Finance</u> – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Rogers, it was RESOLVED to approve the schedule of payments.	
552	<u>Policies and Documents</u> –	
552.1	On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Yelland, it was RESOLVED to approve the following documents as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee, including the addition of approval for overnight stays and meals for the Mayor if needed when attending Civic events in the Expenses Policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenses Policy • Outdoor Area Inspection Policy 	Clerk
552.2	On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was RESOLVED to approve the submission of the Green Flag application for Simmons Park.	Clerk
553	<u>Nomination of Trustee</u>	
553.1	Okehampton United Charity - On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Holt, it was RESOLVED to nominate John Simmons as Trustee to Okehampton United Charity to fill the casual vacancy following a resignation. The appointment would run until 31 st July 2027.	Clerk
553.2	Simmons Homes - On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was RESOLVED to appoint Cllr Bird as Trustee to Simmons Homes to fill the casual vacancy following a resignation. The term of office being 4 years from the date of appointment.	Clerk

554 Planning Training for Councillors – Councillors were requested to advise the Clerk if they wish to attend the virtual training session being provided by WDBC at 4pm on 29th February. Attendees to date were:

- Cllr A Fisher
- Cllr R Colman
- Cllr M Richards
- Cllr T Cummings

Clerk

555 Mayors Civic Diary – Cllr Fisher reported on events attended which included the Friendly Circle Christmas lunch, Plymouth Civic Service, Courtenay Players, Town Band concert, Carnival fair and Coffee mornings.

(Cllr Holt left for a short time during this item)

556 Reports of Council Working/Task & Finish Groups –

556.1 Climate Change – No meeting had been held.

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

557.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group – Considered earlier in the meeting.

557.2 Okehampton Community Hospital – Cllr Marsh reported a working group meeting had been and priorities had been set which included that the facility was retained for health and wellbeing use. A written report from Cllr Richards had circulated along with information about the Integrated Care Board Strategy.

557.3 Business Improvement District – Considered earlier in the meeting.

558 Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items -

558.1 Rural Market Town Group – No recent meetings

558.2 20's Plenty for Devon – No meeting had been held but emails and newsletters had been received.

558.3 Active Travel Project – No meeting had been held.

(All persons with the exception of Councillors left the meeting)

559 PART 2 Confidential Matters - On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Bird 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.

560 Communication and Community Engagement - On the proposition of Cllr Rogers, seconded Cllr Richards, it was **RESOLVED** to run a competition for the design of a noticeboard, Cllr Rogers to work with the Clerk. It was commented that the proposed locations were within a conservation area and planning consent would be required.

Cllr
Rogers/
Clerk

561 Water/Legionella Monitoring – On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to bring the monitoring 'in-house', approve the associated training and purchase of equipment the anticipated cost being in the region of £1,000. The annual cost saving being approximately £2,000.

Clerk

562 Public Toilet Cleaning - On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Rogers, it was **RESOLVED** to extend the cleaning contract for the facilities

in Market Street and Fairplace for the 2024/25 year through WDBC at the following costs:

Market Street £6,725.20
Fairplace £8,113.00

Clerk

563 **CCTV** – Cllr Richards declared a personal interest relating to previous work.

On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was **RESOLVED** not to link the camera behind Lidl to the system which would enable remote access.

Clerk

564 **Memorial Stonemason** – On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Order 3 (bb) to permit extension of the meeting.

The Clerk reported on an ongoing matter as circulated within a confidential report. On the proposition of Cllr Bird, seconded Cllr Rogers, it was **RESOLVED** to:

Clerk

- a) To join the British Register for Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAAM)
- b) To obtain updated insurance, risk assessment and other information annually from Memorial Masons
- c) That the Council compiles and holds its own register of permitted Memorial Masons, following which only those approved by the Council will be able to undertake work in the Council owned Cemetery.
- d) With immediate effect, with the exception of outstanding work, those noted in the report will not be permitted access to the Council owned Cemetery.

565 **Basket Swing** – Quotations for the replacement of the item of play equipment in Simmons Park were considered.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Yelland, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the purchase and installation of a Devils Island Basket Swing with stratus basket from HAGS at the cost of £7,973.

Clerk/
Park-
Keeper

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Rogers, it was **RESOLVED** to move out of Part 2 and ratify decisions made therein. The meeting was closed at 8.40pm.

Councillor Fisher, Mayor