

Minutes of an Okehampton Town Council Parks Committee Meeting held on Monday 19th February 2024 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton

Committee Members Present: Councillor C Marsh (Chairman)
 Councillor R Colman (Chairman, Property)
 Councillor M Ireland
 Councillor L Rogers
 Councillor B Tolley
 Councillor S Weekes

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

Absent: Councillor M Harding

	Action
<p>572 <u>Apologies for Absence</u> – Apologies tendered by Cllrs Fisher (personal), Holt (health), Leech (health) and Yelland (personal) were APPROVED on the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Ireland.</p>	
<p>573 <u>Declarations of Interest</u> – None</p>	
<p>574 <u>Public Participation</u> – None</p>	
<p>575 <u>Park Keeper</u> – Mr McGahey provided an update which included the rebuilding of a large part of the wall along the top path in Simmons Park. There were a large number of frogs and spawn in the ponds, council made compost had been spread on beds, spring bulbs were being planted, Clapps Wood brambles had been cleared. A meeting with Devon Wildlife Trust had been held the previous week when advice and information had been provided. An Owl box had been provided in Simmons Park and the Crocus were in flower.</p> <p>Questions about improvements to the rockery, the volunteer group and the sensory garden planting were asked and answered: The apprentice would be completing work to the rockery as part of his course, work would be commencing by the end of the month. The volunteer group had 11 members and would be meeting regularly, potentially weekly, when the weather improved. More plants were being added to Fairplace garden including hellebores and jasmine, wild primroses were currently flowering.</p>	
<p>576 <u>Members’ Questions</u> – None</p>	
<p>577 <u>Minutes</u> - Minutes of the Parks Committee meeting held on 20th November 2023 were APPROVED to be signed by the Chairman on the proposition of Cllr Rogers, seconded Cllr Ireland.</p>	
<p>578 <u>Simmons Park</u></p>	
<p>578.1 Bookings – The previously circulated list of events was noted.</p>	
<p>578.2 Cycle Rack Provision – Following advice from DCC who were willing to provide a cycle rack free of charge, on the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was RESOLVED to approve an alternative location for the provision of a cycle rack, that being adjacent to the information board, along with a concrete pad as necessary.</p>	<p>Park-keeper/ Clerk</p>

578.3	<p>Electricity – A revised date was awaited for the installation of a smart meter in the Parks Office.</p>	Park- Keeper
578.4	<p>Bandstand – A response from WDBC to a planning pre-application submission to ascertain if planning consent to add a ‘finial’ to the new structure adjacent to Chalet Treloar was awaited.</p>	
578.5	<p>Bridge/Riverbank Inspections and Repairs – The full written report was awaited. Some repair work would be required once the full extent of the repairs was known. Park-keeper to make a further request for the full report, noting the inspection had been undertaken at no cost to the council.</p>	Park- Keeper
578.6	<p>Okehampton College and Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust (DMAT) Signage – It was noted that Trustees of Simmons Park Charity were continuing to liaise with DMAT about signage in the vicinity of the playing field and a response to the last correspondence was awaited.</p>	
578.7	<p>No Mow May – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was RESOLVED that agreed areas in Simmons Park be left unmown until the bluebells had died back.</p>	
578.8	<p>Entrance Rockery – Following receipt of planning consent for tree work (3859/23/TC) improvements were due to commence later in the month. The project was being led by the apprentice as part of his course.</p>	
579	<p><u>Skatepark</u></p>	
579.1	<p>Skatepark and BMX Track – Concern and potential solutions raised by Cllr Weekes about standing water on the skatepark were considered. It was noted the issue was due to the lay of the concrete which was flat and there was no runoff of rainwater. A solution would be reviewed alongside future resurfacing work.</p>	Park-keeper
579.2	<p>Cycle Rack Provision – It was noted DCC had agreed to provide a cycle rack free of charge.</p>	
579.3	<p>Tree Work – Tree work required following an inspection in November 2023 for health and safety purposes in the skatepark area had been completed.</p>	
579.4	<p>Extension of Wildlife Area – Cllr Weekes outlined a proposal to extend the wildlife area on the land adjacent to the skatepark. Cllr Weekes and the Park-keeper to progress plans and report to next meeting.</p>	Cllr Weekes Park- Keeper
580	<p><u>Cemetery</u></p>	
580.1	<p>Burials – The summary of burials previously circulated was noted.</p>	
580.2	<p>Scattering Lawn – Creation of the scattering lawn would commence in the new financial year.</p>	
580.3	<p>Tree Work – Planning consent for tree work identified in an inspection undertaken in November 2023 was awaited along with some additional crown lifting work.</p>	Clerk Park-keeper
<p>The trees were on land adjacent to the cemetery for which the landowner was not known and was not registered with Land Registry. The Committee was clear the council did not, and would not, take future responsibility for</p>		

	the trees or the land they were on and that the work was being carried out for the health and safety of users of the cemetery and staff working therein.	
580.4	<p>Cemetery Policies – On the proposition of Cllr Weekes, seconded Cllr Colman, it was RESOLVED to recommend the following policies to the Policy & Resources Committee for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorial Mason Registration Scheme • Cemetery Rules and Regulations 	Clerk
581	<u>Other Outdoor Areas and Updates</u>	
581.1	<p>Vehicles – The Park-keeper provided an update following electrical issues with the van and for which quotations and advice were awaited. On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Tolley it was RESOLVED the decision be delegated to the Clerk in conjunction with the Chairman or Vice-Chairman.</p>	Park-keeper Clerk
581.2	<p>Remote Controlled Aerial Vehicles – It was commented any such vehicles being flown over Council owned/maintained land needed to comply with Civil Aviation Authority regulations. The Clerk and Chairman to agree a statement to be published on the website.</p>	Cllr Colman Clerk
581.3	<p>Fairplace Tree – It was RESOLVED the tree be replaced with a tree of the same type as previously in situ at this location.</p>	Park-keeper
582	<u>Finance</u>	
582.1	<p>Payment of Invoices – On the proposition of Cllr Weekes, seconded Cllr Rogers, it was RESOLVED to approve the schedule of payments.</p>	
583	<u>Reports of Council Working/Task and Finish Groups -</u>	
583.1	<p>Cemetery Management – A meeting had been held when the policies at Min Ref 582.4 above had been discussed.</p>	
583.2	<p>Putting Green Improvements – It was commented the project was reliant on S106 and other grant funding.</p>	
584	<u>Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items -</u>	
584.1	<p>Dartmoor National Park Forum – Cllr Marsh advised no recent meeting had been held.</p>	
584.2	<p>Everything Okehampton – Cllr Marsh reported the Christmas lights had been well received and the group would continue to fundraise to provide them again in 2024. It was hoped a BID might then be in place and agree to take on the funding of the lights. Anchor bolts and wire testing was due to be undertaken in 2024.</p>	
584.3	<p>Okehampton Community Recreation Association (OCRA) – Cllr Tolley had been unable to attend the meeting on 17th January and was awaiting the minutes. The AGM had been postponed to 27th March.</p>	
584.4	<p>Okehampton & District Community Transport Group – No report.</p>	
584.5	<p>Okehampton Ukraine Support Group – The Clerk advised she had been in contact with a previous Town Councillor who was still involved with the group. The group was still operational but not very active. Cllr Ireland was keen to be in contact with this person if they were willing. The Clerk to follow up.</p>	Clerk

584.6 **Parklands Leisure Centre Users Group** – No information had been received the Clerk to chase a meeting date.

Clerk

584.7 **Twinning Association** – Cllr Rogers had emailed the group but had not received a response.

585 **PART TWO CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS** – On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Colman, 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.)

586 **Play Equipment** – Cllrs Marsh, Tolley and Ireland declared a personal interest being Trustees of Okehampton United Charities (OUC).

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation for the provision of bespoke made tractor for the play area noting this was specialist work and only one company/quotation was available, subject to the approval of the OUC who had offered a donation to the Council for the provision of the play equipment. The cost quoted in January 2024 totalling £19,650 from Flights of Fantasy.

It was further **RESOLVED** to request a preferred colour scheme from the OUC and the position in which they would like their logo to be placed.

Park-keeper
Clerk

587 **Cemetery Extension** – Cllr Marsh outlined the potential availability of 2 pieces of land.

The impact on wildlife of recent felling of trees on adjacent land was commented upon.

588 **Memorial Masons** – An update following a resolution of Full Council on 22nd January was provided.

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

Councillor Holt
Chairman