

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Okehampton Town Council Parks Committee
held on Monday 6 October 2014 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber,
Town Hall, Okehampton**

Committee Members Present: Councillor Mrs C Marsh (Chairman)
Councillor K Ball (Vice Chairman)
Councillor Revd M Davies
Councillor Dr M Ireland
Councillor P Vachon (Town Mayor)
Councillor A Leech (Chairman, Planning)
Councillor Mrs M McDonald (Chairman, P& R)

Other Members Present: None

In Attendance: P R Snell (Town Clerk)

255. **Apologies for Absence** - Apologies for absence were presented on behalf of Councillor D Weekes and Councillor Mrs J Goffey.
256. **Deferment of Business** (for comment by the public) - None
257. **Members' Questions** - None.
258. **Minutes** - The minutes of the Parks Committee held on Monday 21 July 2014 were approved and signed by the Chairman on the proposition of Councillor Ireland, seconded by Councillor Ball with all in favour.
259. **Matters Arising** -
- 259.1 **BT Phone Box** - The Clerk reported that the phone box was now in the compound at Simmons Park awaiting removal for sandblasting and repainting.
- 259.2 **College Car Park Alterations** - The Clerk reported that the amendments to the kerb heights and installation of bollards to allow emergency access through the College car park had been completed in late September.
- 259.3 **Sophia Simmons' Headstone** - Nothing to report.
- 259.4 **Dog and Public Highway Waste Collections** - The Clerk reported that the Borough Council proposed to place notices on its bins that dog waste could also be placed in normal street waste bins. This was at variance to the Town Council's policy for Simmons Park where every effort was made to segregate waste due to the recycling policy of the new contractor. The Committee noted the position.
260. **Park Bookings** - None.
261. **Community Self-help on Highways** - The Chairman reported on a County Council initiative in preparation whereby Town and Parish Councils or voluntary groups could take on responsibilities that the County were increasingly less able to provide. After much discussion it was agreed that the Council were not in a position to take this initiative further at present.

262. **County Snow Warden Scheme** - The Chairman reported that 70 parishes had now joined the scheme with 20 having decided not to. Through discussion it was generally felt that the scheme appeared orientated to rural parishes rather than towns such as Okehampton, notwithstanding the difficulties that may be presented on some steep residential roads. After a wide-ranging discussion, it was agreed not to join the scheme until a full, evidenced feasibility study had been carried out followed by a further review, this on the proposition of Councillor Ireland, seconded by Councillor Davies and carried.
263. **Open Spaces** - Councillor McDonald declared an interest. The schedule of open spaces potentially to be transferred from West Devon Borough Council to the Town Council was scrutinised, following the summary previously circulated. The Clerk reported on an initial assessment of maintenance implications that had been made by the Chairman and Park-keeper, and the running costs for facilities such as toilets that had been provided by West Devon Borough Council were noted. On the proposition of Councillor Davies, seconded by Councillor Ireland, it was agreed that this was a good opportunity to pursue, subject to assembling a clear and detailed schedule of all costs and implications involved location by location.
264. **Play Area & Skate Park Safety Inspections** - The Clerk reported on the safety inspection carried out and further reported on the remedial works that had been carried out since receipt of the inspection reports. The Committee noted the reports.
265. **West Devon Car Parking Strategy Meeting** - The Chairman reported on the meeting that she had recently attended, noting the Borough Council's strategy for reducing charges at long-stay car parks under its control. The Committee discussed the matter of coach spaces at Mill Road car park, and Councillor Ball, as Borough Councillor, reported that the consultation associated with the publication of the Traffic Order was still awaited.
266. **Maintenance of Public Benches** - The Clerk reported on a £500 grant towards the maintenance of public benches within the town, payable by West Devon Borough Council. The Committee noted the conditions attached to the award of the grant for the current year, and agreed that application to claim it should be made, with the proviso that the benches outside St James' Chapel should not be included as they were in need of more substantial repair. It was further reported that a Mr Bennett had kindly cleared brambles and growth from the Lions-dedicated bench on Exeter Road. The Committee agreed that a letter of thanks should be sent.
267. **College Parking Permits** - It was noted that the Children's Centre had requested permission to take up parking in the College car park, which was already overfull during term time. It was agreed to defer further discussion on this matter until a full study of the deeds and lease agreements had been made.
268. **Cemetery Matters** -
- 268.1 The Clerk reported on a complaint that had been received concerning grass growth around a particular headstone. He reported that the matter had been resolved satisfactorily with the complainant.

268.2 The Clerk reported on a complaint concerning strimming at one of the gravestones. The Clerk had investigated the matter, and the complainant had met with both the Chairman and the Deputy Clerk in the Clerk's absence, and the matter had been satisfactorily resolved.

268.3 Consideration to establish an earmarked fund for new burial ground provision -
The Chairman summarised the situation that the old burial ground had been given to the Church whilst the new addition continued to be owned by the Council, but administered by the Church. Both sections continued to be maintained by Council staff. It was agreed the Clerk would research the history of payments made for maintenance before arranging a meeting with Reverend Cook. It was also agreed that a timely search on land availability for the next burial ground should be commenced, with due provision for earmarked funds being made.

269. Members' Reports -

- (i) Children's Centre - Councillor Leech reported no significant developments.
- (ii) North Dartmoor Search and Rescue Group - Councillor Vachon reported that a training plan had been introduced, new trainee members were to be taken on, there would be an open day for the new centre, and a number of members had obtained their Chapter 8 Road Closure Certificates. Councillor Ireland reported that a recent meeting of the members had identified significant costs of restructuring, that there had been 22 call-outs to date in 2014, and that the members experienced in road closure activities had proved of considerable experience in assisting the Civic Parade on 5 October. Councillor Ireland further confirmed that the group continued to use both the old and the new buildings for the time being.
- (iii) Okehampton Community Archive - Councillor Vachon reported that a meeting on 17 September had discussed fund-raising and the provision of a World War I display and exhibition in St James' Chapel. An application for funding had been made to Okehampton United Charities to assist with the rent for the following year and provision of new equipment and a plan chest.
- (iv) Okehampton Community Recreation Association (OCRA) - No meeting to report on.
- (v) Parklands Leisure Centre Users' Group - Councillor Leech reported that the Parklands Management Team had been reconstituted as a new trust entitled, 'One Life'. This allowed them to put together applications for community grants. There had been discussion about the increased rates applied, and the introduction of swipe cards for all members.
- (vi) Tennis Court Management - No meeting.
- (vii) Youth Issues/Room 13 - Councillor Davies reported no issues.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.29 pm.

Councillor Mrs C Marsh
Chairman