

**Minutes of Okehampton Town Council Policy and Resources Committee Meeting
held on Monday 11th March 2024 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber,
Town Hall, Okehampton**

Committee Members Present: Councillor J Yelland (Chairman)
Councillor B Tolley (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor R Colman (Chairman, Property)
Councillor L Bird
Councillor C Marsh

In Attendance: Mrs E James (Town Clerk)

Action

- 627** **Apologies for Absence** – Apologies tendered by Cllr Leech (health), Cllr Holt (health), Cllr Fisher (Mayoral), Cllr Weekes (personal) were approved on the proposition of Cllr Bird, seconded Cllr Colman.
- 628** **Declarations of Interest** – None
- 629** **Public Participation** – None
- 630** **Members’ Questions** – None
- 631** **Minutes** – On the proposition of Cllr Bird, seconded Cllr Tolley (1 abstention), it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15th January 2024 to be signed by Cllr Yelland.
- 632** **Grants**
- 632.1** **Feedback** received from Tor Support Services for a grant of £3,000 awarded in July 2023 was noted.
- 632.2** **Allotments** – Personal interests were declared by Cllrs Marsh and Tolley who were Trustees of Okehampton United Charity.
- On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded Cllr Bird (2 abstentions), it was **RESOLVED** to approve the application from Okehampton United Charities for the sum of £3,661.99 as the Town Council’s contribution towards the cost of provision of allotments in 2023, in accordance with the Funding Agreement.
- 632.3** **Town Centre Initiative** – The Clerk outlined a suggestion for an initiative which would support the business community, economy, and a public realm strand of DCC’s Regeneration project for the town.
- On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** in principle to support the project, subject to agreement of policies and procedures. Funds remaining in the Grant Budget at 31st March 2024 to be used for the purpose of creating a grant scheme in 2024/25 for application by town centre businesses to assist with front elevation exterior decoration/improvement.
- 633** **Policies and Documents** -
- 633.1** On the proposition of Cllr Bird, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED**, due to the possibility of issues including illness, the following amendment to Standing Order 5e) to read: ‘those being nominated for election as Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Committee Chairman or Vice-Chairman to the Council are **not** required to be present at the meeting at which the election will take place’.
- On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Bird, it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the amendment to Standing Order 4b) also include the following

Clerk

Clerk

wording: 'in the absence of the Mayor or Committee Chairmen, the Deputy Mayor, or Vice-Chairmen, may take their place with full voting rights.

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to recommend following policies to Full Council, including amendments as above:

- Health & Safety Policy
- Delegation Scheme
- Financial Regulations
- Financial Risk Assessment and Management Policy
- Internal Control Statement
- Reserves Policy
- Standing Orders
- Treasury and Investment Policy & Strategy

Clerk

633.2 On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the following policies to Full Council:

- Cemetery Rules and Regulations
- Memorial Mason Registration Scheme

Clerk

634 **Finances**

634.1 **Councillor Audits** – Cllr Marsh confirmed an audit of the bank reconciliations, online payments, Lloyds Debit Card transactions and petty cash had been undertaken earlier in the day. There was a balancing issue whereby some March payments had been accounted for in month 11 (February), and not month 12 (March). The software provider was aware and would be completing an update. This would be followed up at the next audit.

Cllr
Marsh

634.2 **Management Accounts** – Queries including in relation to additional income over the budgeted amount for Town Hall hire, which was due to an increase in bookings, and miscellaneous income in relation to public toilets in Market Street which was funding provided by WDBC for some maintenance work were raised. On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the management accounts, as circulated, for months ended 31st December 2023 and 31st January 2024 (months 9 and 10).

634.3 **Investments** – Investments and interest rates were reviewed. Move of funds from NatWest to a higher interest account to be considered following completion of the Charter Hall roofing work. It was agreed interest income from accounts, including CCLA, continued to be paid into the nominal code for interest received (1190/101).

Ass.
Clerk

634.4 **Payment Schedule** – Cllr Yelland declared a personal interest having submitted a claim for expenses in relation to council work. On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Tolley (1 abstention), it was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments.

635 **Reports of Council Working/Task & Finish Groups** –

635.1 **80th Celebration of D-Day in 2024** – The last meeting was on 30th January 2024, the next meeting was in April. A grant application to Okehampton United Charities for funding to cover the cost of a marquee and generator had been approved.

635.2 **Emergency Plan** – Cllr Marsh advised a meeting was being held the following day to review a draft document.

636 **Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items** –

636.1 **Citizens Advice** – Cllr Yelland had no update to report.

636.2 **DALC Larger Councils Sub-Committee** – Cllr Yelland and the Clerk had attended a Workshop on 7th March when the potential impact of Devon devolution deal on larger town councils had been discussed.

636.3 **Devon Climate Emergency Group** – Cllr Bird had no information to report.

636.4 **Fairtrade** – No report had been received from Cllr Weekes.

636.5 **Police Council Advocate Scheme, Northern Links and West Devon Matters** – Cllr Yelland reported that as Council Advocate, she had attended the official opening of the Okehampton Police Office. New ‘Criminal Justice and You’ multimedia resource designed to help victims through the process had been launched.

There had been no Links meeting held.

The West Devon Inspector had been promoted and moved to a different role.

Sgt Ottley had attended a recent meeting of the council to provide information about the value of CCTV.

637 **On the proposition of Cllr Colman, 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 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.**

638 **Outstanding Balances** – The list of outstanding balances, action being taken and a concern in relation to potential non-payment by a debtor was reported.

639 **Silver Mace** – A condition report and quotation for recommended repair and maintenance was considered. Only one quotation had been sourced because of the specialist nature of the work.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the quoted repair and maintenance work, including provision of new cases, at the cost of approximately £2,830. Photographs of the work in progress to be requested, internal wooden poles to be kept and returned to the Council for historical purposes. Insurance to be investigated and agreement with location where the work would be undertaken to be made. Work to be undertaken after Mayor Choosing/Annual Council meeting in May.

Clerk

640 **Council Email/IT Security** – Quotations for alternative email security packages were considered. On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Bird, it was **RESOLVED** to reconsider following the presentation by the Police Cyber Crime Team in October.

Clerk

The Council’s IT contractor had provided a quotation for IT penetration testing. On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to not to accept the quotation as this may be undertaken free of charge by the Cyber Insurance company used by the Council.

Clerk

641 **Staffing Matters** – The Clerk reported staff annual reviews had been undertaken. On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the pay increase for the Apprentice in April and October 2024 in line with Government pay rates for 2024.

It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Order 3 (bb) to permit extension of the meeting following a proposal by Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Colman.

A meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee was being held on Tuesday 19th March 2024 to consider further matters.

(The Clerk left the meeting)

- 642** **Clerk's Annual Appraisal and Performance Review, and Pay Review** –
Cllr Yelland reported on the review undertaken by herself and Cllr Fisher on 29th February 2024.
On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Bird, it was **RESOLVED** to award a pay increase of one spinal point effective from the date of employment (July).

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part 2 and ratify decisions made therein. The meeting was closed at 8.50pm.

Cllr Yelland, Chairman