

Minutes of an Okehampton Town Council Parks Committee Meeting held on Monday 13th May 2024 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton

Committee Members Present: Councillor B Tolley (Chairman)
 Councillor L Rogers (Vice-Chairman)
 Councillor A Fisher (Mayor)
 Councillor R Colman (Chairman, Property)
 Councillor J Yelland (Chairman, Policy & Resources)
 Councillor C Holt
 Councillor M Ireland
 Councillor C Marsh

In Attendance: Mrs E James (Town Clerk)
 Mr J McGahey (Park-Keeper)
 1 Member of the Public

	Action
Cllr Tolley welcomed Councillors to the first meeting of the Committee in the new mayoral year and thanked the previous Chairman and Vice-Chairman.	
15 <u>Apologies for Absence</u> – Apologies tendered by Cllrs Leech (health) and Weekes (health) were APPROVED on the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded Cllr Ireland.	
16 <u>Declarations of Interest</u> Cllr Rogers declared a personal interest in Min Ref 22.4 being a member of the community group. Cllr Marsh declared a personal interest in Min Ref 21.1, item relating to the play tractor being a Trustee of the OUC.	
17 <u>Public Participation</u> – A member of the public addressed the Committee in relation to the item about putting improvements and the impact this may have on the area and businesses. Previous correspondence sent to the Clerk had been circulated with the meeting papers.	
18 <u>Park Keeper</u> – Mr McGahey provided an update which included the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairplace tree had been replanted, other planting was in progress. • Replanting had taken place near the ponds where a storm damaged tree had been felled. The trunk had been milled into planks for use as signage for the wildlife trail. • Following rehabilitation 2 hedgehogs had been released in Simmons Park the previous week • Creation of the scattering lawn was in progress • The wooden bench by the traffic lights at the Mill Road/East Street junction required maintenance. Replacement parts was anticipated to be required within approximately 18 months and was likely to be costly due to the nature of the bench. • Green flag judging had taken place and the outcome was awaited. 	
19 <u>Members' Questions</u> – None	
20 <u>Minutes</u> - Minutes of the Parks Committee meeting held on 19 th February 2024 were APPROVED to be signed by the Chairman on the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Colman.	

21	Simmons Park		
21.1	<p>Updates - The following were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bookings - Events that had either taken place or were scheduled to take place in Simmons Park, subject to receipt of the necessary paperwork. • Electricity – A date in July had been received for the installation of a smart meter in the Parks Office. • Okehampton College/DMAT Signage – Trustees of Simmons Park Charity were awaiting a response from the DMAT. • RoSPA Play Safety Inspections – The annual inspection of the play areas in Simmons Park had been undertaken in March 2024. The Park-Keeper reported that the majority of items requiring repairs were majority being minor, easily rectified items which had mostly been completed. • Green Flag Application – A judging visit had taken place on 2nd May, the outcome would be known in June/July. • EV Charging, DCC Call for Sites – A no obligation expression of interest had been lodged with DCC who were seeking sites for the placement of EC charging points. • Emergency Tree Work – A Beech Tree adjacent to the ponds had been felled following storm damage (planning consent 0728/24/TCA). • Play Tractor – The play tractor, funding donated by Okehampton United Charities, was due to be installed in early June. 		
21.2	<p>Putting Improvements – Feedback received from members of the public had been previously circulated and a further comment received was read out by the Clerk.</p> <p>It was noted the result of any project needed to take into consideration the impact of ongoing maintenance. The S106 funding application had not been approved. It was commented applications were considered and decisions made by WDBC Ward Members for Okehampton, none of whom had supported the application. The Clerk was requested to ascertain the grounds on which the application was rejected noting that crazy golf was a recreational activity.</p> <p>On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was RESOLVED to defer consideration until further funding information was available.</p> <p>On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded Cllr Fisher, it was RESOLVED not to refill the existing bunkers with sand and to flatten the area.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Park-keeper</p>	
21.3	<p>Bandstand – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Ireland, (1 abstention) it was RESOLVED to apply for planning consent to place a 'finial' to the top of the structure adjacent to Chalet Treloar.</p>	Clerk	
21.4	<p>Bridge/Riverbank Inspections and Repairs – The Park-Keeper explained an inspection and written notes had been provided free of charge, but the full report had been not received. On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded Cllr Rogers, it was RESOLVED to obtain quotations for the work based on the information received.</p>	Clerk/ Park-keeper	
21.5	<p>Cycling and Cycle Rack Provision – Correspondence from a member of the public in relation to cyclists in Simmons Park was considered. It was noted that an issue was people coming off the moors and through the park from the top footpaths accessed from Station Road. On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Colman, it was RESOLVED to place larger 'No Cycling' signs on the related entrance gates.</p>	Clerk/ Park-Keeper	

	It was noted DCC had agreed to provide a free cycle rack for the park.	
21.6	<p>Simmons Park Car Park – Correspondence from a member of the public in relation to parking permit provision and lack of available parking spaces was considered.</p> <p>There were 74 spaces, and 34 parking permits in existence. The committee recognised use of the car park was related to the popularity of the area and facilities on offer. No action to be taken.</p>	
21.7	Nature Trail and Booklet – The initial outline for the trail incorporating wildlife information boards and a booklet were noted. Work to continue.	
22	<u>Skatepark and BMX Track</u>	
22.1	RoSPA Play Safety Inspections – The annual inspection of the areas had been undertaken in March 2024. The Park-keeper advised the Skatepark had been flagged as needing improvements but was safe to use because it complied with H&S requirements when it was installed. Major work would be needed to refurbish it completely. Funding would need to be identified and obtained, the project would be progressed when staff had capacity to do so.	
22.2	Extension of Wildlife Area – Cllr Weekes had provided the Clerk with a brief update; he would be providing wildflower seeds and logs to use as seating and for ecology when he was able.	
22.3	S106 Funding Application – The S106 funding application had resulted in an award of £38,907.57 towards the upgrade of the BMX track.	
22.4	<p>Skate Jam and Volunteer Group – Cllr Rogers requested permission on behalf of Okehampton Skatepark Regeneration Group (OSRG) to paint some elements of the skatepark and hold skate jams in the area.</p> <p>On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr March, it was RESOLVED to approve the painting request, subject to relevant insurance being provided, approval of the type of paint to be used and that any other requirements from the council's insurer were able to be met.</p>	Clerk
23	<u>Cemetery</u>	
23.1	Burials – The Committee noted that a burial was due to take place later in the week, this being the only once since the last meeting.	
23.2	Scattering Lawn – Work to create the facility had commenced.	
24	<u>Other Outdoor Areas and Updates</u>	
24.1	Vehicles – The Park-keeper reported a scrapped van of same year and make had been located by a local garage who were hoping to purchase it for parts to repair the council vehicle.	
25	<u>Payment of Invoices</u> – On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded Cllr Rogers, it was RESOLVED to approve the schedule of payments. Payments required to be made between meetings, due to bank holidays and other events, approved by Cllr Ireland and Marsh on 29 th April and authorised online by Cllr Tolley were noted. The payments, which amounted to £104,238.89, included an interim invoice for the roofing work.	

26	Committee Terms of Reference – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Rogers, it was RESOLVED to recommend the draft document to Full Council, including removal of responsibility for the 3 bus shelters.	Clerk
27	Reports of Council Working/Task and Finish Groups -	
27.1	Cemetery Management – No further update	
27.2	Putting Green Improvements – No further update	
28	Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items -	
28.1	Dartmoor National Park Forum – Cllr Marsh advised she was due to attend a meeting.	
28.2	Everything Okehampton – Cllr Marsh reported a fundraising dinner was being held in November.	
28.3	Okehampton Community Recreation Association (OCRA) – Cllr Tolley had attended the AGM in March. Stakeholder DMAT Trustee was not yet in place and a vacancy for a Clerk had arisen. The Manager's report was available on the website.	
28.4	Okehampton & District Community Transport Group – No report.	
28.5	Okehampton Ukraine Support Group – Cllr Ireland was contacting local group members for a full report.	
28.6	Parklands Leisure Centre Users Group – Cllr Tolley had visited and met with the Manager and another member of staff.	
28.7	Twinning Association – Cllr Rogers had been unable to make contact with the group. Clerk to assist.	
29	PART TWO CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS – On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Marsh, 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 member of public left the meeting, the Park-Keeper was permitted to remain.)	
30	Cemetery Extension – The Clerk outlined the two options that may become available and difficulties experienced dealing with the land agent related to one of them. On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Yelland, it was RESOLVED that the Clerk make an official complaint, if necessary, due to the difficulties and lack of communication from the land agent.	Clerk

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland seconded Cllr Colman it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part Two and ratify decisions made therein. The meeting was closed at 8.15pm.

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