



Okehampton Town Council



Okehampton Town Council
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NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2024

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Christmas message from Cllr Fisher, Mayor

'It has been my great pleasure to have been your Mayor during 2024 and I will continue to spread the gospel that Okehampton is a really excellent place to live. With our new station about to be built, VE Day celebrations in our park organised, and all the other things planned we can look forward to a great 2025. Our Christmas Lights are once again fantastic, and we all hope that with the Business Improvement District (BID) now in full swing there will be more and more exciting opportunities and events in our great town. Jean and I would like to thank you for your support and wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a great New Year.'

The Mayors Carol Service

Come along and join in with carol singing on Edwardian Evening at 6pm outside of St James' Chapel immediately after the Christmas Light switch on.

Christmas Parking in Simmons Park

Will be free Monday to Friday from 12noon, all day Saturdays and Bank Holidays from Monday 2nd December until 1st January 2025 (inclusive).

Simmons Park Christmas Trail

From 2nd December there will be a trail in Simmons Park. Test your Christmas knowledge and spot the Christmas baubles around the park with a Christmas book theme. Trail sheets can be collected from the Book Swap (phone box), Town Hall or downloaded from the website.

Council Office Christmas and New Year Opening Hours

The Office in the Town Hall will close at 12noon on Friday 20th December and reopen on Thursday 2nd January 2025. During that time emails and messages will be monitored for any urgent matters.

EDWARDIAN EVENING
Okehampton
Thursday 5th December 18:00 – 21:00

SCHEDULE

- 18:00 – 18:30 Join in with the Mayors Carols – In front of Church
- 18:30 & 19:30 Festive Bubble Shows with Bubbles the Pixie
- 18:30 & 20:00 Join us for Festive Vintage tunes – In front of Church
- 18:30 & 20:10 Alison Moyna joins us with Festive tunes – Red Lion Yard
- 19:15 In – Motion dance group join us with dance performances – In front of Church
- 19:15 – 19:35 Okehampton Voices join us with Festive tunes – Red Lion Yard
- 19:35 – 20:10 Wren Music Street Band performance – Red Lion Yard

Children's carousel and rides (small charge)
Father Christmas will pay a visit to the Museum – do pay him a visit!

Sponsored by: **EVERYTHING OKEHAMPTON**

Miss Ivy Events

Okehampton Youth Council

The Youth Council met on 30th October when they spent time creating a poster and their social media presence – Facebook and Instagram. Hosting a First Aid course for young people in February half-term is being considered. A Logo was agreed upon and grant applications were submitted to WDBC and DCC for the cost of badges, branded hoodies and to cover the cost of the first aid course.



A page on the Town Council's website will be provided for the youth council in due course.

Interested in joining the Youth Council – email youthcouncil@okehampton.gov.uk

Okehampton Town Council Cemetery

Please note that Christmas wreaths and other related items will be removed by Town Council staff during the last week of January.



Town Council Grants were awarded to the following not-for-profit groups and organisations at the November Policy & Resources Committee meeting. The value of grant applications far exceeded the budget available, and Councillors had to make some very difficult decisions, expressing how problematic it was and noting the vital role the groups and organisations played within the community. The grant budget for this financial year has now been fully spend.

- **Okehampton United Ecclesiastical Charity** - a grant of £500 towards the upkeep of St James' Chapel and the Town Clock for which Trustees were presented with a cheque by the Mayor.
- **Okehampton District Community Transport Group** - a grant of £750 towards the provision and delivery of core services.
- **Citizens Advice Torrridge, North Mid and West Devon** – a grant of £4,000 towards provision and delivery of services.
- **Meldon Viaduct Trust** - a grant of £250 to assist with funding of essential repairs and maintenance and build a reserve for refurbishment plans in 2029.
- **Everything Okehampton** - a grant of £2,000 towards the cost of erecting, maintaining and dismantling the Christmas Lights.
- **Okehampton Carnival** - a grant of £400 towards the running costs of the annual carnival
- **Okehampton Ladies Friendship Group** - a grant of £342 towards the cost of room hire, refreshments for monthly meetings and for anniversary and Christmas celebrations



Details of how to apply for a grant in the next financial year can be obtained from the office or website.

Town Centre Business Grant Initiative - At the beginning of the financial year, the council put aside unspent funds amounting to £2,896 from the 2023/24 Grant budget to be used this year for a pilot scheme – a Town Centre Business Grant Initiative. This grant will enable businesses to apply for funding to spruce up their shop fronts which will improve the overall look of the town centre. WDBC have added to this grant pot by providing double the funds, increasing the amount available within the budget to £8,688.

[This funding has to be spent within the next few months, so businesses are encouraged to apply for funding as soon as possible. Please see the council website for information.](#)

The following grants were awarded at recent meetings of the Policy & Resources Committee.

- **Dogberry & Finch Books** – a grant of £386.85 towards the cost of window decal, vinyl sign panels and an eco-friendly wall mounted heater.
- **The Arcade Trust** (Victorian Arcade) - a grant of £1,500 towards the design and installation of a large entrance sign at the Fore Street end, refurbishment of the entrance panel the opposite end and repainting of associated entrance ceilings.

Okehampton Library The Cold Days, Warm Libraries campaign is back to warm up communities this winter. With the cost-of-living crisis continuing and a challenging winter ahead, we're reminding communities that libraries are warm, welcoming spaces with plenty going on beyond borrowing books. The campaign launched in October and runs until March 2025. Offering warm spaces, free Wi-Fi, computer access, friendly faces and somewhere to chat and connect with others - plus lots of fun activities for all ages.



Remembrance Sunday

Participation in the Parade and Service at All Saints Church was bigger than ever this year, partially thanks to the weather which was kind. For the first time since before the Covid Pandemic a service was held inside the Church.

All those who attended and helped with arrangements are thanked for their ongoing support – this includes but is not limited to the Okehampton Excelsior Silver Band, Mace Bearers David Piper and David Ellis and those who help with the road closure.



Coming up in December

Note – there will not be any events in the Charter Hall between 21st December and 2nd January

- **Mondays** - Mental Health Drop-in Sessions, Charter Hall 10am-1pm
- **Tuesdays** - Wren Choir, Charter Hall
- **Mondays and Wednesdays** – Clubbercise, 6pm-8pm Charter Hall
- **Thursdays** - Ballroom and Latin American Dancing, Charter Hall
- 5th Edwardian Evening
- 7th Friendly Circle Coffee Morning, Charter Hall
- 14th Okehampton Community Christmas Fundraiser Coffee Morning, Charter Hall
- 21st Everything Okehampton Coffee Morning, Charter Hall

Town Council Meeting Dates

Members of the public are welcome to attend council meetings and have the opportunity to address the council. Alternatively, meetings are livestreamed through the council Facebook page where they are available to view.

December

- 2nd Policy & Resources, Property and Parks Committee Budget Meetings
- 9th Parks Committee
- 16th Full Council

Meeting dates for 2024/25 can be found on the [website](#). Some Planning Committee Meetings have been scheduled; others will be convened as needed.

Council meetings normally start at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Fore Street.

Occasionally meetings are subject to change, details can be found on the [website](#) or noticeboard in the Victorian Arcade.

Arson – Bench Behind Lidl

In October 2023 a wheelchair accessible bench provided by the Town Council in the green space behind Lidl was deliberately set alight and destroyed.

Thanks to the CCTV system the four individuals responsible were identified, have been found guilty of Arson and dealt with by the Court. The outcome of which includes orders to pay compensation towards the cost of the lost bench.

Contact Us – 01837 53179

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VACANCY - Finance Officer (Accounts)
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James McGahey, Park-Keeper
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Your Councillors

Cllr Allenton Fisher (Town Mayor)
 Cllr Richard Colman (Deputy Mayor)

Cllr Laura Bird	Cllr Christine Marsh
Cllr Terry Cummings	Cllr Mark Richards
Cllr Frankee Hart	VACANCY
Cllr Carole Holt	Cllr Bob Tolley
Cllr Dr Michael Ireland	Cllr Simon Weekes
Cllr Tony Leech	Cllr Julie Yelland