

**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 16th December 2024 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

Members Present: Councillor A Fisher (Mayor)
Councillor R Colman (Chairman, Property Committee)
Councillor T Leech (Chairman, Planning Committee)
Councillor B Tolley (Chairman, Parks Committee)
Councillor J Yelland (Chairman, Policy & Resources Committee)
Councillor L Bird
Councillor T Cummings
Councillor C Holt
Councillor M Ireland
Councillor C Marsh
Councillor M Richards

In Attendance: Mrs E James (Clerk)
Cllr G Dexter (WDBC)
1 Member of the Public

Action

486 Apologies for Absence – Apologies tendered by Cllr Hart (no reason given) and Cllr Weeks (health) were noted.

487 Declarations of Interest – None

488 Public Participation – None

489 Members Questions – None

490 West Devon Borough Council – Reports from Cllrs Leech and Dexter had previously been circulated.

Cllr Dexter advised that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) had been recently published. The Devolution Bill had been published earlier in the day and it was likely District/Borough Councils throughout the country would be disbanded. WDBC were waiting for the 2025/26 financial settlement to be received from the government, the indication was that funding would be reduced.

Cllr Leech reported that rural areas across the country would be financially worse off following reduced government grants. The NPPF indicated all those sitting on planning committees would have to attend planning training. The Devolution Bill impact was that the middle tier of councils would go, town and parish councils would remain and were seen as being very important.

491 Devon County Council – Report from Cllr Samuel had been circulated.

492 Questions Arising from Members Reports –

Cllr Richards reported that following a recent storm the smell from Forthglade was particularly bad and commented the Devolution Bill would put more work on town and parish councils

Cllr Yelland requested the council be advised of developments in relation the to the creation of the new Devon Combined County Authority particularly following to the government statement that they must have a Mayor, which was not part of the Devon deal.

493 Adoption of Minutes of Committees and to Receive Questions from Members Thereon

493.1	On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Parks Committee meetings held on 9 th September and 2 nd December 2024.	Clerk
494	Full Council Meeting Minutes – The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 25 th November 2024 were approved on the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Marsh, to be signed by the Mayor.	Clerk
495	Co-option – No applications had been received. The vacancy would remain open, and consideration would be given to applications received at future meetings.	Clerk
496	Meetings, Projects and Consultations	Clerk
496.1	Community Governance Boundary Review – The Clerk advised information promised by WDBC at a meeting on 21 st October 2024 was still awaited.	Clerk
497	Simmons Homes Charity – (Cllr Holt left the meeting during this item of business). Cllrs Marsh, Bird and Fisher declared personal interests.	Clerk
No nomination for a Trustee to the Charity was made. Item to be included on the next agenda for further consideration.		Clerk
498	Finance and Governance	Clerk
498.1	Payments – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Colman, it was RESOLVED to approve the schedule of payments.	Clerk
498.2	Virement – On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded Cllr Cummings, it was RESOLVED to approve the virement of £1,500 from the Charter Hall Roofing work nominal code (4040/202) to the Charter Hall Roofing Work EMR (352) to cover the final site inspection, rectification work, issuing of final documentation and certification by Place Architects in 2025.	Clerk/ Finance Officer
498.3	2025/26 Budget – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Colman, it was RESOLVED to approve the following additions to V5 of the draft budget, noting that further amendment may be required in relation to riverbank repairs: a) Public Toilet cleaning costs and acceptance of the quotations from WDBC: • Fairplace - increase by £28 to £9,028 • Market Street - increase by £62 to £7,062 b) The addition of £200 to the waste collection budget as it had been indicated WDBC would be increasing their general and dog waste bin collections by 5%-10%.	Clerk
Final approval for the 2025/26 budget and precept would be made by the Council at a meeting on 20 th January 2025.		Clerk
499	Staffing Matters – Cllr Yelland advised that the Policy & Resources Committee had appointed Mrs T Bryant as Finance Officer who would be starting on 6 th January 2025.	Clerk
500	Mayors Civic Diary Report – Cllr Fisher had attended events including the following: 2443 Air Cadets Squadron Dinner, Okehampton Voices concert and presented a grant cheque, Methodist and Carnival Coffee Mornings, Friendly Circle Christmas lunch, Green Drinks meeting, Edwardian Evening, Hatherleigh Indoor Market, Okehampton Excelsior Silver Band Concert and an event at the Community Garden.	Clerk
501	Reports of Council working/Task & Finish Groups:	Clerk
501.1	Climate Change – No meeting had been held.	Clerk

- 502 Reports on Current Activities by Community Groups with Town Council Representation**
- 502.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group** – The Clerk advised that following publication of the new NPPF she had spoken with the Planning Officer at WDBC who had advised that more guidance and information was awaited from the government. The implications were not yet fully clear, and he had indicated he would be willing to speak with the Council when more information was available. To be further considered by the Council in January.
- 503 Members' Reports and Items for Agendas**
- 503.1 Business Improvement District** – Cllr Tolley reported on meeting of 10th December. Two thirds of the businesses had paid the levy. More Directors were coming on board, a grant application was being made to Shared Prosperity Fund, they were investigating merchandising possibilities. The BID Manager had arranged a Christmas trail on the 2 Saturdays before Christmas.
- Everything Okehampton and the BID were working together in relation to the future of the Christmas Lights
- 503.2 DCC Regeneration Board** – Cllr Tolley reported a meeting had been held on 26th November and the BID Manager had attended for part of the meeting. Items discussed included a the potential of farmers market, business grant initiative, a shared prosperity funding grant application, vocational training and there would be an employment fair in February. The next meeting was on 7th March.
- 503.3 Okehampton Community Hospital** – Cllr Richards advised he had stepped back from the role and the council should consider appointing another representative at the next meeting.
- 503.4 Rural Market Town Group** – Cllr Leech advised no update was available.
- 503.5 Transition Town Okehampton** – Cllr Cummings reported on a meeting held the previous week and advised a document would be circulated to Cllrs.
- 504 Urgent Item** – The Clerk circulated the final design drawing for the new Mayoral Chain which would be ordered later in the week.
- 505 PART TWO – CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**
On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Leech 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.
- 506 Simmons Park Riverbank Maintenance** – Item deferred.
- 507 Okehampton Hospital** – Correspondence marked 'private and confidential' from Buckingham Palace in response to a letter sent to King Charles III was read out by the Clerk and noted.

Clerk

Clerk

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part 2 and ratify decisions made therein. The meeting was closed at 7.34pm.

Councillor Fisher, Mayor