

**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 24th February 2025 at 7.15pm 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 L Bird
 Councillor T Cummings
 Councillor M Ireland
 Councillor M Richards
 Councillor S Weekes

In Attendance: Mrs E James (Clerk)
 Cllr G Dexter (WDBC)

Action

- 607 Apologies for Absence** – On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Richards, it was **RESOLVED** to approve apologies tendered by Cllr Yelland (personal), Cllr McNeill (personal), Cllr Hart (personal), Cllr Marsh (personal) and Cllr Holt (health)
- 608 Declarations of Interest** – None
- 609 Public Participation** – None
- 610 Members Questions** – None
- 611 West Devon Borough Council** – Reports from Cllrs Leech and Dexter had been previously circulated.
- Cllr Dexter briefly commented further on the English Devolution paper as did Cllr Leech who advised nothing had been agreed. Cllr Leech reported that only two parking apps were being used in carparks managed by WDBC and users should be aware of potential scams.
- 612 Devon County Council** – Apologies from Cllr Samuel had been received and a report circulated.
- 613 Questions Arising from Members Reports** – None
- 614 Adoption of Minutes of Committees and to Receive Questions from Members Thereon**
- 614.1** On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the **Planning Committee** meetings held on 21st October, 18th November and 9th December 2024
- 614.2** On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the **Property Committee** meetings held on 2nd September, 4th November and 2nd December 2024
- 615 Full Council Meeting Minutes** – The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 20th January 2025 were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Colman, and signed by the Mayor.
- 616 Devolution White Paper** - The Council noted that DCCs bid to delay the 2025 elections and be included in the first wave of new Unitary Council creation had been rejected.

<p>On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded Cllr Leech, it was RESOLVED to approve feedback to DALC following a recent Larger Council's meeting and to working with other West Devon and/or appropriate councils in relation to aspects of devolution if suitable opportunity arose.</p>	Clerk
<p>617 <u>Meetings, Projects and Consultations</u></p>	
<p>617.1 Community Governance Boundary Review – It was noted that WDBC had met with Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council and a joint meeting had been arranged to take place on Wednesday 12th March 2025. A plan, titled Okehampton extended boundary, depicting the boundary as it would be in 2027 had been received from WDBC.</p>	
<p>617.2 Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework – On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded Cllr Colman, it was RESOLVED to submit a response to the consultation which closed on 26th February 2025 in accordance with the draft document prepared by Cllrs Fisher, Yelland and the Clerk.</p>	Clerk
<p>617.3 Pulse Hub Update – An update from a site meeting on 13th February attended by Cllrs Fisher, Leech and the Clerk was provided. On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Leech (2 abstentions), it was RESOLVED to agree in principle the proposed locations, for confirmation once planning consent had been obtained.</p>	Clerk
<p>617.4 Fire Service Consultation, Automatic Fire Alarms – Councillors were encouraged to respond as individuals.</p>	
<p>617.5 Nature Towns and Cities – It was noted that DCCs expression of interest submitted to the scheme run by the National Lottery Heritage Fund had been unsuccessful.</p>	
<p>618 Traffic Infrastructure – On the proposition of Cllr Fisher seconded Cllr Leech, it was RESOLVED to request findings in writing initially and not receive a presentation.</p>	Clerk
<p>619 Christmas Lights – Cllr Fisher declared a personal interest being member of Everything Okehampton who had previously facilitated the erection and dismantling of the Christmas lights.</p>	
<p>On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded Cllr Bird (1 against, 1 abstention), it was RESOLVED to gift the Christmas lights to the Business Improvement District who would be taking over the provision and once accepted, to remove them from the Council's Asset Register.</p>	Clerk
<p>620 Policies and Documents – On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Cummings, it was RESOLVED to approve the Parks Risk Assessments.</p>	Clerk
<p>621 Finance and Governance - On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded Cllr Cummings, it was RESOLVED to approve the schedule of payments and to ratify those made since the meeting of the Property Committee on 3rd February 2025 as approved by Cllrs Fisher and Tolley.</p>	
<p>622 <u>Events</u></p>	
<p>622.1 Commonwealth Day, 10th March 2025 - The event due to take place outside St James' Chapel was noted including the change of time to 10am. Councillors were encouraged to attend.</p>	Cllrs
<p>622.2 Annual Town Assembly and Report for 2024/25 - The confirmed speakers at the meeting on Tuesday 8th April 2025 were noted; Okehampton BID, Wellness Singers and the Youth Council.</p>	

<p>On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Colman, it was RESOLVED to approve the draft 2024/25 annual report as available to date.</p> <p>622.3 Annual Council Meeting and Mayor Choosing, 14th May 2025 – On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Richards, it was RESOLVED that the meeting take place at the time of 6pm.</p> <p>623 <u>Royal Garden Party Nomination</u> – It was noted the Clerk had been nominated to attend a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on 20th May 2025, that being the only name submitted by Councillors. She not been drawn to attend.</p> <p>624 <u>Staffing</u></p> <p>624.1 The Council noted that the following vacancies would be advertised in March, initially internally then externally, if necessary, as previously agreed with the same terms and conditions as other members of staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities Officer, 26 hours per week • Groundsperson, 37 hours per week • Horticultural Apprenticeship, 37 hours per week <p>624.2 It was noted the Assistant Clerk would be clerking some future meetings of the Parks Committee and that of Full Council on 28th April 2025.</p> <p>625 <u>Mayors Civic Diary Report</u> – Cllr Fisher had attended various events including the Rector’s last service, OkeRail meeting, Launceston Civic Service, presented a grant cheque to Citizens Advice, an Antiques evening, Courtenay Players pantomime, Bideford Civic Dinner, Street Pastors Service, Community Garden Coffee Morning, WDBC Employment Fair, Methodist Ladies talk.</p> <p>626 <u>Reports of Council working/Task & Finish Groups:</u></p> <p>626.1 Climate Change – A meeting had been arranged to take place on 19th March.</p> <p>627 <u>Reports on Current Activities by Community Groups with Town Council Representation</u></p> <p>627.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group – Cllr Richards provided an update from an informal meeting held on 19th February with the WDBC Planning Officer responsible for Neighbourhood Plans. It was noted the Clerk would write to Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council and further consideration of progressing with a plan would be added to the next agenda.</p> <p>628 <u>Members’ Reports and Items for Agendas</u></p> <p>628.1 Business Improvement District – Cllr Tolley advised a meeting had been held on 31st January, a temporary Chairman had been agreed, the job description for the BID Manager was being finalised, the operating agreement with WDBC had been signed and some articles of association had been drawn up. The next meeting was on 28th February.</p> <p>628.2 DCC Regeneration Board – The next meeting was on 4th March.</p> <p>628.3 Okehampton Community Hospital – Cllr Colman provided an update on a meeting held on 6th February and a note from Cllr Goffey. The Clerk advised the council had free software available that could assist with a survey.</p> <p>628.4 Rural Market Town Group – Cllr Leech reported that a meeting was due to be held, and the latest newsletter had been circulated.</p> <p>628.5 Transition Town Okehampton – Cllr Cummings reported that a meeting had been held the previous week and a coffee morning on Saturday.</p>	<p>Ass. Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
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- 629 **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.
- 630 **Mayoral Awards** – It was **agreed** that awards would go to the two nominations received. The Youth Council had also agreed a nomination. Clerk
- 631 **Insurance Quotations** – It was noted the quotation was not yet available and that an additional meeting of the council would be required to be held at 6.30pm on Monday 17th March prior to the Policy & Resources Committee meeting to consider approval. Clerk
- 632 **Cinema Lease** - On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to:
- Approve the Rent Deposit Deed, the opening of a Lloyds Account to hold the rent deposit and that the signatories and online banking arrangements be the same as for other Lloyds Accounts.
 - Approve the execution of the Council’s common seal, on the lease as approved by the Property Committee, and the associated Rent Deposit Deed.
- Clerk
- 633 **Electrical Work** – On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded Cllr Richards, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation from AJ Electrics in the sum of £8,000 for rectification work following inspections. Clerk
- 634 **HR and Health & Safety Support** – The previously circulated report was considered. On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Richards, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation from Peninsula for HR and H&S services for a 5-year contract at the fixed cost of £4,112.55 p/annum. Clerk
- 635 **Waitrose Carpark Income** – On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded Cllr Cummings, it was **RESOLVED** to accept a quotation from Stephens Scown Solicitors for the sum of up to £2,500 for the clarification of the agreements relating to income from Waitrose carpark with the aim of establishing review, cessation dates and other risks in order to manage the potential risk of loss of income. Clerk
- 636 **Urgent Matter** - Cllr Leech raised a confidential matter and requested that it be included within Part 2 of the next Full Council meeting agenda. Clerk

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part 2 and ratify decisions made therein. The meeting was closed at 8.30pm.

Councillor Fisher, Mayor