



Okehampton Town Council

Town Hall
Fore Street
Okehampton
Devon
EX20 1AA

01837 53179

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**Minutes of a Okehampton Town Council Planning Committee Meeting
held on 7th July 2025 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

Members Present:

Councillor T Leech (Chairman) Councillor L Bird (Chairman, Property)
Councillor M Ireland (Vice-Chairman) Councillor J Yelland (Chairman, Policy & Resources)
Councillor T Cummings
Councillor M Richards

In Attendance:

Mrs E James (Clerk)
1 Member of the public

The meeting was livestreamed through the Council Facebook page.

114. Apologies for Absence

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Richards, it was **RESOLVED** to approve apologies tendered by Cllr Tolley (prior commitment) and Cllr Colman (prior commitment).

115. Declarations of Interest

None

116. Public Participation

None

117. Members' Questions

Cllr Ireland raised concern about overhanging trees/bushes in the Fern Close area. Location to be clarified for reporting to DCC.

118. Minutes

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Richards, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 27th January, 24th February, 14th and 28th April, 19th May and 2nd June 2025.

119. Planning Applications

Cllr Yelland declared a personal interest in application 1592/25/HHO.

1592/25/HHO Householder application for proposed single storey extension. 32 Simmons Way, Okehampton

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Richards, (1 abstention), it was **RESOLVED** to support the application.

1303/25/FUL Replacement of timber frame windows to match existing and installation of 2no rooflights. 33 Fore Street Okehampton.

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to support the application.

1594/25/HHO Householder application for single storey side extension. 5 Knowle View, Okehampton

A proposition by Cllr Richards, seconded Cllr Ireland, (2 in favour, 4 against) to object to the application was not carried.

On the proposition of Cllr Bird, seconded Cllr Yelland, (2 against), it was **RESOLVED** to support the application.

1753/25/TCA T1 Beech – section fell to ground level due to growing on bank behind retaining wall, highly likely that the damage to wall is caused by tree, risk of wall failure onto public footpath. 95 St Boniface Catholic Church, Station Road, Okehampton

Comments from WDBC's Tree Officer were noted. On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Richards, it was **RESOLVED** to submit a neutral view.

1787/25/TPO T003 Ash – remove SW branch overhanging footpath back to main stem, mechanically poor, T014 Ash (marked with orange paint) sectionally dismantle, fell, and remove to ground level ADB. T016 Ash (marked with orange paint) sectionally dismantle, fell and remove to ground level dead. T017 Ash (marked with orange paint) sectionally dismantle, fell, and remove to ground level, poor vitality and form. Rivers Edge Court, Oaklands Drive, Okehampton

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Yelland, it was **RESOLVED** to submit a neutral view, commenting that the numbering and referencing of trees on the application did not match those within the survey report, including T17 which was referred to as a Turkey Oak in the report.

120. Certificate of Lawfulness

1542/25/CLE Certificate of lawfulness for existing use of first and second floor(s) as a single flat (Use Class C3). 6 East Street, Okehampton

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Bird, it was **RESOLVED** to agree there was enough information to support the claim that the land/building had been used for the purpose described in excess of the last four years. This included verbal evidence provided at the meeting by a Councillor who had previously resided at that address.

121. Prior Approval

1825/25/POD Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed change of use from Commercial, Business & Service (Class E) to dwellinghouse (Class C3) (Conversion of a shop & associated storage to a shop & associated storage at ground floor with 2no flats above). 33 Fore Street, Okehampton

Application noted by the Committee.

122. Planning Authority Decisions

The committee noted that the majority of decisions made by WDBC reflected the comments submitted by the Planning Committee, indicating that the Committee was properly reviewing applications in accordance with the material considerations.

123. Highways and Footpath Matters

123.1 Ranelagh Mews

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** that this be referred to DCCs Highways and Traffic Orders Committee by Cllr Leech for consideration of the provision of enforceable road lining at this location.

123.2 Gas Network Upgrade

Correspondence from Wales and West Utilities advising of major gas upgrade work in Okehampton was considered. Concerns were raised including what would happen if the A30 was closed. Members of the public and businesses had raised potential issues and concerns about risk of loss of income and footfall in the town as well as inconvenience and diversion difficulties. It was noted there was a public consultation drop in event during the day on 17th July in the Charter Hall.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Richards, it was **RESOLVED** that the contractor liaise through the Clerk. Cllr Leech would attend the drop in event, relay concerns and obtain further information.

(Member of the public left the meeting)

123.3 Castle Road Footpath

Cllr Leech provided an update in relation to the current closure of the Footpath 41, this being the step free footpath from Castle Road to Leeze Park. Particular concern was raised regarding the flooding of Castle Road during periods of rain and the subsequent blocking of drains from related mud, this being a recent issue following commencement of work at this location. Planning Enforcement were investigating a possible breach of planning conditions relating to the flooding. DCC Highways were also investigating. The Clerk reported that footpath signage provided by the council had disappeared. Cllr Leech would continue to liaise with DCC.

123.4 Mill Road and George Street Roadworks

Correspondence from DCC in relation to planned work to the courtesy crossings removing the paving from the courtesy crossings was considered.

On the proposition of Cllr Richards, seconded Cllr Bird, it was **RESOLVED** to respond with general concerns relating to the aesthetics of the crossings, impact on the visually impaired, and requesting a compromise for replacement of the paving with a textured/coloured surface. Timing of the work to be considered because of other major road works due to be undertaken in the town.

123.5 Speeding in Crediton Road

Correspondence from a member of the public in relation to speeding was considered. It was noted that footpath work was due to be undertaken, partly funded by WDBC and that St James' School was advertising for a lollypop person. The Police now had access to a speed gun and the Inspector was requesting information about areas where it could be used, details of the location, dates and times of day to enable appropriate planning were required. Provision of a 20mph zone and a pedestrian pelican crossing had been turned down by Highways when school had been built. Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council had agreed to take on Speedwatch but had since been unable to take this forward.

Clerk to respond.

124. To consider correspondence from Bere Ferrers Parish Council

Cllr Leech declared a personal interest being a Member of WDBC.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Cummings (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk respond advising that the majority of decisions made by WDBC reflected the comments submitted by the Planning Committee, and therefore the Committee

did not have any issues. The Council did not currently have a Neighbourhood Plan and was unable to comment on this aspect.

125. Payment of Invoices

The moth trap was being purchased from grant funding, and it was commented that the good work of the Park-Keeper was being noted by other groups.

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Yelland, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the payment of invoices as listed on the schedule, the BACS payments totalling £16,622.49.

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

126. Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items

126.1 Citizens Advice

Cllr Leech advised there had been no change from last report. He was hoping to meet with the CEO about referrals to the foodbank and other services.

126.2 Dartmoor Railway Association

Cllr Ireland reported that work to the footbridge crossing the track, closed following storm damage, would soon be commencing following assessment later in the week.

126.3 Ockment Centre

Cllr Leech reported that future funding was a concern.

126.4 Okehampton & Area Health & Wellbeing Alliance (CVS)

Cllrs Richards and Leech reported on a recent meeting to which numerous groups and organisations had been in attendance. Okehampton Medical Centre were now able to provide social prescribing.

126.5 Okehampton & District Community Transport Group

Cllr Leech reported that volunteer drivers were needed, funding was difficult to obtain, and they were interviewing for a member of staff later this month.

126.6 OkeRail Forum

Cllr Ireland had attended the annual GWR Conference in June. The cutting back of trees along the Dartmoor line could not be undertaken until the bird nesting season had passed. GWR had announced the reopening of some stations including Cullompton and Wellington. The Tavistock to Plymouth line provision had been raised. Representatives from GWR would be attending the next meeting on 17th July. An earlier link to catch the London train was needed, as was a later returning service.

126.7 Rural Market Town Group

Cllr Leech advised the focus was currently on the elderly.

127. Urgent Items

Cllr Richards commented on issues including the requirement for a survey to identify a need for earlier and later trains, rail related articles published by Devon Live and Transition Town activities.

PART TWO – CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

128. On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Ireland 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.

129. Parking and Safety

Correspondence relating to parking and safety on Northfield Road, Crediton Road and East Street junction was considered. The item of business had been deemed confidential because it would reveal the identity of the originator.

Parking situation in the area was noted. On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Bird (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to respond to the correspondent advising that the council needed to take the advice of the Highways Officers and Engineers.

130. Enforcement Issues

The enforcement report was noted. A case had recently been closed following investigation which had resulted in no further action being taken following establishment that no breach had occurred.

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Bird, it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part 2 and ratify decisions made therein. The meeting was closed at 9.15pm.

Cllr Leech, Chairman