



Okehampton Town Council

Town Hall
Fore
Street
Okehampton
Devon
EX20 1AA

01837 53179

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**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 28th July 2025 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

Members Present:

Cllr R Colman (Mayor)
Cllr T Cummings
Cllr A Fisher
Cllr C Holt
Cllr M Ireland
Cllr C Marsh
Cllr D McNeill
Cllr M Richards

Cllr L Bird (Chairman, Property)
Cllr B Tolley (Chairman, Parks)
Cllr T Leech (Chairman, Planning)
Cllr J Yelland (Chairman, Policy & Resources)

In Attendance:

Mrs E James (Town Clerk)
Cllr G Dexter (WDBC)
2 Members of the Public

Prior to the commencement of the meeting Prayers were offered by Cllr Bird.

The meeting was livestreamed through the Council Facebook page.

167. Apologies for Absence

Apologies tendered by Cllr Weekes (illness) were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Ireland.

Absent: Cllr Hart

168. Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Tolley, Marsh, Ireland, Colman and McNeill declared personal interests in Min Ref 177.7 being an Okehampton United Charities Trustee or Allotment holder.

169. Public Participation

None

170. Traffic Proposal Presentation

The presenter introduced himself and explained a potential alternative option to tackle the traffic issues in the centre of Okehampton at the Fore Street, Market Street, George Street junction. The proposal being to replace the traffic lights with two mini roundabouts and provision for pedestrian crossings.

A number of questions were posed including about the width of the roads, pedestrian crossing points, the traffic situation when the A30 was closed, school traffic and previous consultations. The Council was requested to undertake a public consultation or ask DCC to do so including modelling within their software.

171. Members' Questions

None.

172. West Devon Borough Council

Cllr Dexter's report had previously been circulated. The annual accounts were highlighted advising that the financial position was strong and there had been a surplus at the end of 2024/25. The Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) seven stage process had been set out; consultations would be undertaken as plans progressed. Each council had to submit one proposal in November. A concern was the retention of assets for the benefit of West Devon residents.

A report from Cllr Leech had been previously circulated. Items highlighted included the Link Road where discussions were being held to see if it could be opened early to help with the forthcoming Exeter Road closure, and the LGR.

173. Devon County Council

An update from Cllr Grainger had previously been circulated.

174. Questions Arising from Member reports

It was noted the creation of a Unitary Council and a South West Peninsula Mayoral Strategic Authority would effectively recreate a two-tier system. Clarification was requested about West Devon assets as referred to by Cllr Dexter.

175. Adoption of Minutes of Committees and to Receive Questions from Members Thereon

175.1 On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Tolley it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the **Personnel Sub-Committee** meetings held 16th and 23rd September 2024 and 9th June 2025.

175.2 On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Fisher it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the **Policy & Resources Committee** meetings held 12th and 19th May and 9th June 2025.

175.3 On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Holt (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the **Parks Committee** meeting held 19th May 2025.

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

176. Full Council Meeting Minutes

On the proposition of Cllr Colman seconded Cllr Bird it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 30th June 2025 for signing by the Mayor.

177. Projects and Consultations

177.1 Traffic Study – Market Street Junction

The traffic study presentation and previously circulated report was considered. Points raised included concerns about traffic when the A30 was closed and the impact of other areas/ junctions on the centre of the town. The report commissioner and presenter were thanked for the work put into the proposal.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Marsh (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to support, in principle, an approach to DCC by the commissioner to request consideration and modelling of the proposals on their software, including additional traffic flow caused by A30 closures.

(2 members of the public left the meeting)

177.2 English Devolution White Paper/Local Government Reorganisation

Information resulting from a meeting attended by Cllr Colman and the Clerk had been marked confidential. The item was deferred for consideration within Part 2.

177.3 Community Governance Boundary Review

On the proposition of Cllr Leech seconded Cllr Fisher it was **RESOLVED** to approve the draft joint Town and Hamlets Parish Councils statement for publication as outlined in the notes of the joint meeting held on 22nd July 2025.

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

On the proposition of Cllr Richards, seconded Cllr Marsh, following a tie the Mayor used their casting vote and it was **RESOLVED** there would be one Ward following the boundary change in 2027.

(Cllr Holt left the meeting)

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Marsh (2 against) it was **RESOLVED** to offer a peppercorn payment settlement for the assets as previously circulated, or they would not be accepted.

177.4 Okehampton Castle

Updates from the public meeting held earlier in the month were considered. It was commented the castle did not appear to have been effectively marketed. Running costs had not been available. There was some appetite for the castle to be locally run but English Heritage was a Charity and could not give away assets easily.

The Castle was outside of the town boundary and therefore town residents would need to be consulted about any financial support as this would affect their precept. Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council could approach English Heritage suggesting a community led 'Friends of Okehampton Castle' or similar group could be created to support the castle and raise funding.

177.5 Neighbourhood Plan

It was clarified that Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council did not wish to be part of a new NP, but they had consented to land that would transfer into the town boundary in 2027 being included. On the proposition of Cllr Marsh seconded Cllr Fisher it was **RESOLVED** to use the town boundary as it will be from 2027 as the designated Neighbourhood Plan area.

Consideration of an accompanying statement for submission to WDBC deferred to September.

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings seconded Cllr Yelland it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Terms of Reference for creation of the Steering Group.

177.6 Pulse Smart Hubs

No update had been received.

177.7 Allotments

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings seconded Cllr Yelland (5 abstentions) it was **RESOLVED** to accept responsibility for the running and maintenance of the 3 allotment sites from 29th September 2026 in accordance with the recommendations and items for further consideration as set out in the report at 1 and 2.

177.8 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

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

On the proposition of Cllr Bird, seconded Cllr Marsh (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to invite representatives to meet with the Council to present and explain the proposals.

178. Town Transport Services – It was agreed to defer consideration of a verbal report from Cllr Fisher to the next meeting.

179. Finance and Governance

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments, the BACS payments of which amounted to £16,645.92.

180. Policies and Documents

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Tolley it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the following documents as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee:

- a) Business Continuity Plan
- b) Health and Safety Policies (Town Hall and Parks)
- c) Training and Development for Employees and Councillors
- d) Uniform Policy for Employees

180. Freedom of Information Request

Information relating to requests received for the flying of flags on the Town Hall had been received and responded to.

181. Civic Diary Report

The Mayor had attended the Friendly Circle, a Music Concert, visited the Brownies and became an honorary member, Holsworthy Pretty Maids and Otters Swimming Club. He had also hosted a Coffee Morning in aid of his charity Rock2Recovery.

(Cllr Marsh, WDBC and DCC Councillors left the meeting)

PART TWO – CONFIDENTIAL

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Fisher 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.

182. English Devolution White Paper/Local Government Reorganisation

Cllr Colman and the Clerk had attended a Mayors and Clerks meeting hosted by a Town Council in South Hams in relation to these subjects. An update from this and subsequent information received was provided.

183. Historic Civic Chain

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Yelland it was **RESOLVED** to accept a verbal quotation of approximately £100 from Marshalls Jewellers for repair of the safety fastenings.

Options for the repair of the pendant from Fattorini were noted. Because of its historical value option 2, at approximately £1,745, was preferred by all present whether or not the insurer would cover the cost. Clerk to progress.

184. 1/F Market Street Office and Charter Hall Foyer

On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded Cllr Bird it was **RESOLVED** to approve a quotation for replacement of the floor covering in the 1/F office from Countryside Furnishers at the cost of £583.

The quotation for replacement flooring in Foyer was noted and had been included within a grant application for costs towards fire improvement and other work in the Charter Hall and adjoining kitchen.

185. Staffing

185.1 The Clerk reported that the Finance Officer's probation period had concluded successfully, and her appointment confirmed in accordance with the Recruitment Policy. On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to ratify the contractual salary increase by 1 point to be backdated to 6 July 2025.

The pay agreement for the 2025/26 financial year had been agreed by the National Joint Council as being 3.2% on each pay scale point applicable from 1st April 2025. From 1st April 2026 SCP 2 was being removed. The increase was required to be ratified by the Policy & Resources Committee or Council before it could be applied and backdated to 1st April 2025.

185.2 A report from the Policy & Resources Committee was noted reminding Councillors of workload pressures on staff, roles, responsibilities and contact protocol.

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 10.17pm.

Councillor Colman
Mayor