



Okehampton Town Council

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**Minutes of an Okehampton Town Council Policy & Resources Committee Meeting
held on 8th September 2025 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

Members Present:

Cllr J Yelland (Chairman)
Cllr B Tolley (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr L Bird
Cllr A Fisher
Cllr F Hart
Cllr C Marsh
Cllr S Weekes

Cllr R Colman (Mayor)
Cllr T Leech (Chairman, Planning)

In Attendance: Mrs E James (Town Clerk)

A minute of silence was observed in acknowledgement of the recent passing of both HRH The Duchess of Kent and Gill Lower, former Town Councillor.

227. Apologies for Absence

None

228. Declarations of Interest

None

229. Public Participation

None

230. Members' Questions

None

231. Minutes

On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded Cllr Colman it was **RESOLVED** to approve minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meetings held on 21st July and 18th August 2025 for signing by Cllr Yelland.

232. Town Council Grants

232.1 Feedback received from the following grant recipients was noted including a letter from the Museum of Dartmoor Life and Tourist Information Point. Clerk to write to Trustees to clarify the situation, suggesting they approach the BID and acknowledging the continued support of the council. Cllr Bird to report back.

- a) Okehampton Armed Forces Veterans Breakfast Club for a grant of £300 awarded in July 2025
- b) Ockment Centre for a grant of £4,000 awarded in July 2025
- c) Museum of Dartmoor Life and Tourist Information Point for a grant of £3,500 awarded in July 2025

d) Wren for a grant of £500 awarded in June 2023

(Cllr Hart arrived)

232.2 Grant Format

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Fisher it was **RESOLVED** to amend the format for the award of grants for the next financial year, 2026/27, as follows:

Large Grants - Applications between £400 and £5,000.

Considered annually, at a dedicated meeting of the Committee in June.

Applicants for grants of £3,000 or above will be required to attend the meeting to give a presentation of up to 10 minutes to provide additional information not contained with the application. Presentations to be held within an open meeting of the Committee.

Small Grants - Up to £400

Considered at scheduled meetings of the Committee as received throughout the year.

232.3 Town Centre Business Grant Initiative 2025/26

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

The Clerk reported that a grant of £10,000 had been awarded to the Council from WDBC's Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), which could be put towards this initiative and/or towards Charter Hall capital internal improvement work. Three businesses had applied for and been awarded a grant under a similar in 2024/25, and it was commented that improvements to the Charter Hall and associated Kitchen would benefit more residents.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Colman it was **RESOLVED** that £2,000 of the grant award be put towards this initiative, the rest to the Charter Hall improvement work. Clerk to review the initiative take up in December and to vire any underspend to the Charter Hall work. The BID to be requested to promote the initiative. Applications to be considered by the Committee.

226. Okehampton Town Youth Council

Some Youth Councillors had attended Okehampton Show with members of staff and jointly hosted an activity making birdseed feeders and wildflower seed bombs. It was hoped they would be able to visit WDBC in October and would be receiving a presentation/ workshop about public speaking. Youth Councillors would be attending the Civic Service and Remembrance Parade. Plans to visit the Police Station, and the schools in early 2026 were in progress.

227. Policies and Documents

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Tolley it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the following policies to Full Council, incorporating amendments to the Company Mobile Phone Policy and the Town Centre Business Grant Initiative Policy. The Grant Policy was deferred for amendment in accordance with changes at Min Ref 232.2 above.

- a) Asset Register and Disposal Policy
- b) Co-Option Policy
- c) Company Mobile Phone Policy
- d) Discretions Policy (Pensions)
- e) Employee Handbook
- f) Financial Regulations
- g) Financial Risk Assessment and Management Policy
- h) Town Centre Business Grant Initiative Policy
- i) Waste Management & Recycling Policy

228. Finance and Audits

228.1 Councillor Audits

Cllr Marsh advised that she had not undertaken an audit of the bank reconciliations, online payments and Lloyds Debit Card transactions since the last report.

228.2 Management Accounts

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Fisher it was **RESOLVED** to agree the management accounts (as circulated) for month ended 31st July (month 4) 2025.

228.3 Investments

Financial investments including interest rates and Tamar Energy Community Shares were noted. The Clerk reported that options for optimising income from interest rates was being reviewed, particularly in relation to the NatWest accounts, and a process for management of the retention of three months precept in the Lloyds account was being set up. Nationwide were reducing the interest rate from 3.54% gross to 3.35%.

228.4 Payment Schedule

On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded Cllr Colman it was **RESOLVED** to approve:

- The payment schedule, noting the SWW invoice paid by direct debit was missing from the documentation, the BACS payments of which totalled £1,487.76.
- Payments made on 29th August 2025, the BACS payments totalling £1,649.08.

228.5 2026/27 Budget

Feedback arising from the Committee budget workshop held on 26th August to review the Committee budget responsibilities for the current year and initial requirements for 2026/27 was considered. No changes were made to V1 of the draft budget.

229. IT and CCTV

229.1 Livestreaming Facility

The Clerk reported that a quotation was awaited and some information from Cllr Richards had been received. Deferred for receipt of further information and quotations.

229.2 CCTV

Torbay Council had agreed to extend the existing agreements.

230. Reports of Council Working/Task & Finish Groups

230.1 Events (Non-Civic)

There were no events to report upon.

231. Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items

231.1 DALC, Larger Councils Sub-Committee

The Committee Chairman and Town Clerk were attending the DALC AGM and Annual Conference on 1st October.

231.2 Fairtrade

Cllr Hart reported on the success of the group at Okehampton Show which had included a petition for fairer conditions for tea workers. Upcoming events including fairtrade fortnight were highlighted. The next meeting was in October/November.

231.3 Northern Links

No meeting had been held.

231.4 Police council Advocate Scheme

Information was circulated as received.

231.5 West Devon Matters

The meeting on 13th August had been attended by Cllr Yelland and had included information about the Let's Talk programme which had been paused for the setting up of a new website, the importance of reporting information relating to drugs to the Police enabling action to be taken, road safety and the Exeter Road road closure which the Police had been assured emergency vehicles would be able to get through. Junior Life Skills would be taking place during the week commencing 22nd September.

232. PART 2 CONFIDENTIAL

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, 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.

233. Outstanding Balances

Outstanding balances were noted.

234. IT and CCTV

234.1 CCTV

A quotation for additional cover was awaited along with a report in relation to the suitability of the proposed location and electrical connection.

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

234.2 Anti-Virus Protection

The Committee noted that the anti-virus protection had been upgraded with no additional cost to the council.

On the proposition of Cllr Bird, seconded Cllr Hart, it was **RESOLVED** to approve a recommendation from the Council's IT Contractor, AME, for additional advanced threat protection to be applied to all staff and councillor emails, including monthly training at the cost of £828.80 p/annum. A review of effectiveness and use to be undertaken prior to consideration of renewal.

234.3 IT System Migration to SharePoint

On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the quotation from AME for the migration of the IT system from the existing NAS infrastructure to Microsoft 365 and SharePoint, at the cost of £720 for the setup and configuration of the system, and an annual fee of £280. Cost for Councillors was not clear, to be included if possible within the quotation.

235. Staffing Matters

Items 1 and 2 of the Clerks Report relating to working hours and staff absence including the impact and potential actions required were noted. On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded Cllr Hart it was **RESOLVED** to approve item 3 A) effective from 1st September 2025.

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

Councillor Yelland, Chairman