



Okehampton Town Council

Town Hall
Fore Street
Okehampton
Devon
EX20 1AA

01837 53179

www.okehampton.gov.uk

**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 2nd June 2025 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

Members Present:

Cllr Colman (Mayor)	Cllr Bird (Chairman, Property)
Cllr Leech (Chairman, Planning)	Cllr Tolley (Chairman, Parks)
Cllr Holt	Cllr Yelland (Chairman, Policy & Resources)
Cllr Cummings	Cllr Hart
Cllr Ireland	Cllr Marsh
Cllr Richards	Cllr Fisher
Cllr Weekes	

In Attendance:

Mrs E James (Town Clerk)
1 Member of the Public
Cllr Dexter (WDBC)

Prior to commencement of the meeting prayers were offered.

The meeting was livestreamed through the Council Facebook page.

48. Apologies for Absence

Apologies tendered by Cllr McNeill (personal) were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Richards seconded Cllr Ireland.

49. Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Marsh, Tolley, Ireland and Colman declared personal interests in Min Ref 57.8 relating to Allotments

50. Public Participation

A member of the public congratulated Cllr Colman on his appointment as Mayor.

It was requested that the council give consideration to obtaining copies of historical documents held at the Devon Records Office or that they be returned to Okehampton, these being the Royal Charters of 1623, Edward I, James I and Charles II.

51. Members' Questions

The recent Mayor Choosing event was commented upon.

52. West Devon Borough Council

Reports from Cllrs Dexter and Leech had been previously circulated. Cllr Leech was thanked for his interesting and easy to read written report.

53. Devon County Council

No communication had been received from Cllr Grainger.

(Member of the public left)

54. Questions Arising from Member reports

None

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

55.1 On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meetings held 17th and 31st March 2025.

55.2 On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Parks Committee meeting held 10th March 2025.

56. Full Council Meeting Minutes

On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Town Council meetings held on 28th April and 14th May 2025 for signing by the Mayor.

57. Projects and Consultations

57.1 English Devolution White Paper

A meeting with WDBC to review assets and services was taking place on 15th July 2025.

57.2 Community Governance Boundary Review

A further joint meeting with WDBC and Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council was taking place on 18th June. The draft communication plan received from WDBC was noted.

57.3 Okehampton Castle

Feedback from a meeting with Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council on 7th May was considered.

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Weekes, (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to approve the holding of a further joint meeting of both councils on 4th June and an additional meeting on 10th July, the need for this to be a public meeting to be decided following the meeting on 4th June.

(Cllr Dexter arrived)

57.4 Neighbourhood Plan

Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council had agreed that land due to transfer to the town council boundary in 2027 could be included within the remit of a new Neighbourhood Plan.

On the proposition of Cllr Richards, seconded Cllr Yelland, (4 abstentions) it was **RESOLVED** to undertake to progress with a new Neighbourhood Plan incorporating land that would become part of the town boundary in 2027. A community steering group reporting to Full Council to be created. The group to consist of a minimum of two councillors and members of the public.

57.5 Pulse Smart Hubs

On the proposition of Cllr Bird, seconded Cllr Cummings (2 abstentions, 1 against), it was **RESOLVED** to agree the green and orange locations as identified on the previously circulated map.

57.6 Council Action Plan

On the proposition of Cllr Richards, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was **RESOLVED** to review the initiatives submitted by Councillors in conjunction with the 2025/26 budget workshops.

57.7 Emergency Plan

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was **RESOLVED** that Cllrs Cummings and Richards work from the existing plan and report to the Policy & Resources Committee.

57.8 Allotments

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Leech (5 abstentions), it was **RESOLVED** to create a working group to investigate a request received from Okehampton United Charities that the Council assumes responsibility for the day-to-day management of three allotment sites in Okehampton (Fatherford Road, Castle Road and North Street). Group to report back to the council and to consist of Cllrs Weekes, Richards, and Leech.

57.9 Okehampton Conservation Area, Appraisal and Management Plan

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Hart, (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Marsh to work with the Clerk in order to assist WDBC with the creation of their plan.

(Cllr Holt left)

58. Finance and Governance

58.1 Payments

Queries were raised and answered by the Clerk about the cleaning and DBS check costs. On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments, the BACS payments totalling £5,153.42.

58.2 Budget Workshops

Workshops open to all Councillors would be held in the summer and early autumn to inform the budget setting process for 2026/27. The workshops for the P&R and Parks Committees had been scheduled for 26th August 2025.

58.3 Financial Checks

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Hart, it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Marsh to undertake monthly Council financial checks including bank reconciliations and BACS payments.

58.4 Asset Audit

On the proposition of Cllr Bird, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Fisher to undertake an audit of elements of the assets held by the Council including regalia, silverware and paintings.

58.5 Parks Committee Vice-Chairman

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Ireland, members of the Committee **RESOLVED** to ratify the appointment of Cllr Marsh as Vice-Chairman of the Parks Committee.

58.6 Data Protection

Data protection, and other, training was available for Councillors and an information sheet had been circulated.

58.7 Councillor Surgeries

Community engagement to be added to a future agenda.

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Hart, it was **RESOLVED** to continue to hold surgeries at the discretion of councillors, providing at least 2 councillors were present and the permission of the business/event organiser had been obtained. Members of the public could also request to speak by appointment to a Councillor.

59. 2024/25 Year End Audits and Reports

59.1 Internal Audit Certificate and Report

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Bird, it was **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the 2024/25 year-end certificate and report including observations which had previously been actioned.

The Clerk and members of staff were commended for their work.

59.2 AGAR Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

Councillors considered the Council's internal control processes and their effectiveness. Each statement was read out and considered separately. On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Fisher, it was **RESOLVED** to agree a 'yes' response to each statement. Cllr Colman and the Clerk signed the statement.

59.3 AGAR Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2024/25

On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the accounting statements which were duly signed by Cllr Colman, having previously been signed by the Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer.

59.4 Electors' Rights

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Hart, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the dates for the exercise of Electors Rights those being Thursday 5th June to Wednesday 16th July 2025.

60. Policies and Documents

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the following policies as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee:

- a) Asset and Service Transfer Policy
- b) Body Worn CCTV Policy & Operational Procedural Guidance
- c) Body Worn CCTV Privacy Impact Statement
- d) Fire Safety Policy
- e) Financial Regulations
- f) Financial Risk Assessment & Management
- g) Standing Orders
- h) Treasury and Investment Policy

61. Facilities Officer

A Facilities Officer had been appointed, start date to be confirmed.

62. Civic

62.1 Diary Report

Events attended by the Mayor included the Skate Jam, Bluebell Sunday at the Castle, PFTA and Trek 26 Coffee Mornings, Morris Dancers and a Men in Sheds meeting.

62.2 Chain of Office

The new Mayoral Chain of Office had been received, and the historical Chain of Office was partly retired to be used only at specified Town Council Civic events as previously agreed by the Council. Those events being the Town Council Annual Council Meeting and Mayor Choosing, Civic Service, Remembrance Sunday and Commonwealth Day.

Damage to the historic chain and medallion was reported. On the proposition of Cllr Hart, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to obtain quotations, including sending the regalia to a specialist for review if there was not anyone local who was able to undertake the work.

(Cllr Weekes left).

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

62.3 Mayoral Robe

Replacement of the accessories (jabot and sleeves) was deferred to Part 2 for consideration of quotations.

62.4 Mayor Choosing Feedback

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Cummings, it was **RESOLVED** to defer the item for consideration at a future meeting.

62.5 Council Meeting Seating and Sound

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was **RESOLVED** to create a working group consisting of Cllrs Richards, Fisher and Cummings, to investigate and report back.

(Cllr Hart left)

62.6 Mace Bearers

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk advertise for expressions of interest for the appointment of a relief Mace Bearer.

63. External Body Representatives

A request from the Hogs Wood Core Group for a Council representative to be appointed was considered. On the proposition of Cllr Richards, seconded Cllr Fisher (2 abstentions) it was **RESOLVED** to not appoint a representative to the group due to potential conflicts of interest.

64. Members' Reports and Items for Agendas

64.1 Okehampton United Charities/Simmons Homes

Cllr Marsh, who was a Trustee, outlined the work of the Charities and advised that the Clerk to Trustees would forward any relevant information.

(Cllr Dexter left)

65. PART TWO – CONFIDENTIAL

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Cummings 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.

66. Mayoral Robe

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to replace the jabot and sleeves at the approximate cost of £124.16

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 9.05pm.

Councillor Colman
Mayor