



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 15th December 2025 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

Members Present:

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

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)
Cllr J Goffey (WDBC)

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

459. Apologies for Absence

Apologies tendered by Cllr Holt (illness) and Cllr Hart (personal) were approved on the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded by Cllr Tolley.

Cllr Grainger, DCC, had tendered apologies.

460. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Leech declared a personal interest in Minute Reference 468.1 being a Member of WDBC.

Cllr Ireland declared a personal interest in Minute Reference 470 being the Chair of OkeRail.

461. Public Participation

None.

462. Members' Questions

None.

463. Devon County Council

Apologies had been received from Cllr Grainger.

464. West Devon Borough Council

The Clerk apologised for not having previously circulated the report from Cllr Leech who then provided an update in relation to a working group who were looking at how Southwest Water operates within the region.

Cllr Dexter reported on the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), advising he was pleased that the report had been submitted to the government. He also provided information about the work of the Pensions and Investment Committee and financial capping arrangements.

Cllr Goffey advised that she had been appointed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She had fully reviewed WDBC's LGR submission and had commented upon a proposition for purchasing of land for the planting of trees near Tavistock and the comparison with Wonnacotts Meadow.

465. Questions Arising from Member Reports

Concerns about the lack of parking restrictions along Mill Road during the closure of Fore Street for Edwardian Evening and road works on 14th December were voiced. This had been raised with DCC.

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

466.1 On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Weekes it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of **Policy & Resources Committee** meetings held on 3rd November and 1st December 2025.

466.2 On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Tolley it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the **Personnel Sub-Committee** meeting held on 30th June 2025.

466.3 On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded by Cllr Weekes it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the **Parks Committee** meeting held on 29th September 2025.

466.4 On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the **Planning Committee** meetings held on 20th October and 10th November 2025.

467. Full Council Meeting Minutes

On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded Cllr Weekes it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 24th November 2025 for signing by the Mayor.

468. Projects and Consultations

468.1 English Devolution White Paper/Local Government Reorganisation

Cllr Leech had obtained guidance from WDBC's Legal Team who had confirmed that land subject to S106 agreements were valid for life, therefore use of associated land could not be changed.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded by Cllr Weekes (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to submit a request to WDBC for the acquisition of assets in accordance with the report and to request a similar conversation with DCC.

468.2 Community Governance Boundary Change

A response was awaited from Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council in relation to a meeting of the two councils to discuss the next steps. WDBC had confirmed that information could be included with the annual Council Tax Bills, the cost depending on the size and format. The information would be required by early February.

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded by Cllr Fisher it was **RESOLVED** that:

- The Clerk draft a document be sent to OHPC for their consideration in January and costings be obtained from WDBC.
- A letter be sent to WDBC noting that all information required had been provided by the two councils and requesting that the Order for the Boundary Change be made

and querying the impact if this was not undertaken before any order was made by the government in relation to LGR.

469.3 Okehampton Neighbourhood Plan

A response for consideration at the meeting had been requested by the Clerk but it had not been forthcoming. A proposition by Cllr Richards, seconded by Cllr Cummings that the Clerk write to WDBC in accordance with an email he had sent to the Clerk was not carried.

469.4 Lloyds Bank Closure

No further information had been received.

469.5 Pulse Hubs

It was noted that the project had been withdrawn due to planning difficulties.

469.6 Library Consultation

A [consultation](#) which closed on 22nd February 2026 was noted. Councillors and members of the public could respond as individuals.

470. Town Transport Services

Reports from Councillors Ireland and Cummings regarding bus services and their links with the railway stations were considered and it was commented that two new covered bus stops had been installed in Nexus Way.

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded by Cllr Marsh (3 abstentions) it was **RESOLVED** to support the modifying of the 317 bus to include stops at Waitrose and the Railway Station, and Moyses Meadow as set out in the report from Cllr Cummings.

Cllr McNeill had received queries from members of the public about the bus service between Newton Abbot and Okehampton, and it was suggested residents pass concerns directly to the bus company. A new 66 bus service route had been published for duration of the upcoming road works.

471. Government Digital ID Scheme

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded by Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to defer the item to the next meeting.

472. Policies and Documents

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

- a) Asbestos Policy
- b) Freedom of Information Publication Scheme
- c) Privacy Notice
- d) Reserves (Financial Policy)
- e) Subject Access Request Policy
- f) Youth Council – Code of Conduct
- g) Youth Council – Constitution
- h) Youth Council – Data Protection
- i) Youth Council – Equal Opportunities
- j) Youth Council - Safeguarding

473. Finance and Governance

473.1 Payments

On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Bird it was **RESOLVED** to approve payment of invoices in accordance with the schedule, the BACS payments including December salaries totalled £27,123.25 exclusive of VAT.

473.2 Bank Accounts and Management

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded by Cllr Weekes it was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendations of the Policy & Resources Committee as follows:

- a) Closure of both NatWest Accounts following termination of the Nationwide Account and successful transfer of the funds to the CCLA.
- b) The CCLA account be maintained to hold 60% of the Council's total funds, the calculation being based on the balance as at the commencement of each financial year.
- c) Three months operational funds to be maintained in the Lloyds account calculated as 25% (3 months) of the total anticipated expenditure for the financial year, as at the commencement of the financial year.
- d) Two Unity Bank Accounts be opened as follows:
 - i) Easy Access Business Deposit Account, maintained with a balance of one months anticipated expenditure, calculated annually at the commencement of each financial year. This will ensure instant access to funds enabling salaries and invoices to be paid promptly should there be an issue with the Lloyds account.
 - ii) Unity Trust 30 Day Notice Account to be used to hold any funds over the 60% held in the CCLA Account
 - iii) Signatories and online banking arrangements be as existing for the Lloyds Accounts

473.3 2026/27 Budget and Precept

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded by Cllr Fisher it was **RESOLVED** to recommend V3 of the draft budget and precept requirement for final approval by the Council on 19th January 2026.

473.4 Freedom of Information Request

The Clerk reported that an FOI request relating to the management of Simmons Park carpark had been received in November and responded to within the statutory timescales. A question posed by Cllr Bird would be responded to within Part 2.

474. Civic

474.1 Mayor's Diary Report

The Mayor had attended a variety of events, including acting as a casualty for North Dartmoor Search & Rescue, Edwardian Evening and a Veterans breakfast.

474.2 Civic Service

Cllr Marsh declared an interest being a Trustee of St James' Chapel.

A verbal report from Cllr Marsh about using St James' Chapel, also known as the Mayor's Chapel, for the Annual Civic Service was considered. Concern was raised about the size restraints of the Chapel and the possibility that people may be excluded because of this.

475. External Councillor Representatives

475.1 Carnival Committee

Cllr Fisher had resigned as representative to the Carnival Committee and on the proposition of Cllr Weekes, seconded by Cllr Colman it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Weekes as the replacement.

475.2 Police Advocate

On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Weekes it was **RESOLVED** to nominate Cllr Fisher as the Police Advocate in place of the Town Clerk.

(WDBC Members and Cllr Marsh left the meeting)

PART TWO – CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

476. On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Bird 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.

477. Freedom of Information Request

The Clerk provided additional information as requested by Cllr Bird.

478. Simmons Park Charity (101388)

Documentation provided by the Solicitor in relation to the Sole Trustee Status of Okehampton Town Council was considered. It was reported that a special meeting of Trustees had been held earlier in the day when the Deed of Variation for approval by the Council had been agreed.

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded by Cllr Cummings it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Deed of Variation, the execution of the Council's common seal in accordance with Standing Order 22.b and that it be signed by the Mayor and Cllr Tolley.

479. Staffing Matters

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded by Cllr Weekes (2 abstentions) it was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation from the Policy & Resources Committee for the creation of an Events Assistant role on a Zero Hour Contract. Position to be advertised internally initially.

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part 2 and ratify decisions therein. The meeting was closed at 8.31pm.

Councillor Colman, Mayor