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**Minutes of an Okehampton Town Council Parks Committee Meeting held on
Monday 17th November 2025 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

Members Present:

Councillor B Tolley (Chairman)
Councillor C Marsh (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor F Hart
Councillor C Holt
Councillor M Ireland
Councillor S Weekes

Councillor R Colman (Mayor)
Councillor L Bird (Chairman, Property)
Councillor T Leech (Chairman, Planning)
Councillor J Yelland (Chairman, Policy & Resources)

In Attendance:

Mrs A Horn (Assistant Clerk)
Mr J McGahey (Park-Keeper)

The meeting was livestreamed through the Council Facebook page.

377. Apologies for Absence

On the proposition of Cllr Colman and seconded by Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to accept apologies from Cllr McNeill (personal).

378. Declarations of Interest

None

379. Public Participation

None

380. Park-Keeper

Mr McGahey reported that the Parks team had completed leaf blowing and weeding across all areas. They had planted new heathers on the Waitrose verge and near Wongs to improve coverage and reduce maintenance. Potholes had been filled in the carpark and on the path by the river. Repairs to the fence behind Lidl was scheduled to begin this week. They had trimmed the bank behind the first shelter to help the crocus in Spring. All the hedges had been trimmed. The War Memorial was cleaned for the Remembrance event and all the signs for the road closures had been put in and out. Mr McGahey had tasked one of the Groundsmen and the Apprentice with a project to rejuvenate the Rose garden.

381. Members' Questions

None

382. Minutes

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland and seconded by Cllr Colman it was **RESOLVED** to confirm, approve and sign the minutes of the Parks Committee meeting held on 29th September 2025.

383. Simmons Park

383.1 Bookings

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh and seconded by Cllr Yelland it was **RESOLVED** to decline an application for an inflatable event in Simmons Park.

383.2 Memorial Tree

Cllr Weekes proposed planting a tree such as a native holly tree at the Skate Park with an inscribed stone as a memorial to a former Town Councillor, Gill Lower, which was seconded by Cllr Leech but not resolved.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh and seconded by Cllr Yelland it was agreed that the family be consulted on the type of tree and the location it would be planted, following which it would be brought back to the committee for further consideration.

383.3 Green Flag

Cllr Yelland commended the Park Keeper and his team on the feedback received from the Mystery Shopper. Any feedback on the V1 of the next application to be passed to the Assistant Clerk.

384. Cemetery

384.1 Burials

It was noted that since the last meeting there had been 2 burials and a scattering of ashes, 3 headstones and 2 pre purchased plots.

384.2 Extension

The Assistant Clerk reported that the company chosen by the Council had been asked to provide an indicative cost of project managing the planning application. It may exceed the financial limit of the Parks Committee and need to go to Full Council for approval. Concerns about value for money using a project manager were raised.

385. Other Outdoor Areas

385.1 Clapps Wood

It was noted that the permissive footpath through Clapps Wood was closed from 0800 on 28th October until 0800 on 29th October 2025.

385.2 Skatepark Lighting and CCTV

It was noted that a grant application had been submitted and the lamp was currently permanently on. A quotation for a timer allowing for the pole to be powered continually with the light on a timer was awaited.

386. Zoning Map

On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded by Cllr Weekes, it was **RESOLVED** to continue mowing the area adjacent to the Guide Hut near the skatepark, and to contact the organisation regarding future maintenance of that land. It was further **RESOLVED** to maintain the churchyard in accordance with the existing mowing schedule. Ownership and boundaries of the remaining areas to be confirmed and reported back to the next Parks Committee meeting.

387. Finance

387.1 Payment Schedule

Cllr Marsh, Cllr Yelland and Cllr Tolley declared an interest.

On the proposition of Cllr Bird and seconded by Cllr Leech (3 abstentions) it was **RESOLVED** to approve payment of invoices in accordance with the schedule, (BACS payments totalling £33,026.82 plus VAT, including November salaries).

387.2 2026/27 Budget

On the proposition of Cllr Weekes and seconded by Cllr Colman (6 for, 1 against, 2 abstentions) it was **RESOLVED** to add £5,000 to the budget for Health and Safety requirements. This was on the understanding that no further battery powered machinery for the parks team would be purchased without further review.

On the proposition of Cllr Weekes and seconded by Cllr Marsh it was **RESOLVED** to add £2,000 to the Cemetery maintenance budget for fencing repairs.

(8pm Cllr Holt left)

388. Reports of Council Working/Task and Finish Groups

388.1 Cemetery Management

It was noted that Cllr Hart had resigned from the working group and nominations for replacement would be requested at Full Council.

388.2 Projects

a) Putting Green Improvements

It was noted that two grant applications had been submitted, one had been rejected and the result of the second was awaited.

389. Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items

389.1 Business Improvement District

Cllr Tolley reported that they had met last Friday, an Edwardian Evening Social media campaign had been started. A Customer Relation Marketing system which gives business access to each other through email was being worked on. The BIDs purpose and mission details had been added to the website. There had been positive take up and feedback on the Seedl training. The next meeting was on 14th December, and they would be starting surgeries and clinics in new year. Cllr Yelland asked if the BID Manager could be invited to Full Council.

389.2 DCC Regeneration Board

Cllr Tolley reported that the BID and the DCC Regeneration Board were meeting to see how they could work together.

389.3 Dartmoor National Park Forum

Cllr Marsh reported that she had attended an online meeting on Dartmoor Futures which was a group set up to source funding and look at projects. The Dartmoor National Park Plan was available online. They would be interviewing next week for the new CEO. The excavation of an Early Bronze Age cist at Cut Hill continued with animal bones having been found.

389.4 Okehampton Community Recreation Association

Cllr Tolley reported that the Trustees meet on 15th November. They had received a grant from the OUC towards the windmill power project for the Pavilion. The Manager was congratulated as during his 6-year tenure all parts of the business were now profitable. The Fundraising committee were looking to raise £170K for an all-weather pitch

389.5 Parklands Leisure Centre User Group/Meet the Manager

No one had attended the last Meet the Manager event.

PART TWO – CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

390. On the proposition of Cllr Ireland seconded Cllr Leech 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.

391. Damage to Bench

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh and seconded by Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to accept the plan.

392. Jubilee Bridge Repairs

On the proposition of Cllr Weekes and seconded by Cllr Colman it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Sam Dunn Fabrication to undertake the metal fabrication on Jubilee Bridge at a cost of £4,821.08 and JHB to undertake the anti-slip surfacing at a cost of £1,775.75.

393. Football Club

It was agreed to defer this item as information had not been received in time for the implications to be considered.

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland seconded Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part Two and ratify decisions made therein. The meeting was closed at 8:20pm.

Cllr Tolley, Chairman