



Town Hall
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Okehampton
Devon
EX20 1AA

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Okehampton Town Council

**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 23rd February 2026 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

Members Present:

Cllr R Colman (Mayor)
Cllr T Cummings
Cllr C Holt
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 J Goffey (WDBC)
Cllr G Dexter (WDBC)
1 Member of the Public

Prayers were offered by Revd Claire Reynolds prior to commencement of the meeting.
The meeting was livestreamed through the Council's Facebook page.

A moment of silence was held in memory of former Town Mayor, Peter Woodgate who had recently passed away and thanks were expressed to the emergency services for their attendance at the Promise School which had been devastated by fire.

585. Apologies for Absence

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded by Cllr Bird, it was **RESOLVED** to approve apologies tendered by Cllr Fisher (personal), Cllr Marsh (personal), Cllr Weekes (illness) and Cllr Ireland (illness).

586. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Leech declared a personal interest in Minute References 594.2 and 594.3
Cllr McNeill declared a personal interest in Minute Reference 594.5
Cllr Yelland declared a personal interest in Minute Reference 594.5

587. Public Participation

A member of the public addressed the council on matters relating to the future of the town centre to ensure a thriving economy, promoting commerce and supporting growth without eroding its charm. Some questions were posed to the council and the member of public was requested to either leave their contact details or forward the comments to the Clerk (townclerk@okehampton.gov.uk) to enable a response to be made.

588. Members' Questions

None

589. West Devon Borough Council

Reports from the WDBC Cllrs present had previously been circulated.

Cllr Goffey brought to the attention of the council additional information about the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Neighbourhood Plans produced up until now were virtually redundant and future Plans would have to comply with the NPPF.

Cllr Dexter provided an update about the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in relation to the government consultation. He advised there had been a symposium in support of tourism and provided an update regarding finance.

Cllr Leech advised it had been confirmed that the provision of a shop within the new development was a condition of the planning consent. The government had changed the original conditions for submission of LGR options and there were now 5 options for Devon, including a 145+1 option which had been added by the government. WDBC were introducing voluntary DBS checks for Members from April. An update about the Castle reopening was provided and for which additional volunteers were needed to facilitate extra opening opportunities. The emergency services were commended for their attendance at the Promise School fire.

590. Devon County Council

No report.

591. Questions Arising from Member Reports

Cllr Richards commented how pleasing it was to see the shop requirement within the planning condition as referred to by Cllr Leech and reported there was potential support for it to be run as a community shop.

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

592.1 On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded by Cllr Bird it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the **Parks Committee** meetings held on 17th November and 1st December 2025.

592.2 On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Richards it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the **Planning Committee** meetings held on 1st December 2025 and 12th January 2026.

593. Full Council Meeting Minutes

On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded by Cllr Bird it was **RESOLVED** to adopt as a true record the minutes of the Town Council meetings held on 13th and 19th January 2026 for signing by the Chairman.

594. Projects and Consultations

594.1 Local Government Reorganisation

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

A response to questions posed to DCC had been circulated. WDBC were considering an Asset Policy and no decision would be made regarding the potential acquisition of assets by the Town Council prior to its approval. Changes to the NPPF had been discussed by WDBC earlier in the day and a briefing note would be circulated to town and parish councils. Cllr Cummings reported that some community groups might be prepared to maintain green areas but not purchase them. It was suggested they contact WDBC who currently owned the assets.

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded by Cllr Tolley (5 in favour, 3 against, 1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** the Council would not make a response to the [Government Consultation](#). Councillors could respond individually.

594.2 Community Governance Boundary Change

WDBC had confirmed that all information required from Okehampton Town and Parish Councils had been received.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Bird (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk write to WDBC requesting that the Order be Made by 31st May 2026 with the appropriate effective from dates thereon.

On the proposition of Cllr Richards, seconded by Cllr Cummings (7 abstentions) it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk seek independent legal opinion on WDBC's advice that the precept cannot be raised incrementally and applied by correction of council tax, not using council reserves.

(Cllr Holt left the meeting)

594.3 Neighbourhood Plan

The Clerk was again writing to WDBC requesting an update as a response had not been received.

Cllr Yelland provided an update from a DALC run training session recently attended which indicated that Neighbourhood Plans would no longer be about vision but should focus on design codes.

594.4 Lloyds Bank Closure

The Clerk advised that Sir Mel Stride had confirmed a response from LINK was awaited.

594.5 Allotments

The draft lease was awaited.

594.6 Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service

Councillors to respond as individuals to the [Community Risk Management Consultation](#)

596. Okehampton Castle

From 1st April 2026 the Castle would be open to the public for free entry Wednesdays to Sundays 10am to 4pm, and guided tours would be available to book between April and October. This was able to be offered because volunteers had come forward, additional volunteers were required to enable extra opening days to be offered.

597. DCC Regeneration Board

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Leech (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Bird as the Council's representative on a sub-group investigating the creation of a farmers' market and that this be revisited at the Annual Council Meeting/Mayor Choosing alongside the annual review of other similar appointments.

598. Devon Town Champion Programme

Following an invitation from Visit Okehampton, on the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded by Cllr Yelland it was **RESOLVED** to nominate Cllr Marsh as the Okehampton Town Champion.

599. Wider Okehampton Cluster Group Meeting

An update from the meeting on 14th January was provided and on the proposition of Colman, seconded by Cllr Cummings it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Terms of Reference.

600. Okehampton College All Weather Pitch

Correspondence from Okehampton Hockey Club requesting council support for resurfacing of the pitch was considered. On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Bird (2

abstentions) it was **RESOLVED** to provide support by way of a letter of endorsement to assist with funding applications.

601. Government Digital ID Scheme

Cllr Colman addressed the Council advising he had not written a report as the situation had changed.

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

602. Finance

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Cummings it was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments, the BACS payments totalled £1,262.61 exclusive of VAT.

603. Policies and Documents

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

- a) Councillor/Employee Protocol
- b) Delegation Scheme
- c) Dignity at Work Policy
- d) Sexual Harassment Policy
- e) Family Friendly Policy Pack (statutory policies only)

The Clerk confirmed that policies were being added to/updated on the website as they were approved.

604. Royal Garden Party Nomination

No nominations had been submitted.

605. External Body Councillor Representatives

On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded by Cllr Tolley it was **RESOLVED** to nominate Cllr Fisher as the Council's representative to the Okehampton Fairtrade Group.

606. Civic

606.1 Mayor's Diary Report

The Mayor reported he had attended the Round Table Award Ceremony and had hosted a Coffee Morning in the Charter Hall.

606.2 Commonwealth Day, 9th March 2026

Councillors were encouraged to attend the event outside St James' Chapel at 9.20am.

606.3 Annual Report for 2025/26

It was agreed that reports from the Committees be included within the 2025/26 annual report. Committee Chairmen and the Mayor to provide their report by no later than 3rd March.

606.4 2026/27 Meeting Dates

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Tolley it was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of meetings for 2026/27.

PART TWO – CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

607. On the proposition of Cllr Bird, seconded by 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.

608. Cemetery Extension

On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded by Cllr Tolley it was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation of the Parks Committee and accept the quotation of £9,100 plus expenses from Clifton Emery Design. The work would not commence until confirmation that the land would be sold to the council had been received in writing.

609. Simmons Park, Path Repair Work

Consideration by Ful Council was not required.

610. Fire Audit, Kitchen and other Improvements

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded by Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation of the Property Committee and accept a quotation from Vesta Sol in the sum of £9,410 for fire improvement work to the Charter Hall and other locations as identified within the fire audit report.

611. Insurance Quotations

The pre-renewal meeting had been held and quotations were awaited.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part 2 and ratify decisions therein.

The meeting was closed at 9.01pm

Councillor Colman, Mayor