



Okehampton Town Council

Town Hall
Fore Street
Okehampton
Devon
EX20 1AA

01837 53179

www.okehampton.gov.uk

**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Annual Assembly
held at 7pm on Monday 16th March 2026 in the Charter Hall, Market Street, Okehampton**

In Attendance:

Okehampton Town Council:

Cllrs Bird, Colman, Cummings, Ireland, Leech, Richards, Tolley, Yelland
Mrs E James (Town Clerk), Mrs A Horn (Assistant Clerk), Miss R Wills (Facilities Officer)

WDBC: Cllrs Goffey and Vachon

Members of the Public and Local Organisation Representatives: approximately 28
Revd C Reynolds

Devon Communities Together Representative

The Assembly was chaired by Councillor Colman, Town Mayor.

1. Welcome and Introduction

The Mayor, Councillor Colman welcomed those present to the meeting and invited Revd Reynolds, who had recently been appointed to a position in Okehampton, to introduce herself.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been tendered by Okehampton Town Councillors Fisher, Marsh and McNeill.

3. Confirmation of the Minutes

Minutes of the Town Assembly held on 8th April 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record on the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded by Cllr Leech, and signed by Cllr Colman.

4. Okehampton History

Jan Goffey, previous Town Councillor and Mayor, presented a short talk about the history of Okehampton which she had digitised from parchments located in an old chest, still housed in the Town Hall. The parchments had been transcribed by Dr Edward Herbert Young 1862-1932.

5. Questions from the Public

No written questions had been received.

The following questions were posed by those present:

Q Why are toilets not being provided at the new Interchange Station

Cllr Ireland responded advising that the council had been asking for the toilets to be provided and commented that the station was currently within Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council's boundary. GWR's policy was not to install toilets at smaller stations. The only reason there are toilets at the town station is because of their historic provision.

Q The Exeter to Okehampton bus times do not match the train times, is anything being done about it?

Cllr Ireland advised there was a lack of coordination between bus and train services and that it was something OkeRail were taking up.

Q What is the likelihood of Lidl being able to move to the Eastern side of Okehampton?

Cllr Leech advised that the application was with WDBC, the planning authority, for consideration.

Q The Central Government Resilience Action Plan is designed to make Britain more ready. Are there any plans for community resilience in the town?

Cllr Cummings advised there was a presentation later in the evening about a Community Emergency Plan.

6. Devon Communities Together – Community Emergency Plan

A representative from DCT introduced emergency planning which could have capacity to support the community in many ways. The local resilience forum brings together blue light services and helps coordination with responders at a local level. An aim being prevention, reduction, protection and recovery of communities from incidents. CEPs are about immediate action before emergency services are on site and are about the community helping themselves.

This meeting, the community engagement stage of the preparation process, is the first step in creating a CEP. CEPs are not the job of the council, it is for the community to form a group to take the plan forward.

Q How big should plan areas be?

Some are towns, some are larger areas that are divided into sections. Villages can have their own plans or a group of villages and join together.

Q How is the active part of the plan; training, rehearsal, equipment, insurance, H&S funded?

Training sessions through DCT and partners are free and there is a small startup grant to help with meetings. There is potentially a grant available for equipment once the plan has been signed off. Other sources such as town and parish councils, DCC and WDBC may have grants available.

Q Last time it snowed and the A30 was blocked the college rescue centre coordinator was unavailable and Dartmoor rescue took action. The college did not know where emergency supplies were kept. Important everyone knows who to contact.

Networking is an important factor as is local knowledge and accessibility and this would be included within a plan.

Q Does this mean that DCC no longer have an emergency plan with Okehampton?

The formal structure is still there. There are plans in place, but community plans are a useful addition. Formal structures are sometimes difficult; community resources fit into the formal plans.

Q. Has any thought been given to the formation of digital plans and the impact if the internet or mobile signals fail?

Coaching with response teams includes training about this aspect. The groups are advised not to be too reliant on mobile phones and the internet. Plans need to be resilient and consider the provision of radio sets etc to back up communications.

Q. The older population don't necessarily have access to the internet; does this exclude these people and how can they be included?

This is why DCT dissuade reliance on the internet and encourage door to door communication, ringing of bells or other ways of communication.

Q. Insurance. What if someone fell in the school and broke their leg who is liable? The Good Samaritan Act is failing because people are willing to sue each other.

Usually, insurance is funded by the town or parish councils for volunteers. If responders are working under direction of emergency services, they are covered by that service.

Q There are cases when the advice provided by DCT about insurance had been proven wrong.

Exposure to volunteers is minimal.

Q Community emergency hubs. These are first responder points in the community where basic resources are held. They complement emergency plans. Transition Town would be happy to help with this in conjunction with the town council.

This is a newly launched initiative usually announced to responders as part of the plan, not instead of, it is usually a later phase.

Q Aging population of Okehampton. Quick response harder with older people, how can younger people be encouraged to take part

An issue is that it tends to be older members of the community creating the plans and volunteering. Talking to children at schools can raise awareness in the home

Q Home emergency plans – are booklets sent out with suggestions?

Yes, some do.

Q Grab bag – if everyone had a backpack with an emergency card listing the things you need to take it would be helpful.

That is the idea

Volunteers to help to set up a Community Emergency Plan and to assist with delivering it as needed were requested. Details to be sent to the Town Council.

7. Conclusion and Thanks

No further questions were forthcoming. The Mayor, Cllr Colman, thanked everybody for taking the time to attend and closed the meeting at 8.39pm.

DRAFT