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Okehampton Town Council

**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 27th October 2025 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

Members Present:

Cllr R Colman (Mayor)	Cllr B Tolley (Chairman, Parks)
Cllr T Cummings	Cllr T Leech (Chairman, Planning)
Cllr A Fisher	Cllr J Yelland (Chairman, Policy & Resources)
Cllr F Hart	
Cllr M Ireland	
Cllr C Marsh	
Cllr D McNeill	
Cllr M Richards	
Cllr S Weekes	

In Attendance:

Mrs E James (Town Clerk)
Cllr J Grainger (DCC)
Cllr G Dexter (WDBC)
2 Members of the Public

315 Apologies for Absence

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

316 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Marsh declared a personal interest in Min Ref 325.5 and 327
Cllr Cummings declared a personal interest in Min Ref 328
Cllr McNeill declared a personal interest in Min Ref 325.5
Cllr Colman declared a personal interest in Min Ref 325.5
Cllr Ireland declared a personal interest in Min Ref 325.5
Cllr Tolley declared a personal interest in Min Ref 325.5

317 Public Participation

None.

318. Members' Questions

A recent break-in, theft and vandalism that had occurred at the Community Garden and Men in Sheds, and concerns raised by members of the public about the closure of Lloyds Bank. were brought to the attention of the Council.

319. West Devon Borough Council

Reports from Cllr Leech and Cllr Dexter had been previously circulated.

Cllr Dexter highlighted items from his report including progress that had been made with the provision of a footpath along Crediton Road which it was anticipated would be complete by

Summer 2026. The Joint Local Plan for Plymouth, South Hams and West Devon was being reviewed and would be replaced by one covering South Hams and West Devon only (SHWDJLP).

Cllr Leech brought the early opening of the Link Road to the attention of the council. West Devon Planners and DCC Highways were thanked for working to open it early to help mitigate the traffic issues whilst Exeter Road was closed. Other issues including ongoing concern with regards to the Kellands Lane blockage was raised.

320. Devon County Council

Cllr Grainger apologised for lack of attendance at council meetings advising he would attend when possible. His DCC group leader had advised councillors not to submit written reports to local councils as the information was available on the website, but he was happy to answer any questions posed. Cllr Grainger had met with Cllr Leech to discuss highway related discuss issues which he would take to a Highways and Traffic Orders Committee meeting.

321. Questions Arising from Member Reports

Cllr Grainger was informed that although reports were available online it would be useful to receive updates in relation to local issues affecting Okehampton.

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

322.1 On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded by Cllr Yelland it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the **Parks Committee** meeting held on 14th July 2025. On request Cllr Tolley provided an update on the putting green progress.

322.2 On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the **Planning Committee** meetings held on 7th July, 4th and 18th August, 8th and 15th September 2025.

322.3 On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded by Cllr Fisher it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the **Property Committee** meeting held on 16th June 2025.

323. Full Council Meeting Minutes

On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded Cllr Tolley it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Town Council meetings held on 15th September and 13th October 2025 for signing by the Mayor.

324. Wider Okehampton Cluster Group

Cllr Colman and the Clerk had hosted the initial meeting on 9th October 2025. The councils present had shared ideas and information and agreed that the next meeting would be held in January at Sampford Courtenay. It was suggested the group could contact Cllr Grainger, or other DCC/WDBC Ward Members for information about relevant issues.

325. Projects and Consultations

325.1 English Devolution White Paper/Local Government Reorganisation

It was commented that the Council should debate and adopt a position in relation to the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) following which a discussion took place.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded by Cllr Hart (1 abstention, 1 against) it was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to permit a member of the public to speak.

Cllr Dexter advised there would be a government consultation after the submission date.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded by Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

On the proposition of Cllr Richards, seconded by Cllr Hart (6 in favour, 2 abstentions, 4 against) it was **RESOLVED** to hold an extra ordinary meeting to debate the matter with the aim of forming a council opinion and communicating it to the government. The meeting to be held once all of the options submitted to the government were known.

(A member of the public arrived)

325.2 Community Governance Boundary Review

On the proposition of Cllr Weekes, seconded by Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to accept the assets from Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council in accordance with the circulated list at the peppercorn payment of £1 per asset. The provision of dog waste bins would be reviewed when the development management company transfer had taken place.

325.3 Okehampton Neighbourhood Plan

WDBC had acknowledged receipt of the statement and documentation shortly after the meeting of the Council on 15th September 2025. Approval and further information was awaited from WDBC.

325.4 Lloyds Bank Closure

The Clerk reported that representation to LINK as resolved by the Council had been rejected on the grounds that no new information had been provided. A petition passed to the Clerk by a member of the public, signed by approximately 340 people, had been sent to LINK the response being that it would not change the outcome of their decision. A response to a correspondence sent to Lloyds requesting that a representative attend a meeting was awaited.

Further correspondence had been forwarded to the Clerk by Mel Stride, MP. This letter from Lloyds stated that the branch would remain open until a cash service had been provided and that a new postal deposit service for use by customers not online and who relied on the Post Office for the deposit of cheques. The correspondence advised that in excess of 39,000 personal customers in the constituency used the app or website and very few of those used the physical branch. It was commented that it did not include figures for those who did not use online facilities. A location that may be willing to accept a banking facility had been brought to the attention of the Council and the Clerk was awaiting consent to forward their information to LINK.

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded by Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to permit members of the public to speak.

Cllr Dexter advised there would be a government consultation after the submission date and Cllr Grainger reported that the Wellbeing Café provided assistance with online access.

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

325.5 Allotments

On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Weekes (5 abstentions) it was **RESOLVED** to agree the recommendations of the working group in accordance with the report.

326. Town Transport Services

Cllr Fisher reported concerns relating to the inclusion of all areas within a bus route that connected with the railway stations and other facilities and services within the area.

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded by Cllr Hart it was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to permit a member of the public to speak.

Cllr Grainger advised he was attempting to engage DCC requesting that existing bus routes be tweaked and would invite the Council to attend any meetings.

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded by Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Hart it was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Fisher investigate and report back to the Council.

327. St James' Chapel

A request from Cllr Marsh that the Council provides a letter of support to accompany a Heritage Lottery Bid that is being made for repairs to the Chapel Tower was considered. The repairs included removal of cement pointing and replacement with lime mortar.

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded by Cllr Weekes (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk write a letter of support, noting that St James' Chapel was also known as the Mayor's Chapel.

328. Finance and Governance

On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Marsh (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to approve payment of invoices in accordance with the schedule, the BACS payments totalling £797.01 inclusive of VAT.

329. Freedom of Information Request

The Clerk advised that a request for information about IT provision had been received and responded to.

330. Civic - Mayor's Diary Report

Cllr Colman reported on events he had attended since the last meeting. These included the Repair Café, Okehampton Carnival, Fairtrade Coffee Morning, Trek26, Otters Swimming Gala, Okehampton Civic Parade and Service.

(All those in attendance, with the exception of the Clerk, left the meeting)

PART TWO – CONFIDENTIAL

331. 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.

332. Youth Council

Cllr Cummings reported feedback received from ~~the Mayor~~ of Barnstaple Town Council commending their visit to Okehampton Youth Council and its creation which had inspired them to implement a similar initiative.

333. Staffing Matters

The Clerk provided an update in relation to staff absence and a personal matter for the information of those in attendance.

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Richards, it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part 2. The meeting was closed at 8.25pm.

Councillor Colman, Mayor