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Okehampton Town Council

**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on  
Monday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

**Members Present:**

Cllr R Colman (Mayor)	Cllr L Bird (Chairman, Property)
Cllr T Cummings	Cllr B Tolley (Chairman, Parks)
Cllr C Holt	Cllr T Leech (Chairman, Planning)
Cllr M Ireland	Cllr J Yelland (Chairman, Policy & Resources)
Cllr C Marsh	
Cllr D McNeill	
Cllr M Richards	

**In Attendance:**

Mrs E James (Town Clerk)  
Cllr G Dexter (WDBC)  
Cllr J Goffey (WDBC)

**394. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies tendered by Cllr Fisher (personal), Cllr Weekes (personal) and Cllr Hart (illness) were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded by Cllr Cummings.

Cllr Grainger (DCC) had tendered apologies.

**395. Declarations of Interest**

Cllrs Ireland and McNeill declared personnel interests in Min Ref 403.5.

**396. Public Participation**

None.

**397. Members' Questions**

None.

**398. West Devon Borough Council**

Reports from Cllrs Leech, Dexter and Goffey had previously been circulated.

Cllr Dexter expanded on his report advising of Christmas free parking and a recent economy report that showed disappointing results with decreasing numbers of tourists visiting the area. The Police Matters meeting had been very useful, the police were now out of special measurers and had a strategy to deploy more officers on the streets. There had been a slight decrease in levels of crime overall. Mobile speed cameras were now available to the police who were requesting specific information of where they could best be used. WDBC were considering their Local Government Review (LGR) submission on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

Cllr Goffey had submitted a short report and advised she was waiting to see what decision government would make in relation to LGR.

Cllr Leech highlighted items from his report. Completion of the Link Road was required but it was still open for use at present. The level of the St James' School playing field had been regulated. Parcel 4 footpath consultations were underway. The Crediton Road footpath was in the planning stage. An enforcement officer had visited Kellands Lane but there was no response from the Inspectorate to date. A high fence erected at Kellands Lane by a resident was causing angst. The current status of access/egress to the persimmons site was being investigated. The developer had agreed money was available for play equipment on the Crediton Road site but not the timescale for installation. Cllr Leech was now part of a regenerative farming working group. WDBC had received information from the government indicating that rural area funding would be cut.

#### **399. Devon County Council**

Cllr Grainger had tendered apologies.

#### **400. Questions Arising from Member Reports**

It was clarified that Simmons Park carpark was owned by the Town Council and that the free parking in this area was the Town Council's initiative. The Council Tax Policy was due for review.

Cllr Goffey was requested to investigate the status of the Old Mill site which was in an increasingly poor state, especially the public right of way which was still closed. Cllr Leech had been liaising with building control and DCC Highways as Chair of Development Management and Licensing Committee at WDBC and advised that relevant authorities were liaising.

Cllr Ireland commented on the decreasing tourist numbers.

#### **401. Adoption of Minutes of Committees and to Receive Questions from Members Thereon**

**401.1** On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Tolley it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the **Policy & Resources Committee** meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

**401.2** On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded by Cllr Tolley it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the **Property Committee** meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

#### **402. Full Council Meeting Minutes**

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Bird it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2025 for signing by the Mayor, including an amendment of Minute Reference 332 removing the wording 'the *Mayor of*'.

#### **403. Projects and Consultations**

##### **403.1 English Devolution White Paper/Local Government Reorganisation**

There were no updates reported.

##### **403.2 Community Governance Boundary Change**

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded by Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to approve the draft FAQ's, to be sent to Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council (OHPC) and adding to the website, and a request to meet informally again with OHPC about future public engagement. The Clerk to establish if information could be sent with the next Council Tax bills and potential costs.

### **403.3 Okehampton Neighbourhood Plan**

Correspondence received from WDBC and a subsequent response by the Clerk was noted. It was commented that information from WDBC's legal department was required before any further action could be taken.

### **403.4 Lloyds Bank Closure**

The Clerk reported that a local business had indicated they may be able to assist with the housing of a banking facility/hub and the information had been passed to the relevant organisation. An informal meeting with Lloyds was due to take place later in the week.

### **403.5 Allotments**

Cllr Tolley, the Clerk and Assistant Clerk had attended the Annual Allotment Holders meeting hosted by the Okehampton United Charity. The Clerk had written to Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council advising them of the allotment management change in September 2026 and requesting consideration of funding for allotments holders that would reside within their parish following the boundary change in 2027.

## **404. Infrastructure**

### **404.1 Railway Station Parking Restrictions**

Correspondence from Cllr Grainger, DCC, requesting feedback in relation to proposed parking restrictions in the area of the new station was considered. It was agreed to delay further discussion until after the next item of business as some information may be relevant.

### **404.2 Future Rail Links**

A report from Cllr Ireland was received. It was noted that OkeRail would be discussing bus routes to the new station on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025. The proximity to Northern Dartmoor and the need to retain the 118 bus service from Tavistock to the Town Station should be promoted as there was concern it may become less popular on the opening of the new station. Future rail links to Plymouth via Tavistock were considered essential because of the threats from climate change and the need for defence. The 317 bus from Bideford to Okehampton could be rerouted to include the Station. The introduction of heavy freight trains to Meldon Quarry would require track upgrade to welded rail to Okehampton. Track improvements were needed on the route from Coleford Junction to the main line at Exeter.

### **404.3 Railway Station Parking Restrictions**

The deferred item of business was further considered. On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to make the following comments, and it was queried how the restrictions would be enforced:

- Provision of mini roundabouts to both access roads would be beneficial.
- The introduction of no waiting areas could impact the carparks available to public visiting business. Visitors could find no parking available resulting in negative economic impact.
- There should be no parking on the west side entrance to Higher Stockley to improve visibility.
- Clarification to ensure the bus links were fit for purpose was required and there should be layby/pull in waiting area for busses.

(Cllr Holt left the meeting)

### **404.4 Town Transport Services**

Cllr Fisher had tendered apologies and there was no report.

## **405. Policies and Documents**

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Cummings it was **RESOLVED** to approve the following policies as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee including an amendment to page 2 of the Grant Policy changing an amount to £400.

- a) Snow and Ice Management Policy
- b) Cemetery Fees
- c) Okehampton Cemetery Brochure
- d) Cemetery and Grave Digging Policy
- e) Cemetery Rules and Regulations
- f) Simmons Park Hire and Booking Terms and Conditions
- g) CCTV Policy
- h) Grant Policy
- i) IT Policy

**406. Finance and Governance**

**406.1 Payments** - On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded by Cllr Cummings it was **RESOLVED** to approve payment of invoices in accordance with the schedule, the BACS payments totalling £1,908.83 exclusive of VAT.

**406.2 Interim Internal Audit Report**

Cllr Marsh declared a personal interest in St James' Chapel.

The previously circulated auditors report and observations were considered. On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Richards (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to vire the BID Levy's totalling £752 and the £1,000 grant for St James' Chapel from general reserves into the appropriate budget codes:

**406.3 Bank Accounts and Management**

The Finance Officer was continuing to liaise with Nationwide to close the account as previously agreed. Further changes to bank accounts and management of finances would be considered by the Policy & Resources Committee in December.

**407. Working Groups**

It was noted that Cllr Hart had resigned from the Cemetery Management working group. No further nomination was made and it was **agreed** the group membership would stay as existing with Cllr Marsh, Tolley and Fisher.

**408. Christmas and New Year Office Opening Hours**

The Council Office would be closed to the public from 4pm Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2025 until Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026. Urgent emails and messages would be responded to during normal working hours.

**409. Civic - Mayor's Diary Report**

Cllr Colman had attended events including the Remembrance Parade and Service, WDBC's Civic Service and his Mayoral Coffee Morning which had raised in excess of £230.

There was no confidential information for consideration, and the meeting was closed at 8.31pm.

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Councillor Colman, Mayor