Okehampton Town Council

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Minutes of an Okehampton Town Council Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on 7th September 2026 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton

Members Present:
Cllr J Yelland (Chairman)
Cllr L Bird (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr A Fisher
Cllr T Leech (Chairman, Planning)

In Attendance:
Mrs E James (Town Clerk)
Museum of Dartmoor Life representative

Absent:

The meeting was livestreamed through the Council Facebook page.

208. Apologies for Absence
On the proposition of Cllr Bird, seconded by Cllr Fisher, it was **RESOLVED** to approve apologies tendered by Cllr Tolley (personal) and Cllr Colman (personal). Apologies received from Cllr Weekes (work) were not accepted. Although the reason for absence and recent illness was acknowledged it was commented that he had not attended a meeting of the council for some time. Clerk to seek clarification of when he would be in attendance.

209. Declarations of Interest
Cllr Yelland declared a personal interest in items relating to Allotments, Min References 213 and 214.

210. Public Participation
A representative of the Museum of Dartmoor Life addressed the Committee and provided a written summary of the museum's activities and future plans, as previously requested by the Council.

The Committee Chairman confirmed that the Council's support for the museum had not diminished and explained that the reduced grant award was due to the high number of applications received and the limited budget available.

(Representative left the meeting)

211. Members' Questions
None

212. Minutes
On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Bird it was **RESOLVED** to approve minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meetings held on 6th and 20th July 2026 for signing by the Chairman.

213. Town Council Grants –
213.1 Applications
Okehampton Argyle Youth Football Club - On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Fisher, it was **RESOLVED** to award a grant of £375 towards the cost of replacement footballs.

213.2 Policy
The Committee considered recommendations arising from an informal grant review meeting, which had been open to all councillors, together with the subsequent draft policy. It was acknowledged that grant applications would be considered later than usual, resulting in a longer waiting period however, all applications would still be determined within the next Council's financial year. It was commented that every application would be considered at the same time resulting in a farer approach. On the proposition of Cllr Bird, seconded by Cllr Fisher, it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the Grant Policy to Full Council.

214. Policies and Documents
On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Fisher (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the following policies to Full Council:
a) Allotment Policy
b) Allotment Memorandum of Understanding: A non-binding document recording agreed expectations between both parties – Consultation with Allotment Associations to be undertaken prior to review by Full Council, in case of necessary amendment

On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Bird it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the following policies to Full Council:
c) Absence Management Policy
d) Asset Register and Disposal Policy
e) Discretions Policy (Pensions) – The revised template policy received from Peninsula Pensions since distribution of the agenda and papers was considered in conjunction with the existing draft policy and the amendments therein agreed.
f) Flexible Retirement Policy (Pensions)
g) Personal Data Retention Policy for Scheme Holders (Peninsula Pensions)
h) Recruitment Policy
i) Sexual Harassment Risk Assessment and Action Log
j) Work Experience Policy

215. Finance and Audits
215.1 Councillor Audits
Cllr Marsh had reported by email on 1st September 2026 that the audit of the bank reconciliations, online payments and Lloyds Debit Card transactions for July 2026 had been completed and everything was in order.

215.2 Management Accounts
On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Fisher, it was **RESOLVED** to agree and adopt the management accounts (as circulated) for months ended 30th June (month 3) and 31st July (month 4) 2026

215.3 Investments
The financial investments including interest rates and Tamar Energy Community Shares were noted.

215.4 Virement
On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to approve the virement of £10,000 grant received from the Police & Crime Commissioner from General Reserves to the CCTV budget 4141/101.

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215.5 Bank Accounts

a) It was noted that the Unity Accounts had been opened and the NatWest Accounts would be closed in accordance with previous resolutions

b) On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Bird it was **RESOLVED** to ratify the transfer of funds as follows:

- Transfer one months anticipated expenditure - £55,079 as previously resolved for 2026/27, from NatWest to Unity Current Account by cheque
- Remaining NatWest funds to be transferred to Unity Instant (Savings) Account by cheque or closure mandate
- Transfer funds in excess of 3 months anticipated expenditure (£165,237) from Lloyds Current Account to CCLA.

215.6 Payment Schedule

On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to approve the payment schedule, BACS payments totalling £57,154.07 exclusive of VAT. BACS payments made outside of a meeting totalling £32,876.50 including August salaries, and £12,153.31, both exclusive of VAT, were noted.

215.7 2027/28 Budget

Feedback arising from the budget workshop held on 4th August to review the Committee's budget responsibilities for the current year and initial requirements for 2026/27 was noted in conjunction with V1 of the draft Democratic and Administrative budgets. It was commented that each line of the budget had been scrutinised line by line during budget workshops each year for at least the last 8 years and as a result there was little that could now be pruned back.

215.8 2026/27 Pay Agreement

On the proposition of Cllr Bird, seconded by Cllr Fisher it was **RESOLVED** to ratify the implementation and backdating of the contractual statutory Local Government Services Pay Agreement for the 2026/27 financial year to 1st April 2026, and for backpay to be paid to employees in instalments if requested.

216 St Georges Day

Item deferred due to the absence of Cllr Colman.

217 CCTV

It was noted that Ofcom had revoked the requirement for telegraphy licences for the GHz band used by the CCTV system. Therefore, a licence was no longer required to be held and would be surrendered, a saving £50 per annum.

218 Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items

218.1 DALC, Larger Councils Sub-Committee

No meeting had been held, and it was reported by Cllr Yelland that the committee was on hold as DALC would be reviewing how they engage with members. The AGM, which would be attended by the Committee Chairman and Clerk, was on 8th October.

218.2 Fairtrade

Cllr Fisher reported that the group had attended Okehampton Show and had given away Fairtrade Bananas. Fairtrade week and a Coffee Morning were being held in September.

218.3 Police council Advocate Scheme

Cllr Fisher had attended a recent meeting about facial recognition. The consultation about organisational change and merger of police forces had been objected to.

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218.4 West Devon Matters
The next meeting was on 23rd September in Tavistock. Cllr Leech attended the previous meeting when Okehampton traffic issues and the potential for an additional CCTV camera in Okehampton that could view St James Chapel was considered. Rural crime, drugs and road traffic accidents including those on the A30 and how they were policed had been discussed.

PART 2 CONFIDENTIAL

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

220. Outstanding Balances
Details of outstanding balances were noted.

221. Civic Regalia
It was agreed not to place the Mayoresses Chain on black velvet.

222. IT System
On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Bird, it was **RESOLVED** not to accept the recommendation and quotation from the council's IT contractor in relation to Strengthening Security & Device Management with Microsoft Intune at this time.

223. Staffing Matters

223.1 On the proposition of Cllr Bird, seconded by Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to approve a number of additional hours this financial year for the Finance Officer to complete work related to the administration of the allotments in accordance with the report. Requirement for future years to be considered at a later date.

223.2 On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Bird, it was **RESOLVED** to continue with the current cleaning arrangement and review in March 2027.

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

223.3 Items C and D of the report were noted.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Bird, it was **RESOLVED** to exit part 2 and ratify decisions made therein. The meeting was closed at 8.32pm.

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Councillor Yelland, Chairman