



Okehampton Town Council

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Minutes of an Okehampton Town Council Parks Committee Meeting held on Monday 28th September 2026 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton

Present:

Councillor B Tolley (Chairman)	Councillor R Colman (Mayor)
Councillor C Marsh (Vice-Chairman)	Councillor T Leech (Chairman, Planning)
Councillor M Ireland	Councillor J Yelland (Chairman, Policy & Resources)
Councillor D McNeill	
Councillor M Ricketts	

In Attendance:

Mrs A Horn (Assistant Clerk)
Mr J McGahey (Park Keeper)

Absent:

Cllr C Holt
Cllr S Weekes

256. Apologies for Absence.

Proposed by Cllr Ireland and seconded by Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to accept Councillor Bird's apologies due to illness.

257. Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Ireland, Yelland and Tolley declared a personal interest in minute 265 as trustees of the Okehampton Foundation.

Cllr McNeill declared a personal interest in minute 265 as an allotment holder.

258. Public Participation

None

259. Park-Keeper

Mr McGahey reported that repairs to the riverbank and woodland path were complete. The bank repairs would be assessed over the winter, and overhanging branches had been cut back to keep the river clear. Around 30 people attended the late-August bat walk after the weather cleared. Pipistrelle bats were seen using the river, possibly while teaching their young to hunt. Work was under way to clear the outer flower beds, cut back shrubs and trim hedges. A survey had identified shrubs that had not coped well with the weather and drought-tolerant varieties suitable for future planting.

260. Members' Questions

Cllr Ricketts asked whether the memorial stone beside Jubilee Bridge could be cleaned, as it appeared neglected.

261. Minutes

Proposed by Cllr Leech and seconded by Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes of the Parks Committee meeting held on 20th July 2026.

262. Simmons Park

262.1 Bookings

The bookings list was noted. Proposed by Cllr Marsh and seconded by Cllr Yelland, it was **RESOLVED** to defer discussion of the Beer and Boots Festival until the park hire fees had been agreed.

262.2 Hire Fees

Proposed by Cllr Tolley and seconded by Cllr Marsh, it was **RESOLVED** to remove the stated fee for commercial bookings from the hire price list and replace the wording “if any rubbish is left on site a fee of up to £100 will be charged depending on the amount and type of waste left on site” with “if any rubbish is left on site, a fee covering the cost of its removal will be charged”.

262.3 Beer and Boots Festival

Proposed by Cllr Marsh and seconded by Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to support the event in principle, subject to an acceptable traffic and parking management plan being submitted and approved. Vehicles would be permitted on the park field only for stallholders, and the relevant commercial hire fees would apply.

262.4 Fair Dates

It was noted that the fair would arrive on Sunday 11th October and leave on Sunday 18th October. It would operate on Thursday 15th, Friday 16th and Saturday 17th October.

262.5 Green Flag Dementia Friendly Parks

Proposed by Cllr Tolley and seconded by Cllr Yelland, it was **RESOLVED** to apply to participate in the Green Flag Dementia Friendly Parks study.

263. Cemetery

263.1 Burials

The update was noted.

263.2 Row 19 Memorial Alignment

The Assistant Clerk reported that the two stones were still awaiting relocation despite repeated contact with the stonemason.

263.3 New Cemetery

The Assistant Clerk reported that the surveys required for planning permission were under way, with submission of the application expected in December.

263.4 Closed Churchyard Headstone

Proposed by Cllr Marsh and seconded by Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to ask West Devon Borough Council to remove ivy from the headstone of a former Mayor in the closed section of the churchyard.

264. Clapps Wood Permissive Path Closure

It was noted that the permissive path through Clapps Wood would be closed from 8am on Tuesday 27th October until 8am on Wednesday 28th October.

265. Allotments

265.1 IBC Request

Proposed by Cllr Marsh and seconded by Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** that officers would determine requests unless unusual circumstances required referral to the Parks Committee.

265.2 Hand Over Inspections

It was noted that the handover inspection would take place on 29th September. The Assistant Clerk reported that several invoices were being queried and would be corrected if necessary.

266. Dartmoor National Park Dynamic Landscapes Project

Cllr Marsh reported that ORIG was supporting the project by testing the rivers from their sources to their confluence with the Torridge at Hatherleigh. She would report the results at the next meeting.

267. Finance

267.1 Payment Schedule

Proposed by Cllr Tolley and seconded by Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to approve payment of the invoices listed in the schedule, those paid by BACS totalling £2,726.11 excluding VAT.

267.2 2027/28 Budget

The budget figures were reviewed. New bin-collection charges received that day were noted, together with the need to account for bins in the new boundary area.

268. Reports of Council Working/Task and Finish Groups

268.1 Cemetery Management

No meeting had been held.

268.2 Projects

No meeting had been held.

269. Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items

269.1 Business Improvement District

Cllr Tolley reported that the BID had joined UK Partners Against Crime (UPAC), an easy-to-use crime-reporting platform and dedicated hub, through which businesses could share reports and police intelligence. The BID was also working with GWR to promote Okehampton as a destination. The new manager had visited businesses and was becoming well known. He had held several stakeholder meetings about Edwardian Evening, and the next BID meeting was scheduled for the following Friday.

269.2 DCC Regeneration Board

Cllr Tolley reported that no meeting had taken place, but he had circulated details of a hospitality fund that could support the high street.

269.3 Okehampton Community Recreation Association (OCRA)

Cllr Tolley reported that no meeting had been held since the AGM and that the trustees would meet the following week. OCRA had hosted the inaugural Beast Run on Sunday in aid of Hospiscare, starting and finishing outside the pavilion and offering 14 and 20 mile routes. Town car parks were full, and the well-supported event provided a positive boost to the town. The only feedback was that the PA system should be quieter.

269.4 Dartmoor National Park

There was nothing further to report.

269.5 Devon Town Champion

Cllr Marsh asked where the request had originated and why no further information had been received. The Assistant Clerk would investigate.

269.6 Okehampton Carnival Committee

Cllr Ricketts reported that he had attended several meetings. The committee had raised funds for the Carnival through a bingo evening, cream tea and coffee morning. Arrangements were in place for the carnival on 17th October.

269.7 Parklands Leisure Centre User Group/Meet the Manager

Cllrs Marsh and Tolley reported that there was no longer a formal user group. Cllr Leech hoped to meet the leisure centre manager the following day and would ask whether the group would continue. Cllr Ireland reported that the new provider offered more classes and a much-improved timetable.

PART TWO – CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

270. Proposed by Cllr Ireland and seconded by Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED**, under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, to exclude the public and press from the following confidential items because they concerned legal and/or commercial matters, staffing, and/or the financial or business affairs of persons other than the Council.

271. Nibbles

Proposed by Cllr Ireland and seconded by Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to extend the agreement until 31st October.

Proposed by Cllr Marsh and seconded by Cllr Yelland, with one vote against, it was **RESOLVED** to permit up to six tables from 1st April to 30th September 2027 at £5 per table per month. This arrangement would be reviewed if customers continued to damage the putting green.

272 Skate Park

Proposed by Cllr Colman and seconded by Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to purchase 52 boulders for £2,740 to improve security, subject to the adjoining landowner's agreement.

273 Football Club

The Clerk reported that the Club had emailed that day. The lease was with the solicitor, and the Club would follow it up.

274 Memorial Masons

Proposed by Cllr Yelland and seconded by Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to prohibit a stone mason from working in Okehampton Cemetery. Another stonemason would be appointed to move the stones, and the cost would be recharged to the other stonemason.

Proposed by Cllr Ireland and seconded by Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders 3 (bb) to permit extension of the meeting.

275 Play Equipment Quotation

Proposed by Cllr Colman and seconded by Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to purchase replacement nets from Kompan for £2,137.96.

276. Replacement Blue Plaque

Proposed by Cllr Marsh and seconded by Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to replace the blue plaque in the Museum of Dartmoor Life courtyard to correct the spelling of Sydney Simmons' name.

Proposed by Cllr Ireland and seconded by Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to leave Part Two and ratify the decisions made during it. The meeting closed at 8:34pm.

Cllr Tolley, Chairman