

**Minutes of a Meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on Monday 7 December 2015 in
the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton at 7.00 pm**

Members Present: Councillor P Vachon (Town Mayor)
Councillor Mrs J Goffey (Deputy Mayor)
Councillor Mrs J Carpenter
Councillor T Cummings
Councillor Mrs J Cushing
Councillor Miss C Holt
Councillor Dr M Ireland
Councillor A Leech
Councillor R Rush
Councillor B Stephens
Councillor B Tolley
Councillor D Weekes (until 8.30 pm)
Councillor Mrs J Yelland

Attending: Councillor Rev'd M Davies (Ward Member, WDBC)

In Attendance: P R Snell (Town Clerk)

Before business, prayers were offered by Councillor Rev'd M Davies.

- 317. Urgent Items:** Councillor Leech reported that the link between Crediton Road and Exeter Road through Kellands Lane was currently not progressing due to the lack of enforceable planning conditions by West Devon Borough Council and that he was trying to get the Borough Council to bring the impasse to a conclusion.
The Town Clerk reported that he had received a letter from HSBC bank informing the closure of the Okehampton branch with effect from 26 February 2016.
- 318. Apologies for Absence** - Apologies were presented on behalf of Councillor Marsh.
- 319. Deferment of Business** - There were 7 members of the public present. Mrs Wallace expressed serious concerns about the notified closure of the Okement Surgery in April 2016, stating that no consultation had been undertaken, that there would be no choice for a growing population in Okehampton, asking if the remaining Okehampton Surgery would have capacity to increase its patient numbers by over 10% without service quality being degraded to all and what would be the likely effect on Okehampton Hospital.
As the subject was on the agenda, it was agreed to bring forward Item 13 before Item 8 on the proposition of Councillor Leech, seconded Councillor Ireland.

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320. **Members' Questions** - Nil.

321. **West Devon Borough Council** - Councillor Davies reported on:

- The surprisingly high volume of litter collected on the recent town Litter Pick, particularly at Waitrose where the bin is filled quickly. He has suggested this be taken forward with the Locality Officer.
- The Borough Council was supporting trade and commerce in Okehampton by offering free parking after 4 pm.
- With reference to the Okement Surgery, he had ascertained that NHS England had confirmed available capacity at the Okehampton Medical Centre.
- He had asked for a progress report on the Wetherspoon development (White Hart) through the Constituency MP.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Davies for co-ordinating the Litter Pick once again and for his report.

Council Leech reported that he had asked the Scrutiny Committee to interview JobCentre Plus concerning their decision to close the Okehampton office.

322. **Devon County Council** - The Ward Member for Devon County Council was not present and no report had been received.

323. **Adoption of Minutes of Committees and Member Questions arising:**

323.1 **Planning Committee** meetings held on 12 October and 2 November 2015 - adoption proposed by Councillor Leech, seconded Councillor Ireland and agreed.

323.2 **Property Committee** meeting held on 7 September 2015 - adoption proposed by Councillor Carpenter, seconded Councillor Stephens and agreed.

323.3 **Policy & Resources Committee** meeting held on 19 October 2015 - adoption proposed by Councillor Yelland, seconded Councillor Cummings and agreed.

324. **Full Council Meeting Minutes** - The minutes of the Town Council meetings held on 2 and 16 November 2015 were received, signed and approved on the proposition of Councillor Vachon, seconded by Councillor Ireland.

325. **Okement Surgery** - The fact of the notified forthcoming closure of the Okement Surgery was discussed. Councillor Leech reported he had called for a meeting of Borough and County Ward Members on 17 December, with invitations to Town and Hamlets Members and to Lynn Lane as patient representative at the Okement Surgery, with the purpose of collating information to present to the County Scrutiny Committee. He emphasised the meeting would not be a public meeting. A number of concerns and

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<p>questions were raised noting also the points made by members of the public and it was agreed unanimously that the Mayor (supported by the Clerk) should write a letter to NHS England expressing the Council's concerns for Okehampton patients. The letter should be copied to the Constituency MP and County Ward Member.</p>	Mayor Clerk
<p>326. <u>Matters Arising</u> - Nil.</p>	
<p>327. <u>Civic Diary Report</u> - The Mayor reported on his official appointments as scheduled until the end of the year and also reported on a conversation he was due to have concerning a general publicity tourist film for Okehampton. Councillor Goffey, as Deputy Mayor, reported that she had attended the Get Changed Theatre Company event where David Skrzypczak received a Life-time Attendance award.</p>	
<p>328. <u>Civic Invitations Working Group</u> - The Mayor reported that a Working Group had met to review the civic invitations list for Town Council events and that a revised list would be completed for use. There was much discussion on the principle of whether Members should have the cost of their attendance at the Civic Dinner paid through public funds. On the proposition of Councillor Stephens, seconded Councillor Ireland, it was agreed that the sum of £400 should be included in the budget to ensure Members could attend the Civic Dinner to undertake hosting duties.</p>	
<p>329. <u>Reports of Working Groups</u> -</p>	
<p>329.1 <u>Destination Okehampton</u> - Councillor Ireland reported that a Destination Okehampton meeting had been held on 18 November and it had been agreed to write a letter to Councillor Leadbetter requesting that the start date for construction of the Northern Route be returned to control period 6 (it having been moved into control period 7 in the recent Peninsula Rail Task Force Report). Councillor Ireland was looking for confirmation from the County Board Member that the Sunday Rover would continue to be funded by Devon County Council in 2016. At the recent Rail Forum the importance of evidence gathering had been emphasised. Councillor Ireland sought to confirm from a forthcoming meeting with Bruce Thompson what sort of evidence would be acceptable. Councillor Ireland closed with a report on the Rail Futures Meeting at Crediton he had attended on 28 November.</p>	
<p>329.2 <u>Neighbourhood Plan</u> - Councillor Leech referred to the most recent meeting of the Okehampton and Hamlets Neighbourhood Plan Group on 24 November 2015 and confirmed that the Group was currently working on the questionnaire.</p>	
<p>329.3 <u>Renewable Energy Feasibility Study</u> - Councillor Leech reported that the feasibility study currently being undertaken on behalf of the Town and</p>	

- Hamlets Councils by the Devon Association of Renewable Energy was slightly in delay due to the changes to be implemented in the sector after the latest Government consultation. A new final submission date for the report had been agreed with WRAP, this being 29 January 2016. A draft copy of the report would be submitted to the Council for consideration prior to submission.
- 330. Financial Regulations** - On the proposition of Councillor Stephens, seconded Councillor Yelland, it was agreed to adopt the revised Financial Regulations, a copy of which is attached at Annex A for reference.
- 331. Devolution Issues** - The Council noted the known implications of both County and Borough Councils seeking to address the funding gap by addressing their statutory obligations, but looking for alternative delivery methods or cessation of their discretionary budget responsibilities. Members noted a number of areas where services and facilities were being withdrawn from Okehampton. After discussion, it was agreed that there should be further fact finding to produce a clear picture of the implications, production of a newsletter explaining what Okehampton Town Council were doing and where responsibilities for other duties lay and that this should be brought to a future agenda.
- 332. TAP Funding** -
- (i) Councillor Leech reported that to date, he had been unable to obtain further information from the police with reference to speed measuring equipment. With reference to the Tourist Information funding application, he reported that he had the agreement of Inwardleigh and the agreement in principle from the Hamlets and Town Councils. The completed form would be brought to each individual council for final approval prior to submission through the Northern Links Committee.
 - (ii) Councillor Cummings reported that it was important to establish priorities for the various Town and Parish bid applications so that an order of priority could be established by the Links Committee prior to submission for funding. It was understood that the carry-over of funds from one year to another was permissible in principle. However, a recent proposal by the Leader of Devon County Council that TAP Funding be used to augment road verge and pothole repair was expected to have some impact on future TAP funding applications.
- 333. Queen's Birthday Celebration 2016** - It was agreed to convene a Working Group to take forward the idea of a town celebration to mark Her Majesty the Queen's 90th birthday in 2016. Working Group members were agreed as Councillors Goffey, Carpenter, Stephens and Vachon.
- 334. Members' Reports** -
- (i) Dartmoor National Park Forum - Councillor Cummings reported that

at the last meeting of the Forum there had been nothing of particular relevance to Okehampton on the agenda. However, at the next meeting there would be an item on how the National Park was looking to encourage young people living and working on the Moor.

- (ii) Northern Parishes Link Committee - Councillor Cummings reported that the last meeting had been much occupied with the latest crime data and TAP Funding.
- (iii) Okehampton Matters - No meeting.
- (iv) Okehampton Older People's Community Services Network - No meeting.
- (v) Okehampton Vision Steering Group - Councillor Cushing reported that the last scheduled meeting on 4 November had not been Chaired therefore there was technically no meeting. Councillor Vachon suggested that the Council would need to consider its representation at the Vision Steering Group and how this would best be taken forward either as its own entity or in collaboration with the Okehampton and West Devon Liaison Group where there was considerable overlap of subject matter.
- (vi) West Devon/Okehampton Liaison Group - Councillor Vachon reported that the last meeting of the Liaison Group (9 November) had received reports on progress for the new primary school site-purchase, reported encouraging levels of interest for taking up opportunities at Okehampton Business Park, an update on works around the Fatherford Pedestrian Bridge and the purpose of the Liaison Group in its current form. There had been no West Devon Officers able to attend the last meeting, but Angela Welch as the Devon County Council Locality Lead had been present and made a presentation on the first two months in her role. With reference to the future of the Liaison Group, it was agreed that this should be considered further once the Hamlets and Town Councils had had opportunity for further independent discussion. Councillor Yelland reported that there would be a meeting with Steve Jorden the following week on the matter of Officer attendance at the Liaison Group meeting.

PART TWO ITEMS

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 item as it involves the likely disclosure of sensitive and confidential information. Proposed by Councillor Leech, seconded Councillor Cummings and agreed.

335. Consideration of Local Awards and Commendation Processes

329.1 Destination Okehampton (continued)

Action

The meeting was closed at 9.02 pm.

Councillor P Vachon
Mayor