

**Minutes of the Okehampton Town Annual Assembly held on Monday 21 March 2016**  
**in the Charter Hall, Okehampton at 7.00 pm**

The Assembly was chaired by Councillor Vachon, Town Mayor.

Town Council Members present were Councillors Carpenter, Cummings, Cushing, Goffey, Holt, Ireland, Leech, Marsh, Rush, Stephens, Tolley and Yelland in addition to 24 members of the public.

In Attendance: P R Snell (Town Clerk)

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

|   | Action |
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| <b>2016.1</b> <b><u>Apologies for Absence</u></b> - Apologies for absence were presented on behalf of Father Darline, Cllr Ball and Mrs Burgoyne.   |        |
| <b>2016.2</b> <b><u>Welcome and Introduction</u></b> - The Mayor, Cllr Paul Vachon, welcomed all to the town's Annual Assembly and presented a summary of the business to be transacted. By way of highlights of the year, the Mayor referred to the start of a Neighbourhood Plan for the Town and Hamlets areas jointly, progress towards re-establishing a passenger rail service from Okehampton Town station, the preparation of a small-scale traffic management plan in conjunction with Devon County Council project officers and the completion of a renewable energy feasibility study in conjunction with the Hamlets, and the establishment of a community energy partnership. Information was available of councillor attendance at meetings and budget and expenditure. |        |
| <b>2016.3</b> <b><u>Minutes of Previous Assembly</u></b> - The Minutes of the Town Assembly held on 23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2015 were agreed as correct on the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Cummings.  |        |
| <b>2016.4</b> <b><u>Committee Tables</u></b> - There were no formal presentations by Committee Chairs on this occasion but members of the public had opportunity to raise any questions at the respective tables staffed by Committee Chairs.   |        |
| <b>2016.5</b> <b><u>Presentation of Community Energy Feasibility Study</u></b> - Mr Andrew Shadrake (Consultant with Devon Association of Renewable Energy (DARE)) gave a report on the recently completed renewable energy feasibility study, noting that 6 sites had been identified for solar PV and further sites had been listed for small-scale hydro potential. The study had been somewhat disrupted by government-initiated changes to the feed-in tariff and registration criteria. Nevertheless, a community joint working group had been established and CORES (Community of Okehampton Renewable Energy Society) had been formed in February.  |        |

**2016.6 Presentations by Community Groups** - The following community groups had been invited to present short reports on their activities and on how Town Council grants that had been awarded during the year had been used:

- a. The Ockment Centre - Jenny Hopkins
- b. Citizens Advice - Torridge, North Mid and West Devon Branch – Vicky Rowe
- c. Museum of Dartmoor Life - Debbie Pritchard
- d. Battle of the Bands - Jay Hadland
- e. Okehampton Fairtrade Group - Cynthia Higbee
- f. North Dartmoor Search & Rescue Team - Dave Stoneman
- g. Okehampton Carnival - Stephen Bolt

**2016.7 Questions from the Public** - There were no written questions submitted in advance. The following questions were addressed at the Assembly:

1. The wild flower display at West Bridge had been attractive in the last two years. Would the practice be continued? Cllr Marsh replied that preparation and planting had already started.
2. Noting that there was ever more building to the east of Okehampton, the town-centre traffic gridlock experienced with increasing frequency was becoming a deterrent to shopping in Okehampton. What was the Town Council doing? Cllr Leech referred to the major expense of the proposed link road but that the link from Exeter Road to Crediton Road was a part of the development conditions of parcels to the East of Okehampton. The Mayor added that this problem was frequently discussed at Council meetings and encouraged more members of the public to attend.
3. The phasing of traffic lights on Market Street appeared to be a major cause for traffic hold-ups. Was there anything further that could be done? Cllr Leech reported that the question had been put to Devon County Council frequently, with the response that the computer programme could not be adjusted further.
4. What was the situation with the parking of buses at Mill Road car park? It was noted that this car park was owned and operated by West Devon Borough Council. The coach parking had been implemented as a trial and would be evaluated by the Borough Council's Car Park Strategy Group.
5. Would the Sunday Rover operate again in 2016? Cllr Ireland reported that Devon County Council was to fund the Sunday Rover for the 2016 season. A timetable was currently in production through the Destination Okehampton Working Group to publicise the facility.

**2016.8 Concluding the Assembly** - The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and bringing questions to the assembly. The year would continue with the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, with a major questionnaire in preparation, to be delivered to all households within the two parishes later in the Spring. Information would also be available on the Council's website.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 8.46 pm.

Signed as a true record of the Assembly

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