

**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on
Monday 24th June 2024 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

Members Present: Councillor A Fisher (Mayor)
 Councillor B Tolley (Chairman, Parks Committee)
 Councillor T Leech (Chairman, Planning Committee)
 Councillor L Bird
 Councillor T Cummings
 Councillor F Hart
 Councillor C Holt
 Councillor C Marsh
 Councillor M Richards
 Councillor L Rogers

In Attendance: Mrs E James (Clerk)
 Cllr G Dexter (WDBC)
 1 Member of the public

Action

115 Apologies for Absence – Apologies tendered from Cllr Samuel (DCC) and Cllr Vachon (WDBC) were noted.

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to approve apologies tendered by Cllr Colman (health), Cllr Ireland (attending GWR Conference), Cllr Yelland (personal) and Cllr Weekes (health).

116 Declarations of Interest – None

117 Public Participation – A member of the public presented the Council with an aerial photograph of the town dated 1952 for which she was thanked.

(Cllr Hart arrived during this item and the member of public left the meeting)

118 Members Questions – None

119 West Devon Borough Council – A report from Cllr Dexter had previously been circulated.

Cllr Leech advised he would provide further updates after the General Election on 4th July 2024. Issues at the east of the town, mainly within the Hamlets, continued to be confidential.

Discussions were on going in relation to Parcel 3 of the development off Crediton Road. Planning Enforcement had investigated concerns relating to trees and dust and had confirmed conditions were being met. There was no update in relation to footpath issues, the Kellands Lane blockage would be reviewed by an Inspector and options were being investigated. Visibility when exiting the site at the Persimmon end was poor and been passed to the enforcement team for investigation, the S106 Officer had been requested to investigate the missing play equipment. There was no update on the St James School playing field matter.

Cllr Leech had attended Diversity and Hate Crime Awareness training for which slides would be circulated when available.

Links Meetings were being incorporated into Community Safety Partnership meetings. There would hopefully be a consultation of town and parish councils about the format of the meetings.

120 Devon County Council – Cllr Samuel had previously circulated a report in relation to Family Hubs.

121 **Questions Arising from Members Reports** – It was commented that some large developers were joining together.

Cllr Leech was requested to provide a written report as well as a verbal one.

Cllr
Leech

122 **Adoption of Minutes of Committees and to Receive Questions from Members Thereon**

122.1 On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Richards, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the **Property Committee** meeting held on 18th March 2024.

122.2 On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the **Policy & Resources Committee** meeting held on 15th April 2024.

123 **Full Council Meeting Minutes** – The minutes of the Town Council meeting held 20th May 2024 were **approved** on the proposition of Cllr Rogers, seconded by Cllr Holt, to be signed by Cllr Fisher.

124 **Okehampton Town Youth Council** – Initial meetings had been held. Youth Councillors had invited the Council's Climate Change Working Group to attend their meeting in July and were considering the possibility of creating a climate related display for McColl's window, if permission could be obtained. Some Youth Councillors would be attending Okehampton Show with Officers and asked if Town Councillors would be willing to participate in a challenge comprising of stocks and wet sponges which was agreed by some including Cllrs Hart, Fisher and Rogers.

Clerk

125 **Charter Hall Roofing Project** – The roof had been slated, work to the flat roof was underway and internal decoration had commenced. There were no confidential matters to be considered.

126 **Business Improvement District (BID)** – Cllr Tolley reported the ballot was live, papers had been posted to all businesses and a link to the website had been circulated to Councillors. The next meeting of the Steering Group would be held following announcement of the result.

The Council had three votes for Town Hall, Charter Hall and Simmons Park. On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Cummings, it was **RESOLVED** to vote in favour of the creation of a BID in Okehampton for all three venues.

Clerk

127 **Okehampton Community Hospital** – A briefing update paper dated May 2024 issued by NHS Devon on estates work at the Okehampton site was considered. It was commented the most important facility for the benefit of the community would be the return of the beds, existing services being too far away especially for those who needed regular care.

On the proposition of Cllr Richards, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was **RESOLVED** that after the General Election in July the Council actively lobby the Secretary of State, DCC and other stakeholders for the reintroduction of beds.

Clerk

128 **DCC Children's Centre/Family Hub Consultation** – The consultation, which indicated there would be a Family Centre/Hub located at Okehampton Community Hospital, was due to close on 3rd July 2024.

	On the proposition of Cllr Richards, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was RESOLVED to write to DCC in response to the consultation supporting the need for such a facility in Okehampton and requesting more detail.	Clerk
129	<u>Okehampton Railway</u> – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Cummings, it was RESOLVED to defer any comment or action until after the General Election on 4 th July and a commencement date for the work had been confirmed.	Clerk
130	<u>Okehampton Town and Hamlets Neighbourhood Plan</u> – Cllr Leech declared a personal interest being a Member of WDBC. The outcome of the Hearing held in July and the resulting report from the Inspector were considered. On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Rogers, it was RESOLVED to seek expert advice in relation to recommencing a Neighbourhood Plan for the town and surrounding area, including required consultation with Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council.	Clerk
131	<u>BT Phone Box Removal</u> – The phone box located at the junction of Station Road and Tors Road was due to be decommissioned by BT in September 2024. The box had been identified as being a K6 Kiosk, many of which were already listed. On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Holt (5 in favour, 4 against, 1 abstention), it was RESOLVED not to take any further action.	
132	<u>Payments</u> - On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Rogers, it was RESOLVED to approve the schedule of payments.	
133	<u>Polices and Documents</u>	
133.1	<u>Policies</u> - On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Tolley, it was RESOLVED to adopt the following documents, as recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Register and Disposal Policy • Business Continuity Plan • Hosting of Foreign Visitors 	
133.2	<u>Terms of Reference</u> - On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded Cllr Rogers, it was RESOLVED to approve the following Terms of Reference as recommended by the relevant committees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks Committee • Property Committee • Policy & Resources Committee • Personnel Sub-Committee • Planning Committee 	
134	<u>Museum of Dartmoor Life</u> – Cllr Bird provided a report: In 2023 there had been approximately 4,000 visitors to the Museum, 3,700 to the Tourist Information Point, and visitors from March to May 2024 totalled 1,257 raising over £5,000 income. A new website had been created, a Magic and Myth exhibition provided, QR codes had been provided for more exhibit information, tour operators were being encouraged to visit and a booking had been taken for 2025. There had been a lot of press coverage in recent months and visits from schools had taken place. In 2023 two awards had been won; Bronze for Best Small Visitor Attraction in the South West and Silver for Best Small Visitor Attraction in Devon. Trustees were grateful for the continued support of the Council.	
135	<u>Transition Town Okehampton</u> – Cllr Richards declared a personal interest being a member of the group.	

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Hart, (2 abstentions), it was **RESOLVED** to nominate Cllr Cummings as Council representative.
A briefing/presentation to be arranged.

Clerk

- 136 Council Strategy Meeting** - On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded Cllr Hart, it was **RESOLVED** to hold an informal meeting in early 2025 from which an annual action plan could be drawn up.

Clerk

- 137 Mayors Civic Diary Report** – Cllr Fisher had attended a variety of events including Barnstaple and Northam Mayor Choosing, Wren Music, Loving Earth Project, Hospice, Methodist and Community Links Alzheimer’s Coffee Mornings, Inspiration meeting place, Friendly Circle cream tea, D-Day event, Choir for Wellness, Probus meeting, Plait, a mental health event, Plastic Free meeting, opening of the new terrace at Okehampton Golf Club.

138 Reports of Council working/Task & Finish Groups:

- 138.1 Climate Change** – Cllr Leech reported a meeting held been held and they would be attending the next Youth Council meeting. Energy Performance Certificates had been obtained and work to carry out improvements would be considered as would future replacement of radiators in the Charter Hall. Rewilding work was continuing in the skatepark area and provision of additional allotments could be considered on adjacent land.

Ass.
Clerk

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

- 138.2 Charter Hall Roof Replacement** – No further report.

139 Reports on Current Activities by Community Groups with Town Council Representation

- 139.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group** – Considered previously within the meeting.

140 Members’ Reports and Items for Agendas –

- 140.1 Business Improvement District** – No further report.

- 140.2 Okehampton Community Hospital** – Cllr Richards reported it had been difficult obtain any information, especially in the run up to the General Election.

- 140.3 Rural Market Town Group** – Cllr Leech reported the next meeting was in the autumn.

There being no confidential items requiring consideration, the Mayor closed the meeting at 8.30pm.

Councillor Fisher, Mayor