

Minutes of an Okehampton Town Council Parks Committee Meeting held on Monday 8th July 2024 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton

Committee Members Present: Councillor B Tolley (Chairman)
 Councillor A Fisher (Mayor)
 Councillor R Colman (Chairman, Property)
 Councillor T Leech (Chairman, Planning)
 Councillor J Yelland (Chairman, Policy & Resources)
 Councillor F Hart
 Councillor C Holt
 Councillor M Ireland
 Councillor C Marsh
 Councillor S Weekes

In Attendance: Mrs E James (Town Clerk)
 Mr J McGahey (Park-Keeper)

Absent: Councillor L Rogers

	Action
156 <u>Apologies for Absence</u> – None	
157 <u>Declarations of Interest</u> - None	
158 <u>Public Participation</u> – None	
159 <u>Park Keeper</u> – Mr McGahey provided an update which included the installation of a new play tractor funded by Okehampton United Charity which had been well received. Regular jobs were ongoing some events had been held in the park including a fair, PTFA circus and cricket events hosted by OCRA and a damaged gatepost at the Cemetery had been replaced. Pressures, workload and challenges being experienced by the Parks Team were outlined by the Park-Keeper.	
160 <u>Members’ Questions</u> – None	
161 <u>Minutes</u> - Minutes of the Parks Committee meeting held on 13 th May 2024 were APPROVED to be signed by the Chairman on the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Colman.	
162 <u>Simmons Park</u>	
162.1 <u>Updates</u> - The following were noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bookings - Events that had either taken place or scheduled to take place in Simmons Park, subject to receipt of the necessary paperwork. • Electricity – A smart meter was due to be installed in the Parks Office • Okehampton College/DMAT Signage – Trustees of Simmons Park Charity were continuing to liaise with DMAT. • Play Tractor – The play tractor, funding donated by Okehampton United Charities (OUC), had been installed. The OUC were thanked for their generosity which facilitated the provision of new play equipment. • Cycle Rack Provision – Two cycle racks had been provided by DCC free of charge; one for Simmons Park and one for the Skatepark. 	
162.2 <u>Putting Improvements</u> – The potential impact of different schemes on staff workload was outlined by the Park-Keeper. It was commented Fields in Trust would need to be consulted.	

	On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Fisher, it was RESOLVED to undertake further public consultation.	Clerk
162.3	Bandstand – Cllr Leech declared a personal interest being a Member of WDBC’s Planning Committee. The Clerk advised there would be a fee of approximately £360 for the planning application. An application for a Certificate of Lawfulness, for which there may also be a fee, and was believed would need to be obtained before a full application could be submitted. On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Fisher (1 abstention), it was RESOLVED to continue with applications as necessary for planning consent to place a ‘finial’ on the top of the structure adjacent to Chalet Treloar.	Clerk
162.4	Green Flag Application – Cllr Leech declared a personal interest being a Member of WDBC’s Planning Committee. On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Colman (1 abstention), it was RESOLVED to approve the installation of a flagpole if the application was successful, having noted there may be a fee for the application. Flagpole to be sited in the rose bed adjacent to the bandstand by the putting green The Clerk reported the Green Flag application result had been received but was embargoed until 16 th July. The outcome would be advised in Part 2.	Clerk
163	<u>Skatepark and BMX Track</u>	
163.1	Extension of Wildlife Area – On the proposition of Cllr Weekes, seconded Cllr Hart, it was RESOLVED to cut the area around the BMX track/Skatepark and the adjacent land three weekly instead of two weekly from 2025.	Park-Keeper
163.2	BMX/Pump Track Improvements – The S106 funding application had resulted in an award of £38,907.57 towards the upgrade of the BMX track. On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded Cllr Colman, it was RESOLVED to progress with tender documentation for the project with a working group being formed by Cllrs Weekes, Colman, Hart and Cllr Rogers if she was willing.	Clerk
164	<u>Cemetery</u>	
164.1	Burials – One burial had taken place since the last meeting.	
164.2	Memorial Stones – The annual inspection had been undertaken and some memorial stones needed attention. Families and/or the relevant stonemasons would be contacted where possible and notices placed on the memorial stones.	Admin Office/ Clerk
164.3	Scattering Lawn – Work to create the facility was progressing. A bench had been installed, some bulbs and climbing plants would be provided.	Park-Keeper
164.4	Sydney Simmons Family Plot – The Clerk advised the plot was in an area of Churchyard that was not the responsibility of the Council and care should be taken not to accept any other liability for its maintenance, staffing resource implications should be considered.	

<p>On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Ireland, it was RESOLVED to weed only the Sydney Simmons family plot twice yearly.</p>	<p>Park-Keeper</p>
<p>165 <u>Other Outdoor Areas and Updates</u></p>	
<p>165.1 Vehicles – Progress in relation repair of the van was awaited by the garage.</p>	
<p>165.2 Picnic Area Behind Lidl – Options for replacement of the bench destroyed by fire in 2023 including recycled plastic, wooden and metal were considered.</p>	
<p>A proposition by Cllr Hart, seconded Cllr Leech, to undertake a public consultation in conjunction with one in relation to the putting green was not carried.</p>	
<p>On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Holt, it was RESOLVED to purchase a metal picnic bench to be sited at this location.</p>	<p>Park-Keeper/ Clerk</p>
<p>166 <u>Payment of Invoices</u> – Cllr Fisher declared a personal interest having submitted an expense claim.</p>	
<p>On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Colman, it was RESOLVED to approve the schedule of payments which included transfer of funds from NatWest to Lloyds to cover Charter Hall roofing payments and an associated payment.</p>	
<p>167 <u>Reports of Council Working/Task and Finish Groups -</u></p>	
<p>167.1 Cemetery Management – No further update</p>	
<p>167.2 Putting Green Improvements – A meeting to be arranged to consider the consultation.</p>	
<p>168 <u>Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items -</u></p>	
<p>168.1 Dartmoor National Park Forum – Cllr Marsh advised a meeting on 3rd July had been cancelled and a report circulated to Councillors.</p>	
<p>168.2 Everything Okehampton – Cllr Marsh reported the group was continuing to seek funding for Christmas Lights and planning events including Edwardian evening.</p>	
<p>168.3 Okehampton Community Recreation Association (OCRA) – Cllr Tolley reported Trustees generally met quarterly. Sports week was underway, holiday clubs were being advertised and memory café attendance numbers were increasing.</p>	
<p>168.4 Okehampton & District Community Transport Group – Cllr Leech advised the new office team were in place and working well. Additional volunteer drivers would be welcomed, particularly for the wheelchair accessible vehicles. The AGM was due to be held later in the month.</p>	
<p>168.5 Okehampton Ukraine Support Group – Cllr Ireland had spoken to individuals and was attempting to contact a formal group.</p>	
<p>168.6 Parklands Leisure Centre Users Group – No meeting had been held.</p>	
<p>168.7 Twinning Association – No report.</p>	

169 **PART TWO CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS** – On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded 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.

(The Park-Keeper was permitted to remain)

170 **Green Flag** – The Clerk disclosed the outcome of the application and reminded those present that the result was embargoed until 16th July.

A thank you was extended to the Park-Keeper and Parks Team for their work, the quality of which was recognised along with the pressures they were under.

171 **Cemetery Extension** – No further correspondence from the land agent had been received.

172 **Parks Staffing** – On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** that the Park-Keeper and Clerk prepare a proposal for additional resources within the Parks Team to the next meeting for consideration of a recommendation to the Personnel Sub-Committee.

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland seconded Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part Two and ratify decisions made therein. The meeting was closed at 8.25pm.

Chairman