

**Minutes of Okehampton Town Council Policy and Resources Committee Meeting
held on Monday 16th September 2024 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber,
Town Hall, Okehampton**

Committee Members Present: Councillor J Yelland (Chairman)
Councillor R Colman (Chairman, Property)
Councillor A Fisher (Mayor)
Councillor T Leech (Chairman, Planning)
Councillor L Bird

In Attendance: Mrs E James (Town Clerk)

Action

- 283** **Apologies for Absence** – Apologies tendered by Cllrs Tolley (personal), Weekes (work) and Hart (personal) were approved on the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded Cllr Colman.
- 284** **Declarations of Interest**
- Cllr Marsh declared personal interests in Min Refs 288 b) and e), and 295.1
 - Cllr Leech declared a personal interest in Min Ref 288 a).
- 285** **Public Participation** – None
- 286** **Members' Questions** – None
- 287** **Minutes** – On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Fisher, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 10th June and 5th August 2024 to be signed by Cllr Yelland.
- 288** **Grant Feedback** received from the following groups and organisations was noted:
- a) **Ockment Centre** for the grant of £5,000 awarded in June 2024
 - b) **Okement Rivers Improvement Group** for the grant of £500 awarded in June 2024
 - c) **2443 Okehampton Air Cadets** for the grant of £500 awarded in June 2024
 - d) **Citizens Advice Torridge, North, Mid & West Devon** for the grant of £5,000 awarded in 2023.
 - e) **Meldon Viaduct Trust** for the grant of £500 awarded in November 2023
- 289** **Town Council Grants**
- 289.1** **Grant Scheme** – The Committee noted that Okehampton Hockey Club had withdrawn their application to the Council for funding towards Floodlights, the full amount of funding having been secured elsewhere.
- 289.2** **Town Centre Business Grant Initiative** – The Committee noted that WDBC had contributed £5,792 to the scheme and the result of an application to DCC for £3,312 from their Regeneration Quick Win funding was awaited. The scheme had been advertised and applications would be considered at meetings of the committee.
- 290** **Okehampton Town Youth Council** – A local designer had offered, free of charge, to design a Logo for the Youth Council. The options suggested were reviewed by the Committee who agreed to leave the decision to the Youth Council.

Some Youth Councillors would be taking part in the Civic Service alongside Town Councillors.

- 291** **Website** – It was noted the website was being updated to ensure WCAG 2.2 accessibility requirements, which were changing in October 2024, were met.
- 292** **Civic Regalia** – Future use of the Mayoral Chain and that of the Mayoress, including security arrangements, was considered. It was noted a report from 2002 had identified the fragility of the chain and had recommended that it be retired. It was suggested future use of the existing chain be restricted to the Town Council's Civic Service, Remembrance Parade and Mayor Choosing.
- On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Fisher, it was **RESOLVED** that options and costs for a replacement chain on velvet be obtained for consideration. Options to include the ability to attach the existing gong to it and to have similar shields which did not need to be engravable.
- 293** **Policies and Documents** -
- 293.1** The following policies were deferred to the next meeting:
- a) Co-Option Policy
 - b) Discretions Policy
 - c) Equality and Diversity Policy
 - d) Flexible Retirement
 - e) Recruitment
- 293.2** On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** recommend the following policies to Full Council:
- a) Snow and Ice
 - b) Wood/Logs
- 294** **Finances**
- 294.1** **Councillor Audits** – Cllr Marsh reported she had undertaken Councillor audit of the bank reconciliations, online payments and Lloyds Debit Card transactions and there were no issues to raise.
- 294.2** **Management Accounts** – On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the management accounts, as circulated, for months ended 31st May 2024 (month 2), 30th June 2024 (month 3) and 31st July 2024 (month 4).
- 294.3** **Investments** – Investments and interest rates were noted.
- 294.4** **Payment Schedule** – On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments.
- 294.5** **2025/26 Budget** – A budget workshop to review the 2024/25 Property Committee budget and initial requirements for 2025/26 had been held on 27th August 2024.
- The Clerk advised that Grant Budget had not been considered and it had previously been suggested that funding towards allotments could be separately budgeted. Election Earmarked Reserve to be increase by £2,000 instead of £1,000. Draft budget to be further reviewed at the next meeting.
- 294.6** **Asset Register Audit** – Cllr Fisher reported that he had completed an audit and had no issues to raise.
- 295** **Events**
- 295.1** **VE Day 80th Anniversary, 8 May 2025** – Cllr Fisher declared a personal interest. It was agreed in principle that the Council would take part in an event being arranged by Everything Okehampton. The D-Day Working Group to review and report back to the committee.

Clerk

Clerk

Clerk

Clerk

Clerk

- 295.2 Mayor Choosing/Annual Council Meeting and Mayoral Awards** – A review of the 2024 event had taken place. On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded Cllr Bird (1 abstention), it was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council the changes set out in the report.
- 296 Reports of Council Working/Task & Finish Groups –**
296.1 80th Celebration of D-Day in 2024 – A review meeting had been held. The meeting name and remit to change to that for taking part in a VE Day event in May 2025, Min Ref 295.1. Meeting to be arranged.
- 297 Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items –**
297.1 Citizens Advice – Cllr Leech had not received a recent update.
- 297.2 DALC Larger Councils Sub-Committee** – The AGM and Conference was in early October.
- 297.3 Devon Climate Emergency Group** – There had been no recent meeting
- 297.4 Fairtrade** – Cllr Fisher was presenting a grant check over the coming weekend.
- 297.5 Museum of Dartmoor Life** - Cllr Bird reported a Trustee meeting had been held when building maintenance and funding for restoration work had been considered.
- 297.6 Police Council Advocate Scheme, Northern Links and West Devon Matters** – Cllr Yelland advised she had been unable to attend the Advocate meeting the previous week, information from which had been circulated. The next West Devon Matters meeting was on 18th September.
- 298 On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded Cllr Fisher 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.**
- 299 Outstanding Balances** – The list of outstanding balances was noted. On the proposition of Cllr Bird, seconded Cllr Colman (1 against) it was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that a debt for £12 be written off, if it had not been resolved by the time of publication of the relevant agenda.
- The Clerk informed the Committee about correspondence received and action taken in relation to a property in which the Council had no interest.
- 300 Land Purchase** – The Committee noted the potential purchase of land for future cemetery use and that a site meeting was due to be held on 19th September.
- 301 IT and Phone Equipment Purchase**
301.1 IT Equipment - Cllr Fisher declared an interest.
- On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Fisher, it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk obtain an alternative quotation for the purchase of equipment.
- 301.2 Phone System** - On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Bird, it was **RESOLVED** to upgrade the phone system and purchase an additional phone to enable the Facilities Officer role in accordance with the report.

Clerk

Clerk

Clerk

Clerk

302 Staffing Matters

302.1 Caretaking Staff - On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Fisher it was **RESOLVED** to approve payment of additional hours to the Senior Caretaker as required until the existing reduction in caretaking staff had been resolved

Clerk

302.2 Facilities Officer – Item paused until recruitment following the resignation of the Assistant Clerk was underway.

302.3 Flexible Working – On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Colman it was **RESOLVED** to approve a recommendation from the Personnel Sub-Committee permitting a member of the Parks team to reduce their working hours. The change to take effect from March 2025.

Clerk

302.4 Parks Staffing - On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to approve recommendations a) and b) from the Personnel Sub-Committee, subject to ratification by Full Council.

Clerk

302.5 Assistant Clerk Resignation – The resignation of the Assistant Clerk was noted, her last working day being 8th November 2024. Recommendations arising from a meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee were agreed in principle. A further meeting of the Committee would be held on 23rd September 2024.

Clerk

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part 2 and ratify decisions made therein. The meeting was closed at 8.25pm.

Cllr Yelland, Chairman