



## Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024

### **Parish councillors present**

M Cooper, B Wood, J Heard, M Littlejohns, P Heard, A Ewen, S Norris, J Goffey

### **Also Present**

Clerk – J Gillard, members of the public

**1. Welcome** - Cllr Wood welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**2. Apologies** – there were no apologies received.

### **3. Chairman's report –**

The Chairman advised that a written report has been made for the year 2023/2024 . This will be circulated and published on the OHPC website and copies available if required. He discussed the key points in the report and thanked the whole Council for their support throughout the year.

### **4. Guest speakers**

#### **Kevin Dentith – Meldon Viaduct Company**

The company was formed in 1998 to preserve the viaduct for the benefit of the public. The viaduct is owned by DCC but leased back to the company. The track over the viaduct is part of the Granite Way and maintained by DCC. It is the oldest surviving viaduct with wrought iron trusses on lattice piers in the UK, constructed in 1871. The board of the company meet 2 or 3 times per year discussing the financial position on maintenance of the structure. Major assessments of the structure take place every 6 years by professional engineers. The plans are to set up a 'Friends of Meldon Viaduct' organisation, with the key purposes of fund raising and undertaking some maintenance tasks. Vegetation clearance around the base of the structure is planned for late summer/autumn subject to the necessary permissions being obtained.

#### **Forthglade Limited – Mike Jolley**

Mike gave an overview of the Company history and the expansions that have taken place since their move from Winkleigh to Okehampton. They are keen to take on workforce from the local area including apprenticeships for skilled roles.

#### **Darryl White – Democratic Services WDBC**

Darryl explained the procedures that took place throughout the Community Governance Review of the Okehampton area. It commenced in Sept 2022, not ideal due to elections taking place the following May.

Terms of Reference for the review agreed in February 2023, all householders were then written to and the first public consultation took place between Feb and June 2023. 124 comments were received, 78 in favour of the proposals, 33 against and 13 on the fence. There were 3 themes from this consultation – support the proposal, retain the status quo and merge the 2 councils. WDBC felt a merger was not palatable and not appropriate for a rural/urban split. In October - December there was a second public consultation on 2 options – change as per the petition or retain the status quo. The final recommendations were made in February 2024 to change, a political decision, as per the petition. There are now two strands of work being undertaken, line plotting for the new boundaries and getting the three councils together to work through the changes.

**5. Questions from Parishioners**

There were no questions raised.

6. The Chairman thanked parishioners and guest speakers for attending and invited all to accept some light refreshments.

The meeting was declared closed at 8.50 pm.

**Signed..... Date.....**