



## Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council

### CLERKS REPORT – June 2021

1. **Romansfield Noticeboard** – Mike Bailey requested to undertake work.
2. **Noticeboards** – Meldon board still being replaced, once complete onto Mole Avon.
3. **Mole Avon, Gypsy Corner, Glendon Cross ‘cut through road’** - Highways advised of damage to bank by Gypsy Corner caused by arctic lorry, unlikely there is anything they can do however have raised the issue of drainage from the road going into Caerlan again.
4. **Okehampton United Charity OHPC nominated representative** – currently Derek Webber whose term of office expires in October. This is early warning of this happening. The Council is being asked to nominate their rep for the next term. Derek has served for over 15 years at least, he can be renominated if he is willing, or the Council can nominate a different individual. The nominee does not have to be a Councillor – it should be someone who will best represent the interests of The Hamlets residents on the Charity. For further discussion.
5. **Beating the Bounds** – OHPC insurance does not cover this event our policy only covers events solely organised by the Council. I advised Cllr P Heard of this and he was going to progress further with the Commoners. The item will be included again on the July agenda
6. **OTPNR and Meldon Woods tree survey reports** – full reports and updates received however identification of specific trees an issue. GPR co-ordinates requested from Contractor contact has been received from software supplier and access now set up. Lots of info which needs time to study.
7. **Meldon Woods – bluebell notice** – these temporary notices have had some effect !! However the Ian Brooker has removed the 6 notices which I now have. He mentioned he had received positive feedback about them being in place.
8. **Code of Conduct** - As you will be aware the Committee for Standards in Public Life’s recommendations included the production of a Model Code of Conduct. One of the reasons for the recommendation was to give consistency across all tiers of local government. The Local Government Association took the lead. Following consultation with stakeholders and examining good practice in local government and other professions a final model code was published late last year.

The model code is largely self-explanatory. However, the following points are to be noted:

- (a) The LGA Model Code seeks to build upon the CSPL’s seven “Nolan Principles” of public life (selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty and leadership). It builds on these principles with a set of “general principles” developed specifically for the role of the councillor. These are phrased in the first person which reinforces ownership by councillors.
- (b) The LGA Model Code uses “respect” rather than “civility” which had been suggested in earlier drafts. There is a definition of respect in case it is not immediately obvious or perhaps as a useful reminder to reflect upon. The model code confirms that councillors can “express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner” but that they should not “subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack”. The model code also confirms that councillors have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public, other councillors and employees.
- (c) The LGA Model Code contains specific references to councillors not bullying or harassing others and includes definitions of bullying and harassment.
- (d) The preamble to the LGA Model Code makes it clear that the code applies to “all forms of communication and interaction” including online meetings, on the telephone and via social media.
- (e) The LGA Model Code contains new duties to undertake code of conduct training and to cooperate with any code of conduct investigation undertaken.

(f) The LGA Model Code uses the terminology of “disclosable pecuniary interests”, “other registerable interests” (and “non-registerable” interests.

(g) The LGA Model Code requires gifts and hospitality with a value of £50 or more to be declared.

The new Code has been adopted by WDBC recently. The existing Code adopted by OHPC was the same as the previous one adopted by WDBC. It is recommended that Towns and Parishes adopt the same Code as their Borough or District. I recommend that OHPC adopts this new Code. Adoption of the new Code does however mean that your Interests have to be re-registered, the new forms do appear simpler than the existing ones !

**9. Clerks Expenses**

Total of £772.73 made up of -

£143.88 Zoom subscription renewal paid by Clerk on own credit card

£4.85 recorded delivery postage of items to Internal auditor

£156.00 – 52 weeks @ £3 pw use of home as office inc telephone etc 1/4/2018-19

£156.00 – 52 weeks @ £3 pw use of home as office inc telephone etc 1/4/2019-20

£156.00 – 52 weeks @ £6pw use of home as office inc telephone etc 1/4/2020-21

Apologies for the oversight in claiming home working allowance, last claimed 1/5/18 for previous financial year. Chairman has double checked accounts to ensure accuracy of claim.

**10. Okehampton Castle – English Heritage.** I have received advice from English Heritage that they are having major issues with booked Castle visitors not being able to park when they arrive at the Castle for their visit. EH are considering solutions to this – they are currently verbally asking local residents not to park in their car park, they plan to follow this up with letters to them. They are also in the long term considering making the carpark Pay and Display. If that route is taken it would not happen quickly – funding would first have to be found! EH will keep the Council advised of developments. They have also advised OTC.