



Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council

CLERKS REPORT – March 2022

1. **Okehampton and Hamlets Combined Archive Project** – visited Devon Archives on 3rd March with Karen Percival and Emma James. Very interesting and useful. New ideas gained which will be discussed at a meeting with the project Group members on 5th April after which I will give more details
2. Fuel prices – this was highlighted as an issue in an email from a resident, suggesting Council takes some actions. Acknowledged and comments passed onto Mole Avon.
3. Replacement dog waste bin for Fatherford – ordered and awaiting delivery.
4. **Southcott noticeboard** – repairs undertaken (silicone) in an attempt to stop water ingress.
5. **Committee on Standards in Public Life Review** - on 18 March 2022, the government [published its response](#) to the [Committee on Standards in Public Life \(CSPL\) review](#) and recommendations on local government ethical standards. SLCC's Chair of the Board, Steve Trice, expressed his disappointment in our [news bulletin on 22 March 2022](#). SLCC will continue to campaign in this area and they request help to try to raise this issue in parliament.

Dr Julian Lewis, MP for New Forest East, has tabled an early day motion (EDM) which calls for the government to establish an appropriate and effective sanctions mechanism to deal with local councillors who have been found guilty of bullying and harassment following an independent investigation.

What are EDMs? EDMs are motions submitted for debate in the House of Commons for which no day has been fixed. Whilst few are debated, many attract a great deal of public interest and media coverage.

They are used to put on record the views of individual MPs or to draw attention to specific events or campaigns. By attracting the signatures of other MPs, they can be used to demonstrate the level of parliamentary support for a particular cause or point of view. The more MP's that support this EDM, the more likely it is to get discussed in parliament. Please either table an agenda item to pass a resolution to write to your MP asking that they back this motion and have it discussed in parliament, or write to your MP as an individual.

[Click here to view the EDM.](#)

There are template letters which can be used to contact your MP on this issue. You may like to personalise it with an introduction and sign off and if appropriate, the inclusion of any personal experiences will help to add context and influence.

[Click here to view the template letter for clerks to MP.](#)

[Click here to view the template letter for councils to MP.](#)

Suggestion – the Council pass a resolution to send suggested template letter to Mel Stride MP

6. Dynamic Dartmoor NHLF Bid – Zoom call attended by BW and JG with DNP

Meeting with Jennifer Manning, Recreation and Strategy Development Officer DNPA and James, Project Manager, Development Partnerships and Bid funding for new projects. They are preparing a bid to the Heritage Fund, National Lottery, this is the first of a 2 stage process. They are looking at 3 strands of work

- Nature and Natural capital – landscape inc 3 river catchment areas which include the Okement
- Connecting people to nature and connection communities together
- Foundations of the future – how things can be done better/differently in the future including for example sustainable travel.

Major partners include Environment Agency, Woodland Trust, Sustrans and SWWA

They also want to work with other local partners inc OHPC, OTC etc

They wish to ascertain more information on the future needs of our community for example support to local businesses, connectivity improvements etc

They are not requesting any funding from OHPC at this stage

The Chairman indicated that he felt councillors would want to support this project and engage in joint working however this needs to be agreed by the Council. They also want feedback on what the future needs of the community are.

A follow up Zoom meeting is being arranged.

7. Zoom meeting attended by Bw and JG with Sarah Gibson, Head of Placemaking, WDBC and her team. They have recently been conducting some work in Okehampton, surveying business views and exploring the needs of the town.

They have engaged with the Okehampton Town Council and they wanted a discussion about The Hamlets. They are a relatively new team exploring three main areas of work –

- West Devon Transport Hub – currently waiting to resubmit an application for funds from the Levelling Up Fund Scheme
- Town Centre – looking at setting up a Chamber of Trade or Business Improvement District (BID), need to set a boundary
- Regeneration proposal – requesting DCC support

They have a strategy group meeting in April, there will be a formal invite to take part later. We listened to their aims, made no commitment or agreement on behalf of the Council other than to agree to consider more information later, and that in principle felt the Council would want to be involved in working together and that the involvement of other outlying parishes should be considered as well as they will contain businesses.

They made an informal request towards funding the projects.

8. Community Governance – it is noted from OTC recent meeting minutes that this is being discussed. It is suggested that Councillors review the resolution passed on 7th November 2017, minute ref 220/14 and amend or re-confirm the contents as felt appropriate.

It was resolved to pass the following motion - This council is pleased that West Devon Borough Council has commenced a Community Governance Review to primarily consider increasing the membership of the Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council from eight to ten Members. This increase in membership will allow the council to meet its Statutory and community obligations more effectively. This council will not accept any mergers or changes to existing boundaries with any of our neighbouring Parish or Town Councils in order to reduce the size of this council's electoral area. However, the council would be prepared to consider any increase of electoral size should any of our neighbouring Parish or Town Councils wish to reduce or relinquish their responsibilities. This council will also welcome an early outcome from the review to facilitate the election or co-option of further members. This council will continue to foster formal and informal working collaborations with its neighbouring councils to ensure effective deliverance of services to the communities of Okehampton and surrounding areas.