



## Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council

### Annual Parish Assembly

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held at 7.30pm on Monday 17th April 2023 at  
Meldon Village Hall

**Parish councillors present**

B Wood, M Littlejohns, R Maile, M Cooper, A Ewen, J Heard, P Heard

**Guest speakers** – as detailed below.

**Also Present**

Cllr M Davies (WDBC), Cllr L Samuels (DCC)

Clerk – J Gillard

Members of the public

1. Welcome by the Chairman – the Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.
2. Apologies – apologies were received from Cllr J Yelland and A Leech (WDBC) and Karen Percival (OUC)
3. Chairman's Report – the Chairman advised he had written an Annual Report on behalf of the Council, he highlighted a few key points from within it. The complete report is now available on the Council's website [www.okehamptonhamlets-pc.gov.uk](http://www.okehamptonhamlets-pc.gov.uk)
4. Guest Speakers –

**Immersion in the Community** – Ryan Arthurs

Based in the old Nat West building, he has set up escape rooms and games, used by twenty local clubs weekly. In September 2022, a Community Interest Company was set up which opened funding avenues. OUC funded twenty-five sessions for young adults over the winter months. Mens Mental Health sessions are now being held weekly, he is also working with Pete's Dragons charity, OCRA and the local Police trying to encourage kids in with a view to reducing anti-social behaviour. Virtual headsets are also available providing escapism experiences – those are particularly useful for less mobile people and also for those suffering with mental health problems.

**OCRA - Ian Blythe**

The Chairman presented a grant cheque of £500 to the organisation towards the costs of relaunching the Memory Café.

Ian advised the year has all been about collaboration and partnership working and all is going well. Use of the building, its use and management are now also coming together, attendance at events has returned to pre pandemic levels. Particularly pleasing is the relaunch of the Memory Café, Tuesdays weekly in the Pavilion, there is an average of sixteen attendees each week, it is a social gathering with quizzes board games and other entertainment.

**StOC (Sticklepath and Okehampton Conservation Group) – Mike Watson**

The Group was formed 30 years ago, Ian Brooker suggested the formation of a group to undertake a specific project to rebuild a footpath in Sticklepath, they now meet weekly every Friday with between 10 and 20 volunteers attending each time, all community based and also involving adults with learning disabilities. Covid meant the loss of touch with members, it has been difficult building it back up again. They work mainly on areas on Dartmoor, mixed ability group, wide range of ages and they undertake a variety of tasks – path repairs, bracken and weed control, coppicing, clearing holly etc.

They work regularly helping OHPC in Meldon Woods and Old Town Park and are always looking for new members.

**North Dartmoor Search & Rescue – Chris Clark**

The Group has been in existence for 50 years, Okehampton is one of four teams covering Dartmoor, but they all work together and share resources. They also work with other teams in Cornwall and Exmoor and sometimes further afield. The Police will call out the Group when people are ‘in trouble’ on the Moor. They are entirely a voluntary group and go out as and when required. They currently have thirty-four members on the call out list which is a bit lower than usual, and they also have some trainees. Regular Tuesday training sessions are also held. They had twenty-one call outs last year, some injuries, some searching for those missing – some lost but others mental health issues.

They also support other outdoor events e.g., running, and also Ten Tors. They have supporters who give help fundraising. Their running costs are approx £24k per year, no central or government funding is received. They are replacing their control vehicle this year; it has been obtained and is currently being fitted out with all necessary equipment etc. Members gave 10,000 hours last year.

**Dartmoor National Park – Rob Taylor**

Rob has recently taken over from Ian Brooker who has retired, he has been with DNPA for 19 years but only covered Ian’s old patch for 3 weeks. Since Ian’s retirement there have only been 6 Rangers in place. His priority over the next few months will be working with the Education Officer at Okehampton College working with Year 9 groups, he will also be looking at improving signage and is looking forward to Meldon Wildlife Day.

The Chairman thanked all the Guest Speakers for attending and for the interesting presentations that they gave.

5 Questions from the Public – these were covered by Councillors over refreshments.

The chairman thanked everyone for attending and invited all for refreshments.

The meeting was declared closed at 8.50 pm.

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

**Annual Assembly Minutes 2023:3**