



## Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council

**Minutes, number 305 of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024, at 7.30 pm at Meldon village hall, Meldon, Okehampton**

**A minutes silence was held in respect of the late Mr Ken Heard.**

**Councillors Present -**

M Littlejohns – Vice Chair  
M Cooper - Chair (arrived after item 10)  
P Heard  
S Norris  
J Goffey  
A Ewen

Also present –Mrs E Young Parish Clerk

**Cllr Littlejohns opened the meeting at 7.30pm.**

1. **Members of the Public** – None present.
2. **Declarations of Interest** – there were no Declarations of Interest made.
3. **Apologies** – Received and accepted from Cllr J Heard, Cllr B Wood and Cllr G Dexter.
4. **Approval of Minutes of previous meeting** held on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024. **The minutes were approved as being an accurate record and were signed by the Vice Chairman, proposed by Cllr Goffey, seconded by Cllr Norris, agreed by all.**
5. **Planning** – to consider and agree response to applications listed below together with any others received up to date of this meeting:

**5.1.1 Reference:**

**2719/24/LBC**

**Proposal:**

Listed Building Consent for single storey rear extension

**Site Address:**

Lower Chichacott Barn  
Chichacott  
EX20 1RS

**Proposed by Cllr Ewen to support, seconded by Cllr P Heard, agreed by all.**

**5.1.2 Reference:**

**2720/24/HHO**

**Proposal:**

Householder application for single storey rear extension

**Site Address:**

Lower Chichacott Barn  
Chichacott  
EX20 1RS

**Proposed by Cllr Ewen to support, seconded by Cllr P Heard, agreed by all.**

**Cllr Ewen declared an interest.**

**5.1.3 Reference:**

**3656/23/FUL**

**Proposal:**

Change of use from agricultural land to use ancillary with Manor House Hotel (Retrospective & Resubmission 2045/23/FUL)

**Site Address:**

Land At Sx 561 943, Okehampton

**Proposed by Cllr Norris to support, seconded by Cllr J Goffey, agreed by all.**

**5.2 Planning decisions –**

**5.2.1 3106/23/HHO Householder Application**

**Applicant Name:** Mr and Mrs Cole Officer: **Nicola Glanville**

**Grid Reference:** (260253, 95364) Decision Level: **Officer Delegated**

**Site Address:** 1 Moorcroft Close

Okehampton

EX20 1XA

Decision: **Conditional Approval**

**Description:** Householder application for two-storey side extension Decision Date: **11 September 2024**

**Noted.**

**6. DCC and WDBC –**

**Cllr Leech's Octobers report:**

**Parcel 3 Link Road, footpaths, and Kellands Lane blockage.**

A further meeting was held with the WD planners, DCC Highways and others to discuss the Link Road, Kellands Lane, and footpath provisions last week. The outcome is as before. There has been a lot of work going on behind the scenes which remain confidential, but there has been some progress made.

**Parcel 4a footpath / Crediton Road concerns:**

I have been informed that the footpath on the Parcel 4b side has now been completed, so although the route is long, it should be a safer way to access the town etc.

**Exeter Road Persimmons site:**

No further information on this junction yet.

**Forthglade odors:**

I understand that Forthglade contacted the WD Environmental Health department (EH) when a pipe carrying the waste materials from the factory ruptured. The management carried out very quick emergency work to stop the smells, and a replacement pipe has been installed. The WD EH will be making regular inspections of the site as part of their usual monitoring procedures.

**Persimmons Crediton Road site:**

I have again reminded our S106 officer of the missing piece of play equipment. This time I have been told that either the Head of Planning or our legal department will be writing to Persimmons to make the point that they are not complying with the Section 106 agreement. Watch this space!!

**St James Primary School playing field:**

Not sure how this is progressing, but the last time I looked, it had come to a standstill.

**Links meetings:**

The second old Okehampton Matters meeting, which includes the Links meeting, was held in Okehampton last week, but I was unable to attend, but from the feedback that I received, nothing had been discussed that would have been part of the old Links meetings. WD will be looking at whether this should be separated out again.

**Changes in planning (NPPF)**

There are changes to the number of houses that we will have to build each year. Under the present JLP, we must build 160 per year. Under the government's new evaluation process, we will need to build 446 per year. Although we are in a partnership under the JLP, (which must be at risk now) we can't expect others to take any of the numbers, especially as Plymouth and the South Hams, have even larger numbers than us. Numbers that in fact we can't, and never will be able to achieve.

The Government propose to take away the ‘under exceptional circumstances’ option, such as having a national park and SSSI etc in our patch. This means more pressure on our towns, and it looks like a lot more housing in the countryside. Brown field sites are to be the first to develop and other grey areas in green belt land.

We must press the government to look at the existing land bank situation and fine developers for not building on land that already has planning permission. Just doing this could achieve around a million new houses. A land tax and even Compulsory Purchase could help this situation.

Then there is the problem of skills shortages in construction and the availability of all the materials needed. No government has even taken the time to look at this important element of their proposed changes..

The consultation period has now finished and WD has put forward a strong response to the Government’s proposals.

### **Household Support Funding: (HSF)**

The new government has now extended this grant, and we are waiting to see how much money will come down via DCC. With the number of pensioners who will now not receive the heating allowance, they could well now need to apply for the HSF, so please make sure that anyone you know who needs help, contacts WDBC as soon as possible, as whatever money we do receive, will not last long.

### **Cllr Dexter’s Octobers report:**

#### **National Planning Policy Framework Consultation**

I attended both the national webinar and the subsequent WDBC discussion on the consultation and our response to the associated question.

The consultation (now closed) asked councils to respond to government proposals to change planning policy to support national housebuilding 370,000 annual target. This was based on a change of formula which takes into account housing demand as measured by the ratio of house prices to average income. For West Devon this would mean that our target would increase from around 160 to around 430 per year. We do not believe this to deliverable and it would be inappropriate for us anyway.

There were many other proposals in the consultation, most of which are not relevant to West Devon, but there was one to increase planning fees to cover costs. The consultation estimates that this would be £521. We responded that it should be left to local authorities to determine exact fees.

West Devon has formally responded to the 106 questions in the consultation. I have reproduced the WDBC’s answer to the final question.

**“Question 106: Do you have any views on the impacts of the above proposals for you, or the group or business you represent and on anyone with a relevant protected characteristic? If so, please explain who, which groups, including those with protected characteristics, or which businesses may be impacted and how. Is there anything that could be done to mitigate any impact identified?”**

Delivery of 1.5 million houses within the next 5 years will clearly impact negatively on some people and positively on others. The provision of such large numbers of housing in rural areas will impact on agricultural land for food production, and negatively affect the ability of towns and /or rural landscapes to function as places, and the natural beauty of protected and other rural landscapes.

The proposed crude uplift in numbers will not benefit millions of people who cannot afford to access the type of home that they need. The crude uplift in numbers will benefit large, volume house builders, and people who already have sufficient capital to buy a home, or multiple homes. The lack of nuance to the delivery of new housing will do nothing to correct market dysfunction, and only perpetuate its failings.”

### **Climate and Diversity**

There is a new page on the WDBC website which shows a few of the achievements against the council’s plan, including:

- a) A scheme for providing advice to businesses to help them with specialist action to reduce their emissions; and
- b) Support for regenerative agriculture through diversification, decarbonisation and agritech.

### **Cycling & Walking in Okehampton**

I attended and commented on the consultation in the Ockment Centre on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>. This was a well-attended event, where I and other people provided their comments on the proposed routes which pedestrians and cyclists could use to make Okehampton fully accessible. There were many comments about the known problems on Crediton Road. I am continuing to work for a resolution of these.

### **Okehampton interchange**

The station should be substantially complete by November 2025 and come into operational use in February 2026, to comply with funding requirements. However, the programme is very tight. Since the station will be unmanned, public lavatories will not be provided.

### **Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

The Hub Committee of the council approved the Council Tax reduction scheme for next year; which is substantially unchanged from the current scheme.

However, during the discussion on the effects of the government's proposed abolition of Winter Fuel Payments, we promoted action for the council to encourage pensioners to take up pension credits which would enable them to retain this benefit. It was noted that we knew that there were about 520 current claimants with at least another 145 who are eligible to claim (with probably many more who we don't know about).

### **Community Services and Enforcement Policies**

An update to the policies regarding enforcement of policies for fly tipping, littering, fly posting, graffiti and dog fouling were approved.

Under this policy all Locality Officers and Civil Enforcement Officers will be trained and authorised to collect evidence and recommend Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) for littering offences, and body cams will be used to support this. The communications and education plan and the new procedure will publicise successful prosecutions and remove the advice step before the issue of an FPN.

Enforcement is known to be a difficult issue, and in support of the policy Officers have been tasked to explore the relative position of WDBC against similar local authorities to understand better what additional steps it might want to consider both in terms of management and enforcement.

### **S106**

As part of its Capital Report it was noted that there is an outstanding balance of £1.25m of S106 balances to spend. £323k relates to Homes and Natural Environment and the rest substantially to Open Space, Sport and Recreation. I have asked for an update for members on how S106 contributions are determined in the first place to ensure that they are aligned with local priorities.

**7. LCWIP consultation** – Have your say on Active travel in West Devon - West Devon Borough Council has launched a public consultation for their draft Local Cycling and Walking Plan (LCWIP). An LCWIP is put together with the aim of creating long-term networks and routes for everyday walking and cycling. Go to <https://activetravelshwd.commonplace.is/>

**8. DALC/NALC training courses** – Noted

**9. Dartmoor marshalls update** – No update received. Clerk to chase.

**10. Beating the bounds** – It was felt that this event should be lead by the Parish Council next year (August 2025). Proposed by Cllr Norris, seconded by Cllr Goffey, agreed by all. Next step is to do a full costing.

**Cllr Cooper arrived and assumed the Chair.**

**11. Okehampton 4b** – Cllr Goffey has found some historical information which she shared. All Cllrs reminded to try and attend the public exhibition on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 3-8pm at the Ockment centre.

**12. Boundary review response from Okehampton TC** – noted.

**13. Meetings between hamlets and town** – To be re-established once a quarter between the Chair and Clerk of both councils.

**14. Social between hamlets and town** – welcomed.

**15. Defibrillator** – Recent training from South Western Ambulance Service was very good. It was requested by Cllr Cooper to budget a replacement in 3 years time based on the current charge of £800.

**16. Okelinks** – Cllr Goffey offered to write a piece for the December Okelinks for Cllr Cooper.

**17. Polling districts and polling places review** – Clerk asked to write to the Electoral Services Manager to mention the changes afoot with the boundary change for the Hamlets and to consider parishioners geographical location.

**18. Draft gambling statement of principles** – Noted.

**19. 2443 (Okehampton) Squadron Extended Unit Footprint - Okehampton Old Town Park Nature Reserve approval** – Approval proposed by Cllr Littlejohns, seconded by Cllr Ewen, agreed by all. Clerk to complete and return the form.

**20. To receive reports from meetings and events attended by Parish Council representatives including –**

**Cllr Cooper** – Cllr Littlejohns and Cllr Cooper attended the recent civic service which was very good. Also the recent West Devon matters meeting at Okehampton Police station was very useful.

**Cllr Norris** – Attended the Beacon Path meeting. Waiting to hear when WDBC will give a presentation.

## 21. Finance –

### 21.1 Accounts for payment –

E Young wages for September	£647.83
E Young travel	£28.80
E Young expenses	£10.00
HMRC	£0.00
Meldon hall hire 1 <sup>st</sup> Oct 2024	£25.00
Mole Avon	£20.00
PKF Littlejohn external auditor	£210.00+
WDBC 2 x dog poo and 1 x litter bin	£476.36+
GX accounts	£52.50+
Broadbury Landcare	£160.00

### 21.2 Credits received –

Second half of precept	£18,019.00
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**Resolved accounts be paid, proposed by Cllr Ewen, seconded by Cllr P Heard agreed by all.**

### 21.3 RFO report/Bank reconciliation – Cllr Littlejohns to approve

#### Balance per bank statements as at 23

#### September 2024

	£	£
Current account (Treasurers)		<b>2382.32</b>
Deposit account (BB Inst online)		50,666.69
		<b>53,049.01</b>

**Less: any un-presented cheques** 0 0.00

**Add: any un-banked money** 0 0

**Net bank balances as at 23 September 2024** **53,049.01**

**The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book (receipts and payments account) for the year, as follows:**

#### Cashbook

Opening Balance	<b>55,389.93</b>
Add: Receipts in the Year	592.20
Less: Payments in the Year	2,933.12
	<b>53,049.01</b>

**Closing balance per cash book (receipts and payments book) as at 23 September 2024 (must equal net bank balances above)** **53,049.01**

**It was proposed by Cllr Ewen to approve the bank reconciliation, seconded by Cllr P Heard, agreed by all. Cllr Littlejohns signed and dated the document.**

**21.4 Budget versus actual expenditure figures to-date** – As at 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024, actual spend compared against budget set. Cllrs were happy with the position excluding S.137 budget being so low. Clerk asked to add to next agenda moving money from grant budget to S.137 (to vire).

**21.5 Conclusion of audit** – To note completion of audit for accounts dated 31 March 2024, to consider points raised and agree date and length of time for publication of Notice of Conclusion of Audit.

**Resolved to publish Notice of Conclusion of Audit for 1 month commencing 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 and to charge £2.50 per copy. Proposed by Cllr Cooper, seconded by Cllr Norris, all in favour.**

**22. Review of Council Documentation – 22.1 On-line grant form** – Cllr Norris to make a couple of minor changes and then send to the Clerk to be added to website. **Resolved to accept by Cllr Littlejohns, seconded by Cllr Goffey, agreed by all.**

**23. Environmental issues**

**23.1 Granulite quarry** – Gate all fixed. It was noted there was a wedding held at the quarry recently.

**23.2 Granite way – viaduct to be closed 11-29 November 2024** – Noted.

**23.3 Odours East of Okehampton – to receive an update** – there have been problems at the Forthglade site, but Cllrs have been told these have now been fixed.

**24. Open Spaces**

**24.1 To receive update from Working Group** – Ongoing fencing concerns along bridlepath and by the A30. Cllr Littlejohns to follow up with Highways (as per the email forwarded by the Clerk) and to report back.

**25. Highways**

**25.1 St James School crossing + footpaths in all new developments** – Clerk has asked for a meeting with all Cllrs, no confirmed response received. To be chased.

**25.2 To note temporary road closure 21 Oct – 1 Nov Fatherford Road. Diversion will be in place.** Noted.

**26. Economic Development Projects**

**26.1 Okehampton BID**– to receive an update – Cllr Goffey attended an online meeting with Cllr Neil Dury, Cllr Caroline Mott, Cllr Bob Tolley and WDBC officers where it was mentioned that the BID bill is a shock for some. The board is about to be appointed; 20% can be Cllrs. It has been suggested to have 15 members and they are trying to get a full mix of different size businesses. The rateable threshold has been set at £5000.00. ‘Everything Okehampton’ will cover the cost of the Christmas lights this year. They are looking to employ a BID manager to be based in Okehampton. The proposed new station location is near the bus station, so there is a possibility that toilet facilities could be provided and shared. Cllr Goffey commented that this area could do with a ‘tidy up’. The idea behind the BID project is that it has a positive effect on all of the town.

**26.2 Regeneration project** update – minutes of the previous meeting have been circulated.

**27. To confirm Date and venue of next meeting – Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at Meldon Village Hall** – Noted.

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.00 pm**

Signed ..... Date .....

Minutes 305/6