



Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council

Minutes, number 322 of the Ordinary council meeting held on Tuesday 9 September 2025, at 7.30 pm at Meldon village hall, Meldon, Okehampton

Councillors Present -

M Cooper - Chair
M Littlejohns
P Heard
J Heard
S Norris
A Ewen
J Goffey

Also present Emily Young Parish Clerk

Cllr Cooper opened the meeting at 7.30pm

1. Chairmans welcome Cllr Cooper welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming.

2. Members of the Public – 2 members of the public plus the BID Manager, Kathy James-Castle.

The **BID (Business Improvement District) project** has been running for roughly 18 months and as of today the Board is not yet complete.

The main project they are working on is SEEDL <https://www.seedl.com/> which provides live and interactive training for all businesses, large or small. There are around 300 courses available and courses are free to all members, you just need to register. Kathy has been working with the Principal of Okehampton College to engage with young people and apprenticeships. There is an event on 17/Sept 4-6pm at the college about SEEDL, WDBC are also supporting this event. The BID Manager is working with a local small business to implement a CRM (Client relationship management) tool so that a centralised platform is used to allow the flow of information more easily between different systems and to track data, for example, facebook, instagram, etc. One of the objective of the BID is to always try to work with businesses within Okehampton.

The BID has identified a skill need to have more plumbers and electricians. They are looking to create apprenticeships for young people in these areas, also including the Christmas lights that they have taken on, as well as other areas. A member of the public said that small businesses are struggling with their own revenue and could not afford an apprentice.

The BID applies for grants and these grants can help with money towards an apprenticeship programme and more. Councillors felt it was 'key' for Kathy to visit all businesses outside the town centre, as they are hearing people are generally unsure of the BIDs purpose, value, etc.

The BID Manager, Kathy can be contacted on bidmanager@okehamptonbid.co.uk

A member of the public came to talk about item 6.1.4 (application for construction of food store at Stockley). The gentlemen read out a statement which the councillors listened to.

3. Declarations of Interest – Cllr Cooper declared an interest in item 6.1.5

4. Apologies – Cllr Wood and Cllr Dexter.

5. Approval of Minutes of previous meeting held on 5 August 2025

The minutes were approved as being an accurate record and were signed by Cllr Cooper. Proposed by Cllr Goffey, seconded by Cllr Littlejohns, agreed by all.

6. Planning – to consider and agree response to applications listed below together with any others received up to date of this meeting.

6.1.1 Ref – 2268/25/VAR – Meldon garage, Meldon - Application for variation of condition 2 (approved plans) of planning consent 0548/25/FUL **Proposed by Cllr Ewen to support, seconded by Cllr Norris agreed by all.**

6.1.2 Ref – 2255/25/FUL – Land opposite industrial estate, Exeter Road, Okehampton – Translocation of existing hedge bank to north of POS to create a straighter hedge design **Proposed by Cllr Norris to support, seconded by Cllr P Heard agreed by all.**

6.1.3 Ref – 2304/25/FUL – St Jude, Thorndon Cross, EX20 4NE – Proposed replacement dwelling and creation of ancillary art studio – WDBC have received this application and are consulting OHPC as a neighbouring parish to the site **No comment.**

6.1.4 Ref – 2354/25/FUL – Land at SX 612 953 Stockley – Construction of food store (Class E A) with associated parking, landscaping, drainage and servicing. **Deferred to October meeting.**

Cllr Cooper left the meeting.

6.1.5 Ref – 2246/25/VAR – Mole Avon Stockley – Variation of condition 6 of planning permission 8719/2006/OKE to allow sale of food within the existing store to an area not exceeding 250sqm **Proposed by Cllr Norris to support, seconded by Cllr P Heard, agreed by all.**

Cllr Cooper returned to the meeting.

6.2 Planning decisions – To note:

3493/23/VPO Variation of S106 Agreement (approval granted)

Applicant Name: Barratt David Wilson Homes

<https://westdevon.planning-register.co.uk/Planning/Display/3493/23/VPO>

0284/25/FUL Full Planning Application (Conditional approval)

Applicant Name: Farmer Luxtons Farm Shop

<https://westdevon.planning-register.co.uk/Planning/Display/0284/25/FUL>

1728/25/ARC Approval of Details Reserved by Conditions (Discharge of Condition Approved)

Applicant Name: Mr Andrew Wildish - Barratt Homes

<https://westdevon.planning-register.co.uk/Planning/Display/1728/25/ARC>

1782/25/ARC Approval of Details Reserved by Conditions

Applicant Name: Mr Colin Field Officer: **Richard Nicholson**

Grid Reference: (260683, 95590)

Site Address: Land At Sx 606 955, Higher Stockley Mead, Okehampton

Decision: **Discharge of Condition Approved**

<https://westdevon.planning-register.co.uk/Planning/Display/1782/25/ARC>

6.3 Planning correspondence

6.3.1 Ref-3815/24/OPA – planning consultation highway reply – Land adjacent to Baldwin Drive Radford Way Oke. Invitation to planning committee. **Councillors are not sure on their availability to attend the committee meeting so a proposal was made by Cllr Goffey that should the development go ahead Kellands Lane should be fully opened before building works are commenced; to allow access for all. Seconded by Cllr Cooper and agreed by all.**

7. DCC and WDBC – to consider the Councillors written reports/updates.

Cllr T Leech

The majority of what West Devon Borough Council has been doing in the last month has been all around the proposed changes in Local Authorities. There is to be a meeting on the 2nd of this month at the Ockment Centre to discuss the possible options that will be going to the Government. Most of the districts Boroughs still believe that the 1 – 4 – 5 option is the best for all of Devon.

For any ordinary member of WDBC, there have not been any formal meetings at all for five weeks, so any other information on what is going on is hard to come by, except by reading the public available weekly briefings.

Link Road - During the last month, I sent the timings of the road closures in Okehampton to the WD Planners, who then discussed the problems with the Developer of the Link Road to see if they could open the road earlier. The 1st of September was mentioned, but to date I have not been told if this is a firm date, or if it is just a possibility. A lot will depend on DCC Highways signing off the work completed. Fingers crossed!!

Parcel 4b footpaths. No change with this issue.

Parcel 4a Footpath: No change with this either.

Crediton Road footpath and Link Road. As far as I know, the design work is underway but might have been slowed down due to the summer holidays.

Kellands Lane blockage: Someone has moved a few blocks to make it easier for pedestrians to get through this area. The planning application for the developer's site has now been assessed by the planners. A lot is riding on this application going through, as it covers the opening of the blockage. However, even if it is, the blockage could go on for a number of years yet, and I have been pushing (as I have for years now) for other options to be taken more seriously.

Exeter Road Persimmons site: Access issues. Still no news on this.

Persimmons Crediton Road site: Additional play equipment: This is yet another issue that just rolls along without an end date in sight. It's no good serving a notice etc. if we are not going to press forward with it.

Lidl: The information that has been circulated around the area re Lidl's future cannot be debated yet by myself or others who are involved with making decisions on any formal application, as we could easily be accused of pre-determining to outcome.

Devolution: Although every authority in Devon is for a Mayoral system for Devon, as far as I know, no one has asked the ordinary elected members what they think or indeed the public at large.

Plus:

The developer has told our planners that the Link Road should be opened on the 9th.

Enforcement will be checking that the St James Primary school issues have now been resolved, so that this can be removed from the enforcement list.

Cllr G Dexter

Outline Planning Application: Land adjacent to Baldwins Drive, Radford Way

This application is to be considered by West Devon's Planning Committee. Committee members have been invited to visit the site at 10am on 12th September.

The application includes:

- the on-site provision of 2 x 1-bed social rented flats;
- Footway on SW side of Kellands Lane to be completed and Kellands Lane to be open to through traffic on foot/cycle prior to the occupation of any dwellings on the application site;
- The carriageway on Kellands Lane to be completed and Kellands Lane to be open to vehicular/all traffic prior to the occupation of the 15th dwelling on the application site; and
- The provision of a footway link onto Kellands Lane from the proposed estate to ensure provision of a pedestrian link from Baldwin Drive/Radford Way to Kellands Lane

Local Government Reorganisation

WDBC is undertaking an engagement exercise to hear people's views on the proposals for the reorganisation. As part of this, there was a public meeting at the Ockment Centre on 2nd September which was attended by a small number of the public as well as local councillors. (This is not a formal 'consultation'. That will be carried out by the Government at some time next year.)

Contributions can be made on-line at - www.westdevon.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation.

Dartmoor Partnership Plan Review

A public opinion survey on the Dartmoor Partnership Plan - the strategic plan for the moors guiding the priorities and management decisions for Dartmoor over the next five years - is now live.

West Devon Borough Council is providing its own response to the plan.

Click on the link see the online survey <https://dartmoorpreservation.co.uk/dartmoor-partnership-plan-public-survey/>

Cllr J Grainger

I have reached out to Devon Live regarding the surge in graffiti with people painting St George's flags. I want to discourage people from vandalising our area and hope to promote appropriate patriotism.

I have also made it clear to the Highways Team that profanities and offensive messages will be prioritised to be removed more quickly. Please report any to me and I will see to it that they are removed.

Full Council meeting:

We voted in favour of the '20 is plenty' motion which should make implementing 20mph speeding limits easier for parish councils.

The motion:

- (a) that the Authority through the Transport capital Program continues to invest in the highest priority requests from communities;
- (b) that the Authority will have a more proactive approach and continue to work with any community that wishes to see a new 20mph speed limit introduced, where it will be beneficial to road safety and sustainable travel, and if communities wish to self-fund their own speed limit;
- (c) that the Community Self-Delivery Guide for Works on the Highway is amended to provide more advice to communities on the cost process for the new 20 mile an hour limits; and step by step guidance;
- (d) that the website page on Working with Communities is updated to contain the revised Community Self-Delivery Guide for Works on the Highway, and that a communication is sent round to all town and parish councils, advising of the changes and inviting town and parish councils to consider if this may be of interest to their communities; and (e) that taking into account the previous scrutiny recommendations in relation to the 20 is plenty programme and the Parish Councils who have already self-funded a programme, best endeavours will be taken for officers to review both of those programmes successes and performance within the next 12 months which could include a new speed limit policy, and take a report to the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny committee.

8. Local government re-organisation - to consider feedback and matters arising from any updates and meetings attended. **Some Cllrs went to recent WDBC event in Okehampton. Looks like 5:4:1 still likely. WDBC asked to hear opinions but discussed no change.**

9. Beating the bounds – Cllrs believed the walk was very successful. Thanks to all involved.

Clerk presented costings as follows:

Who	What	Cost	Paid by	Notes
Waitrose	Fruit, crisps, bottled water and lemonade	Nil	N/A	Given for free. Maria to collect
Winkleigh Cider Company	Ciderx4	202.80	Oke Commoners	Plus VAT. Delivered to Phil Heard
Ellis Bakery	150 steak pasties, 100 veggie and 250 small buns	768.00	Oke Commoners, OTC and OHPC	Maria to collect. Plus VAT Tbc
Eagle plant	2 x portable toilets	317.40	OUC	Plus VAT. Delivered
TOTAL		1288.20	-900	
	OUC	300 requested	300	received
	Town council	300 requested	200	received
	Oke commoners	400 requested	400	received
	Total		900	
	Difference	388.20	Taken out of reserves in OHPC	

10. To receive reports from meetings and events attended by Parish Council representatives

Cllr Norris reported Meldon wildlife day was well attended and very successful despite the weather.

Cllr Cooper confirmed the allotments are being transferred to the town in 2026.

11. Finance –

11.1 Accounts for payment –

Mrs E Young wages	£665.93
Mrs E Young – travel	£15.30
Mrs E Young – expenses	£40.53
Meldon hall hire	£25.00
Internal auditor Paul Russell	£150.00
WestCountry Grounds Mntce OTP grass July	£67.00+
Broadbury landcare (grass July)	£160.00
PKF Littlejohn Inv SB20250976	£210.00+
WesternWeb Invoice 25084	£15.00+
Dartprint (Meldon wildlife poster)	£27.00+
Men in Sheds 10 bird boxes	£100.00
WestCountry Grnd Mntc OTP grass & weed Aug	£117.00+
Ellis bakery (Beating the Bounds)	£768.00

Resolved accounts be paid, proposed by Cllr Ewen, seconded by Cllr P Heard, agreed by all.

11.2 Credits received – to note

Interest earned 09/07/25	£43.20
Interest earned 11/08/25	£47.55
01/08/25 OTC grant (BtheB)	£200.00
02/7/25 Oke commoners grant (BtheB)	£400.00
26/6/25 HMRC VAT credit	£2,504.20
28/8/25 Payment for ash wood	£300.00

11.3 Request for spending

11.3.1 National pay increase - Clerk hourly increase of 50p per hour backdated to 1st April 2025 Proposed by Cllr Ewen to approve, seconded by Cllr P Heard, agreed by all.

11.4 Finance general

11.4.1 AGAR 2025 external auditor report & conclusion of audit – Resolved to publish Notice of Conclusion of audit for 1 month, available Tuesday-Thursday 11am-3pm and to charge £2.50. Cllr Cooper, Cllr Littlejohns, agreed by all.

11.4.2 Qly review budget vs actual – Resolved review approved. Cllr Cooper, Cllr Littlejohns, agreed by all.

11.4.3 Lloyds Bank interest rates reducing 09.09.2025 noted.

11.4.4 To note Lloyds Bank debiting £4.25 monthly service fee noted.

11.5 Grants

11.5.1 Okehampton Womens Institute £500.00 – Proposed by Cllr P Heard to grant £100.00, seconded by Cllr J Heard. Agreed by all.

11.5.2 Meldon viaduct Okehampton £500.00 – Proposed to grant £500.00 by Cllr Norris, seconded by Cllr Ewen. Agreed by all.

11.5.3 Feedback to OTC for Bthe B grant received of £200 - Clerk asked to provide feedback to OTC as follows: ‘a healthy proportion of walkers appeared to be from the town and Cllrs would like to see a more generous donation in future.’ Proposed by Cllr Littlejohns, seconded by Cllr Cooper agreed by all.

11.6 Bank reconciliation as at 3rd Sept 2025

Prepared by Emily Young, Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Date 3/September/2025

To be approved by - Cllr Martin Littlejohns

At the Parish Council meeting on 9 September 2025

Balance per bank statements as at 3 September 2025

	£	£	
Current account (Treasurers)		800.83	Current Account (36901368)
Deposit account (BB Inst online)		74,677.94	Savings Account (38166660)
		75,478.77	

Less: any unrepresented cheques 0 0.00

Add: any unbanked money 0 0

Net bank balances as at 3 September 2025 75,478.77

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

Cashbook

Opening Balance	75,149.98	
Add: Receipts in the Year	4231.41	(up to 28/08/25)
Less: Payments in the Year	3902.62	(Include VAT - up to 17/06/2025)
	75,478.77	
Closing balance per cash book (receipts and payments book) as at 3 September 2025 (must equal net bank balances above)	75,478.77	0.00 Difference

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

12. Environmental issues – none.

13. Open Spaces

13.1 To review information sent by White Wood Management – Proposed by Cllr P Heard to allow White Wood management and Matt Parkins to put together a higher-tier CS application for ongoing woodland management asap. Seconded by Cllr Norris agreed by all.

13.2 To review Meldon viaduct tree and shrub clearance –Cllrs approve. Proposed by Cllr Littlejohns, seconded by Cllr P Heard. Agreed by all.

14. Highways

14.1 Damaged fence by A30. Reported to Highways England – **completed.**

14.2 St James crossing – wig wag – now working.

15. Economic Development Projects

15.1 Okehampton BID – See public section above.

15.2 Regeneration project – no meeting.

16. Community governance- (1)Dog poo bin request – management company require indemnity. **(2) Asset value** – OTC proposes peppercorn amount. Cllr Ewen proposes this is accepted. Seconded by Cllr Littlejohns and agreed by all. Clerk asked to respond back to OTC.

17. Okehampton castle – no update from English Heritage. Clerk to chase.

18. Review of reserves' policy – deferred to next meeting.

19. Wider Okehampton cluster group invitation – Cllrs are supportive but not sure on frequency. Proposed for meeting to have an agenda. Cllr Cooper to attend first meeting and report back.

20. Proposed sports pitches – Cllr Ewen gave an overview. Looking at new location south of showground land. 2 all weather pitches. Sports and skills Trust will be applicants.

21. Emergency planning event – Cllr Goffey to attend event in Sticklepath on Monday 15th September 7pm.

22. Consultation- West Devon Draft Statement of Licensing Policy - Have your Say – Noted.

23. Correspondence

23.1 Various highways notifications please see website homepage for details <https://www.okehamptonhamlets-pc.gov.uk/index.php>

24. To confirm date of next meeting – Tuesday 7th October 2025 at 7.30pm Meldon village hall.

PART TWO - Proposed by Cllr Norris, seconded by Cllr J Goffey, agreed by all.

Items which may be taken in the absence of the press and public. The Council is recommended to pass the following resolution:- ‘Resolved that under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items as they involve the likely disclosure of sensitive and confidential information.’

25. To note current WDBC enforcement case list and information. **Noted.**

26. Betty Cottles Inn. **Noted.**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.36 pm

Signed Date

Minutes 322/6