



## Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council

**Minutes, number 303 of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024, at 7.30 pm at Meldon village hall, Meldon, Okehampton**

**Councillors Present -**

B Wood  
M Cooper  
J Heard  
S Norris  
M Littlejohns  
P Heard  
A Ewen

Also present –Mrs E Young Parish Clerk, Cllr Lois Samuels and three members of the public

Cllr Cooper welcomed all to the meeting at 7.30pm.

- 1. Members of the Public** – One member of the public had come along to raise his ongoing concerns with school children regularly crossing the road outside St James primary school. He would like to know who is responsible for the road and what is going to be done to improve safety?  
Cllr Norris agreed with the concerns raised and said there isn't a clear line of site to cross (there is a hedge too far out), some car drivers will stop to let children cross but others don't and historically the Police have carried out a speed check which at the time didn't look too bad. Cllr Wood also said that Highways didn't believe it would be a problem at the time of planning. He said it was Highways responsibility and for the parishioner to speak to Cllr Samuels. The Parish Council said they will follow this up with Highways and DCC themselves.

**1 x member of the public left the meeting.**

**2. Declarations of Interest** – there were no Declarations of Interest made.

**3. Apologies** – Received and accepted from Cllr J Goffey.

**4. Approval of Minutes of previous meeting** held on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024. **The minutes were approved as being an accurate record and were signed by the Chairman, proposed by Cllr Wood, seconded by Cllr Littlejohns, agreed by all.**

**5. Planning** (*received after agenda issued*)

**i. Reference 2078/24/TPO – T1 Ash fell to ground level, hollow trunk due to fungal decay, risk of failure – 15 Tors Road Okehampton** – It was proposed by Cllr Wood to support this application, seconded by Cllr Norris agreed by all.

**ii. Reference 1769/24FUL – Application for proposed building to be used as a plant room, housing borehole plant, dissolved air flotation and reverse osmosis plant** – Unit 2, Dartmoor View, Okehampton – It was proposed by Cllr Ewen to support this application, seconded by Cllr Wood agreed by all.

**iii. Reference 3106/23/HHO – Householder application for two-storey side extension – 1 Moorcroft Close, Okehampton** – It was proposed by Cllr Phil Heard to support this application, seconded by Cllr Norris agreed by 6 councillors with 1 abstention.

**6. DCC and WDBC – Cllr Cooper read out Cllr Leechs report as follows:**

**Parcel 3 & Link Road:**

Although discussions with our planners and Highways and the Developers are ongoing, I have not been provided with any updates this last month

The issues concerning the TPO trees on the development and the concerns about dust in hot weather have now been investigated by the enforcement team and they have found that all that is required is being provided by the developer.

**Footpaths:**

Nothing further to report this month.

**Kellands Lane blockage:**

This is now tied up with the new planning application by the site owner that will be looked at by an Inspector in July. Other options that may be available to the planners are being investigated, but no updates as yet, plus there are still issues around the unfinished section of highway that belongs to Persimmons.

**Exeter Road Persimmons site:**

The issue of the visibility issues exiting this development has now been passed to the WD enforcement team.

**Persimmons Crediton Road site:**

I have again reminded our S106 officer of the missing piece of play equipment and again I am waiting for a response.

**St James Primary School playing field:**

I understand that work has at last started on lowering the pitch and I hope, to install the playing area that the school has been waiting for, for so many years.

**Links meetings:**

I was asked at a recent OTC meeting about what is happening about the Links meetings, and it now appears that these are to be incorporated into the Community Safety Partnership meetings. This meeting was Okehampton Matters, (which used to be specifically for very local policing issues) but now includes the local PCC Councillor Advocates. Adding the Links meeting seems to me to be a strange decision, as the old Links meetings only included reports from the Police, with most of the discussions being around other local community and regulatory issues, and nothing to do with the Police. It will be interesting to hear the outcome of any meaningful consultations with members, Towns and Parishes about this decision.

**Councillor George Dexters report:**

**Productivity Plan**

The Government is reviewing productivity across all public services. As part of the recent Local Government Finance Settlement, all Councils are being asked to produce productivity plans. The plans are supposed to help the Government to understand what is already working well across the whole country, what the common themes are and whether there are any gaps and what more the Government needs to do to unlock future opportunities.

In response to this, the Hub Committee recommended a response which highlighted that the recent Peer Review found that WDBC was a well-managed council which delivers consistently well on behalf of its residents and communities. Moreover, within its response, the council commented on a number of areas where the Government could improve its own productivity. Specifically:

- Removal of prescriptive regulation which specifies input measures and operational processes which stifle innovation and better outcomes;
- Incentivising investment in new green infrastructure and affordable housing by introducing discounted borrowing rates;
- Providing a multi-year financial settlement to enable greater ability for longer-term planning by local authorities; and
- Ringfencing second homes council tax premium for local affordable homes.

**Cost of Living Crisis**

In the Spring Budget, the Chancellor announced that the Household Support Fund would be extended for a further 6 months, from 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024 with a further £421m of funding. Devon County Council has been provided with funding of £5m by the Department for Work and Pensions for a Household Support Fund (1 April to 30 September 2024). Devon County Council has provided West Devon with £125,045 (based on the Universal Credit uptake in the Borough) from this fund.

WDBC has then resolved to:

- a) progress support payments of £500 to Devon County Council Care Leavers known to be living at an address in the Borough on 1 June 2024;
- b) progress support payments of £500 to Devon Care Leavers newly notified by Devon County Council to be living at an address in the Borough between 2 June and 30 September 2024; and
- c) release the balance of the Household Support Fund for an open application process until 30 September 2024 or until the fund is fully spent, if sooner.

The expectation is that the Household Support Fund will be used to support households in the most need. Further, there is the intention to create a new post of Cost Of Living Support Officer (shared with South Hams District Council) to provide financial support, advice and signposting to residents.

### Housing Profiles

WDBC will be trialling an alternative to traditional housing needs surveys, in order to gain a greater understanding of the demographics within each community. Unfortunately, survey completion rates are normally low, which makes them flawed. It is important to collate evidence in relation to housing that can be used to inform decisions and support the mix, size, tenure of any future development, whilst also understanding the local needs. The intention is to use these profiles to support the responses by the Council in relation to affordable housing as a statutory consultee. Also to share them with our RP partners to support the need for development when seeking approval for funding bids through Homes England and through internal Boards. It will also support development on exception sites that may be brought forward through the West Devon Housing Offer.

The information on the profiles will come from publicly available sources to provide information including:

- property prices and availability
- housing by number of bedrooms
- home ownership
- affordable housing stock
- renting data
- Devon Home Choice
- Schools
- Developments
- Census data

The profiles will be trialled, and comments will be welcomed from councils and members.

### 7. Neighbourhood Planning

The clerk was asked to email the Chair of the steering group to ask that she calls a meeting following recent emails.

### 8. To receive reports from meetings and events attended by Parish Council representatives including –

Cllr Cooper recently attended the Meldon village hall committee meeting. There is a planned ‘big clean up’ at the hall on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> July at 7pm. The clerk was asked to check on the details and training of the defibrillator outside the hall. Cllr Cooper attended the silver band event on the moor last Sunday.

### 9. Correspondence

**9.1 20mph speed limit** – Moretonhampstead Parish Council have written to the PC to ask for support to DNPA to reduce traffic speeds and lobby DCC for 20mph speed limits for towns and villages on Dartmoor.

**Cllr Cooper said that the Speedwatch was offered to parishioners but no volunteers came forward. Also they are not DNPA.**

### 10. Finance –

#### 10.1 Accounts for payment –

Mrs E Young wages £707.63, travel £105.30,	
Exp £112.60	£925.63
HMRC	£297.40
Meldon hall hire	£ 25.00
M.Cooper new postbox	£ 30.00
Broadbury Landcare grass cutting at 4 sites	
Meldon woods – grass cutting	£160.00
DALC – Chair course Cllr Cooper	£30.00+
WesternWeb Inv 24471 – Laptop work	£30.00+
Ockment Centre – 4/June/24	£39.44+

Tindle newspapers (Inv.20000060790)	£11.34
Dartmoor National Park (wildlife day grant)	£500.00
GX Accounts 1/4ly fee	£63.00
Mole Avon OTP materials	£297.00

**Resolved accounts be paid, proposed by Cllr Wood, seconded by Cllr Norris agreed by all.**

**10.2 RFO report/Bank reconciliation** – Cllr Littlejohns – Deferred to next meeting

**10.3 Contracting Jane Gillard for 10 hours to do archive work** – It was proposed by Cllr Wood to request Jane completes the work, seconded by Cllr Norris, agreed by all. Clerk to arrange.

**10.4 Purchasing of SSD hard drive** – Clerk to talk to WesternWeb about existing backup or Cllr Norris regarding GoogleDrive.

**10.5 Grant application – Men in Sheds £150.00 for building 10 bird boxes for Meldon woods.** It was proposed by Cllr Wood to support, seconded by Cllr Ewen, agreed by all.

**10.6 To note ICO (GDPR) has been renewed.** Noted.

## **11. Review of Council Documentation**

**11.1 To review Financial Regulations** – Clerk to highlight changes and circulate ready for next meeting.

## **12. Environmental issues**

**12.1 Granulite quarry** – Clerk was asked to send a letter to Okehampton YHA to ask that they padlock the gate at all times. To also ask who are they letting in?

Cllr P Heard also said the small gate requires a small spring and some of the fencing by the dual carriageway have broken posts. Cllr Heard will carry out repairs up to £100.00.

**12.2 Granite way** – Cllr Littlejohns said the cycleway that goes under the underpass both gates (at either end) have been taken off and thrown in the verge. He also said there is a lot of graffiti on the underpass. Clerk to report to the Police and contact Devon CC.

**12.3 Odours East of Okehampton** – to receive an update – Cllr Cooper had a report about 3 weeks ago but nothing since.

## **13. Open Spaces.**

**13.1 To receive update from Working Group** – Cllrs P Heard, J Heard, M Cooper, S Norris and B Wood met at Meldon Woods recently. Cllr P Heard said there are quite a lot of new paths being formed, the Cllrs are thinking of putting up some new signage and possible new bench seats. Clerk to ask Men in Sheds if they can make signs. Also noticed in the passing places unauthorised paths are originating. Move the 2 benches from Chichacott and gypsy corner to the woods. Fencing - under the carriage way, the fence needs ratching up and tying back. Meldon lane - fencing to be repaired. Gate posts and fencing by the car park. Cllrs to do.

**Two members of the public left the meeting.**

## **14. Highways**

**14.1 St James School crossing + footpaths** – Cllrs followed on discussions from the public section. They are concerned with the lack of a safe crossing plus footpaths in this area. Clerk asked to forward concerns to DCC Cllr Lois Samuels and WDBC Cllrs. Cllr Norris had prepared a satellite view of the footpaths.

**14.2 Monday 22-Weds 24 July 2024 road closure Tavistock Road, Meldon (diversion in place)** – Noted.

**15. D Day Celebrations 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024** – Feedback – Cllr Cooper thanked all who helped with this event. She felt it was a successful event for the community. Cllr Littlejohns also thanked Cllr Cooper for her extra work. Cllr Cooper would like to arrange a ‘wash up’ meeting with Okehampton TC.

## **16. Economic Development Projects**

**16.1 Okehampton Regeneration Board (BID)**– to receive an update – Cllr Goffey – Deferred to next meeting.

**17. St James School crossing + footpaths (duplication).**

**18. West Devon Matters** – Clerk to ask Cllr Goffey to attend.

**Cllr Samuels left the meeting.**

**19. To confirm Date and venue of next meeting – Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 at Meldon Village Hall – Clerk** asked to book the hall through to April 2025.

**20. Office closure – 5-26 August 2024 inclusive.** Out of office to be setup and mobile voicemail. Cllrs to be contacted for anything urgent.

**PART TWO – Proposed by Cllr Wood, Seconded by Cllr Norris, 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.’

**20. To note current WDBC Enforcement cases list and information. Noted.**

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.23 pm**

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

Minutes 303/3

