

ORLETON PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of an Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on
Thursday 17th November at 19.30 at Orleton Village Hall

Present

Councillors: David Lane (in the Chair), Colin Mitchell, Brian Powell, Barry Rogers, Phillip Hardwick and Mark Simmons.

In attendance

Clerk Helen Tinson – on behalf of HALC (Herefordshire Association of Local Councils);
Ward Cllr Sebastian Bowen; 3 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence: There were none.

2. Consideration to access HALC Clerk Cover for the meeting:

It was unanimously RESOLVED to access HALC's CiLCA qualified Clerk/RFO Cover for the meeting.

3. Elect a Vice-Chairman:

Cllr Brian Powell nominated Cllr Colin Mitchell to the office of Vice-Chairman. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Barry Rogers.

It was unanimously RESOLVED to elect Cllr Colin Mitchell to the office of Vice-Chairman.

4. Declarations of interest & written dispensation requests: There were none.

5. Minutes of Parish Council Meeting 20th October 2022:

Members considered the minutes.

It was unanimously RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting on the 20th October 2022 as a true and proper record of the meeting. The minutes were signed by the Chair.

6. Public Participation:

6.1 Ward Councillor Report – Ward Cllr Sebastian Bowen gave his report:

- 6.1.1** BBLP had recently cleared a significant local fly tip, taking the matter very seriously;
- 6.1.2** Herefordshire Council's Children's Services are still under pressure and need to show improvement by 12th December;
- 6.1.3** A contraflow cycle lane on St. Owen Street has been approved at a cost of £1million. £700,000 from grant funding, £300,000 from HC funds;
- 6.1.4** Cllr Bowen had attended various Remembrance Day functions;

6.2 Public Session – A member of the public reported potholes on the turning circle at Ashley Walk. Cllr Bowen took an action to report the matter to BBLP.

7. Finance:

7.1 Bank Balance: Members received a finance report noting the Unity Bank balance at 31.10.22 was £23,927.15.

7.2 Payments: It was RESOLVED to approve the following invoices for payment:

7.2.1 HALC Clerk Cover, 21/10/21 ... £240.00 (inc £40 VAT)

7.2.2 DC Gardening Services, Lengthsman Duties October ... £552.90 (inc £92.15 VAT)

The Clerk was asked to confirm that the September invoice of £36.00 has been paid by cheque, but if not, to pay it with the October balance.

7.2.3 Leo Pest Control, Aug-Oct inclusive ... £232.80 (inc £38.80 VAT)

7.3 Signatories: Members were informed that the necessary authority has been signed by the current signatories to add Cllrs David Lane and Colin Mitchell; currently waiting for Unity Bank to action.

7.4 Draft Budget and Precept 2023/2024: Members considered an amended draft budget and a report of the Lengthsman's activities and costs. The grants and donations budget has been calculated on the current S137 allowance. Reserves were forecast in the region of £10,000 at the current year-end (ie 31.3.23) but anticipated to be much lower at the end of the 2023-24 financial year. It is recommended that local councils hold general reserves of between 20% and 50% of the annual precept. Concerns were raised about increasing the precept in view of the increasing cost of living but it was noted that the precept has not been increased for a number of years and there are significant concerns about solvency if the precept, and level of reserves, are not increased.
It was RESOLVED to approve the amended draft budget pending public consultation on 19th January 2023.

7.5 Internal Auditor: Members considered the appointment of an internal auditor for the financial year 2022-23.

It was RESOLVED to defer this item to the confidential session.

7.6 Donation for Upkeep of Church Property: Members considered legal advice recently received in connection with a previous resolution (made 25th August 2022) to donate £2,200 to the PCC to assist with the upkeep of Church property. NALC's current advice is that any Parish Council payment for the upkeep of Church property would be unlawful. The Clerk informed the council of the risks associated with making a payment against legal advice and the Council's obligation to complete the Annual Governance Statement as part of the External Audit process (assertion 3 applies).

It was RESOLVED to revoke the previous decision made on 25th August to contribute towards the maintenance of the churchyard. 5 in favour, 1 abstained.

- 7.7 Donation to Cover Costs Associated with Community Activities:** Members were informed that it is lawful to contribute towards costs incurred in connection with the provision of community activities and recognised that the PCC provide such activities.

It was RESOLVED to make a donation of £2,200 to the PCC to cover costs associated with community activities.

8. Planning: Consideration of comments on applications for determination by Herefordshire Council:

- 8.1 P223037: The Maidenhead, Orleton, SY8 4JB.** Proposed erection of a block of 5no detached single storey holiday bed-sit letting units with associated drainage and removal of a mobile home and 3no Leylandii fir trees. Members considered the application and asked the applicant to clarify that the existing boundary hedge will remain, obscuring the buildings from the road. It was confirmed that this would be the case. It was noted that one of the units is to be adapted for less abled users.

It was RESOLVED to support the application, and to note that there is a dropped kerb outside the Maidenhead but there is not one on the opposite side of the road, which already causes difficulties for wheelchair users.

- 8.2 P223525: Little Overton, Orleton, SY8 4HZ.** T1 dead Holly, T2 dead Cherry (wild) – remove (cut down), T3 & T4 Small Ash Sapling – below 75mm diameter, T5 dead Field Maple – cut out all dead branches. There were no objections.

It was RESOLVED to support the application.

9. Highways:

- 9.1 Comberton Road Safety:** Members received an update following the meeting on 17th October. Police monitoring has confirmed that speeds have exceeded the threshold to take enforcement action; they have been unable to identify an area with sufficient line of sight for a van but are hoping to use a motorcycle and are currently looking for an appropriate location.

- 9.2** Members considered a report asking them to consider the submission of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to reduce speed limits at two locations within the parish: Kings Road and B4362, Comberton; and the Junction of Millbrook Way, Green Lane and B4361, following representations of concern from local residents.

It was RESOLVED to agree to the submission of a TRO in principle pending the completion of the application form and public petition.

10. Coronation of King Charles III Working Group: Members considered commemorating the coronation of King Charles III in conjunction with local community groups.

Proposals of tree planting and an inscribed commemorative stone were considered.

It was RESOLVED to appoint Cllrs Barry Rogers, Colin Mitchell and Mark Simmons to the working group and for a costed proposal to be prepared for the January meeting. Local community groups will be approached and invited to join the working group.

- 11. Defibrillator Cabinet:** Members considered the disposal of the defibrillator cabinet assessed as unsuitable (because it does not have a lock). A new cabinet has been purchased and is in situ.

It was RESOLVED that the Chairman investigate the most economically beneficial way of disposing of the cabinet and report options for consideration at a future meeting.

- 12. Planning Group:** Members considered appointing representatives to a new Planning Working Group. The role of the group would be to assess planning applications and present a report to full council for decision.

It was RESOLVED to appoint Cllrs Philip Hardwick and Brian Powell to the working group.

- 13. Donations and Grants Policy:** Members considered a draft Donations and Grants policy to provide the framework for consideration when awarding the donations and grants budget.

It was RESOLVED to adopt the draft policy. The Chairman signed the policy and requested a copy is posted to the website.

- 14. Kings Road Flooding:** Members received an update noting:

14.1 Brimfield Brook maintenance – waiting for contractors;

14.2 Road drains are blocked with tree roots and gullies are in very poor condition. It was felt that repair work to the gullies is likely to be cost prohibitive and it was agreed to ask Herefordshire Council to carry out the root cutting in the first instance. Cllr Bowen agreed to raise the matter with BBLP at the highest level. Cllr Bowen reported that some S106 money is available and he is pushing for it to be allocated.

14.3 It was noted that a number of potholes on Kings Road have been filled.

- 15. Christmas Trees:** Members were informed that a donation of three Christmas trees has been confirmed. They will be sited at the Kings Road entrance to the Church; at the War Memorial; and at the Village Hall.

- 16. Matters relating to Outside Bodies:**

16.1 Members received a report following a meeting between Cllrs David Lane and Colin Mitchell with the Interim Chair and a representative of ORA to explore issues raised at the last PC meeting. On the back of this meeting, a letter had been drafted to raise some areas of concern.

- 16.2** Members were asked to consider whether to send the draft letter. It was recognised that ORA and the Football Club have shared responsibility to balance income and expenditure but felt that a gentler approach would be more appropriate.
It was RESOLVED not to send the draft letter.

A resolution was passed to exclude members of the public for the following confidential item:

17. Employment Matters:

- 17.1** There was nothing to report on the recruitment of a new clerk.
- 17.2** Members received an update on HALC advice in relation to employment matters and financial governance.
It was RESOLVED to accept the advice from HALC.

18. Matters for discussion at the next meeting:

- 18.1** Draft Budget 2023-24 – Public Consultation
18.2 Consider appointment of Internal Auditor for 2022-23
18.3 Receive report on King Charles III Coronation Celebrations, May 2023
18.4 Receive update on Employment Matters

19. Date of next meeting: Thursday 19th January 2022, 7.30pm.

Meeting closed.

SIGNED DATE