ORLETON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes
of the meeting of Orleton Parish Council
held on Thursday 20th July 2023 at 7:30pm
at the Village Hall

PRESENT: Councillors: D. Lane (in the Chair), C. Mitchell (in the Chair following item 3), V. Bishop, B. Rogers, R. Gittings.

IN ATTENDANCE: Olena Barrett (Clerk), Cllr Dan Hurcomb (Bircher Ward), 1 member of the public.

1. **To receive apologies of absence.**
   Apologies for absence were received from Cllr B. Powell (holidays) and Cllr M. Simmons (away trip).

2. **Chairman's resignation**
   The Chairman, Cllr D. Lane offered his **RESIGNATION** after 11 months in the office. Cllr Lane expressed his thanks to the whole Council and, in particular, to the Vice-Chairman, Cllr C. Mitchell for his support throughout, and expressed the immense honour he felt it was to serve the Council, Parish and community in the role. The Chairman also offered his thanks to the Clerk.
   Cllr Rogers led the appreciation and thanks from the Council for the Chairman's service, seconded by all Members unanimously. It was underlined that the Chairman guided the Council through a challenging period of transition, elections, and the long-term vacancy in the post of the Clerk. Chairman resignation was **ACCEPTED**.

3. **Election of the Chairman** (presided by the retiring Chairman)
   Following the resignation of the Chairman, the Council moved to elect Chairman of the Council to hold the office until Annual Council meeting in May 2024.
   Cllr Bishop proposed Cllr Mitchell, this was seconded by Cllr Gittings and Cllr Mitchell was unanimously **ELECTED** as Chairman of the Council.
   The Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office was duly **SIGNED** before the Clerk.

   The duly appointed Chairman expressed his gratitude to Cllr Lane for his steady leadership and dedication in discharge of the office through the duration of his term.

4. **Election of Vice Chairman**
   Following the election of Chairman, the position of Vice-Chairman having become vacant, the Council moved to elect Vice-Chairman of the Council.
   Cllr Lane nominated Cllr Rogers, this was seconded by Cllr Bishop and Cllr Rogers was duly **ELECTED** as the Vice-Chairman of the Council.

5. **To consider any declarations of interest and written requests for dispensation on agenda items.**
   None.

6. **To approve Minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2023.**
   Minutes were **APPROVED** as true and accurate record. Minutes were duly **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

7. **To receive an update form HC Bircher Ward Member, Councillor D. Hurcomb** (limited to 5 minutes)
   Cllr Hurcomb delivered a report, copies of which were distributed to all present. – APPENDIX 1

8. **Open session** (limited to 10 minutes)
   No matters were raised.

9. **Clerk's report**
   Following matters were reported to the Council by the Clerk:
   9.1 Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year 2022/23, as approved by the Council on 15th June 2023, has been submitted to the External Auditor (PKF Littlejohn) and the conclusion of the audit will be reported to the Council in due course.
   9.2 It was discovered that the Council has not reclaimed VAT for the previous four financial years (last claim – 31.03.2019). The VAT refund documentation has now been completed for the whole period and a claim was submitted to HMRC on 17th July 2023 for the sum of £11,838,22. Some of the claim was for a period beyond the legal deadline and might therefore be rejected. The PC will be updated on progress.
   9.3 Councillors in-house training session has been booked for Thursday 17th August at 7pm. The training will take place in the Village Hall and be delivered by the Chief Executive of HALC.
   9.4 The Council received a Subject Access Request. This has been processed and the data held by the data controller will be sent to the subject following this meeting. The statutory deadline for response expires on Monday, 24th July 2023.
   9.5 The War Memorial was cleaned by the appointed contractor on 6th July. This was made possible before the originally planned date thanks to Cllr Rogers securing access to electricity and water from a neighbouring property. The Council expressed thinks to the resident who made the utilities available. The railings will be painted in the coming weeks.
   9.6 Report from Parish Footpath Officer about poor state of repair of the village telephone box was received. The Clerk to enquire if the PFO would be willing to paint the structure at the PC's expense.
   9.7 Following discussions at the previous meeting a Freedom of Information request was submitted to the Herefordshire Council and records of roads inspections for the Kings and Kitchen Hill Roads were received. The received documents are predominately internal in nature and therefore difficult to interpret. Cllr Hurcomb will share reports which might be of more use to the Council.
   9.8 A general waste bin for Hallets Well has been purchased and installed on 12th July by the Lengthsman. It was also added to the PC collections rota with the contractor.
   9.9 The Clerk wrote to the Chairman of Village Hall Managing Committee to clarify the role and status of the nominated Trustee. A very positive response was received and the Trustee's status was acknowledged. The Council expressed their thanks to the Chairman and the VH Cttee for their dignified response.
   9.10 Cllr Bishop met with the Headmaster of Orleton primary school and agreed sharing of the cost of the replacement noticeboard for the Kings Road, at a significant saving to the PC. The noticeboard will be purchased by the school and the council will be billed for half of the net value.
   9.11 The Clerk wrote to the Shropshire Homes developer to enquire about the uncut hedge on the boundary. A response was received – the hedge will be cut after the bird nesting season protection ends in September.

10. **Finance.**

10.1 To note the bank balance – 30th June 2023

Bank balance was **NOTED** - £17,862.70

10.2 1st Quarter finance report – APPENDIX 2

10.2.1 To receive the appointed Member's report on the verification of the 1st Quarter bank reconciliation.

Pursuant to Financial Regulation 2.2 the appointed member **REPORTED** the conclusion of verification of accounts, financial statement, and bank reconciliation as prepared by the RFO for the 1st Quarter. No errors or irregularities were discovered. Member's written report was submitted and relevant documents were duly **SIGNED** as evidence of verification.

10.2.2 To receive the appointed Member's budget monitoring report as on 30th June 2023.

Budget monitoring report was received and **NOTED** by the Council.

10.2.3 To consider and approve the finance report & bank reconciliation for the 1st Quarter, as produced by the RFO and verified by the appointed Member. To note the budget monitoring report.

The Council considered the 1st Quarter finance report & bank reconciliation, as verified by the appointed Member. It was moved by Cllr Mitchell, seconded by Cllr Gittings and unanimously **APPROVED**.

10.3 Virements, pursuant to Financial Regulation 4.2

10.3.1 To consider and approve re-allocating £1000 from s. 137 budget to 'Dog bins (emptying)' budget.

Moved by Cllr Lane, seconded by Cllr Rogers and unanimously **APPROVED.**

10.3.2 To consider and approve moving £3000 from s. 137 expenditure to a new budget heading 'grounds maintenance, s. 164 Public Health Act 1875'.

Moved by Cllr Gittings, seconded by Cllr Bishop and unanimously **APPROVED.**

10.4 To consider and approve application for grant to 'Welcome To Our Future' fund.

It was moved by Cllr Lane, seconded by Cllr Rogers and unanimously **APPROVED** to authorise the clerk to submit a grant application to the WTOF fund.

10.5 To note the updated Assets Register

The asset register updated after the purchase of general waste bin (Hallets Well) was **NOTED**. The value of assets held by the Council stands at £16,671.00

10.6 To consider and adopt Risk Management Policy and Risk Schedule

Cllr Lane raised a question regarding the proposed Risk Management Policy provision:

10.6.1 Risk management as part of internal control – Monthly reporting

Monthly reporting as part of internal control is carried out as per the policy and accomplished by the RFO reporting, at each meeting, the closing bank A/C balance at the end of last month with all payments and receipts for each period. This provides Members with the opportunity to verify accuracy of accounts and funds held.

Following amendments were proposed to the Risk Schedule by Cllr Lane:

10.6.2 Inclusion of the GDPR UK provisions together with FOI Act.

10.6.3 Review and inclusion of Health & Safety matters in the Council's offices (Clerk's home)

Having considered the Policy, it was moved by Cllr Lane, seconded by Cllr Mitchell and unanimously agreed to **ADOPT** the Risk Management Policy and Schedule with the above amendments. The Chairman to inspect the Council offices for Health & Safety purposes.

10.7 To review PC's insurance Policy and approve extension to cover personal accident

Following a review of Council's insurance arrangements, the Clerk reported that the Council should hold a personal accident policy to cover volunteers whilst acting on Council business for current and future projects. The proposed extension to existing schedule increases the annual premium by £36.61. It was unanimously **APPROVED** to extend the PC's insurance Policy.

10.8 To consider and approve the following outstanding invoices for payment:

Following invoices were **APPROVED** for payment by BACS:

10.8.1 BHIB insurance, Personal Accident cover - £36.61
10.8.2 Leo Pest Control – June – £69.60
10.8.3 Lengthsman – June – £1,012.80
10.8.4 Autela Payroll Services - £76.29
10.8.5 VH room hire - £150.00
10.8.6 HALC, CiLCA training, Finance module - £264.00
10.8.7 Donation to Wigmore High School - £30
10.8.8 Clerk's travel & stationery expenses - £56.52 + £23.74

10.9 To note the following payments:

Following payments were **NOTED**:

10.9.1 Public Works Loan Board repayment (DD) - £1,096.07. The outstanding loan balance of £6,310.43 (excluding interest) was **NOTED**.
10.9.2 Glasdon, waste bin - £268.94
10.9.3 Footpath Officer, Kissing Gate installation materials - £38.40
10.9.4 Clerk's salary for June.

11. Policies:

11.1 To review and approve Council's GDPR policies and schedules:

A. Data Protection Policy. **B.** Data Protection – General Privacy Notice. **C.** Data Protection – Staff Privacy Notice. **D.** Data Protection Retention Schedule. **E.** Data Security Incident Procedure. **F.** GDPR Consent Form. **G.** Subject Access Request Form.

The above Policies were **REVIEWED** and unanimously **APPROVED**.

11.2 To review adopt Publication Scheme Policy and Orleton PC Publication Scheme.

The Policy and Schedule were **REVIEWED** and it was unanimously agreed to **ADOPT** both without amendment.

12. Lengthsman

12.1 To consider and approve entering the Lengthsman contract with Herefordshire Council, approve the draft Annual Maintenance Plan and agree the amount of 'match funding' from the precept ('Lengthsman' budget heading).

The Council considered the Lengthsman contract as proposed by the Herefordshire Council and reviewed the Annual Maintenance Plan as prepared by the Clerk. It was proposed by Cllr Gittings, seconded by Cllr Bishop and unanimously **APPORVED** to:

12.1.1 Sign the Lengthsman scheme contract with Herefordshire Council with the base sum of grant available £2,422.00. The contract was duly SIGNED by the Chairman and Clerk.
12.1.2 Approve and submit the Annual Maintenance Plan without amendments.
12.1.3 Request the available additional match funding of £2,422.00.
12.1.4 Match the funding up to the sum of £3,460.00, as outlined in the AMP, from the existing 'Lengthsman' budget heading.

12.2 To receive an update from the Clerk on herbicide treatment for Orleton Village and if necessary to approve alternative actions to address highway growth.

The Clerk reported that herbicide spraying was carried out by the contractor earlier that day. Clerk to seek clarification which streets in the village were treated. It will be monitored whether the weeds need strimming or otherwise removing following dieback. Given the unwelcome delay of the service the arrangements need to be reviewed in September in view of next year provision.

13. Policing

13.1 To consider and approve draft response to the Police and Crime Commissioner's 'Town & Parish Survey 2023'.

The draft response was reviewed and amended. It was then unanimously **APPROVED**.

13.2 To consider and approve signing up to the Local Policing Charter 2023 and agree the three local policing priorities.

The Council considered the Policing Charter and reviewed local policing priorities. After discussion it was moved by Cllr Gittings, seconded by Cllr Rogers and **AGREED** that the three priorities for the Parish are speeding, drugs and theft (dwellings). Issue of drug dealing in the VH & Rec car park in the evenings was raised by a member of the public. The Clerk to write to the Local Neighbourhood Team to raise the issue.

14. Street furniture

To consider requests for bench installation and replacement and agree next steps.

Two items of correspondence regarding benches in the village were considered. A request from ORA for covering the costs of the installation of Apperley Memorial Bench on the Rec and the Lengthsman's report regarding the state of repair of a bench located in Tunnel Lane. After consideration the Council **RESOLVED**:

14.1 That, as the Parish Council in its position of Custodian Trustee is unable to participate in the day-to-day management of the grounds in ORA's care, to propose that the Apperley Memorial Bench could be installed by the bridge over Brimfield Brook in Millbrook Way, with the Council covering the costs of installation.

14.2 To commission the Lengthsman to remove the bench in Tunnel Lane. The Clerk to explore opportunities for replacement.

15. Planning

To consider the following planning applications for determination by Herefordshire Council:

15.1 231812 - Orleton House, Orleton, Ludlow, Herefordshire SY8 4HN

T1 - Beech tree. Crown raise by approximately 3m due to excessive shading and interference of neighbouring property. T2 - Conifer tree. Low amenity tree. Dismantle due to excessive shading of neighbouring property and proximity to LPG tank.

NO OBJECTION

16. To receive updates:

16.1 Highways – to receive and update from Cllr Bishop and agree next steps.

Cllr Bishop reported a meeting with Bircher Locality Steward Natasha Jackson, attended also by the then Chairman, Cllr Lane. The state of repair of Kings Road and Kitchen Hill Road were amongst the subjects discussed and inspected. Chances for resurfacing are low. Cllr Hurcomb advised that funding for resurfacing might become available in the future. Issues of road safety by the school were raised, including the inclusion of zebra crossing and warning signs on the approach to school. The Council might apply for S106 money for zebra crossing. Clerk to explore both - zebra crossing matter and insufficient warning signage. Collapsed drain under the highway at the bottom of Green Lane by the Maidenhead issue was raised again.

16.2 Village Hall Committee meeting – to receive an update from Cllr Gittings.
Cllr Gittings reported that there was no meeting of VH since June and next meeting will be in September.

16.3 ORA – to receive an update from Cllr Powell.
In his absence no report was available.

16.4 Footpaths/PROW – to receive and update from Cllr. Lane and agree next steps.
Cllr Lane reported that a new Kissing Gate was installed between St. George's churchyard and the fields with the help of Parish Footpath Officer and volunteers from Ramblers Association. The Council expressed their thanks to the volunteers for their work. The new gate is wheelchair, buggy and dog friendly. Volunteers are sought to assist the Footpath Officer with looking after the local network of footpaths, flyers have been produced. Further kissing gates replacements are planned. The PC was asked for assistance in identifying landowners where footpaths cross private property, in order to seek permissions for works. Large scale map of the network would be helpful and will be sought through the PC's PSGA licence and/or Herefordshire Council. Cllr Powell and other residents with extensive local knowledge will be approached for help in identifying landowners.

17. ICT:

17.1 To consider and approve quote for necessary repairs of the Council's website.
Moved by Cllr Lane, seconded by Cllr Rogers and unanimously **APPROVED** to carry out necessary repairs.

17.2 To consider and approve annual laptop service and maintenance.
Moved by Cllr Mitchell, seconded by Cllr Bishop and unanimously **APPROVED** to carry out annual service and maintenance of the PC's laptop.

18. Training
To consider and approve training for Councillors – Chairmanship @ HALC (£50/session/delegate).
APPROVED. Clerk to arrange on request by Members.

EXCLUSION OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC
*A **RESOLUTION** was passed, pursuant to 'Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, 1960, c. 67, s. 1(2)', to exclude the members of the public from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the following items*

Members of the public present left the meeting. The Clerk recused herself and also left the meeting for the duration of the following items.

19. Employment matters
Minutes of the closed session are contained in Confidential Minute book and are exempt from public record. The following items were excluded as confidential.

(19.1 – 19.5 REMOVED**)**

Following resolution was passed in a matter falling outside of the confidentiality exemption:

19.6 Under Pensions Act 2008 all employers must provide a pension scheme for the purposes of automatic enrolment and/or employee voluntary enrolment (entitled workers). Provisions of the legislation affect Orleton Parish Council from 30.07.2020.
It was **RESOLVED** that the Council joins NEST pension scheme.

<u>READMISSION OF THE PUBLIC</u>
*A **RESOLUTION** was passed to readmit the public for the remainder of the meeting.*

The Clerk and one member of the public rejoined the meeting.

20. Matters for discussion at the next meeting. (No discussion)
- Review of grants policy

21. Date of next meeting – 21st September 2023
Date of the September meeting was confirmed.
The PC was informed that due to few time-sensitive matters arising an extraordinary meeting might have to be called in August. Most likely date – 17th August @6pm. Notice and summons will be issued in due course.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9:48pm

Signed – Chairman of the Council **-----** **Date**