



ORLETON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of Orleton Parish Council held on Thursday 17th August 2023 at 6:00pm at the Village Hall

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Olena Barrett (Clerk), Cllr Dan Hurcomb (Bircher Ward), 2 members of the public.

1. To receive apologies of absence.

Received from Cllr Simmons (childcare).

2. To consider any declarations of interest and written requests for dispensation on agenda items.

NONE received.

3. To approve Minutes of the meeting held on 20th July 2023.

Minutes were **APPROVED** as true and accurate record and duly **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

4. To receive an update from HC Bircher Ward Member, Councillor D. Hurcomb (limited to 5 minutes)

Cllr Hurcomb clarified that the original notification about \$106 money for the refurbishment of pavilion on the Recreation Ground being in excess of £200k was erroneous and the actual amount is £21,278. He also passed on unreserved apologies from the Herefordshire Council officer who reported the higher amount in error and her offer to come and update the Council in person.

5. Open session (limited to 10 minutes)

To receive views of local residents on items set out in the agenda and other parish matters proposed for inclusion in future agendas.

NONE raised.

6. Clerk's report

To receive Clerk's update on current matters and agree next steps where appropriate.

Following matters were reported to the Council by the Clerk:

6.1 The PC's tax account was recovered after several months difficulties to access it. This was due to the account being tied to a private mobile number of one of the previous employees. Upon recovery it was discovered that the PC details registered with the account were out of date, with some going as far as 15 years. It was also discovered that the PC was in liability to the HMRC to the sum of £118.61. This liability was settled immediately under delegated powers (FR 4.1.iii) to avoid further interest and potential penalties and the payment is being reported to the Council under item 8.8.1 of this agenda. The practice of the Council using employees' private telephone numbers for discharging of the Council business was

highlighted as a risk factor and long-term resilience issue and is being brought before the Council to consider and remedy accordingly (item 8.5).

- 6.2** Orleton Parish Council has been registered under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) for 2023/24 and is eligible for the registration being a small local authority with a budget up to €500,000.
- 6.3** Website Home page rebuild was carried out and the website is being updated and refreshed to provide more information and facilities to the parishioners, including reporting problems facilities.
- 6.4** The faulty SID radar in the device currently located in Comberton was repaired earlier today under the PC current maintenance contract and the SIDs will now be moved between the three co-owning parishes according to the regular rota.
- 6.5** The Council's laptop has been serviced with one recommendation to increase the RAM memory. Clerk to explore available quotes.
- 6.6** Councillors' official emails have been set up and most of the Cllrs are now using their official email addresses exclusively for Council business. Members who have not yet finalised their set up will do so imminently. Technical assistance available from the Clerk on request.
- 6.7** Large scale map of Orleton Parish PROWs, as requested by the Council at the previous meeting has now been generated using PC's PSGA & 'Parish Online' licence and printing will be arranged following this meeting, including a copy for the Parish Footpath Officer.
- 6.8** Missing warning signage on the approach to the Primary School on Kings Road has now been reinstated. Thanks to Cllr Hurcomb for his intervention with Balfour Beatty.
- 6.9** It was confirmed that the herbicide spraying carried out in the village last month was applied on all main streets. Cllr Lane confirmed that the expected die back is now apparent throughout the area.
- 6.10** The Clerk wrote to Leominster Neighbourhood Policing Team to report the suspected drug dealing in certain parts of the village. The known problem spots were added to the Police patrol rota and random patrols should be expected forthwith. The Cllrs and residents are encouraged to report any suspected incidents through the reporting facilities – all information is available on the PC's website.
- 6.11** Following a report from Cllr Powell regarding a dilapidated railing fence on the boundary of Orleton Fields development alongside Kings Road, the Clerk wrote to the Shropshire Homes developer enquiring if any repair works are planned. It was also discovered that the fence is part of the planning permission boundary plan granted for the development, according to which it was expected to be painted black; this might result in any issues with the fence being a planning enforcement matter. The fence is also leaning over, causing potential danger to the Kings Road traffic. No reply was received from the developer. Clerk to write again before raising a planning enforcement case.
- 6.12** Following number of residents' complaints and the issue raised by Cllr Powell, the Mortimer Drive drains noxious smell was reported to Severn Trent and Herefordshire Council. Both organisations refuse to accept liability. It was raised by Cllr Lane that Severn Trent should be expected to take the issue seriously because the foul smell may indicate that storm drains are connected to the sewage and further investigations are necessary. Cllr Lane to draft a letter to ST and pass to the Clerk to follow up.
- 6.13** The red telephone box repair will have to be carried out by a specialist and may incur more cost than originally anticipated. Clerk to explore the costs, quotes and possibilities for grant funding for the project.

7. Chairman's report

To receive Chairman's update on current matters and agree next steps where appropriate.

Following matters were reported to the Council by the Chairman:

- 7.1** To alleviate safety issues at the two dangerous junctions in the parish (Kings Road/B4362 Comberton & Millbrook Way/B4361 Maidenhead) an idea to install mirrors was put forward. The Clerk wrote to BB to enquire about such possibility and it appears that until very recently junction mirrors were not allowed under Highway Code. However, whilst the rules were somewhat relaxed nationwide the Herefordshire Council's own Policy is yet to be updated accordingly. An enquiry was sent to HC with no reply yet. Cllr Hurcomb to assist in further inquiries.

7.2 Several overgrown hedges reported to the PC were investigated by the Chairman. Individual landowners to be contacted by Cllr Mitchell to encourage cuts improving visibility at junctions.

7.3 It was reported that following an enquiry from ORA regarding a Memorial Bench and the PC's offer to install it at a previously agreed location, ORA decided to install the bench within the Recreation Ground at a location chosen by the Managing Committee. Correspondence between the two organisations will be circulated to the PC Members.

8. Finance.

8.1 To note the bank balance – 31st July 2023

Bank balance was **NOTED** – £27,555.75

8.2 To note the receipt of VAT refund payment for the period of 1st April 2019 – 31st March 2023

It was **NOTED** that the PC claim for the VAT refund was accepted in full and the Council recovered all VAT it was due up until 31st March 2023. The refund amount was **NOTED** - £11,838.22

8.3 To note the receipt of grant awarded by 'Welcome to Our Future' fund and:

Receipt of £1,000 grant from 'Welcome to Our Future' fund was **NOTED**. The Council expressed its thanks to the awarding body.

8.3.1 *To approve the purchase of a bench, as per the grant approval specification;*
APPROVED.

8.3.2 *To agree the wording of engraving on the bench, as per the advice received from the Lord Chamberlain's Office;*
An engraving of 'Orleton Parish' was **APPROVED** for the knee bar of the bench. It was **RESOLVED** not to engrave the top bar of the bench.

8.3.3 *To approve location of the bench within the village and authorise the Clerk to commission its installation and associated works.*
A general discussion took place with various options discussed. No resolution was passed.

8.4 To appoint a Member to verify bank reconciliations and budget vs expenditure monitoring, as produced by the RFO, for the remainder of financial year 2023/24, pursuant to Financial Regulation 2.2

Following election of the Chairman at the meeting of 20th July 2023 the position of verifying member became vacant and the Council must appoint another of their number to discharge the duty.

Appointed Member to verify bank reconciliations at the end of each quarter and report to the Council.

It was moved by CM, seconded by DL and **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Gittings to discharge the function.

8.5 To consider and approve establishing the Council's official telephone number. To approve acquiring of pay-as-you-go SIM card at a monthly cost of £10.

It was moved by DL, seconded by RG and **APPROVED** to acquire a SIM card and establish the PC official telephone number. Monthly top-ups of £10 were **APPROVED**.

8.6 To approve Direct Debit mandate to NEST Pension Scheme and sign the mandate accordingly.

It was moved by CM, seconded by BR and **APPROVED**. Direct Debit mandate was **SIGNED** accordingly by two signatories.

8.7 To consider and approve the following (but not limited to) outstanding invoices for payment:

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

- 8.7.1 Leo Pest Control – July & August – £69.60 + £85.20
- 8.7.2 Lengthsman – July – £644.40
- 8.7.3 HALC, web hosting & domain name (for the period Dec 2021-Nov 2023) - £270.00
- 8.7.4 Complete Weed Control, herbicide spraying - £390.00
- 8.7.5 Eyelid Productions Ltd, website repairs - £50.00
- 8.7.6 Parish Online, mapping software - £67.20
- 8.7.7 Make Me Something Special, engraved bench - £1,037.99
- 8.7.8 Clerk's travel & stationery expenses - £6.84 + £46.65

8.8 To note the following payments:

Following payments were **NOTED**:

- 8.8.1 HMRC – outstanding PAYE payment - £118.61 (approved under delegated authority, pursuant to FR 4.1.iii)
- 8.8.2 Clerk's salary for July.

9. Contracts:

9.1 To Consider and approve renewal of maintenance contract with Swarco for the period 23.08.2023 – 22.08.2026

To review the offer for Gold Maintenance contract for the two SID devices co-owned by Orleton Parish Council together with Luston Group and Richard's Castle Parish Councils. The total cost of 3-year contract - £1,693.50 (£2,032.20 incl. VAT). Orleton Parish Council share - £564.50 (£188.17/year). The two co-owner PC's to be invoiced £564.50 each.

It was moved by CM, seconded by VB and **APPROVED**.

10. Lengthsman

10.1 To consider and approve schedule of works for October (The following works are part of the Annual Maintenance Plan for the purposes of HC Lengthsman Scheme grant; The Council may consider approving all/some of the works provisional on the receipt of the grant):

Following works were **APPROVED**:

- Cutting of all visual displays throughout the Parish and strimming along the bottom edge of the embankment leading from the War Memorial to just past the bus stop;
- Cutting behind road signs throughout the Parish, around black and white bollards, benches throughout the Parish and around the red phone box and bench in the village;
- Strimming around salt boxes throughout the parish;
- Washing of non-illuminated signage and black and white bollards throughout the parish;
- Scraping off drain tops throughout the Parish.

11. Planning

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

11.1.1 - 232384 – Fairfield House, Millbrook Way, Orleton, Ludlow, Herefordshire SY8 4HW

Proposed works to T1 - T8 group of Leylandii trees, to be reduced by approx 20 ft (40%), to allow more light into garden and reduce risk of failure.

NO OBJECTION

11.1.2 - 232385 – The Old Bakery, Kitchen Hill Road, Orleton, Ludlow, Herefordshire SY8 4HN

Proposed works to (T1) Hazel, reduce crown by 3m on lapsed coppiced Hazel, lift and thin crown to allow light into garden. (T2) Purple Plum, reduce crown by 1.5m, thin and dead wood.

NO OBJECTION

11.1.3 - 232222 – Whitestones Farm, Richards Castle, Ludlow Herefordshire SY8 4EX

Proposed agricultural storage building.

It was **NOTED** that this development falls outside of Orleton Parish boundary. **NO COMMENT**

11.2 To consider and note the following Modification Orders, as issued by the County of Herefordshire District Council, under Section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Definitive Map and Statement for the County of Herefordshire.

11.2.1 Addition of Bridleway OL42 Orleton

11.2.2 Addition of Bridleway OL43 Orleton

11.2.3 Addition of Restricted Byway OL44 Orleton.

It was moved by DL, seconded by CM and **RESOLVED** that the PC **SUPPORTS** the above modification orders.

12. Matters for discussion at the next meeting. (No discussion)

- Flood Working Group
- Grants Policy review
- Outside grants requirements

13. Date of next meeting – 21st September 2023

There being no other business the meeting closed at 6:50pm

Signed – Chairman of the Council

Date