



ORLETON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

held on
Thursday, 18th May 2023 at 6:30pm
At Orleton Village Hall

PRESENT: Cllr David Lane, Chairman of the Parish Council (in the Chair), Olena Barrett, Clerk to the Parish Council.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors of the Parish Council – Veronica Bishop, Colin Mitchell and Ron Gittings; Mr John Berry – Treasurer of Orleton Parochial Church Council, Sergeant Nicola Holgate – Leominster Safer Neighbourhoods Team, 34 members of the public.

MINUTES

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors of the Parish Council – M. Simmons, B. Powell and B. Rogers and from Claire Owens of Orleton Recreation Association (ORA).

The Chairman welcomed all present and expressed thanks to members of the Parochial Church Council for providing refreshments at the meeting.

2. To receive an annual statement from the Chairman of Orleton Parish Council on the matters arising during the last 12 months.

The Chairman delivered an annual report, as appended to these minutes. – APPENDIX 1, p. 4.

3. To invite members of the public to raise issues for consideration by the parish and, where necessary consider and take a poll on any resolutions proposed at the meeting.

Following matters and questions were raised:

3.1 Relationship between the PC and Orleton Recreation Association (ORA).

It was explained by the Chairman that the Parish Council is the Custodian Trustee of the Orleton Recreation Ground, whilst ORA is the Committee of Managing Trustees with sole responsibility for the management of the Charity's property. It was further explained that, after the recent ORA AGM and subsequent resignation of a number of the newly elected ORA Trustees, an Extraordinary ORA meeting will be held by the remaining three Trustees with new elections held. It was also explained that any resident of Orleton Parish may stand for election as ORA Trustee, as per the Charity's constitution.

3.2 Status of the S106 money from the new development (Captain's Meadow) as apportioned for sports facilities.

It was explained that the Local Authority is in the process of finalising the project to be delivered under this funding with some legal matters outstanding. The Parish Council has initiated the process of registering the Recreation Ground with Land Registry, a process

which is likely to take around 12-18 months. It is understood that ORA Cttee is not going to pursue a grant from Football Association. Further updates on the status of the project will be forthcoming from ORA Cttee.

3.3 Precept increase in the 203/24 Financial Year.

The Chairman explained that the increase was unavoidable due to the Local Authority's diminished service provision. As other Parish Councils up and down the country, Orleton PC has had to step in to fill the void and is now providing many more local services to the community, including drainage and flood resilience projects, Lengthsman works funded from the Precept and many others as detailed in the Chairman's Annual Report.

The Clerk added that the PC precept has been kept at the same level for 7 consecutive years, with only a modest increase of £500 in 2020/21 financial year. This resulted in the need for a steeper increase in this financial year to ensure that the PC can meet its obligations and provide the services community expects, as well as keep up with rising costs due to inflation. It was also underlined that the raise works out to £0.15 increase per week for a Band D property.

3.4 Lack of Precept information on the PC website

The Clerk acknowledged that the PC website requires updates and improvement to provide information which the residents may expect and find useful, and reassured members of the public that this is on the to-do list for near future. The Precept information will be added to the website as a priority.

3.5 Members of the Parish Council Declarations of Interests out-of-date and unavailable on Herefordshire Council Website

The Clerk explained that she is aware of the Local Authority's website being out-of-date and lacking the required Registers and has already been in communications with Herefordshire Council's officers to request that this is put right. It was also explained that at this particular moment, with elections having just took place and newly elected Councillors, as well as those who remained in the office, submitting their Declarations of Interests, the deadline for new Registers to be made is not until the end of May. It may therefore be expected that updates on the HC website will take at least few weeks to take effect. The Clerk confirmed that, to her knowledge, all Orleton Councillors are aware of their requirement to submit their up-to-date Declarations of Interest and have either already done so or are about to do. The state of the HC website and Cllrs Dols availability for public inspection will be monitored and resolved as soon as possible.

3.6 Will the PC investigate what happened at the ORA AGM?

Parish Council has no place nor authority to investigate the proceedings of ORA AGM. Parish Councillors who have stood for elections as ORA Trustees have done so in their private capacity as residents of Orleton, which they were entitled to do as any other residents in the area. It is not a matter for the PC to direct its Members private lives. Parish Councillors remain private citizens and should not be curtailed in exercising their freedoms as any other Parish resident. It is up to the individuals involved to make judgements on any conflicts of interest arising, if any.

3.7 State of Kings Road and Kitchen Hill Road.

The Parish Council continues to lobby the Highways Authority regarding surface repairs on the above roads. It is also hoped that the newly elected Ward representative, Cllr Dan Hurcomb may support the PC in this matter. Serving of S56 Notice on the Highways Authority for not fulfilling its obligations could be considered as last resort in the future.

4. To receive a brief talk from the PCC Treasurer John Berry on the progress of work to create a new community space at St Georges Church.

Mr Berry delivered a short talk about Orleton St. George's Church and the Parochial Church Council's plans for the future. He underlined that the church and churchyard belong to the whole community, not only people of Faith. The churchyard is a well loved and used public space, frequented by walkers and other visitors. Repairs to drains and churchyard surface are planned in near future. Plans for creating a new space in the church are also underway. This space will be made available to all members of the community and an invitation was extended for local community groups to make more use of the church in the future. The PCC is, as always, working hard to raise the funds necessary for maintaining the church and keeping it open.

5. To receive a brief talk from the Chairman of Orleton Recreation Association Andrew Cadwallader on future plans for Orleton Recreation Ground.

Due to recent elections at ORA AGM, Mr A. Cadwallader was no longer the Chairman of ORA and as such was not able to represent the Charity. No other representative was available to deliver the update in his stead.

Sargeant Nicola Holgate delivered the following update on Policing matters in the local area.

- Community Policing Charter, introduced in 2021, is continuously updated with the Leominster Team engaging with communities to ensure it is up-to-date with matters important to local residents;
 - Periodic on foot patrols in the village, including plain clothes patrols;
 - Speed enforcing events carried out periodically in the parish;
 - Substance misuse reports in the woodlands by the Rec and the Village Hall car park monitored with patrols attending from time to time;
 - Police needs community information and reports to act on it; appeal to use the online and telephone facilities to report problems and crimes;
 - Youth outreach programs planned to be rolled out in villages across the area;
 - Funding for sport venues and equipment available;
 - Leominster Team are open to invitations to attend community groups meetings and deliver talks;
 - Property marking events planned;
 - Leaflets about scams and cold calling available;
 - Orleton is a low crime area;
 - Weekly surgeries run by the Team across the area;
 - Monthly coffee morning talks and face-to-face meetings.
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There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 7:28 pm

Signed – Chairman of the PC

Date

APPENDIX 1

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

May I welcome:

John Berry – Treasurer of the Parochial Church Council – who will be talking about the new community space at the Church and funding.

Sergeant Nicola Holgate representing the Leominster Safer Neighbourhood policing team who has kindly agreed to talk about community policing.

May I also welcome those from the Church who have volunteered to come here this evening to provide refreshments.

On behalf of Clare Owens of ORA may I also offer her apologies for not being able to join us tonight to talk about their work and forward programme.

This has been an eventful year for the parish council.

We have had three chairmen, lost four councillors and employed two clerks.

Since July we have had five elections, four of which were unopposed and one of which was contested.

The new committee, some of whom were elected as recently as January 2023, has been keen to effect cultural and procedural reforms.

There have also been regulatory, financial and governance issues. These 'legacy issues' have been addressed. We have not ignored them.

Looking backwards:

- We have made progress in developing a programme of works for the local infrastructure.
- We have secured improvements to Brimfield Brook by Shropshire Homes limited.
- We have worked with ORA and HC to ensure they are leading on the investment of £21k of s.106 monies to improve facilities for football on the recreation ground.
- We have resolved the neglect of junction markings at the post office junction.
- We have seen the ditching and drainage work completed.
- We have invested in equipment for flood volunteers to continue their work protecting the village.
- We are working with the police to improve road safety and reduce speeding in Comberton and by the Maidenhead.
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However, looking forward there are a number of new challenges:

One of these is the need to develop a new Neighbourhood Development Plan. This is the most effective way of ensuring that future development is responsibly and sympathetically considered by the Planners having proper regard to local opinion.

The second is the challenge of getting Herefordshire Council to discharge its obligations to the community in maintaining services and infrastructure. There is less money, and what there is, is being applied sparingly. The parish council will need to fight harder and with more reliance on the enforcement of legal duties to ensure delivery.

Tonight's annual meeting of the parish council is, unfortunately not the opportunity to debate these issues, as there are annual statutory obligations to discharge – such as the review of procedures and the appointment of representatives. However, the June meeting will provide that opportunity.

We shall continue to communicate our proceedings and the development of future plans via Grapevine and the PC web site.

In this connection may I also thank our new Clerk Olena Barrett for her work in improving the website and the presentation of our communications with the public.

David Lane
Chairman
Orleton Parish Council
18th May 2023
