

ORLETON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting

Thursday, 19th June 2025, 6.00pm, Orleton Village Hall

Present: Cllrs David Lane (Vice Chair), Veronica Bishop, Brian Powell and Barry Rogers (joining the meeting at item 5.3)

In Attendance: Ward Councillor Dan Hurcomb

Parish Clerk: Alison Morgan

Members of the Public: 5

In the absence of Cllr Gittings, Cllr David Lane (Vice Chair) chaired this meeting.

1. **Apologies** – Apologies were accepted from Cllrs Gittings, Jones and Simmons.
2. No **Declarations of Interest** or requests for **Dispensation** were received for this meeting.

To make the best use of time for those members of the public attending for an update on the proposed flood alleviation scheme and at the discretion of the Chair, Agenda items 8.1 and 8.1.1 were brought forward to be followed by the Open Discussion section.

8. Highways – The Chair enabled public participation for the first part of this item to facilitate questions and input from those present, including Ward Councillor, Dan Hurcomb.

8.1. HC Drainage & PROW Grant Funding 2025/26: HC has recently confirmed up to £25,000.00 grant funding is available to parish councils on successful submission of bids across Lengthsman, land drainage and public rights of way schemes. While funding amounts per parish council are not guaranteed, bids are encouraged to be submitted as appropriate and in accordance with specified criteria.

8.1.1. Following additional modelling and other contributory factors, design costs of the proposed flood alleviation scheme to reduce flooding on the B4361, in the area around the Maidenhead junction have risen considerably. This increase put completion of the final design phase at risk. Related meetings have taken place with consultants, Herefordshire Council (HC) and landowners to further consider all aspects of the proposed scheme, including the creation of balancing ponds. Discussions and confirmation of land ownership remain ongoing.

The Chair closed public participation to enable councillors to consider a proposal to submit a bid immediately to HC for minor drainage works grant funding of **£10,000.00**. It was proposed the grant funding should be used towards the cost of the detailed design work for the Maidenhead junction part of the Orleton flood alleviation scheme to enable this to be submitted for tender. After consideration, councillors **RESOLVED** the bid should be submitted immediately. Ward Councillor Hurcomb will be liaising with Balfour Beatty on timelines, but it is hoped modelling and design work will be completed by the end of July 2025.

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3. Open Discussion (Resumed):

3.1 Topics raised included the possibility of a Traffic Regulation Order to reduce the speed limit on the B4361 from 40-30mph and the introduction of a dropped curb by the Maidenhead, as well as the feasibility of double yellow lines to reduce parking issues near the school. *This concluded the public participation section of the meeting.*

4. Minutes of the last meeting held on 15th May 2025 were **APPROVED** and duly signed by the Vice Chair; they will be available on the PC website shortly.

5. Compliance

5.1. Councillor Appointments:

5.1.1. **Village Hall Representative:** Cllr Rogers was re-confirmed in this role.

5.1.2. **Recreation Ground Representative:** Cllr Powell was re-confirmed in this role.

5.1.3. **Planning Liaison:** Cllr Powell agreed to assume this role, with Cllr Jones as back-up.

5.2. **Power Tools Policy:** Concerns have arisen about the adequacy of insurance cover for councillors and volunteers involving the use of power tools. Research is ongoing by the Clerk who will report back to councillors as soon as possible for recommendations to be made. In the interim, it was **RESOLVED** the current halt on such activities by volunteers was confirmed.

5.3. (At this point Cllr Rogers joined the meeting) **Footpaths Officer (FPO):** It was agreed Martin Bradford, who has acted as FPO since 2021, has achieved significant improvements in the village's public rights of way network. However, further to item 5.2 above, it was **DETERMINED** clear terms of reference and an appropriate framework were required before the Parish Council would be in a position to consider an appointment to this role for the future. It was proposed letters of explanation should be written to Martin and all volunteer groups outlining this position. This action was **AGREED** and will be followed up by the Vice Chair and Clerk.

5.4. **Lengthsman:** [Ward Cllr Hurcomb left the room for the duration of this item] It was noted the initial agreement with the Lengthsman, Yatton Farm Services, had officially expired at the end of March 2025. After consideration, it was **AGREED** the contract should be formally extended to 31.03.2026. The Clerk will write to extend the agreement and set a reminder for earlier review for 2026-27.

6. Finance & Accounting:

6.1. **Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2024/25:** The following pre-requisite steps were taken to facilitate submission of the external auditor return by 1st July 2025

6.1.1. **Internal Audit 2024/25:** Councillors reviewed the internal audit report and noted two recommendations 1) Invoices must consistently be signed by two signatories and 2) bank reconciliations and independent verification thereof need to be consistently reported and put alongside minutes of meetings. The Clerk advised these steps have already been incorporated into internal processes. The Internal Audit report for submission to the external auditor confirmed internal control objectives were met overall.

6.1.2. **Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25:** based on the internal audit report and to the best of their knowledge, councillors were confident to affirm 'Yes' responses to statements 1-9 of this section; Statement 9 is not applicable and was marked accordingly. The completed form was signed by the Vice Chair and Clerk.

6.1.3. **Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25:** Councillors **APPROVED** the accounting statements, prepared and signed previously by the Responsible Financial Officer. The Vice Chair signed the approved form.

6.1.4. **Dates for the Exercise of Public Rights:** It was **CONFIRMED** the period for the exercise of public rights for inspection of the accounts would run from Tuesday, 1st July to Monday, 11th August 2025. Notices will be published as per statutory requirements.

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- 6.2. **Bank Reconciliation:** Reconciliations up to 30.04.25 and 31.05.25 were considered and Councillors resolved to **ADOPT** the reports for publication on the website as soon as possible.
- 6.3. **PC Mobile Phone Contract:** Councillors **APPROVED** the proposal to take out a mobile phone basic contract. The Clerk will research a suitable contract, estimated to be in the region of £7-9.00 per month.
- 6.4. **PC Charge Card:** It was **AGREED** the Clerk should apply to Unity Trust Bank/Lloyds for a MultiPay Charge Card for use with the PC's current bank accounts. Current cost of the card is £3.00 per month. Having this facility will reduce the need for use of the Clerk/Councillors' personal payment cards, as well as the need for personal reimbursement of expenses.

7. Planning:

7.1. To consider the following applications:

- 7.1.1. **P251396/K – Works to Trees in a Conservation Area – Church House Farm, Orleton SY8 4HN:** T1 - Lawson Cypress - fell to ground level. T2 - Lawson Cypress - reduce by approx. 20% to below cable. No objections were raised to these proposals.
- 7.1.2. **P251571/ PA1– Home Notification - Prior Approval – 27 Captain's Meadow, Orleton SY8 4DW:** Proposed extension and alterations. The extension will extend beyond the rear wall of the dwellinghouse by 6.5m. The maximum height of the extension is 3.7m and the height at the eaves of the extension is 2.3m. It was noted this property is at the end of the development facing open ground and is not on the flood plain. It was, therefore, supported.

Representations of comments by the PC will be submitted to HC Planning on its behalf by the Clerk. All responses can be viewed on the HC Planning Portal after publication.

8. Highways:

- 8.1. Covered at the outset of the meeting.
- 8.2. **Street Banners/Bunting:** The PC was asked by the Festivals Committee to consider use of the Lengthsman to perform this task for village events. After discussion, it was **AGREED** to pass on the Lengthsman's details and labour cost to the Committee for their consideration.
- 8.3. **Obstructed Pavements:** Several reports had been received recently about problems facing pedestrian users of the footways next to roads in the village due to overgrown hedges and trees. It was noted an appeal for property owners to trim vegetation has been inserted in the next edition of Grapevine. If this does not succeed in resolving the problem, it may be necessary to approach Balfour Beatty (BBLP) for enforcement.
- 8.4. **Orleton Memorial Garden:** A request to use the Lengthsman to cut grass in the wildflower meadow was considered and **APPROVED**.
- 8.5. **Other Highways Matters:** It was recently confirmed road resurfacing and safety measures by the school were going ahead as planned during the school holidays. Ward Councillor Hurcomb will establish whether any S106 monies remain that could be put towards yellow lining and/or signage to further improve school safety. Regarding the possible relocation of the SID baseplates on the B4361, Cllr Hurcomb will liaise with BBLP to see if this can be done in parallel with other work on the road.

9. Environment:

- 9.1. **Flooding & Land Drainage (Cllr Lane):** Since the last update, meetings with landowners, consultants and HC have led to a site for attenuation pools being agreed, subject to further clarification. However, the landowner consulted does not wish to undertake the work. Funding avenues are being explored with Natural Flood Management and others; HC as the drainage authority would need to be the lead agency.

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It is hoped statutory powers could be used in lieu of planning permission to gain the go-ahead for associated works. An Environmental Impact Assessment and ecology permits are likely to be required. Ward Cllr Hurcomb will update on timings when known. Further meetings on the detail of all aspects will be ongoing, as required.

10. Community:

- 10.1 **Defibrillators:** A proposal to purchase a replacement battery pack for the unit at the Boot Inn at an estimated cost of £245.00 (+ VAT) was **APPROVED**.
- 10.2 **Dog Waste Collection:** The volunteer who has been emptying the bin on Green Lane has moved. It was thought the bin was used primarily by guests from the Orleton Rise caravan site. It was, therefore, **RESOLVED** the Clerk should contact the owner to enquire whether they would be prepared to move the bin on site and maintain it.
- 10.3 **Orleton Village Hall Matters (Cllr Rogers):** It was reported there had been a rubbish problem after the recent junior football competition; the fete and motor homes events were a success and opportunities for collaborative fund raising are being explored with ORA, etc.
- 10.4 **Orleton Recreation Ground Matters (Cllr Powell):** Some issues with overnight camping were being experienced and consideration given to signage as a deterrent. A further survey has been requested for the pavilion project.

11. Ward Councillor's Report: the meeting was re-opened to public participation for Cllr Dan Hurcomb to update councillors on the following:

- Patching & drainage work is due to take place on B4362 between 21st and 29th July.
- Works at the Ashley Moor junction to include a mirror, re-profiling of the verge and moving a telegraph pole from the verge into a field.
- The stretch from Green Lane to the Maidenhead junction needs patching rather than pothole repairs.
- Attention was drawn to Herefordshire Council's call for development sites.
- The extent of re-surfacing on B4361 is being increased from Yarpole towards the Mortimer's Cross junction and in the opposite direction through Richard's Castle.
- HC has not as yet received much response to the Transport Consultation; everyone is encouraged to participate.
- In response to a query about the railings in Green Lane, it was confirmed the work will be done and Dan will follow up with the locality steward.
- An issue with ditches needing to be cleared at the Portway junction was raised; these have been inspected and marked up; Dan will check the status.

12. Payments Schedule: *NB: all invoices listed have been examined, verified and certified by the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). The schedule of payments was initialled by the Chair at the time of the meeting and is attached to these minutes.*

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- 12.1 Councillors **VERIFIED** the following payments made since the last meeting under delegated powers or previously approved:

Ref:	Payee:	Description:	Gross Payment (£)
12.1.1	M Bradford	Expenses Feb-May 25	623.04
12.1.2	Clear Councils	Insurance 25/26 Renewal	944.90
12.1.3	Wigmore School	Sponsored Prize	50.00
12.1.4	Orleton School	Oracy Grant	500.00
12.1.5	Clerk – A Morgan	Expenses & set-up costs	129.15
12.1.6	Orleton Shop	Meeting Refreshments	48.31
12.1.7	Starboard Systems	Scribe Accounts Set-Up cost	358.80

- 12.2 The following bank transfer, approved at the PC meeting on 17.04.2025 was **NOTED**:

Ref:	From A/c:	To A/c:	Description	Gross Payment (£)
12.2.1	UTB Current A/c	UTB Savings	Internal Transfer	10,000.00

- 12.3 The following payments were **APPROVED**:

Ref:	Payee:	Description:	Gross Payment (£)
12.3.1	Clerk – A Morgan	Expenses (May 25)	24.40
12.3.2	Clerk – A Morgan	Salary (June 2025)	As per staff contract
12.3.3	Clerk – A Morgan	Defib. Pads (Reimbursement)	80.94
12.3.4	Clerk – A Morgan	Mobile Phone (Reimbursement)	25.99
12.3.5	Orleton Village Hall	Hall Hire (Sep-Nov 24)	112.50
12.3.6	Orleton Village Hall	Hall Hire (Jan-Mar 25)	112.50
12.3.7	Leo Pest Control	Dog Waste SI-105434	85.20
12.3.8	M Bradford	Street Sign Expenses 12.05.25	20.26

13. **Correspondence:** The following correspondence was noted:

- 13.1. HC/BBLP: Invite to quarterly stakeholder engagement briefing session

14. Matters for next Agenda – no discussion.

- 14.1. To consider submission of Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for reduction of speed from 40 to 30mph on B4361 near the Maidenhead and addition of dropped curb; addition of yellow lines on Kings Road.

Please send Agenda Items for the next ordinary meeting to the Clerk clerk@orleton-pc.gov.uk by Wednesday, 9th July 2025

Next Meeting: Thursday, 17th July 2025 at 6:00pm in Orleton Village Hall