

This year we have seen much change in Orleton, from the creation of the St Georges Community Association, improvements to the village hall, and progress in ORAs epic battle to secure a new pavilion.

We have seen the completion and occupation of Captain's Meadow and an influx of new residents with new skills, experiences and ideas.

We have seen the expansion of voluntary work and levels of participation in the life of the village and a new Festivals Committee and History Group.

There is a sense that progress is being made in so many aspects of village life.

The parish council plays a modest part in all of this, keeping the village maintained, managing voluntary groups on Rights of Way and Land Drainage and advocating on issues of concern with outside bodies.

Since last May we have lost one **Cllr Colin Mitchell**, who sadly had to leave for health reasons, and co-opted one new Councillor – **Cllr Mike Jones** in November 2024.

A new Tree Officer **Dave Batten** was taken on in July 2024

A new Clerk, **Alison Morgan** was appointed in April 2025

So, if I may just provide a brief report on our activities from May 2024 to date:

This work can be conveniently placed in five categories; there is:

1. The basic function:

We empty dog bins, work with our Lengthsman through grants to maintain ditches, gullies, and respond to incidents. We propose minor drainage works and report on issues arising. We keep the village maintained and do what we can to support and improve it with the help of volunteers.

We work with our County Cllr Dan Hurcomb to secure support from the county where local powers or resources are inadequate.

We respond to planning applications – most notably in relation to the recent proposal to site travellers on the busy B4362.

We attended meetings on subjects as varied as NDPs, the Parish Summit, the Flood Forum, the NPPF, and on the Forward Plan for Highways.

2. The innovative role:

Flood wardens: We persuaded Herefordshire Council to design a scheme which allows volunteers to close flooded roads. **Cllrs Powell, Gittings, Mitchell** all participated.

Street signage: We rolled out a programme to preserve the old cast-alloy signs which our parish footpaths officer **Martin Bradford** then expanded to replace missing signs (Green Lane) and create new ones (Kings Road) and provide additional signage (Mortimer Drive).

Planning: Asking the planners to include sewage capacity as a consideration in the planning process. This has been taken aboard and will now form part of their consideration at a county level.

Cllr Gittings addressed the absence of any flagpole to serve as the focal point for national days in the village by teaming-up with the Village Hall to provide a site.

3. The advocacy role:

Challenging Severn Trent: in April 2024 we wrote a detailed complaint which has resulted in significant interventions from the EA and planners and further work by the company.

Writing critical reports on highway drainage and the design, maintenance and construction of the bridge and highway flooding: This has resulted in a highway drainage scheme being taken on by the Highway Authority and modifications to the bridge.

Cllr Veronica Bishop challenged the failure to maintain the King's Road: With active support from Dan this has resulted in funds being allocated the resurface Kings Road and Kitchen Hill Road

Cllr Bishop questioned highway safety: Again, working with Cllr Hurcomb this resulted in a scheme under s.106 to improve road safety around the school, the village, and more sites for SIDS within the village.

4. Event management role:

Flood response: We now have an effective flood response with a Facebook page supported by **Julia Leech Howlett**, 4 x 4 volunteers, signage, equipment and good communications with Hereford on clean-up and reporting. We have established links to Brimfield and Little Hereford Flood Group and PC. We carry out real-time reporting in liaison with the school. We record data and video to inform subsequent reviews under s.19 of the Floods and Water Management Act 2010.

5. Community enhancement role:

The footpaths volunteers. Under **Martin Bradford** twelve new stiles have been installed, fingerposts repaired or replaced, undergrowth cut back, paths marked and numbered, concrete poured, steps cut in, 3 footbridges replaced, fences repaired, obstructions reported...all to improve accessibility to the countryside.

Cllr Barry Rogers sits as in independent trustee on the Village Hall Committee and **Cllr Powell** as a trustee on Orleton Recreation Association, nominated by the parish council.

Remembrance Day – laying of the wreath and reading the Roll of Honour

Christmas service participation and readings

Community events – VE day buntings and support,

Financial support for the refurbishment of the telephone box carried out by Martin Bradford.

Administrative ‘tidying up’ – first registration of the Recreation Ground at HM Land Registry.

Over this year we have also dispensed grants to: The Evergreens, Orleton History Group, Orleton Church, Orleton Pre-School, Orleton School and the Village Hall, amounting to £2,750.

However, I wish to end by saying a special thanks to those volunteers who regularly come out to serve the community by working on the parish paths, village street signs, the brook and in so many other ways for the benefit of the community. And, to the farmers and landowners who accommodate and support those works.

I also wish to say thank you to those who quietly but effectively maintain God’s Acre.

I also wish to express our appreciation as a parish council for the tireless and diligent work of our county councillor Dan Hurcomb who supports this parish in so many invaluable ways.

May I also acknowledge the work of my fellow Cllrs and, in particular that of my Vice-Chair Cllr Ron Gittings.

David Lane

Chairman Orleton Parish Council

1 May 2025