

ORLETON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting

Thursday, 19 March 2026 at 6.00pm in Orleton Village Hall

Present: Cllrs David Lane (Chair), Mike Jones, Colin Mitchell, Brian Powell, Mike Tipping, Mark Wetton

In attendance: Ward Councillor Dan Hurcomb

Parish Clerk: Stacy Perry

Members of the Public: 10

1. **Apologies** were received from Councillor Simmons.
2. No **Declarations of Interest** or **requests for Dispensation** were received for this meeting.

Cllr Mike Tipping joined the meeting.

3. It was **NOTED** that Stacy Perry has been appointed as Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to the Parish Council.
 - 3.1 Councillors resolved to **APPROVE** HALC training for the Clerk at a cost of £1,100 plus VAT (4 sessions) and £415 for the portfolio submission to the SLCC.
4. It was **NOTED** that the three Parish Councillor vacancies were filled following an uncontested election. Councillors Colin Mitchell, Mike Tipping, and Mark Wetton signed the Declaration of Acceptance.
5. Councillors resolved to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the following meetings:
 - 5.1 The meeting of Orleton Parish Council on 20 November 2025.
 - 5.2 The meeting of Orleton Parish Council on 19 February 2026.
 - 5.3 Extraordinary Meeting of Orleton Parish Council on 9 March 2026.The minutes will be posted on the Parish Council's website shortly.
6. Planning
 - 6.1 The following decisions by the Planning Officer were **NOTED**:
 - 6.1.1 P253496/F – Land adj. Orchard Farm Comberton Orleton.** Application refused.
 - 6.1.2 P260228/K – Kitchen Hill Road, Orleton SY8 4HP.** Work to trees can proceed.
 - 6.1.3 P253481/FH – 4 Mortimer Close, Orleton SY8 4PG.** Approved with conditions.
 - 6.1.4 P253672/PA4 – Whitestones Farm, Richards Castle, Herefordshire.** Prior approval not required.
 - 6.1.5 P253606/L – Churchyard Cottage, Orleton, SY8 4HU.** Approved with conditions
 - 6.2 Application **P260415/K – Works to Trees in a Conservation Area – 19 Mortimer Close, Orleton SY8 4PG** (agenda item 6.2.1) was not considered as it was pointed out that the works had already been completed.

- 6.3 No further **new applications** were considered at this meeting.

Details of all applications and responses can be viewed on the Herefordshire Council Planning Portal website after publication.

7. Finance

- 7.1 **Bank Reconciliation:** Councillor Powell confirmed that he and Councillor Simmons had reviewed the bank reconciliation report prior to the meeting. Councillors resolved to **APPROVED** the report.
- 7.2 **Budget Monitoring:** It was **REPORTED** that the current account balance is £2,229.22. The Clerk was unable to give a more detailed report on performance against budget (Q4/2025-26) as she does not yet have access to the online banking. Because of this, the Parish Council is unable to transfer funds from its reserves account to its current account to cover upcoming payments. Councillor Lane proposed loaning £5,000 to the Parish Council, as a temporary measure to be repaid without interest, pending the resumption of banking authority for the Clerk. Councillors **APPROVED** this proposal.
- 7.3 No **payments** were presented.

8 Herefordshire Council's Community Flood Signage Scheme

- 8.1 It was **NOTED** that there will be further training of the Flood Wardens on 26 March 2026.
- 8.2 It was **NOTED** that going forward, the protocol for the positioning of the flood barriers will be just below the entrance of the Village Hall car park. It is hoped that from this position, the barriers cannot be washed away during flooding.

9 Open session

- 9.1 **Ward Councillor's Report:** Councillor Hurcomb's report included the following items:
- The Government is consulting on the National Planning Policy Framework, which is available online. There will be changes for rural villages, but it is also something to be aware of in case the Parish wants to do any updates to the Neighbourhood Plan in the next 12 to 24 months.
 - The state of the B4361 through the village has been reported to Highways several times. The three potholes on the B4361 north of the Portway junction have been repaired. The wet weather caused a backlog, but Balfour Beatty is starting to turn a corner and get on top of repairs now that the weather has improved.
 - There is a new delivery officer overseeing the Section 106 money, so we are still waiting to find out what additional work can be done. The line painting across from The Boot, however, will be completed.
 - The Ashley Moor highway closure has been rescheduled for April, exact dates to be confirmed.
 - The Council Tax will be going up by 4.99%. The Council needs to identify £30 million of savings in the year ahead.
 - The Parish Council Summit covered the Government's devolution position. Herefordshire is expected to make partnerships with Gloucestershire and Worcestershire in terms of mayoral arrangements.
 - The bin in the layby on the B4361 has been temporarily removed following complaints of fly tipping to Yarpole Parish Council. This is a 6-week trial project to see if removing the bin reduces littering, as suggested by evidence. If the situation worsens, the bin will be returned.

9.2 The following views of local residents were **RECEIVED**:

- A resident asked for clarification of the size of the pipe that is being proposed to go under the road at the Maidenhead junction and if thought had been given to the potential harm that could be caused for people downstream in Brimfield. Councillor Lane explained that the flood alleviation proposal is being developed by engineers who have the qualifications and expertise to determine the necessary pipe size for the volume of water and sludge that would need to be moved and that it is moved along without simply being displaced. Ward Councillor Hurcomb confirmed that Herefordshire Council will not approve any scheme that will increase flood risk downstream.
- The aforementioned resident also asked if it is true that the Parish Council is considering taking Herefordshire Council to court if they do not fund the highway flood alleviation scheme, and why is there an agenda item [14.7] to consider the appointment of solicitors. Councillor Lane stated that various aspects of the broader scheme would be discussed under agenda item 14. At the April meeting of the Parish Council, there will be a presentation of the proposals on the table and the budgets allocated to deliver them. Councillor Lane went on to explain that the Parish Council will discuss whether or not to appoint solicitors as a matter of due diligence and that litigation would be a last resort in any circumstance.
- A resident asked if the legal advice would be shared at the April Parish Council meeting. Councillor Lane confirmed that it would be.
- A resident said that there are a couple of blocked drains causing water to run down Ashley Moor Road. Ward Councillor Hurcomb said he would contact the Locality Steward to get the blocked drains seen to.

10 Community Matters

- 10.1 **Volunteer roles:** Councillors **AGREED** to recruit volunteers for the roles of Parish Footpaths Officer and Parish Tree Officer.
- 10.2 **Orleton Recreation Association:** Councillor Powell reported that Orleton District Junior Football Club has announced that they will be leaving the Apperly Recreation Ground after the current season, which includes the tournament that they host. ORA will begin to advertise the pavilion and recreation ground for other functions. ORA has purchased a disabled access ramp for the pavilion, but it has not been installed yet.
- 10.3 **Orleton Village Hall:** Councillor Jones reported that the committee met earlier in March. They are waiting for the new video projector to be installed and will be applying for a premises license for a bar. The committee has a full calendar of events planned. A resident volunteered to undertake the flying of occasional flags at the Village Hall.
- 10.4 **Defibrillators:** Councillor Jones reported that all of the defibrillators are working and have been registered. He will be cleaning them at the weekend.

11 Annual Parish Meeting

- 11.1 The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on 13 May 2026, and the guest speaker will be Jacob Laughran from the Severn Rivers Trust, who will discuss natural flood management. Councillors **AGREED** that refreshments should be provided at the meeting and that the Clerk will make the arrangements.

12 To consider dates for Parish Council meetings from May 2026-2027: Councillors **AGREED** the following dates:

- 12.1 2026: May 21, June 18, July 16, Sept 17, Oct 15, Nov 19
- 12.2 2027: Jan 21, Feb 18, March 18, April 15

13 Land Drainage Volunteers

- 13.1 The correspondence from Clear Councils of 4th March 2026 and their receipt of Risk Assessments and Method Statements for the use of strimmers and hedge cutters was **NOTED** by Councillors.
- 13.2 Councillors **APPROVED** a resolution to allow the use of strimmers and hedge cutters by the Land Drainage Volunteers.
- 13.3 Councillor Lane reported that over the coming weekend, the Land Drainage Volunteers will be clearing an area of Brimfield Brook adjacent to Captain's Meadow with the agreement of relevant landowners and Shropshire Homes. The volunteers will also be dredging the culvert under the bridge where silt is starting to build up.

14 Highway Flood Alleviation Scheme

- 14.1 Councillor Lane provided the following update on **the attenuation works and the Natural Flood Management Scheme**: Herefordshire Council has confirmed that 19 leaky dams and two in-ditch seepage barriers have been installed across the Brimfield Brook catchment. Just over 47 hectares of land are now under improved soil management, and a further 33 hectares are scheduled for delivery. It is expected that this autumn, more trees and hedgerow will be planted along key flow paths to help intercept runoff and reduce soil erosion. Further attenuation areas and additional leaky dams are also planned. Delivery is scheduled for September.
- 14.2 Councillor Lane provided the following update on **works to break-out the culvert adjacent to the B4361**: A scheme has been designed for the breakout of the old culvert, which has previously been identified as a key contributor to flooding on the B4361. The design includes attenuation measures and will lower the existing surface by approximately one meter below the existing ground levels.
- 14.3 It was **NOTED** that on 26 February 2026, Councillor Lane wrote to the Highway Authority, on behalf of the Parish Council, asking for an update on the progress of the flood alleviation scheme and a timetable for when the scheme will be delivered.
- 14.4 The decision of the Highway Authority not to proceed with flood alleviation works to improve drainage of the B4361 in the vicinity of the Maidenhead junction due to cost was **NOTED**, as was the local authority's identification of a suitable substitute scheme.

Item 14.8 was moved up to allow it to be discussed before members of the public were excluded from the meeting.

- 14.8 It is thought that a community engagement and media strategy are needed to promote the April meeting of the Parish Council. The proposed highway flood alleviation scheme will be presented at this meeting, and residents will be given the opportunity to ask questions on a broader scale than is usually allowed at Parish Council meetings. Therefore, the Parish Council thinks it should draw on the public relations experience of the Clerk to develop a strategy that maximises awareness of the meeting.
- 14.5 Councillors **AGREED** to exclude members of the public from the meeting for discussion of agenda items 14.6 and 14.7 for discussion of privileged legal advice and legal options.
- 14.6 Councillors **CONSIDERED** a briefing note dated 7 July 2025, on legal process and cost benefit.
- 14.7 Following lengthy discussion, Councillors **AGREED** to defer consideration of the appointment of Ladders Solicitors to a later, unspecified date.

- 15** No matters were raised for inclusion on the next agenda. Cllr Jones said that he would not be able to give a Village Hall update as their committee meeting will take place after the next Parish Council meeting.
- 16** Because the Parish Council hopes to have a large turnout for its April meeting, the Clerk will ask the Village Hall Bookings Secretary if the large hall is available on Friday, 24 April at 6pm. Councillors **AGREED** to move the next meeting to this date if the large hall is available.

The meeting closed at 7:42pm.