

ORLESTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Orlestone Parish Council's Meeting held on Monday 12th May 2025 at 7pm in Hamstreet Sports Pavilion, Pound Lees, Hamstreet.

Present: Parish Councillors: Andy Othen (Chairman), Mike Wady (Vice-Chairman) Sid Gittens, Basil Smith, Mags Wellsted-Boorman, David White, Steve Newton via Facetime and the Parish Clerk (Sue Stiffell).

Also Present: Borough Councillor David Ledger

- 1. Election of Chairman for the Ensuing Year:** Nominations for Chairman for the ensuing year were requested. Sid Gittens nominated Andy Othen; this was seconded by Mags Wellsted-Boorman. Andy agreed to act as Chairman for the year and completed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Chairman.
- 2. Election of Vice-Chairman for the Ensuing Year:** The Chairman requested nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman. David White proposed Mike Wady and Basil Smith seconded this proposal. Mike agreed to act as Vice-Chairman for the year and completed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Vice-Chairman.
- 3. To Receive and Approve The Following:** These had been circulated to members prior the meeting via email
 - i) Inventory/Asset Register of Council Property
 - ii) Risk Management Analysis
 - iii) Standing Orders
 - iv) Internal Financial Controls and Procedures

The Asset Register was checked and the number of noticeboards that the Parish Council were responsible for was noted as three (two at Forge Gardens and one on Pound Lees). It was separately noted that the Information Centre (Bus Shelter in Ruckinge Road) also contained a noticeboard. Members agreed that the Asset Register was correct.

Those present approved the Risk Management Analysis, Standing Orders and Internal Financial Controls and Procedures.

The following policies were not reviewed as there had been no changes in legislation. It was agreed that they would be reviewed in 2030 unless legislation was altered.

- a) Freedom of Information Act – Policy
- b) Retention & Disposal of Documents Policy
- c) Data Protection Policy
- d) Safe Guarding Policy
- e) Complaints Procedure Policy
- f) Social Media Policy

- 4. Review Parish Council's Insurance Policy** It was noted that the parish council's insurance policy was due to be renewed on 1st June 2025. The schedule had been circulated prior the meeting via email. It was noted that the annual premium would be £2,892.07. It was unanimously agreed that the policy be renewed. Confirmation on what the cover for 'Playgrounds' included was still be awaited.

- 5. To Appoint Members (including Chairman and Vice-Chairman) to Orlestone Parish Council's Planning Committee.** During discussion the following was agreed:

Chairman: Mike Wady

Vice-Chairman: Sid Gittens

Members: All members

Terms of Reference: To meet on the third Monday of every month, if necessary, to discuss planning applications received and have delegated power to comment. At the discretion of the Chairman of the Planning Committee, a site meeting could replace a sit-down meeting as could a digital meeting.

Appointment of Representatives onto Outside Bodies: The following was agreed:

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| HDSLAs: | Andy Othen & Mags Wellsted-Boorman |
| Victory Hall Committee: | Basil Smith |
| Friends of St Mary's Church | Basil Smith |
| Bowls Club | David White & David Farrell |
| Hamstreet Shed Men | Sid Gittens, David Farrell, Basil Smith |
| Royal British Legion: Hamstreet Branch | Michael Wady and Andy Othen |

6. Allocation of Councillors' Responsibilities: The following was agreed:

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Website/Facebook | Andy Othen |
| Highway Issues | Mike Wady, Basil Smith, Steve Newton |
| Planning: | Mike Wady, Sid Gittens, Steve Newton |
| Johnsons Corner | Andy Othen/Mike Wady |
| Designated Finance Officer | Mike Wady |
| Allotments | David White |
| Forge Gardens | Sid Gittens (& Linda Gittens) |
| Defibrillator | Mags Wellsted-Boorman |
| Local Community Liaison Officer | Sadie Michell |
| Noticeboards | Mags Wellsted-Boorman |
| War Memorial | Sid Gittens |
| Flags | Mags/Andy Othen (All Members to Help) |

7. To Fix Date & Times of Parish Council Meetings for the Ensuing Year: It was agreed that Parish Council meetings would continue to be held on the first Monday of each month except January and August, at 7pm in the Hamstreet Sports Pavilion. Confirmation of the date of the next meeting would be agreed at the meeting prior to it. Planning meetings would be held on the third Monday of each month when necessary.

8. Finance: Discuss/Agree Annual Return & End of Year Accounts, Review Internal Auditor Report, Review Annual Budget; Review Grant Applications Received Since the Last Meeting, Review Parish Councillor Allowances, Review Parish Clerk's Salary, Authorisation of Cheques

- **Review End of Year Accounts and Annual Governance Statement:** This had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. An end of year bank reconciliation and an explanation of variations in income and expenditure from the previous financial year had also been circulated prior to the meeting. Paper copies were made available to those present.

Following discussion, it was unanimously agreed that the items listed from 1 to 9 in section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 2024/2025 be agreed and signed by the Chairman. It was also agreed that the Accounting Statements in the Annual Governance Statement were correct and could be signed by the Chairman as being so.

- **Review Internal Auditor's Report:** The Internal Auditor's report was contained in the AGAR and in a covering letter the internal auditor stated: *'I provided an Internal Audit service to Orlestone Parish Council for the financial year ending 31st March 2025 and acting independently, I examined the system of internal control by undertaking a variety of tests guided by the questions raised in the Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25 of the Local Councils Annual Return Form . On the basis of my examination, in my view the Council's system of internal controls is adequate for the purpose intended and effective.*

I recommend that:

- 1) *The provision of a pension to the parish clerk be reviewed. It is a legal requirement for employers to provide a pension to their employees and although Orlestone Parish Council have opted out, this should be re-examined.*
- 2) *Parish Councillors ensure that they submit any receipts regarding expenditure/reimbursement in a timely manner in order for the accounts to be kept up-to-date. '*

Members agreed that the provision of a pension for the Parish Clerk be investigated and that they would ensure that any receipts were presented as soon as practical.

Review Annual Budget: An annual budget that had been drawn up while discussing Precept setting in December 2024, using this as a template the Clerk had drawn up a budget which had been updated on 6th May 2025, this gave details of what was in each budget from 1st April 2025, what had been spent and what was left. This had been circulated prior the meeting and paper copies were made available to those present.

Review Parish Councillor Allowances. It was highlighted that members could apply for an allowance to cover their expenses and time being a Parish Council. The Chairman noted that all expenses were reimbursed to members on the provision of a receipt and allowances were not usually sought. Those present agreed that this continue and allowances would not be sought but it would be reviewed at the next AGM.

Review Parish Clerk's Salary: It was noted that the Parish Clerk was currently paid £16.50, per hour per hour for an average of 8 hours work a week. The Clerk was also paid £120 a month for expenses relating to the use of her home as an office. During a brief discussion it was agreed that the Clerk's salary be increased by 3% this being an increase of 50p per hour.

Review Grant Applications Received: The following applications for a grant had been received; details of these had been sent to members via email prior the meeting. During this agenda item Jemma Thompson arrived (Chair to the HDSLAs)

- i) **The Church of the Good Shepherd** Funding towards the cost of replacing kitchen. Following discussion and examination of the application it was unanimously agreed that £500 be provided.
- ii) **Hamstreet Victory Hall: Funding** sought to help with mowing costs; last year's cost being £664. During discussion it was noted that the hall received an income when hired out and that this was used to help cover various running costs including mowing the grass. Members agreed that 50% of the cost be awarded, this being £332.
- iii) **HDSLAs** Funding sought for the production of an OS scale site plan and master plan drawings in relation to the new field. The total cost being over £7,000.
Following discussion Sid Gitten proposed that a grant of £500 be awarded and David White seconded this proposal which was agreed by Basil Smith and Steve Newton. Andy Othen and Mike Wady who were part of the project group and Mags Wellsted-Boorman who was affiliated with the HDSLAs all declared an interest and did not take part in the vote.
- iv) **St Mary's Church:** Funding was being sought for new bell ropes. A letter received had been circulated via email and made available to those present. During discussion it was agreed that funds would not be released at this time.

The Chairman proposed that agenda item 12 be brought forward so that Jemma Thompson (Chair of the HDSLAs and Borough Councillor David Ledger could provide their reports. Members unanimously agreed this proposal.

12. Reports/Updates Received From Representatives of the Community and Parish Councillors

HDSLAs: Jemma – Chairman of the HDSLAs reported:

Sports Pavilion: All internal matters relating to the pavilion were overseen by Mags. New lights had been fitted in the lounge area and the solar panels/batteries were proving a success and the electric bills had reduced.

Pound Leas Recreation Ground: A grant had been awarded from the FA for equipment and a new container. One of the LED lights at the MUGA had failed and would be replaced however research was being undertaken into the best one for the job. Plans for more parking spaces had been put on hold for the time being while plans for the new field were in discussion.

Community Day: Had been planned for Saturday 5th July and various events would be held. Plans for the Pound Leas Project (new field) would be shared on the day.

New Field: The project management group were meeting regularly and discussion with the FA had led to consideration being undertaken for a 3G pitch. The advantages and disadvantages need to be examined before a decision could be made.

The ditch that run alongside the field and Ashford Road still required clearing. The Clerk is to chase for this work to be undertaken and request that when it is done it is cleared field side so that as much hedge would be retained.

Following Jemma's report, a brief discussion was held regarding the new field being used temporarily for sheep grazing/hay making. It was agreed that this could take place and an agreement would be drawn up for the person who had voiced an interest.

Borough Councillor David Ledger: reported that The Local Plan Task Group would be holding a meeting later in the week. Things were going slowly and at some point, Parish Council's would need to comment. A site meeting had been arranged for 29th May to discuss the waste water works in Warehorne Road. *Following the meeting this was postponed until 3rd July.* David noted members concerns that it would not able to cope if further development took place in the village.

David highlighted that the main developer at the Chilmington site had put in an appeal regarding S106 contributions which they said they could not afford, the outcome of this appeal could have a knock-on effect to other developments, so the outcome was important. David concluded his report by informing those present that he would be holding his monthly surgery in the Cosy Kettle on Wednesday from 10am.

During a brief discussion , it was noted that a new Kent County Councillor called Bill Barrett (Reform UK) had been elected and would be representing the area. The Clerk had sent him a welcome email and invited him to the meeting being held in June plus an invitation for an informal meeting to walk around Hamstreet with a parish councillor, in her email she had highlighted existing concerns

Parish Councillor Reports:

Chairman: reported that he had noticed earlier, that the 30mph sign in Ruckinge Road had fallen off , he is to investigate and see if he can do a quick repair if not the Clerk will contact Highways.

Mags Wellsted-Boorman: highlighted that the 'Orlestone' gate sign had still not been put up in Warehorne Road. The Clerk is to investigate why it was taking so long. Mags also noted that the hedge around Cherry Cottage had become so large that it was now a hazard and that those using the footpath were now stepping onto the road when walking past. The Clerk is to write to the occupier with a request that it be cut back.

Mike Wady: reported that water leaks in the village continued to be an issue. He highlighted that the one outside Cotton Hill House had been fixed 6 times during the past 2 years but still continued to leak and the ones opposite Fairfield Terrace and in the lay-by opposite Dukes Meadow were an ongoing problem He continued to report these regularly.

Mike further reported on issues with parking by the entrance to Ruckinge Road via Ashford Road, with cars being parked too close to the junction. He had put in a request for double yellow lines her and the Clerk is to add this to the HIP.

Sid Gittens highlighted that when working in Forge Gardens he had been asked a few times by various walkers, where the end of Green Sand Way was. During discussion it was agreed that some type of information was required at Forge Gardens. The Clerk is to contact Adam Colton for help.

David White: reported that the pump being used at the allotment gardens required updating. Those present unanimously agreed that one be purchased.

8. **Finance (cont.)** Discussion was held regarding cheque payments and how it would be easier if on-line banking was adopted. This would especially help the clerk when undertaking bank reconciliations as she would not then have to wait for paper bank statements to be delivered. Those present unanimously agreed that on-line banking be undertaken.

Authorisation of Cheques: The following payments were noted.

| <u>To</u> | <u>Details</u> | <u>Amount</u> | <u>Cheque No</u> |
|-----------|----------------|---------------|------------------|
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| ABC | License Fee For Pound Leas Recreation | 31.00 | 1868 |
| Reimburse Chairman | Website Renewal Fees | 43.06 | 1869 |
| Annual Assembly | Community Awards | 48.00 | 1869 |
| HDSL A | Refreshments at Annual Assembly | 301.20 | 1870 |
| Friends of St Mary's | Annual Subscription Fee | 25.00 | 1871 |
| Friends of St Mary's | S106 Funding: Maintenance | 12,975.60 | 1872 |
| Cosy Kettle | Refreshments at Annual Assembly | 187.50 | 1873 |
| Reimburse Clerk | Stationary & Ice Cubes For Assembly | 9.00 | 1874 |
| Reimburse Clerk | Pump For Allotments | 384.00 | 1874 |
| Parish Clerk | Salary for May | 572.00 | 1875 |
| Parish Clerk | Expenses: Home/Office May | 120.00 | 1875 |
| Reimburse Clerk | Gardeners Pay to end of April | 390.00 | 1875 |
| HDSL A | Grant | 500.00 | 1876 |
| Hamstreet Victory Hall | Grant | 332.00 | 1877 |
| Church of the Good Shepherd | Grant | 500.00 | 1878 |

- 9. Apologies & Declarations of Interest:** Apologies were received from Parish Councillor Dave Farrell and Sadie Michell who both had prior engagements. Those present agreed that these apologies be accepted. Apologies were also received from PC Laker.

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest (relating to items on this agenda made in order to comply with the Kent Code of Conduct): None were made at this point from Councillors present.

Declarations of Significant Interest (relating to items on this agenda made) Mags Wellsted-Boorman: HDSL A Member, David White: Allotment Holder.

- 10. Approval of Minutes From Meeting Held on 3rd March 2025.** Sid Gittens proposed that the minutes be approved as a correct record of the meeting. David White seconded this proposal which was agreed by those present. The Chairman signed the minutes.

11. Matters Arising From the Meeting Held on 3rd March 2025 and Annual Assembly Held on 7th April 2025

- i) Agreement Between HDSL A and OPC Relating to Pound Leas Recreation Ground (New Field): This had not progressed any further due to the lack of any further correspondence with ABC regarding the existing Pound Leas Recreation Ground and the current agreement between OPC and HDSL A.
It was agreed that a separate agreement for the management of the new field between the HDSL A and OPC be drawn up by the parish council's solicitor. This would be along the lines previously agreed.
- ii) During the Annual Assembly it had been suggested that a small number of the parish newsletter could be printed and left at various venues in the village. During discussion it was noted that this would not be a financially viable project for the parish council to do.
- iii) Alleyway from Ashford Road To Footpath to The Pippins: Work had now commenced for there to be a passing place in the 'alleyway'.

13. Correspondence Received & Planning:

Correspondence: not covered under other agenda items. The Clerk had circulated via email various updates from Ashford Borough Council and emails received.

Planning:

No: 2025/0702 The Hall, Ashford Road, TN26 2EW
 Proposal Lawful Development Certificate: Existing Use as C2 Residential Institution
 Comments: No objection

No: 2025/0600 Land North by Northwest of 2 Brimstone Road, Hamstreet (Nightingales)
 Proposal: Erection of 8 dwellings with associated access, car ports, landscaping and biodiversity enhancements.

Comments It was noted that the idea of a care home had been replaced with an application for 8 dwellings. One objection was viewable on ABC's planning portal; copy was provided to those present.
 No objections were raised.

No: 2025/0575 Orlestone Lodge, Hamstreet Road, TN26 2EB
Proposal: Garden store extension to existing garage

No: 2025/0505 Orlestone Lodge, Hamstreet Road, TN26 2EB
Proposal: Proposed single-storey rear extension

It was noted that there had been a flyer delivered in Hamstreet regarding an online consultation for up to 86 homes on land behind the existing Pippins development that would run behind the houses in Ashford Road.

14. **Update: Friends of St Mary's Church & S106 Funding:** It was noted that £34,208.40 Section 106 funding from The Pippins development had been released for work at St Mary's Church. This had been paid directly to the Parish Council who will have to monitor their projects. It was noted that this funding had to be spent on agreed projects. £12,975.60 had been set aside for maintenance expenditure relating to the what the rest of the funding was being spent on. This had already been released to The Friends of St Mary's Church with a request that all receipts or copies of receipts for this expenditure be sent to the parish clerk for her records.

- 15. Items for Next Agenda/Any Other Business** No items were brought forward. The Chairman asked that the Clerk be notified if a members wanted a specific item to be discussed at the next meeting and this would be put on the agenda.

- 16. Date & Time of Next Meetings:** Monday 2nd June 2025 at 7pm in the Hamstreet Sports Pavilion

Meeting Concluded 9.20pm

Chairman's Signature: