

# **Orleton Parish Council**

## **Parish Council Budget and Precept – 2018-19**

The Parish Council set its budget and precept for the financial year 2018-19 in November 2017, and agreed to keep the precept the same. Thus, the precept for the financial year beginning April 2018 will be £25,000 and the component of the precept included in the Council Tax will be unchanged. The full precept and budget for 2018-19 can be seen on the Village website and parish noticeboard.

## **Progress in 2017-18**

In the last year, the parish council has undertaken several initiatives, and with the end of 2017 drawing near, it is perhaps an appropriate time to review these.

- Following the Village Hall car park re-surfacing, we have continued to support the Village Hall refurbishment plans by agreeing to donate £7,100 to the kitchen refurbishment project which will be done in 2018. We have also funded high speed public access broadband at the hall (£850 in 2017-18);
- We have increased our donation to maintain the churchyard at St George's to £2,400 to take account of the increased costs;
- The restoration of the War Memorial was completed in time for Remembrance Sunday at a cost of £1,210 net of a grant contribution;
- New benches have been installed at St George's Crescent, by the phone box and the Liners at a cost of about £1,400;
- Donation to the recreation ground for insurance and mowing of playground area (£2,170); and
- Royal British Legion large poppies to mark Remembrance Sunday – £90.

A sum of £1,311 has been allocated in 2017-18 for minor highways repairs and to help maintain public rights of way or footpaths. This financial contribution is required to access available grant funding for these schemes. As well as strimming of green areas, the lengthsman budget has been used to tidy the large verge and plant bulbs opposite St George's Crescent, and to repair minor potholes (the large potholes remain the responsibility of Herefordshire Council).

A few years ago, the Parish Council publicised a few walks around the Village which proved to be very popular. Will Sanders, our footpath officer has done sterling work in starting to establish a circular walk over by the railway, re-instating the footpath sign by the pumping station, and replacing the stile with a kissing gate up Tunnel Lane to allow easy access to the footpath to the church behind Church Lane. Bridge repair work has been completed as well.

## **Plans for 2018-19**

Next year we must absorb some additional costs because of the withdrawal of the lengthsman grant by Herefordshire Council. The parish council has made £2,500 available for minor highways work next year, which includes the regular strimming of green areas in the village and clearance of visibility splays on key junctions. Also, £500 is to help put in place measures to implement the General Data Protection Regulations which will come into force in May 2018. We shall establish a Parish Council website with a ".gov" name which should enable us to maintain better contact with the Village. Another significant new project that has needed to be budgeted for is maintenance of the boundary wall at God's Acre on Millbrook Way. The parish council commissioned a report which highlighted necessary maintenance which is estimated to cost at least £6,000. A donation of £1,000 is in place to support the 492 bus service, and approximately £450 is allocated for the servicing of the dog bins on Millbrook Way and St George's Crescent.

One of the major concerns which has come to our notice is the issue of road safety, with worries about the speed of traffic on the B roads, and along Kitchen Hill Lane. We have had advice from the police and Balfour Beatty about measures we could undertake to improve things, which could include “Village Gates”, dragon’s teeth and red tarmac road markings, and more sockets for road speed indicators. All these things would have to be done at the parish’s expense and we shall obtain cost estimates and decide on the way forward during the year.

It is also possible that we may have to take some action on The Boot. At present we are hopeful that it will be sold as a going concern to a suitable operator, but if necessary we shall be prepared to get involved. Finally, there are the usual administrative costs necessary to operate the parish council, such as hall hire, insurance, IT, employment costs, and audit fees, which are in line with previous years.

### **Parish Council Meetings**

The parish council is always keen to know what you would like to see supported. For this and other parish matters please come along to a meeting and let us know your views. The next meeting is on 18 January 2018 at the small hall in the village hall. Parish Councillors are always available for discussion.

In the meantime, we hope every resident and business in the parish enjoys a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

*Richard Jack, Chairman, Orleton Parish Council.*