



MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

**Monday 22 September 2025 at 7.30pm
in the Loose Parish Pavilion, King George V Playing Field, ME15 9RG.**

In attendance: Cllrs: Charlie Hollister (CH), Jim Andrew (JA), Sarah Leeson (SL) and Elaine Lawford (EL).

Also in attendance: Nicky Bourne (Clerk - NB) who took the minutes. `

There were no members of the public in attendance.

Housekeeping and meeting rules were covered by the Chairman before the meeting began.

AGENDA

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Previously received apologies from Sue Hill (SH) were accepted by the the Committee. No apologies were received from Velma Bennett (VB).

2. To receive and agree any decision regarding any item to be taken as confidential

None.

3. To receive any declarations of pecuniary interest on items in the agenda

(In accordance with the NALC Model Code of Conduct for Parish Councils (pursuant to section 27 of the Localism Act 2011). In addition, any declaration of personal or prejudicial interest (as agreed by LPC 21 Jan 13)).
None.

4. To receive any signed dispensation requests for any item on this agenda

(For Councillors to approve/disapprove as appropriate and to agree the reason for the dispensation if approved (see dispensation form). This follows the agreement made by the LPC at the meeting held on the 17 July 17).
None.

5. To sign as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2025 (Pages 463-466)

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2025 (Pages 463-466) were duly **AGREED** as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman. The Committee discussed confidentiality and the Clerk will clarify the matter discussed. Action: NB.

6. Questions/comments from the public or community groups (3mins)

(To include any correspondence & phone calls received by the office from members of the public)
All Saints Church wish to replace their noticeboard at the top of Old Loose Hill and asked for any advice or requirements. The Committee felt like-for-like or similar to the adjacent Loose Parish Council (LPC) board should be acceptable but because the location is in the conservation area they should be advised to contact the MBC Conservation Officer. Action: NB.

A resident had attended the last LPC meeting to request an additional litter bin in the vicinity of the public footpath from Pickering Street to Norrington Road. LPC referred the matter to the Environment Committee. After discussion the Committee's consensus was that this was a Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) matter and the resident should direct their enquiry to their Street Cleaning team. Action: NB.

A resident from Carman's Close had been in contact ahead of the winter, with a repeated request for help to obtain a grit bin for their road. Kent County Council (KCC) Highways had refused in

previous years and the Committee felt it was unlikely they would change their mind. Former KCC Cllr Simon Webb had told the resident he would fund one from his next member grant but he was not re-elected. After discussion the Committee's consensus was that this was a KCC matter and the application should be put directly through the KCC Highways portal. Cllr Robert Ford should be contacted regarding his member grant. LPC could help by providing some of their stored grit left over from the KCC delivery last year, if the residents wished to collect some. Action: NB.

7. To receive the Annual Parish Walkabout report and action list and make any necessary decisions.

The annual parish walkabout reports had been pre-circulated along with the action lists which are used by the office to resolve and monitor issues. A number of the items flagged were discussed. The documents were noted. Actions: NB/AB.

8. Risk/General Maintenance - to discuss items below and make any necessary decisions

a. Annual monitoring of LPC-owned ragstone walls

The 2025 annual safety inspection of the LPC-owned ragstone walls is now due. JA has started the inspection and will discuss items with CH and then submit his report. An issue with a coping stone in the closed cemetery will be fixed when they attend for the headstone inspection. Action: JA/CH.

b. Annual monitoring of the closed cemetery headstones

The 2025 annual safety inspection of the closed cemetery headstones is now due. JA and CH will arrange a date to carry this out. Action: JA/CH.

c. Annual tree safety inspection

The quote for the annual tree safety inspection had been pre-circulated and was **AGREED** at a cost of £600 + VAT. Action: NB. The remaining treeworks from the annual safety inspection were completed in the allotments and Brooks Field between 2-5 September 2025.

d. Allotments boundary collapse issue update

The quote for the fence was **AGREED** at the LPC meeting on 15 September 2025 at a cost of £815.00 (to be paid from the Environment general maintenance budget) and the work is being programmed. Upon completion NL/NB will complete a risk assessment and the area will be regularly monitored. Action: NL/NB.

9. Brooks Field – Pond - Roy's Wood – to discuss items below and make any necessary decisions

a. Pond works plans

The Pond warden sent in a detailed report with a range of possibilities for future projects to protect the pond and help the vegetation and wildlife flourish. He has reached out to Medway Valley Countryside Partnership and an experienced fishing lake owner. After discussion the Committee's consensus was that further research should be undertaken, then a decision made on one or two specific projects, with costings and funding proposals. When read, these should be brought to the Committee for discussion. NB advised that a range of environmental grants had been discovered but any application will need to be very specific. Action: NB / Pond warden.

The next volunteer pond working party is planned for 11 and 12 October 2025. The Committee **AGREED** a skip should be booked and funded from the pond works budget. Action: NB.

b. Meadow Phase 5

Following the success of the meadow this year, CH intends to clarify plans with the contractor for the next phase. No further sections will be created but work will be required to encourage re-growth next year, with an additional boost from the very successful seed mix used at the river bank. This section on the silt bed currently remains in flower. The Committee **AGREED** the plans. Action: NB to contact the contractor.

10. Cemetery - to discuss items below and make any necessary decisions

a. Update on repairs to the war memorial

The replacement stone sections are now ready and the specialist work will be programmed to be completed before Remembrance Sunday. Action: NB.

b. Preparations for Remembrance Sunday

The slabs around the war memorial were cleaned as part of the works in the summer. It has been noted that, although not a hazard, they do require some re-pointing. Action: NB to seek quotes, seeking the the advice of the specialist contractor first. Action: NB. The committee **AGREED** a poppy wreath should be purchased to be laid by either JA or Rita Hood. Action: NB.

11. Footpaths - to discuss maintenance proposals and make any necessary decisions

a. The Greenway (KB22B)

Despite the recent works, the edges of the Greenway path have not improved. CH and NB met the LPC groundworks contractor who has given a maintenance schedule and cost at £148 + VAT per treatment session. Since that meeting a volunteer has made a proposal to utilise the Community Payback team, who they have personally been working with at Mangravet Wood, to engage them in the path restoration and management of the vegetation. After discussion, the committee **AGREED** this project should proceed. If the availability of Community Payback was not forthcoming, the Committee **AGREED** the contractor would be employed to start work. A number of tall, encroaching trees across the path will be reported to KCC Public Rights of Way for action. Action: NB.

b. Valley Drive/Bray Gardens to Old Loose Hill (KM180)

Five different residents have contacted the office recently regarding this section of path. It is cut back three times a year by KCC Public Rights of Way (PROW) and has been done recently. However, issues with taller, overhanging shrubs and leaning ivy force people into the hazard of the gully. Detritus has narrowed the path considerably. A resident has asked if LPC could request KCC PROW return to complete a significant cut back of the overhanging bushes before they fall, and to restore the full width of the path. The resident is a volunteer with other projects and feels he could raise a team to help. KCC PROW would need to be present to assist with debris removal. After discussion the Committee felt this was a KCC PROW matter but **AGREED** the proposal should be made, facilitated by the Clerk. Action NB.

12. Volunteers – to update on the current situation and make any necessary decisions

Following an appeal, two new volunteers have kindly taken on planters 2 and 3 on Boughton Parade.

Loose Amenities Association (LAA) volunteers have made proposal. Having completed their regular clearance of the culvert near the Chequers pub, they would like to attempt to reinstate the one on the opposite side of the road alongside Old Loose Close that has effectively disappeared by overgrowth. As a result the water runs down the side of the road and into the middle where it makes regular pot holes. After discussion the Committee **AGREED** they had no issue with this, as it would help protect the village, but that it was actually a KCC drainage matter. They are happy for the skip to be utilised for some of the debris, if the timing worked. Action: NB.

13. Finance

a. To review the contract for street lighting servicing and maintenance

The annual contract was reviewed and the Committee **AGREED** to continue with the existing contractor for street lighting service and maintenance at an annual cost of £108.80 + VAT. Action: NB to update the contract record.

b. To receive an update from the Responsible Finance Officer

The finance report had been pre-circulated including, as requested last meeting, the Environment ear-marked reserves listed separately which the Committee appreciated. All were noted.

c. To note the updated 2025-2026 Management Plan and make any necessary decisions

The updated 2025-26 Management Plan recording all progress to date had been pre-circulated and was noted.

14. Highways Matters – to receive an update on highways matters and to make any necessary decisions

CH and NB met with the new Highways Improvement Partner Emily Rodgers on 26 August. The focus was on the viaduct and bend area on the A229 but all matters left with the predecessor were covered. Emily did query the funding source for the yellow enforceable markings on the Loose Road at the Walnut Tree Avenue entrance and on the Farrows at the Sainsbury's car park entrance. NB has sent over the correspondence from Greg Nicoll stating that KCC would cover all costs of those two measures. NB registered a concern that there have been no school warning signs since the zebra crossing was installed in August and the previous ones were removed. The office was asked to re-register every fault on the KCC Highways portal if it had not yet been resolved (including all the pedestrian refuge damage from several years ago). Action: NB. It was suggested that LPC should liaise with the Speedwatch team to see if the scheme could be reinstated. Action: NB.

Since the visit the 3m extension to the Lancet Lane zig zag markings has gone to public consultation. We have asked for any update on the ideas for the 30/40mph terminal and have been advised a further site visit with an engineer has taken place.

EL raised queries about the status of the A229 30mph proposal put forward by Cllr Brian Clark, having read the paper presented at the last Joint Transport Board meeting. The Committee also queried the status of the discussions about the Mangravet Road access point to Five Acre Wood School and New Line Learning Academy. Action: EL to contact Cllr Brian Clark about both. The Committee **AGREED** that although the LPC Highways Working Group had initiated the proposals and engaged various parties, any new access point would need to be progressed at the higher level by the key stakeholders (MBC, KCC and KCC PROW and the school managers).

15. To ratify any ROUND ROBIN decisions since 28 July 2025

None.

16. Website and media – To discuss and make any decisions as relevant

NB advised that the next "In & Around Loose" deadline is 15 October.

17. Other Items (discussion only)

As requested last meeting, the Church was consulted and agreed to the yew tree being entered in the Kent Friends of the Trees competition as a "Tree with a story of interest", so an entry was made.

JA raised whether footpath responsibility and actions could feature on the website. NB showed the KCC PROW map which provides such information and will put a link on the website.

A final corrected Conservation Area Appraisal map has been circulated and the area has been extended considerably, providing protection for a much larger swathe of the Parish.

18. Date of Next Meeting – 24 November 2025 (Budget meeting)

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.

Signed

Dated.....