



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
LOOSE PARISH COUNCIL
Monday 21 October 2024 at 7.30pm
in the Loose Parish Pavilion, King George V Playing Field**

Councillors taking part: Vianne Gibbons (Chairman) (VG), Charlie Hollister (CH), Jim Andrew (JA), Mick Westwood (MJW), Neil Lettington (NL), Velma Bennett (VB), Sarah Leeson (SL), Tony Oliver (TO) and Sue Hill (SCH)

Also present: Janet Burnett (Assistant Clerk) (JB), Amanda Baker (Assistant Clerk) (AB), Simon Wales (SW) (Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) Ward Councillor), Brian Clark (BC) (MBC Ward Councillor), Nicky Bourne (Deputy Clerk) (NB), and Kim Owen (Clerk) (KO) who took the minutes.

There were 2 members of the public present.

1. To receive and record any apologies for absence.

Apologies have been received from Susan Hogg (SH – Attending Tovil Parish Council Planning Meeting), Michael Hogg (MH – Work Commitments) and Andrew Richards (AR - Personal Commitment).

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.

(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 2017- (item 17)).

None.

5. To agree and to sign as a correct record the following minutes:

- LPC minutes for the meeting held on the 16 September 2024 (Pages 1974-1983)
The minutes of the meeting of 16 September 2024 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

The following approved Minutes to be noted and adopted by the Parish Council

- Planning Committee Meetings as follows:
 - 12 August 2024 (Pages 674-675)
 - 2 September 2024 (Pages 676-678)
- Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meetings as follows:
 - 16 April 2024 (Pages 1-2)
 - 28 May 2024 (Pages 3-4)

6. To receive any reports from the Loose Ward Councillors. (BC & SW)

BC advised that he attended the Joint Transport Board (JTB) and a number of proposed schemes in Loose were discussed. He asked for details of the costings of the projects but was told that this

would not be available until January 2025. Some of the projects are the Wheatsheaf, Sheals Crescent and Cripple Street. These projects were in the Local Plan of 2017 but nothing has been delivered. BC's concern is that if the money secured from developers has not been used, the developers could ask for the money to be returned as it has not been used for the agreed project. There is a glimmer of hope under the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). With S106 monies, MBC has given KCC the monies for these projects even though they are not completed. With CIL money, the payment stays with MBC until the project is ready to be delivered for example the Linton Crossroads project. BC's asked about Highways Working Group. He would like to meet with the group to take matters forward. The CIL manager at MBC is keen to get the CIL money spent. Office to organise a meeting. NB to Action.

JA asked that if Cranbourne Avenue is to remain closed can the road blockage (that looks like fly tipping) be removed as it is unsightly.

SW advised that he has been dealing with housing issues in the Parish.

7. To receive any reports from KCC Division Councillor Simon Webb. (S Webb)

S Webb advised the office that he has no report for the Council because there is nothing he has worked on for Loose for some time.

8. To receive any reports/information from the Community Warden Team.

The Clerk advised that Sandra Edmonds from Community Warden Team advised the follows: 'As you may have been aware the warden service has been under consultation and review and the final part of that process was areas covered. We have recently had a service meeting and been allocated our new areas and very sadly we will no longer be covering Loose. I personally would like to thank you all for your kind support over the past years. I know the wardens from my team and, myself included, have always enjoyed supporting your residents. If things change in the future I will definitely be in touch to keep you updated.'

The Clerk has written and thanked Sandra and her team for all the support they have given over the years and asked when we are likely to hear who is covering the Loose area going forward.

Sandra confirmed the following: 'Sadly due to the cuts in service there will no longer be a warden covering the Loose area. There are options to sponsor a warden and you can speak to Mat Honeysett regarding this project should the parish be interested.'

After discussion the Council **AGREED** that the Clerk should contact Mat Honeysett to look at the options available to sponsor a warden. BC also offered to contact Community Warden team about the lack of cover for Loose. Action: BC/Clerks' Office.

9. To receive any reports/information from the Police and from E-watch.

No Police Report.

E-Watch

- a. Between 09:15 on Saturday 12 October and 12:00 on Thursday 17 October in Old Drive. Three people stole copper piping from a residential garden and attempted to gain access trying multiple door handles.
Crime Report No. 46/176661/24 - Posted 20/10/2024
- b. Between 00:01 on Wednesday 2 October and 19:49 on Wednesday 9 of October in Boughton Lane. Somebody stole credit cards from a handbag in a school and used the cards multiple times.
Crime Report No. 46/172296/24 - Posted 14/10/2024

The Clerk advised that E-Watch is now being populated with all areas of Loose but the area of North Loose is still being listed as unparished area. The Clerk will investigate further. Office to Action. NL advised that there is crime data on the E-Watch site.

10. To receive any questions/comments from the public or organisations.

(To include any letters/e-mails received by the Clerk from members of the public)

- a. A resident raised concerns about the amount of traffic in Loose. He attended the JTB meeting on Wednesday and he is horrified that nothing is happening. If you look at the individual

junctions, three of them, as far as Maidstone is concerned, are not going to be reported on in the future. So, anything we discuss now becomes an urgent issue. The resident attended a meeting as part of North Loose Residents Association (NLRA) in March 2024, which was attended by Helen Grant and Helen Whately (now Shadow Secretary of State for Transport) and Neil Baker from KCC (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport). They made a pledge that Cranbourne Avenue would not be look at for another 12 months and then a decision would be made. Neil Baker has now said it will close permanently. Junctions at Sheals Crescent, Cripple Street, Armstrong Road, Wheatsheaf and Linton Crossroads all need work. The NLRA had put forward some suggestions to improve the situation. KCC agreed to look at the suggestions but none have been discussed and are not in the JTB report. KCC Highways appear to have given up on South Maidstone/A229 corridor. We are talking about £8.9million. The resident urges LPC to have a proactive role, which will require immediate action. If LPC accept the report as it stands then they will be failing the residents of the Parish. The Council needs to come up with ideas and then meet Highways to discuss options. In addition, the Council needs to contact Helen Grant and Helen Whately to ask why nothing has been done since the meeting in March. There will be extra house building in Coxheath, Marden and Staplehurst and the traffic from the developments will come down the A229 corridor. The current situation will only get worse. VG thanked the resident for his comments. The office will be organising a Highways Working Group meeting early next week to review the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP), and they can add this matter to their discussions. BC advised that there is money on the table and LPC need to chase. The resident advised that it is not just about the money, it is about the people having a better quality of life.

- b. The Clerk advised that the office has received a survey request from MBC on Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money. It includes questions such as do we know what CIL money is? Do we need training on CIL? Do we know what CIL money can be used for? The Council **AGREED** that the office will complete the survey on behalf of the LPC. Action: Clerks' Office.

11. To receive updates on the Boundary Changes and make any necessary decisions. (SL/KO)

- a. Mangravet Wood Option Agreement
After discussion the option agreement was **AGREED** by the Council. Action: SL to advise the solicitors. It is likely a printed copy will need signing so it will need to be done at the next LPC meeting. Action: Clerk to print and add to the next LPC agenda.
- b. Lease for Richmond Way
Mike Smith (Warners Solicitors) has confirmed he is now in a position to lodge the lease agreement with the Land Registry. However, he needs to confirm to the Land Registry that he has verified the identity of all parties. As NLRA were a client he can do this, but he needs some proof from the Council. The Clerk has gone back to him and asked if all Councillors need to confirm their identity or just the Councillors signing the document but has not yet had a response. Action: Office to chase.

12. To review and agree the Neighbourhood Plan area for submission to MBC. (MJW)

MJW advised that this is the formal step in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. It comprises of sending a formal letter to MBC sending them the map of the new Neighbourhood area we wish designate when we update North Loose and Loose Parish Council plans. JB and MJW met representatives of the MBC Neighbourhood team last week and they gave some guidance and they are expecting the letter. The Council needs to formally agree the letter. The letter has been circulated to all Councillors. They will then process the letter, which could take several weeks. The Council **AGREED** the letter. JB to action.

13. To review the approval of minutes from Committees and make any necessary decisions (MJW)

Paperwork for this matter has been circulated to Councillors. After discussion the Council **AGREED** that a motion to approve the minutes of a meeting will only require a proposer and seconder.

14. To receive and discuss any items of concern escalated by Councillors, Committees or the Office.

a. Pavilion Fire Protection (MW)

The Clerk advised that Cllr Mark Woodward has resigned from the LPC with immediate effect. NL asked if the Fire Risk assessment was completed by MW. NB advised that MW did the assessment and was going to talk about it this evening.

The Chairman asked that a thank you letter be sent to MW for his work on the Council and in particular his work on the Fire Risk assessment. Office to Action.

NB advised that MW said there was nothing wrong with our current practice as we have done due diligence but he has made some suggestions going forward. After discussion it was **AGREED** that the document to be circulated to PCH members for discussion at the next meeting. NB to Action.

b. BC advised that in the lease for Richmond Way there is a buffer area which MBC held back in case it needed to be widened when a planning application was submitted. The planning permission went through without that need. There is a provision in there and the developer can take the extra space. The application has lapsed but because the developer placed some kerb stones, which do not conform to any Highways standards, they are claiming a continuation of the planning application, as they have made a start. This is going through planning at the moment. It is controversial and Tovil are commenting on it. Linked with that, he advised LPC to be mindful if there is any approach from MBC re the boundary of the lease as the developer got permission without any change to the lease boundary on the original application.

15. To receive an update on the Shed in Brooks Field. (KO)

The Clerk advised that MJW came back with questions on the money laundering issue and she forwarded them to our Solicitors. They have responded. It looks like we will have to go ahead with the documents etc. After discussion the Council **AGREED** to go ahead with the identity check and the document completion. The Clerk will advise the address of the Solicitors to Councillors and confirm the decision with the Council's Solicitors.

16. To review the Enquiry, Concern and Complaints Spreadsheet. (KO)

The document has been circulated to Councillors and noted. SL asked if documents could be uploaded earlier so Councillors have time to read them fully prior to the meeting. Office to Action.

17. Promotion of Loose Parish Council & Articles. (JB)

The data was circulated to Councillors and noted. JA asked if details of transport issues could be put in the "In and around Loose" next edition. The Christmas edition has already been submitted but details can be put on a community Alert and on Facebook. BC suggested using the Loose Ends meeting to get information out to residents. It was also agreed that an update from the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group be put on Facebook and in a Community Alert.

18. To appoint Committees and members to Committees.

This includes substitutes, co-opted members and representatives to outside bodies. To also consider numbers of members on each committee. The Clerk advised that she had spoken to SH and she was happy to go on the Pavilion and Community Hub Committee (PCH). The Council **AGREED** that both SH & MH be put on PCH Committee. Office to update documents.

19. Finance & Funding:

a. To ratify payments made on Appendix A for 21 October 2024

The payments were ratified by the Council.

b. To receive full record of accounts from the RFO.

The Accounts were circulated to Councillors and noted.

c. Reconcile bank balances with bank statements

The bank statements for September 2024 were reconciled with the RBS system and signed by TO.

d. To ratify the total salaries as recommended by the HR Board

On 7 October 2024, following appraisal of staff the HR Board have agreed salary increases for staff with effect from April 2025. The Council ratified these increases.

VG advised that at the HR Board the Clerk formally resigned as Clerk with effect from 31 December 2024. A succession plan has been put in place and KO will stay on as the RFO. NB will step into the role of Clerk with effect from 1 January 2025 and both NB & AB will increase hours accordingly.

- e. To review Salts Wood waste collection contract
After discussion the Council reviewed the contract for the Salts Wood bin emptying and **AGREED** to continue with the current contractor.
- f. To review the Parish Online annual cost
After discussion the Council **AGREED** to the annual cost of Parish Online (£180.00 per year).

20. To review the following policies:

- a. Risk assessment task-based policy
After discussion the policy was **AGREED** subject to any final amendments from MJW. Office/MJW to action.
- b. CCTV policy & tick sheet
After discussion the policy was **AGREED** subject to any final amendments from MJW. Office/MJW to action.

21. To receive an update on the Resilience Plan for the Parish. (VB)

VG advised that she still has to arrange a meeting with AB going forward. From the KALC meeting she attended it is about what the Parish needs to have in place prior to the involvement of MBC. KALC are going to send a template that will need completing. AB will be attending some Resilience workshops shortly.

22. To ratify any Round Robins since the last meeting on 16 September 2024.

16 September 2024 – To agree the renewal of the insurance policy for the coming 3 years. (Clear Council agreed – VG, CH, JA, NL, MJW, & SL).

23. Information Only.

- a. VB asked if she would be able to attend the KALC AGM on 30 November 2024. Office to book a place.
- b. NL asked if there was any progress on the badger issue at the allotments. NB advised that it will be on the agenda for the next McAlpine Trust meeting on 5 November 2024.

24. Next meeting of the LPC 18 November 2024.

The meeting ended at 9.13pm.

Dated.....

Signature