



**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF
LOOSE PARISH COUNCIL**

**Monday 13 May 2024 at 7.30pm
in the Loose Parish Pavilion, King George V Playing Field**

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

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

There were 3 members of the public present. The Chairman explained the housekeeping rules.

1. To Elect a Chairman to the Loose Parish Council for the next year.

A nomination was put forward by JA and seconded by TO that Cllr Vianne Gibbons should continue as Chairman for the forthcoming year. This was unanimously **AGREED** by the Council and accepted by VG. VG signed the Declaration of Acceptance and it was witnessed by the Deputy Clerk.

2. To Elect a Vice Chairman to the Loose Parish Council for the next year.

A nomination was put forward by AR and seconded by TO that Cllr Charlie Hollister should continue as Vice Chairman for the forthcoming year. This was unanimously **AGREED** by the Council and accepted by CH. CH signed the Declaration of Acceptance and it was witnessed by the Deputy Clerk.

3. To receive declarations of acceptance of office for Councillors as elected to the LPC.

All Councillors present signed Declaration of Acceptance. Clerk to get Declaration of Acceptances completed by Councillors not present. Action: Clerk. All Councillors need to complete a new DPI form. Action: Councillors.

4. To receive and record any apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from KCC Councillor Simon Webb (Attending Hunton's Annual Meeting) Susan Hogg (Personal issue) and Michael Hogg (Attending Tovil Parish Council Meeting). Previous arrangement apologies were received from Mark Woodward (MW).

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

None.

6. 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.

7. 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.



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

LPC minutes for the meeting held on the 15 April 2023 (Pages 1940-1948)

The minutes of the meeting on 15 April 2024 were duly **AGREED** and signed by the Chairman with one amendment to the attendees. Councillor Neil Lettington was present at the meeting but had been omitted from the list of Councillors taking part.

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

- Finance & Admin Committee Meeting 8 January 2024 (Pages 234-235)
- Planning Committee Meeting 4 March 2024 (Page 653-654) and 18 March 2024 (Pages 655-657)

The Council **AGREED** to take Agenda Item 12 after Agenda Item 8 as PC Harry Greenfield was on duty.

9. To receive any reports from the Loose Ward Councillor.

Cllr Simon Wales thanked residents for their trust in electing himself and Cllr Brian Clark as the Maidstone Borough Councillors for the new Loose and Linton Ward for the next four years. The Parish Council and residents are welcome to contact them directly for support or advice on any Ward matter.

Cllr Brian Clark picked up the issue raised by a resident at the Annual Parish Meeting, regarding the speed limit on the A229 between Linton and Loose. He offered to start to build up evidence to support dropping the speed to 30mph from 40mph. CH explained the current situation on this issue which is the first priority on the LPC Highways Improvement Plan. LPC commissioned speed surveys and have data for the section. It was supported and worked on by LPC's Highways Improvement Partner but it has hit a barrier with KCC now saying evidence is insufficient for any speed change and other measures should be considered. The Environment Committee are forming a Highways Working Group which will try to progress the matter. JA highlighted where traffic matters feature in the Local Neighbourhood Plan and the frustration that KCC seem to only look at data on the number of deaths for criteria, whereas the number and frequency of accidents should be considered. On the A229 section that LPC are trying to change, the pedestrian guard rails on the bend have been destroyed three times, and every street light on the three central reservations has been knocked down. It was **AGREED** that the Environment Committee's Highways Working Group would continue their work on this, and engage with Cllr Clark. VG thanked him for his support. Action: NB / Environment Committee.

CH thanked Cllr Clark for highlighting the Parish Council election on social media.

10. To receive any reports from KCC Division Councillor Simon Webb. (SW)

No Report Received.

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

No Report Received. NB informed the Council that the Office has been working with the Community Warden team to allocate the Community Funding grants (along with the local schools' family liaison officers and Greensands Social Prescribing team). Some funds have been used for resources for a Community Safety stall at the Loose Fete to be run by the Community Warden team.

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

PC Harry Greenfield attended the meeting and updated that he has been given two additional Wards (Tovil and Leeds) so his time is further stretched. He has been working with the Senior Leadership Team at Loose Primary to help tackle poor parking outside the school. Whilst not actually a police issue, he has been advising the Office on residential parking issues in the Parish. He has now completed speed gun training and intends to monitor the A229, prosecuting speeding motorists when identified. Nuisance dirt bikes from Shepway have been taking up police time, appearing further afield including riding on King George V playing field (KGV). Although CCTV footage has been obtained, the individuals



cover their faces so the police are trying to identify the bikes in the hope of seizing them once their location is identified.

VG thanked PC Greenfield for his support and asked that he raise the idea of Loose Primary developing an in-and-out drop off facility, as suggested many years ago. JA raised the parking issues in Copper Tree Court and VG raised the safety issue exiting Walnut Tree Avenue when people park on the hatchings. BC suggested the Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) parking enforcement team could visit the enforceable sites, but Walnut Tree Avenue cannot be enforced. He suggested that now the Parish has expanded, LPC could pick up some of his work with Sean Carter on hotspots across the area that would benefit from targeted enforceable lines. BC would be happy to work with LPC as he has had successes in Cripple Street and Lancet Lane previously, and knows the relevant contacts in KCC and MBC. It was **AGREED** that the Environment Committee would discuss this issue at their next meeting. Action: NB

E-watch – There have been no new entries for Loose as at 10 May 2024.

13. To receive any questions/comments from the public.

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

- a. **Cornwallis Noise issue** – All the paperwork received on this issue had been circulated. The Premises Licence hearing had taken place and a licence granted with conditions restricting the number of events. Brian Clark advised that the resident had attended to speak but was only permitted to talk about the license application, not the ongoing pitch noise issue, contrary to the information given by the Ward Councillor at the last meeting. After discussion the Council **AGREED** that the Licence issue was now closed but that LPC should support the residents with the noise issue by sending a formal letter to Cornwallis Academy. This should propose that the school, residents, MBC and LPC meet to explore how they can work together to move the issues forward, with the Parish Council acting as an intermediary between parties. Action: Clerks' Office.
- b. **Church Street running water situation** – NB reported that the water flow is ongoing, and so far, not relenting, despite some drier weather. LPC has supported residents by delivering some sand bags. When the drainage team attended they altered the flow so it is now no longer coming from the manhole, but instead pours through the drain on the church path. There has been a huge amount of communication between residents, LPC, Cllr Simon Webb, up to Neil Baker at KCC Highways. Due to the issue crossing private land and public road, KCC have said there is little they can do. Simon Webb has requested a site meeting with the relevant KCC teams and the Cabinet Member for Highways. A local dog walker has recently fallen and injured herself, having slipped on the algae. In the short term, the slip hazard needs to be addressed and NB has reported it again via the KCC Highways portal requesting some immediate action to clean the road surface. Cllr Brian Clark suggested we continue to report, and if a report gets closed down without action, re-report with the previous reference. After discussion, the Council felt that as the road is affected, it is for KCC to resolve the slip hazard. It was **AGREED** that the Office should continue to follow up Cllr Simon Webb to get the site meeting arranged. Action: NB. Brian Clark offered to take the matter to the Joint Transportation Board separately. He asked to be copied into any communications going forward. Action: NB

14. To receive updates on the Boundary Changes and make any necessary decisions.

- a. **To discuss the transport discussions with NLRA (Meeting 10 April 2024) (JA)**

JA explained that much work had been done by NLRA communicating with KCC on key junctions (Sheals Crescent, Armstrong Rd, Wheatsheaf and Boughton Lane). He felt it would be for the new Parish's benefit to continue these discussions and also include Linton Crossroads. Cllr Brian Clark and Sean Carter summarised the history of some of the projects, explaining that the funding is given to MBC by development companies to mitigate increased housing, but KCC are responsible for the road schemes which are yet to be implemented. The Joint Transport Board should bring together MBC and KCC, but meetings have been cancelled or no



representatives have been present from Highways. It was suggested that an action group be formed to continue to push on matters. After discussion the Council **AGREED** that the working group being established under the Environment Committee should pick up these discussions. Action: NB.

b. To sign document for the transfer of Lease on Richmond Way

At the LPC meeting on 15 April 2024 the Council agreed the lease for the transfer of Richmond Way. The Chairman signed the lease on behalf of the Council. SL signed the document on behalf of North Loose Ltd. The Clerk will forward the document to Maidstone Borough Council undated.

SL explained that the transfer document for Richmond Green has been drafted by Michael Smith and she has added the company number of North Loose Ltd. The document was agreed and signed by the Chairman and Cllr Richards on behalf of the Council. SL signed the document on behalf of North Loose Ltd.

c. CILs Monies

MBC have agreed that they will transfer the CILs monies from NLRA to LPC of £1444.18.

After discussion the Council **AGREED** it should be directed to the Neighbourhood Plan. Action: KO

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

- a. The solicitors have sent the details of draft Heads of Lease on 9 May 2024. It has been circulated to Councillors. The Office had noted the plans highlighted the old shed, not the new location. It was **AGREED** to move this item to the next meeting to allow time for Councillors to review the document. Action: KO.
- b. The shed door has been repainted in Buckingham green.

16. To receive updates on the LPC Fete and make any necessary decisions. (NB)

NB advised that this is the last meeting before the Loose Fete on 15 June. Any help would be gratefully received for set up or during the day e.g helping with the tombola and raffle, or dog show tickets sales. The Wards boards list is almost complete and raffle and tombola prizes are being sought. Please advise the office if you can help on the day, or donate or source something.

17. To review the Enquiry, Concern and Complaints Spreadsheet. (NB)

Since the last meeting the office has been dealing with the following issues:

- The continuous water flow down Church Street (see Agenda item 13b)
- The badger sett issue in the allotments / Brooks field – awaiting the experts
- Damage to the dip well at the bottom of Well St during drainage works – reinstated but some do not think adequately. Concluded that nothing more can be done without pictorial evidence
- Dead badger near Rosemount Close - collected
- Queries about the discount card / delivery
- Query about whether we are taking over the NLRA noticeboards
- A concern about commercial parking in a residential street
- Several requests to advertise links on our website and activities on our boards

SL provided information on addresses that had missed the discount card delivery. Action: NB
AR asked for clarification on the requests for adverts or links. NB explained that they are often from national companies or charities, and the Office looks into them before advising that we only list very local services that would benefit residents. If it is for a specific activity, the Office explains that the



noticeboards are for our Council business and any remaining space is prioritised for public information e.g. from Kent Police or the Community Warden.

18. Promotion of Loose Parish Council & Articles. (KO)

Social Media data had been circulated to Councillors and was noted.

There has been a large increase in Community Alert subscriptions (67 so far). A new Community Alert went out on Friday 10 May and has been sent to Councillors. JA asked how LPC can engage with the residents in the NLRA area. NB explained that information has been put in the "In & Around Loose" magazine advising people to sign up to Community Alert, follow LPC on social media and use the LPC website for information. The same information is given when a subscription request to Community Alert comes in. NLRA have been proactive in repeating these messages to their former members. AR highlighted the 50% increase in visits to the website in April and 60% increase on the Facebook reach proving we are making progress with engagement. The Office will continue to promote the contact details through all our communication means. Action: Clerks Office

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

- a. Damage to the sluice at the end of Brooks path had left an entrapment hazard. Volunteers have replaced the wood and the gap is now much reduced. They advise replacing the piece of ragstone to remove the gap completely, and longer term, purchase a piece of oak to prolong the life of the sluice board. Sources of ragstone were discussed and it was **AGREED** that the Environment Committee would pick up the matter. VG asked that the volunteers are thanked. Action: NB.

20. To discuss and agree dates for Council and Committee meetings for 24-25.

At the meeting on 15 April 2024 several amendments to the schedule were agreed. The final version has been circulated to Councillors and was **AGREED**. Action: AB to publish on website. At the Environment meeting it is planned to schedule the Highways Working Group meetings. Action: NB

21. 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 Current Committee members list had been circulated to Councillors and the following was **AGREED**:

- a. Remove all members of the Committees who are not present
- b. Councillors should be on at least two committees (each Councillor then put themselves forward to their chosen Committees)
- c. KALC representative to remain VB
- d. Parish Police Liaison – NL
- e. Loose Parochial Charity – NL

No SMART (South Maidstone Action for Roads and Transport) representative was put forward as the Council were unsure whether SMART continues. Action: NB to check. The amended document with the list of Committees and Members will be re-circulated for completion at the next meeting. Action: KO

22. To agree continuance of ROUND ROBIN agreements & ratified any Round Robins since 15 April 24

This will be line with Terms of Reference, review procedures and make any necessary decisions

The ROUND ROBIN procedures had been circulated to Councillors. The Council **AGREED** to continue with the procedures with minor grammatical amendments suggested by MJW. Action: Clerk to update document.

23. To review all Terms of Reference in view of committees being delegated to carry out LPC business.

After discussion, it was **AGREED** that each Committee will agree the Terms of Reference that are relevant to themselves. The first 3 items of the next agenda for each meeting will be the election of the Chair, election of the Vice Chair, then to review the Terms of Reference, making any necessary amendments. The Terms of Reference, can then be ratified by the full Council.



The Terms of Reference for the newly formed Neighbourhood Plan Working Group had been circulated to Councillors and was **AGREED**.

24. To agree to continuance of 'Delegated Powers Policy'.

This will be in line with Standing Orders and Terms of Reference.

The current policy and procedure were circulated to Councillors and it was **AGREED** to make no amendments. Action: JB to update policy.

25. To agree to the Clerk approval or disapproval of dispensations.

The Council **AGREED** to the Clerk's approval or disapproval of any dispensations.

26. To discuss Councillors allowances and out of pocket expenses and to agree as relevant.

The Council **AGREED** that the Councillors' allowance would not be taken, but out of pocket expenses would be granted, as per current procedures.

27. For members to confirm that they agree to receive ALL agendas electronically.

To also agree that these may be signed by the Clerk using facsimile.

This was **AGREED** by the Council.

28. Finance & Funding:

a. To ratify payments made on Appx A for 13 May 2024

The Payments were ratified. Authorised by VG & CH.

b. To review signatures for the bank accounts and make any necessary decisions

The Signatories for the Bank accounts are as follows:

Barclays Bank – VG, CH & JA

Unity Trust Bank Accounts – VG, CH & AR

A second letter has been returned from Barclays saying that to close the account the mandate has not been completed properly. They will not speak to the Clerk as she is not a signatory. After discussion it was **AGREED** a formal letter of complaint should be sent outlining the actions taken to try to close the account and requesting clarification of the further measures needed to get the account closed.

Signatories are needed for the two new bank accounts to be set up (Nationwide & CCLA) as agreed at the LPC Meeting 15 April 2024. After discussion it was **AGREED** these would be VG, CH & AR and the paperwork can be signed out of meeting once obtained. Action: KO

29. To review the following Policies and make any necessary decisions.

The Policies were circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

a. Policy for the Press and Public on Attending & Reporting meetings

The Council reviewed and **AGREED** the policy with the amendments suggested by MJW.

b. Pre-application Planning Meetings Policy

At the Planning meeting on 22 April 2024 the Planning Committee reviewed draft Planning Committee Pre-Application Meetings Policy and agreed a final version. The Policy has been circulated to Councillors and will be added to the Policy Schedule for review on a yearly basis.

Action: JB to update policy, put it on the website and add it to the policy schedule.

30. To review and agree the Standing Orders for the Council following amendments.

The Standing orders for the Council were reviewed by the Finance and Admin Committee on 8 April 2024 and agreed that they would be updated by MJW to include Working Groups. The revised document has been circulated to Councillors for review. The Council **AGREED** the revised version.

Action: JB to update standing orders and put on the website.



31. To discuss the MBC Over-arching Conservation Areas Management Plan consultation and make any necessary decisions. (NB)

Details of the consultation were circulated to Councillors on 24 April 2024. Any comments need to be submitted by 21 May 2024. MJW welcomed that no outline planning applications will be accepted in conservation areas. Action: NB to add comments to the consultation. The Conservation Officer advised JB that the Loose Valley conservation management plan is in production and will be circulated for comment imminently.

32. Information Only

- a. NB reminded that all election expenses forms need to be returned to MBC by 30 May 2024 and DPI forms need to be completed within 28 days of the election.

33. Next meeting of the LPC - 17 June 2024.

The Meeting ended at 9.03pm.

Dated.....

Signature