



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF LOOSE PARISH COUNCIL (LPC)

**Monday 17 November 2025 at 7.30pm
in the Loose Parish Pavilion, King George V Playing Field, ME15 9RG.**

Councillors present: Cllr. Jim Andrew (JA), Cllr. Sarah Leeson (SL), Cllr. Neil Lettington (NL), Cllr Tony Oliver (TO), Cllr. Mick Westwood (MW), Cllr. Velma Bennett (VB) and Cllr. Matthew Cooper (MC).

Also present: Nicky Bourne (Clerk) (NB) who took the minutes, Eve Poulter (Assistant Clerk) (EP), Stacey Champion (Assistant Clerk) (SC) and Kent County Council (KCC) Division Cllr. Paul Thomas (PT).

In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair the Council **AGREED** that MW would chair the meeting.

There were 4 members of the public present. MW explained the housekeeping rules.

1. To receive and record any apologies for absence.

Previously received apologies from Cllr. Vianne Gibbons (Chairman) (VG), Cllr. Elaine Lawford (EL), Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) Linton & Loose Ward Cllrs: Cllr. Brian Clark (BC) and Cllr. Simon Wales (SW), KCC Division Cllr. Robert Ford and Amanda Baker (Deputy Clerk) (AB) were accepted by the Council.

No apologies were received from Cllr. Sue Hill (SH).

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 20 October 2025 (Pages 2061-2067)

The minutes for the LPC meeting on 20 October 2025 were **AGREED** and signed by MW.

The following approved minutes were noted and adopted by the Parish Council:

- Pavilion & Community Hub Committee Meeting: 1 September 2025 (Pages 408-411)
- Planning Committee Meetings: 29 September 2025 (Pages 734-735), 13 October 2025 (Pages 736-737) and 27 October (Pages 738-740).
- Neighbourhood Plan Working Group 30 September 2025 (Pages 27-30).

6. To elect a Vice Chairman to the Loose Parish Council and for the elected Vice Chairman to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

NB informed the Council that VG had received the resignation of Vice Chair Charlie Hollister (CH) on 4 November 2025. CH served the Council for over 24 years and was Vice Chair of LPC, Chair of the Environment Committee, a member of the Finance & Admin Committee, HR Board and a McAlpine Trust trustee.

A nomination was put forward by NL and seconded by JA that Cllr. Mick Westwood be elected as Vice Chair for the remainder of the year. This was unanimously **AGREED** by the Council and accepted by MW. MW signed the Declaration of Acceptance and it was witnessed by the Clerk.

The vacancies were filled as follows: Environment Committee (NL) Finance & Admin Committee (MC), HR Board (EL) and McAlpine Trust (VB).

There are now 3 vacancies for Councillors and after discussion the Council **AGREED** recruitment should be an item on the next LPC meeting agenda. Action: NB.

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

BC and SW were attending the extraordinary MBC meeting on Local Government Reorganisation but had sent in the following report:

- **Richmond Way Site Update** – BC has followed up two concerns raised by LPC (footpath upgrades beyond the 50m mentioned in the report and boundary tree root protection). Root protection was added as a condition and the developer agreed to provide additional footpath improvements around the site. At this late stage, this is usually arranged through delegated powers for planning officers to meet with the developer and Loose Parish Council to agree the details. This approach was raised alongside the proposal to approve the application, and this was agreed.

Note: Ward councillors, including SW and BC, have worked to secure improvements since the first application (approved in 2015 for 62 homes and later allocated in the Local Plan). The final vote was close, with several committee members wishing to refuse because the scheme no longer delivered the 62 allocated homes. However, refusal could likely have led to the government inspector insisting on a 62-unit scheme. BC and SW feel that reducing the housing numbers by 27 units along with: significant open space improvements, strengthened boundary buffers, a large net biodiversity gain, a far less cramped layout and a high degree of affordable housing, represents a good outcome for the site.

- **Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development Plan** – at the October Planning and Healthier Stronger Communities Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) the committee agreed that the Maidstone Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development Plan Document should proceed to public consultation from 27 November 2025– 11 January 2026. Note: This includes an allocation of 35 pitches at Forstal Farm Barn, subject to numerous conditions being met.
- **New Local Plan now underway** – At the October Planning and Healthier Stronger Communities PAC meeting Option 1 was successfully proposed: That PAC recommends to Cabinet that officers undertake preliminary tasks for a new Local Plan, as outlined in the “Next Steps” section of the report—thereby formally commencing production of a new Local Plan. The next update is expected at committee in April 2026. A timetable was shared.

- **Loose Valley Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan (LAA AGM)**

BC attended the Loose Amenities Association (LAA) AGM to outline the history and details behind the proposed significant expansion of the Loose Valley Conservation Area boundary. The response from members was very positive. Attendees were encouraged to complete the online survey and, where possible, support the proposed changes.

- **Mercers Wood – Salts Lane**

The LAA tabled a proposal to dispose of Mercers Wood at their AGM. The wood is an ancient woodland off Salts Lane identified as a protected woodland area in the Neighbourhood Plan update. The sale was proposed on the basis that the area is not easily accessible to residents and therefore was said to have limited community value. Maintenance costs have become a burden, with over £4,000 spent last year. The proposal to sell the site was rejected.

As a trustee of Hayle Park Nature Reserve, BC explained that limited access often enhances a site's biodiversity value and suggested commissioning a survey for ancient woodland indicator species during the growing season (e.g., bluebells, wild garlic, pignut). A strong presence of these species could significantly improve eligibility for grant funding—such as MBC's £500k Nature and Climate Crisis Fund as well as developer-funded contributions, helping to offset maintenance costs. Although public access is limited, the variety of wildlife, including woodland birds supported by such habitats provides a real amenity benefit to the wider community.

- **Road Closures & SGN update**

- Linton Crossroads: Temporary traffic lights were removed ahead of schedule on Thursday.
- A229 closure: Works remain on track to finish by the end of the week.
- SGN update: A new gas leak has been identified near the Walnut Tree Pub. SGN will delay repair works until the A229 has reopened. A road closure is not expected for the repair.

- **New coffee shop in Loose** - BC attended the opening of the new Loose Goose Coffee Shop in his capacity as Deputy Mayor. This is a real asset to the village, the interior and exterior look lovely, the coffee is good, and ahead of opening the business owner resurfaced the parking area outside. Your ward councillors wish the Loose Goose every success for the future.

8. To receive any reports from KCC Division Councillors (PT & RF).

- PT has requested the full council still complete an investigation into the Loose road closures and lessons learned. He explained the hurdles to getting any bus services in place for isolated residents. There is no KCC or contractor funding available, and no obligations to fund such transport, but he continues to look for solutions.
- The quality of street works by utility companies is being more closely monitored with notice being served where work is inadequate or left requiring the street works teams to remedy.
- The report into the whereabouts of the developer funds for the A229 is still being chased but PT updated on the history and allocation of the money. He believes it is still available but needs to clarify the amount and what it can be used for.
- Blocked gullies remain an issue and these should continue to be reported copying PT in so that he can chase up.

SL asked what could be done about damage caused by HGVs to kerb stones and verges in Cripple Street during the Loose road closure. PT advised they should be reported to KCC Highways via the portal where there is space for third-party information e.g. contractor name if known.
Action: SL report or provide information to Office to report.

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

PC Greenfield sent the following report:

Loose has managed to keep itself mostly out of trouble, the only things happening at the minute are non-disclosable things such as domestic incidents etc. Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is at a low level and I can only imagine that is due to access with the road being shut. In regards to general information, foot patrol is on the up, my colleague (at the minute) and I are in a pattern of rotating foot patrol, we are getting some really good feedback from members of the public when we are out and about. We seem to be deterring low level ASB with nuisance youths, especially when on foot patrol by simply "bothering" any youths causing a nuisance. Our interaction with local shops is also on the incline, take R2 for example, on the old Loose hill, our engagement with them recently has been really positive, building a better working relationship. It has been hectic over the last few weeks, I have been here and there, deployed to different things around the county and dealing with a multitude of incidents.

LPC had asked for support with poor parking and PC Greenfield expressed frustration that he has no powers to manage parking and has tried to get parking enforcement to visit without success.

"Maidsafer" from the MBC Safer, Stronger Communities team – information has been produced following Cluster meetings, outlining working together to tackle ASB across Maidstone, highlighting the important role that residents take. It highlights the tools they use, why reporting matters, practical examples of what information helps most and how residents can stay connected to Kent Police via My Community Voice. The office will display this on the boards and website and encourage people to sign up as Loose and Linton subscriber numbers are low. Action: AB.

E-watch reports for Loose since the last meeting were circulated and noted.

- The Farrows - on Saturday 11th of October between 08:00 and 17:00. Somebody stole a wheelie bin from outside a residential property. Crime Report No. 46/183342/25.
- Loose Valley - on Friday 17th of October between 00:01 and 22:55. Somebody entered a business site and damage a generator and cabling. Crime Report No. 46/180463/25.
- Rushmead Drive - between 13:00 on Tuesday 28th of October and 06:10 on Thursday 30th of October. Somebody stole a white Peugeot Partner, WN69***, from the road. Crime Report No. 46/187295/25.
- Linton Hill - on Tuesday 4th of November around 22:41. Somebody smashed windows of a vehicle as it was being driven. Crime Report No. 46/190703/25.
- Linton Hill - on Tuesday 4th of November around 22:45. Somebody smashed a window of a Mini Cooper as it was being driven. Crime Report No. 46/190709/25.

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)

- Mr Carter, adviser to the LPC Highways Working Group (HWG) suggested verge damage in Cripple Street could also be reported to the developer Millwood Homes. He reminded the Council that the investigation into the May/June road closure is already on the January agenda of the Joint Transportation Board. The HWG continues to wait for the report on the developer funding following a Freedom of Information request. They will be taking it forward a stage with a number of options over the next couple of months until a satisfactory outcome is achieved. Action: HWG.
- A resident raised the matter of poor lighting in Walnut Tree Avenue. TO gave the history of the streetlight that was knocked down some years ago, explaining it could not be replaced by LPC as it is not the landowner. The light from the remaining one streetlight is partially blocked by an adjacent tree. NB advised that the pub landlady had raised the matter as her

CCTV camera view was restricted and the Office will re-raise the issue to see if the tree can be trimmed back. Action: Clerks' Office.

- Heart of Kent Hospice (HOKH) request for support – documents had been shared and after discussion the Council **AGREED** a letter would be sent in support of the HOKH application for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding towards the development of the new hospice. Action: NB.
- Use of the car park outside the coffee shop - a resident raised concern that the already restricted parking at the top of Old Loose Hill has a space being used by the new coffee shop for tables and chairs and suggested LPC might consider allowing use of the village green. After discussion the Council **AGREED** to investigate the matter but had not been approached by the coffee shop. Action: Office.
- Kent Ramblers volunteers, who assist with local footpath clearance, have invited LPC to send a representative to their next meeting on 27 November 2025. MW advised this may provide useful information and connections for the Loose Neighbourhood Plan Working Group who might be able to send a representative. Action: NB to forward information to MW.

11. To receive and discuss any items escalated by Councillors, Committees or the Office and make any necessary decisions.

JA advised that at the McAlpine Trust meeting on 12 November 2025 the Gardeners Society shared their scheme for remedial work on the collapsed section, provided it is feasible, legal and viable. They are preparing further information.

12. To review the "Enquiries, Concerns and Complaints" Spreadsheet. (NB)

A report detailing the enquiries and concerns received since the last meeting was circulated to councillors and the variety was noted. The list did not include the additional quick-response roadworks enquiries, of which there had been many.

13. Finance & Funding.

a. To ratify payments made on Appx A for 17 November 2025

The Appendix A for 17 November 2025 was ratified by the Council.

b. To receive an update on the Internal Auditor's visit

The Internal Auditor visited on 7 November 2025 and his report was received on 14 November 2025. No issues were identified. After discussion the Council **AGREED** to include the appointment of the Internal Auditor as an item on the agenda of the next Finance and Admin Committee on 12 January 2026. Action: NB.

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

At the HR Board meeting on 6 October 2025, the re-structure of the Clerk team roles was agreed, moving forward with a Clerk/RFO, a Deputy Clerk and two Assistant Clerks. The salaries for each role were reviewed alongside staff appraisals and a review of the structure and functions of the Loose Parish. The changes for NB and AB have come into effect from 1 November 2025. The Assistant Clerks' salaries will be reviewed following the completion of their six-month probation periods. The Council ratified the changes agreed at the HR Board.

d. To receive information on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) income and make any necessary decisions

LPC has received the sum of £2069.66 from Planning Application number 24/501084/FULL for 41 Boughton Lane, ME15 9QW. After discussion the Council **AGREED** this would be allocated to the PCH Committee ear-marked reserves. Action: NB.

14. Promotion of Loose Parish Council & Articles.

Social media data was circulated and noted. The Office has continued to disseminate the information on the roadworks received directly from SGN or WCB in Community Alerts.

15. To review the Terms of Reference of committees being delegated to carry our LPC business.

Terms of Reference for the Pavilion and Community Hub Working Group, agreed by the PCH Committee on 10 November 2025, were circulated and ratified.

16. To review the following policies:

a. Health and Safety policy

The Health and Safety policy had been circulated to councillors and was **AGREED** with minor amendments and re-wording regarding Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for litter pickers, proposed by MW and SL. Action: NB.

b. Training and Development Policy

The Training and Development Policy had been circulated to councillors and was **AGREED** with minor amendments proposed by MW and SL. Action: NB.

c. Winter Policy

The Winter policy had been circulated to councillors and was **AGREED** with no amendment. Action: NB.

d. Environmental Policy

The Environmental policy was circulated to councillors and was **AGREED** with minor grammatical corrections from MW. Action: NB.

17. To receive an update on IT matters.

MC reported that the domain is now authorised as settings have been modified and this should stop the issues with the failed delivery to Gmail addresses. MC advised he is looking at the provision of ICT services and has spoken with the existing provider and one other. Proposals will be brought to the December LPC meeting for a decision ahead of the budget meeting in January. Work will then focus on Accessibility and the IT policy. Action: MC/NB. NB thanked MC for the time he has given.

18. Loose Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (LNPWG) – to receive information and make any necessary decisions.

An update on the work of the LNPWG had been circulated and was summarised by MW. The Conservation Area public consultation event (a community engagement opportunity) had been cancelled but Loose Swiss Scouts have allowed a member of the group to talk informally with parents collecting children. The business survey closed at the end of October with 14 responses. Feedback is being reviewed to be used in the formulation of the Local Economy policies. Following the walking tour, the consultant has drafted a lengthy character appraisal of the parish which the group are currently reviewing. The consultant should be providing her first invoice this month so it can be factored into the budget going forward. JA advised that a representative from Boughton Monchelsea Parish Council has been invited to speak regarding BMPC interest in Pested Bars.

SL raised the Loose Valley and Tovil Conservation Area appraisal. MW has drafted a response which the LNPWG will be considering. Any further comments should be sent to MW for inclusion. The MBC Conservation Officer has left so the public consultation events were cancelled but should be re-scheduled for the new year. The consultation deadline has been extended to the end of January. Action: Councillors to send any comments to MW.

19. To ratify any Round Robins since the last meeting on 20 October 2025.

None.

20. Information Only

- VB explained that a fete sponsor has been put nominated in the top ten fish and chip shops in the country. A link will be circulated and VB encouraged everyone to vote in support.
Action: NB.
- VB gave apologies for 8 December LPC meeting. Action: NB.
- JA updated the Council that a willow tree was planted in Brooks Field in memory of a local resident.

21. Next meeting of the LPC – 8 December 2025 at 7.30pm.

The meeting ended at 8.55pm.

Dated.....

Signature

Appendix A - Finance 25/26				
As at 17 November 2025				
Balance as at 31 October 2025				
Current	UTB	Current account	20360513	89,508.19
Savings	UTB	Instant Savings account	20416234	107,321.97
				196,830.16
Direct Debits paid already taken off balances above- INFO ONLY				
All	Monthly	Lloyds Bank- Credit card	Monthly use plus x £3 charge per user	656.66
Admin	Monthly	Clear Business	Broadband at Pavilion	43.19
PCH	Monthly	EDF Energy	Gas Charges for Pavilion	36.24
PCH	Monthly	EDF Energy	Electricity Charges for Pavilion	93.86
PCH	Monthly	Countrystyle Recycling	Waste Collection	64.70
Admin	Monthly	NEST	Staff Pension Payments	496.36
ENV	Monthly	Wynsdale Waste Management	Emptying of bins in Salts Wood	139.44
				1,530.45
Details of Credit Card Gross Payments as debited by DDR- Lloyds Bank-INFO ONLY				
Admin	CC-NB	Banner Group	Black N Red Books	48.94
LPC	CC-NB	Poppy Shop	Poppy Wreath	24.49
PCH	CC-DD	B & Q	Pavilion Maintenance	17.00
PCH	CC-NB	Tesco	Pavilion Supplies	18.74
PCH	CC-NB	Home Bargains	Pavilion Supplies	7.69
PCH	CC-NB	Amazon EU	Pavilion Supplies	15.99
CCM	CC-NB	Amazon EU	Tablecloths	9.98
PCH	CC-NB	Amazon EU	Cleaning Solution	9.99
PCH	CC-NB	Alta & Co Trading Ltd	Paper Towel Roll	16.85
ENV	CC-NB	Rumwood Ltd	Planter Materials	66.00
ENV	CC-NB	Morrisons	Planter Materials	25.00
ENV	CC-NB	Pinden	Ship Hire for Pond Works	336.00
Admin	CC-NB	Longketi Enterprise Ltd	Office Chair	49.99
Admin	CC-NB	Lebara	Mobile Phone Plan	1.00
Admin	ALL	Lloyds	Charges	9.00
				656.66
Payment authorised 20 October 2025 and ratified by LPC meeting 17 November 2025				
LPC		Hinkley & Rugby BS	Transfer to savings account	1,000.00
Total				1,000.00
Payments authorised 13 November 2025 and ratified by LPC meeting 17 November 2025				
LPC		Hinkley & Rugby BS	Transfer to savings account	5,000.00
PCH		Hirers	Hirers Refunds	150.00
LPC		Isle Landscapers	Regular Maintenance Oct 2025	1,549.40
LPC		In & Around Loose	Publication - Christmas Edition	158.00
LPC		Microshade VSM	IT host services	429.91
PCH		Hags Play Equipment	Replacement swing	522.00
PCH		Electrical & Security Services	Replacement car park floodlight	117.22
ENV		Streetlights	Streetlights maintenance	65.28
Admin		Gpeto AI Ltd	Planning tool subscription	25.00
Admin		Parish Online	Mapping tool annual subscription	180.00
Admin		Preventative Healthcare Co Ltd	Occupational health appointment	390.00
Admin		Staff	Expenses	91.05
Admin		MI Payroll Services	Payroll Expenses	50.00
Admin		Salaries	Total Salaries and NI Contributions	10,274.75
		Payments out since last statement	DR	19,002.61
		Current Account Unity Trust Bank Plus Any Income	CR	90,320.25
		Current a/c after committed payments	CR	71,317.64
UTB Deposit			CR	107,321.97
Hinkley and Rugby Building Society			CR	1,000.00
Total savings			CR	108,321.97
		Total Bank balances	CR	179,639.61
Payments authorised by VG & MW				