



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF LOOSE PARISH COUNCIL (LPC)

Monday 8 December 2025 at 7.30pm

in the Loose Parish Pavilion, King George V Playing Field, ME15 9RG.

Councillors present: Cllr. Vianne Gibbons (Chair) (VG), Cllr. Mick Westwood (Vice Chair) (MW), Cllr. Elaine Lawford (EL), Cllr. Jim Andrew (JA), Cllr. Sarah Leeson (SL), Cllr. Neil Lettington (NL), Cllr Tony Oliver (TO), Cllr. Sue Hill (SH) and Cllr. Matthew Cooper (MC).

Also present: Nicky Bourne (Clerk) (NB) who took the minutes, Amanda Baker (Deputy Clerk) (AB), Eve Poulter (Assistant Clerk) (EP), Stacey Champion (Assistant Clerk) (SC), Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) Linton & Loose Ward Cllr Simon Wales (SW).

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

1. To receive and record any apologies for absence.

Previously received apologies from Cllr. Velma Bennett (VB), MBC Linton & Loose Ward Cllr Brian Clark, Kent County Council (KCC) Division Cllrs. Paul Thomas (PT) and Robert Ford were accepted by the Council.

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 17 November 2025 (Pages 2068-2075)

The minutes for the LPC meeting on 17 November 2025 were **AGREED** and signed by VG.

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

- Environment Committee Meeting 22 September 2025 (Pages 467-470)
- Planning Committee Meeting 10 November 2025 (Pages 741-742)

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

SW advised that the Senior Conservation Officer had left MBC and the Conservation Area Plan appraisal would be delayed until April whilst a replacement officer is recruited. BC continues to seek transparency from KCC regarding developer funding allocated for highways projects, prior to the next Joint Transportation Board (JTB) meeting. MBC's Local Government Reform

boundary preference has been submitted to government. MBC supports the model of 3 unitary authorities for Kent with Maidstone in an area with Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks and Tonbridge and Malling. The result will be announced in the spring. Across the country, some mayoral elections have been cancelled but this does not currently include Kent. Casework remains ongoing including enforcement, footpaths and various other matters. VG thanked SW for the continued support of both Ward Councillors. SW left the meeting at 7.38pm.

EL advised that her Freedom of Information request to KCC regarding the whereabouts of the developer funds pledged for Highways projects has been re-submitted after the response received did not answer the question asked.

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

No reports received.

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

No report received.

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

- Loose Road - Between 08:15 on Wednesday 12 November and 18:57 on Thursday 13 November. Somebody broke into a shed at a residential property and stole a quad bike and tools. Crime Report No. 46/196183/25.
- Wheatsheaf Close - On Wednesday 26 November around 15:45-16:00. Somebody damaged windows at two residential properties. Crime Report No. 46/203807/25 and 46/204165/25.
- Loose Road - Thursday 27 November between 20:00 and 22:15. Somebody smashed a window of a residential property. Crime Report No. 46/205074/25.
- Boughton Lane - Between 19:30 on Wednesday 26 November and 17:00 on Friday 28 November. Somebody stole a car battery, both number plates, windscreen wipers and tools from a vehicle parked in the road. They also set fire to the vehicle interior. Crime Report No. 46/205090/25.

9. 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 resident asked about a flyer seeking views on the proposal for a new Maidstone council. This is the second stage of the consultation under the Local Government Reform process. NB explained it referred to the currently un-parished central town areas and will not affect Loose Parish.

A resident asked if there was any update on possible Loose Road closures for further gas works. NB updated that Southern Gas Network (SGN) had been in touch to say there was no planned closure, despite rumours. SGN have advised that for any future work in the Parish they will contact the Office in the planning stages, so that relevant signage and other measures can be put in place ahead of any work starting.

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

a. To receive an update on the land collapse issue in the McAlpine Allotments

SL and JA visited the site with a representative from Loose Gardeners Society who have a plan to engineer a repair of the damaged area. JA is on the working party but explained that any action could only be undertaken if a specialist gives written assurance that the work would not disturb badgers. NB read the findings of the report from a specialist in January 2025 which confirmed an active sett. The plan would include the felling of dead trees but the Parish tree survey is still awaited. Licensing was discussed. The Council **AGREED** that an application should be made to Natural England along with an enquiry for advice and guidance and the insurance company should be consulted on the matter Action: NB.

b. To discuss the maintenance of LPC-owned walls and make any necessary decisions

JA advised that the annual inspection of the walls showed no significant safety issues but a need for minor works. SL advised that the Valley Conservation Society (VCS) volunteers had been approached regarding the ragstone wall repairs and they would be happy to help. The Council **AGREED** to proceed and will make a donation to VCS, the amount to be decided by **Round Robin** agreement. Action: NB.

11. To discuss the recruitment of new Parish Councillors and make any necessary decisions

MW had pre-circulated details of a proposal that LPC launches a new year councillor recruitment campaign to fill the three current vacancies. He proposed the campaign includes a variety of advertising locations and pop-up events, with the publication of new display and recruitment material. The proposed activities would reach out to the community in a visible way, raising the profile of LPC and providing an opportunity for residents to find out more about the work that councillors do. The Council unanimously **AGREED** the proposal. Action: Clerks & MW. Timings and venues for pop-ups were discussed and MW asked that volunteers for these interactions make their availability known to the Parish Office. Action: Councillors.

12. To receive an update on IT matters and make any necessary decisions

MC had pre-circulated a proposal for changes to the IT provision for LPC. He outlined his research and presented a rationale along with costs and comparisons. The proposal would retain the current provider but offer the most up to date applications, increased functionality (OneDrive, Teams, SharePoint, Teams calling), centralised storage, increased security and control of licensing, all at a lower cost than the current provision. MC outlined the migration and transition process and how it would be managed with support for Councillors and minimum downtime. After discussion the Council unanimously **AGREED** the proposal. Action: MC and NB.

13. Loose Valley Conservation Area - Draft Appraisal and Management Plan - to receive information and make any necessary decisions.

MW had pre-circulated a draft response to the Loose Valley and Tovil Conservation Area appraisal consultation, already reviewed by the Loose Neighbourhood Plan Working Group. Although the appraisal process is on hold, the Council **AGREED** the comments should still be sent to the MBC consultation team to feed into the process. Action: NB.

14. 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 was noted. TO raised an issue with drain cover on Linton Road which the Office will investigate. Action: NB. NB updated on progress with the issues of overgrowth and a blocked drain on the KM180 footpath following a site visit with the KCC Public Rights of Way (PROW) team. Ongoing action: NB.

15. Finance & Funding.

a. To ratify payments made on Appx A for 8 December 2025

The Appendix A for 8 December 2025 was ratified by the Council with one item description corrected.

b. To receive information on pension re-enrolment and make any necessary decisions

The payroll company has advised that the pension re-enrolment is required in the new year and quoted for the service which will last for 3 years. EL queried the cost and the Council **AGREED** that EL should be sent the details to investigate and advise. Action: NB & EL.

16. To review the following policies:

a. Social Media policy

The Social Media policy had been circulated to councillors and was **AGREED** with minor amendments proposed by SL. Action: NB.

b. Freedom of Information Policy and scheme of details

The Freedom of Information Policy and scheme of details had been circulated to councillors and was **AGREED** with minor amendments proposed by SL. Action: NB.

17. 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.

- Team members continue to work with LPC's consultant on the Neighbourhood Plan's (NP) draft policies and supporting documentation. Some sections are close to completion, others still require further research to ensure they are supported by appropriate evidence.
- A member of the LNPWG attended a Kent Ramblers meeting for footpath volunteers covering a range of topics relating to footpath maintenance, protection, planning and usage.
- A representative of Boughton Monchelsea Parish Council attended the recent LNPWG meeting of to discuss the Pested Bars site allocated for development in the Maidstone Local Plan. Part of the site is located in Loose and part in Boughton Monchelsea. The emerging draft neighbourhood plan contains a specific policy covering the site.
- A significant amount of work has gone into gathering and analysing information on locations around the parish to support their formal designation in the NP as green spaces.
- Membership of the Open Space Society, a charity that campaigns and provides support for protection and management of common ground, village greens and footpaths has been recommended at £45 annual subscription. The Council **AGREED** the proposal. Action: NB.
- Finance - the 2025-26 budget for the project is £20,000. In addition, there are earmarked reserves totalling £2,279.73. Expenditure to date (excluding VAT) totals £6,015.41 which includes consultancy support at £5,567.50 (billed in line with the original quotation).

18. Promotion of Loose Parish Council & Articles.

The latest edition of "In & Around Loose" is being prepared. SC has spent time working on the website looking at consistency and accessibility compliance. It has been noted that some content within the individual committee pages requires updating. The news and useful links pages are being reviewed to increase clarity. Action: SC.

19. To ratify any Round Robins since the last meeting on 17 November 2025.

The following **ROUND ROBIN** was ratified:

For Item 10a at the Environment Committee meeting held on 24 November 2025, a **ROUND ROBIN** was sent on 1 December 2025: To consider a quote for a new noticeboard for the Greenway. Purchase was **AGREED** (VG, JA, NL & EL) at a cost of £1175 + VAT). Action: NB.

20. Information Only

- JA thanked the Office for organising the Christmas meal.
- NB advised that the VSM shared drive would be unavailable from 2-4pm on 9 December.

21. Next meeting of the LPC – 19 January 2026 at 7.30pm.

The meeting ended at 8.37 pm.

Dated.....

Signature

DRAFT

Appendix A - Finance 25/26				
As at 8 December 2025				
Balance as at 30 November 2025				
Current	UTB	Current account	20360513	71,649.14
Savings	UTB	Instant Savings account	20416234	107,321.97
				178,971.11
Direct Debits paid already taken off balances above- INFO ONLY				
All	Monthly	Lloyds Bank- Credit card	Monthly use plus x £3 charge per user	360.99
Admin	Monthly	Clear Business	Broadband at Pavilion	43.19
PCH	Monthly	EDF Energy	Gas Charges for Pavilion	58.77
PCH	Monthly	EDF Energy	Electricity Charges for Pavilion	97.84
PCH	Monthly	Countrystyle Recycling	Waste Collection	34.30
PCH	Quarterly	Scottish Water Business	Water at Pavilion	316.49
Admin	Monthly	NEST	Staff Pension Payments	613.02
ENV	Monthly	Wynsdale Waste Management	Emptying of bins in Salts Wood	139.44
				1,664.04
Details of Credit Card Gross Payments as debited by DDR- Lloyds Bank-INFO ONLY				
PCH	CC-DD	Home Bargains	Play Area Maintenance - oil	20.98
PCH	CC-DD	B&Q	Pavilion/Car Pk Maintenance - saw	12.00
PCH	CC-NB	Ebay	Pavilion/Car Pk Maintenance - torches	8.88
PCH	CC-NB	Tesco	Pavilion Supplies	25.13
Admin	CC-NB	SLCC	Staff membership	240.00
Admin	CC-DD	TU	Caretaker PPE	20.00
Admin	CC-NB	Tesco	Leaving Flowers	24.00
Admin	CC-NB	Lebara	Mobile Phone Plan	1.00
Admin	ALL	Lloyds	Charges	9.00
				360.99
Payments authorised 5 December 2025 and ratified by LPC meeting 8 December 2025				
PCH		Hirers	Hirers Refunds	150.00
LPC		Isle Landscapers	Regular Maintenance Nov 2025	1,579.32
LPC		Microshade VSM	IT host services	385.37
Admin		Gpeto AI Ltd	Planning tool subscription	25.00
Admin		Warners Solicitors	Richmond Way lease charges	424.80
Admin		Martin Thomas	Internal Audit	505.00
Admin		Staff	Expenses	95.01
Admin		MI Payroll Services	Payroll Expenses	50.00
Admin		Salaries	Total Salaries and NI Contributions	11,065.36
		Payments out since last statement	DR	14,279.86
		Current Account Unity Trust Bank Plus Any Income	CR	71,412.21
		Current a/c after committed payments	CR	57,132.35
UTB Deposit			CR	107,321.97
Hinkley and Rugby Building Society			CR	6,000.00
Total savings			CR	113,321.97
Total Bank balances			CR	170,454.32
Payments authorised by VG & MW				