



MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

**Monday 27 July 2026 at 7.30pm
in the Loose Parish Pavilion, King George V Playing Field, ME15 9RG.**

In attendance: Cllr. Sarah Leeson - Chair (SL), Cllr. Velma Bennett - Vice-Chair (VB), Cllr. Jim Andrew (JA), Cllr. Elaine Lawford (EL), Cllr. Sue Hill (SH) and Cllr. Mick Westwood (MW).

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

There were no members of the public in attendance.

AGENDA

- 1. To Elect a Chair to the Committee for the forthcoming year.**
A nomination was put forward by VB and seconded by JA that Cllr. Sarah Leeson should continue as Chair for the forthcoming year. This was unanimously **AGREED** by the Committee and accepted by SL.
- 2. To Elect a Vice-Chair to the Committee for the forthcoming year.**
A nomination was put forward by SL and seconded JA that Cllr. Velma Bennett should continue as Vice-Chair for the forthcoming year. This was unanimously **AGREED** by the Committee and accepted by VB.
- 3. To discuss and agree any additions or changes to the Terms of Reference.**
The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Environment Committee were **AGREED** with minor amendments. Action: NB. A suggestion to review the TORs for all Committees to develop a common content format going forward will be taken to the full council. Action:NB.
- 4. To receive any apologies for absence.**
None.
- 5. To receive and agree any decision regarding any item to be taken as confidential.**
The committee **AGREED** to take agenda item 16a as confidential.
- 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**
(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).
Item 11c: A dispensation request form was signed by Cllr. Elaine Lawford. The dispensation was approved by the Clerk for the remainder of the current period of office.
- 8. To sign as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2026 (Pages 481-484)**
The minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2026 (Pages 481-484) were duly **AGREED** after two minor amendments to Agenda item 12. They were signed by the Chair. Action: NB.
- 9. To review the Action List from the meeting held on 11 May 2026**
The action list from the 11 May 2026 meeting had been pre-circulated and progress noted.

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

(To include any correspondence & phone calls received by the office from members of the public)

a. To discuss a request to use Brooks Field

Communication with a resident wishing to use Brooks Field for fitness classes was considered. After discussion the Committee **AGREED** that regrettably they could not support the request, but the King George V Playing Field should be offered as an alternative venue. Action: NB.

b. Village sign in Church Street

The Chair of Loose Amenities Association (LAA) had made contact regarding the Loose village sign on unregistered land adjacent to the churchyard. Following an inspection, the base of the sign is showing signs of rot and LAA will be arranging repair before it becomes unstable and dangerous.

11. Highways Matters – to receive an update from the Highways Working Group (HWG) and to make any necessary decisions

a. To discuss and agree the Terms of Reference for the Highways Working Group

The Terms of Reference for the HWG were **AGREED** with one amendment. Action: NB to update.

The Committee discussed HWG membership going forward. Action: MW to ask Neighbourhood Plan Working Group members to consider joining HWG.

b. To review speed data from the KCC survey at the 30/40mph gateway

Data from the speed devices was reviewed and noted.

c. To review the design for the A229 30/40mph gateway received from the KCC

The design received from LPC's KCC Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) partner, Emily Rodgers (ER) was reviewed. It was felt that hedge reduction and sign replacement were maintenance items and the design did not address the issue of speeding alongside the very narrow pavement used by pedestrians en route to the schools in either direction. Due to the ongoing gas mains replacement works on this section of road for at least six months and some pending speed limit changes at Linton crossroads, the Committee **AGREED** proposals for the 30/40mph gateway should be re-discussed when all other work is complete. Actions: NB to feedback to ER and report maintenance items on the KCC Report a Fault portal for resolution.

d. To review the Speed Indicator Device information from KCC

Information on speed indicator devices and vehicle activated signs was reviewed. After discussion, the Committee **AGREED** that they would like to progress to consider a purchase but that EL would seek further advice on particular devices and suitable locations to share next meeting. Action: EL.

e. To investigate feasibility of re-activating SpeedWatch

After discussion the Committee **AGREED** that reactivating Speedwatch should be explored further. Actions: Make contact with the Speedwatch co-ordinator for the requirements and support to re-activate; LPC Speedwatch equipment to be tested; the scheme to be publicised to the community including advertising for potential volunteers; and the established and active Staplehurst speedwatch team to be consulted for any advice. All actions: Asst Clerk Stacy Champion (SC).

f. To receive an update on any other HWG matters and to make any necessary decisions

NB advised she had revised the HIP document format slightly (with the approval of ER) reducing the historical section and adding recent progress and completion information. ER has confirmed that live priorities are not limited as previously advised so LPC should add any matters for exploration onto the plan. This can include issues raised by residents. KCC will then advise on feasibility and responsibility for any costs. The Committee **AGREED** that the HWG should collate these priorities and the revised document be sent to ER for review. Action: HWG/NB.

12. Public Rights of Way (PROW) - to receive updates on the following PROW matters and to make any necessary decisions

a. The PROW noticeboard design

The draft noticeboard design was reviewed. The Committee liked the overall concept and **AGREED** NB should take a number of comments back to the designer. Action: NB.

b. The Greenway (KB22B)

SL highlighted the extensive work by volunteers as part of the previously agreed project to manage the Greenway vegetation. After discussion the Committee **AGREED**:

- to pay the hire cost of a rotavator for the next phase of work (approx. £250) Action: NB
- a letter of thanks be sent to the lead volunteer from the full council. Action: NB
- for the project to feature in the next LPC publications. Action: NB

The quantity of dog mess discarded was discussed and the Committee **AGREED** notices would be displayed whilst the area is so clear advising of the volunteer efforts (and opportunity to get involved) and seeking community cooperation to use the bins for litter and dog mess. Action: NB

NB will contact KCC PROW for a site visit to review the path surface issues and an overhanging tree. Action: NB.

c. Footpath alongside Mangravet Wood (Pheasant Lane to Mangravet Field - KB26)

The footpath improvement project involving Community Payback has now been completed and the organiser has been thanked in the In & Around Loose magazine.

d. Any other footpath matters

None.

13. Allotment/Brooks Field boundary – to receive an update from the McAlpine Trust meeting on 22 July 2027 regarding the boundary collapse issue and make any necessary decisions

SL summarised discussions from the recent McAlpine Trust meeting following the visit from a second volunteer from West Kent Badger Trust. SL outlined the measures proposed by the Loose Gardeners to backfill and secure the collapsed section. However, an issue remains as to whether this work would be lawful and whether it requires a licence, as outlined by Natural England. This will depend on the proximity of badger habitats to the site. After discussion the Committee **AGREED**:

- MBC tree officer and a local tree surgeon to be asked to visit to advise on any impact of the dead trees adjacent to the collapsed area. Action: NB.
- Badger-Gon and Natural England reports to be recirculated to the Env Committee members and McAlpine Trust chair. Action: NB
- Further research to be carried out to explore suggested CCTV surveying or other measures to verify badger proximity. Action: NB.

14. King George V Playing Field (KGVPF) – to receive the quarterly KGVPF walkabout report completed on 24 July 2026 and make any necessary decisions

The report from the KGVPF quarterly walkabout on 24 July 2026 had been circulated and environment matters arising were noted. Action: NB/Deputy Clerk Amanda Baker (AB).

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

a. Meadow update

The seed that was scattered has, despite the extreme heat and drought, produced distinctive meadow sections with significant growth, flowering and some colour.

b. Roy's Wood update

JA and NB provided updates on the trees. The shingle oak has died. The two oak trees donated by Kent Friends of the Trees are suffering but are being regularly watered and monitored. The vandalised chequer tree is doing well. The memorial willow and the oaks donated by a local family continue to thrive. NB/AB recently cleared the bases of the young trees and put down mulch. Action: NB/AB to continue watering and monitoring all trees (with water taken from the stream).

c. Pondworks plans for 2026

The Pond Warden has been made aware that LPC agreed to fund the the supervisor from the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership and will arrange for the volunteer workforce to attend for a

day in late autumn. Action: Pond Warden. October dates are being discussed for the regular weed removal sessions and skip hire. Action: NB.

JA drew attention to communication from the Environment Agency (EA) regarding the issues raised by Simon Green (SG) related to water quality and fish classification in Loose stream. After discussion the Committee **AGREED** that a letter should be sent to SG thanking him for the information and that LPC considers that the areas of concern are under review by EA. LPC will be interested in reviewing the outcomes and deciding further actions at that point. The Committee also **AGREED** that a letter should be sent to EA thanking them for the detailed response that SG has shared, and requesting LPC is kept informed in relation to the outcome of future surveys. Action: NB.

The No Rod Fishing signs have been designed and after discussion it was **AGREED** they would be one-sided to face Brooks Path and smaller signs on the footpath posts. Action: NB to get final costs and circulate, as previously agreed, for Round Robin decision.

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

a. Tree works identified in the annual tree safety inspection

Quotes for the work advised in the tree safety report had been received but a decision delayed due to additional matters arising at the allotments, and the onset of nesting season. After discussion the Committee **AGREED** to proceed with the contractor quoting £1675.00. Action: NB.

b. Update on the annual parish walkabout

SL and NB completed half of the annual parish walkabout on 20 July and will visit the remaining areas on 3 August. The report and any necessary actions will be put on the agenda of the next meeting. Action: NB/SL.

c. Any other maintenance updates and outstanding tasks and priorities

None.

17. Finance - To receive an update from the Responsible Finance Officer

The Environment financial information had been circulated and was noted.

18. To review the 2026-27 Management Plan and make any necessary decisions

The 2026-27 Management Plan had been circulated and the planned and ongoing projects noted. It has been revised to include the financial situation for each project. The Committee must produce a 3-year budget forecast when they budget plan in November. Action: Environment Committee.

19. To ratify any ROUND ROBIN decisions since 11 May 2026

None.

20. To discuss and agree any additions or changes to the website and media

The website has been updated with the change in responsibility for the King George V playing field (from Environment to Pavilion and Community Hub), as agreed at the LPC meeting on 20 July 2026. Councillors were reminded to review the Environment Committee information on a regular basis and advise the Assistant Clerk of any required updates.

21. Other Items (discussion only)

None.

22. Date of Next Meeting – 14 September 2026

The meeting closed at 9.51 pm.

Signed

Dated.....