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MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

**Monday 14 September 2026 at 7.30pm
in the Loose Parish Pavilion, King George V Playing Field, ME15 9RG.**

In attendance: Cllr. Velma Bennett - Vice-Chair (VB), Cllr. Elaine Lawford (EL), 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 receive any apologies for absence.

Previously received apologies were accepted from Cllr. Sarah Leeson - Chair (SL), Cllr. Sue Hill (SH) and Cllr. Jim Andrew (JA).

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

None.

3. To receive any declarations of pecuniary interest or other significant interest on items on the agenda.

(In accordance with the LPC Code of Conduct adopted on 17 June 2019 (paragraphs 12-16 and Appendices A & B) and LPC Standing Orders Section 13).

None.

4. 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).

None.

5. To sign as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2026 (Pages 485-488)

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2026 (Pages 485-488) were duly **AGREED** and signed by VB. Action: NB.

6. 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. Memorial bench in Brooks Field

The decision made at the previous LPC meeting had been fed back to the enquirer, who responded to ask whether there were alternative options or sites. After discussion the Committee **AGREED** to offer an option to adopt a planter at Boughton Parade or the village green. Action: NB.

b. Crocus planting on the village green

The Rotary Club have purchased further crocus bulbs for their World End Polio campaign and asked for permission to plant some on the village green once again with a small sign explaining their significance. The Committee **AGREED**. Action: NB.

c. Bin store at Boughton Parade

A resident raised concern about the condition of the bin store at Boughton Parade and sent photographs of overflowing wheelie bins and refuse discarded over the floor. The Committee **AGREED** the issue should be referred to Community Protection / Environmental Health at Maidstone Borough Council. Action: NB.

DRAFT

d. Parking and noise issues relating to Five-Acre Wood school's end of term festival

In July a resident had raised a concern about parking and noise issues on the day of the festival and contacted the school directly, as advised by the office. As the school did not respond the resident contacted LPC for further advice and support. After discussion the Committee **AGREED** the issue should be discussed with specific contacts, ahead of contacting the school. Action: NB.

7. To receive the annual Parish walkabout report and action list and make any necessary decisions.

The annual Parish walkabout report and action list had been pre-circulated and was noted. NB advised that there were no specific concerns and updated on tasks being addressed or already completed. VB asked to be included in next year's walkabout. Action: NB.

8. To consider a policy on memorial requests and make any necessary decisions.

A draft policy created by Assistant Clerk Stacey Champion (SC) and NB had been shared. After discussion the Committee **AGREED** amendments, including the option of a planter and removal of the application form. The revised draft to be circulated for comment and agreement by **Round Robin**. Action: NB.

9. To receive information regarding the asset transfer process under Local Government Re-organisation (LGR) and make any necessary decisions.

NB and MW attended the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) webinar on asset transfers under LGR on 24 August 2026 and the notes had been pre-circulated. The webinar also highlighted the legislation for the transfer of allotments, which has implications for the Loose Road site. NB has contacted MBC to notify them of LPC's interest in the freehold of Richmond Way Green and requesting clarification regarding the allotments. Since then, the LGR process has been halted by central government. After discussion the Committee **AGREED** that investigation into the allotment regulations should continue, and findings be shared with the Committee. Action: NB.

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

a. Annual monitoring of the stability of LPC owned ragstone walls

The annual survey is due in October. Action: NB to contact Cllr. Andrew (JA) to agree a date and organise a second accompanying inspector following the departure of Charlie Hollister.

b. Annual monitoring of the closed cemetery headstones

The annual survey is also due in October. Action: NB to contact JA regarding arrangements. As JA is now the only member who has attended the specific training on headstone testing the Committee **AGREED** that opportunities for other members or staff to complete the training should be sought. Action: NB.

c. Allotment/Brooks Field boundary collapse issue

NB has completed the actions requested at the last McAlpine Trust and LPC meetings. The specialist reports have been re-circulated and the opinion of the MBC Tree Officer obtained. SL will be meeting an arborist and Chair of Loose Gardeners on 18 September to discuss the dead trees. Action: SL to give feedback at the meetings of LPC (21 September 2026) and McAlpine Trust (24 November 2026).

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

a. Meadow plans

NB updated that the 3 main meadow sections have been cut as per the groundworks contract. The Loose Amenities Association (LAA) volunteers are hiring a machine for works on their land in the valley and have agreed to cut the stream bank section with it, to provide access for the forthcoming annual pond works and to prepare the surface for next sowing. After discussion the Committee **AGREED** that sowing the meadow seed should be trialled in Autumn so the meadow seed should be purchased. Action: NB.

The Committee requested NB consult further with the LAA volunteers regarding any involvement in sowing the streambank section and then seek advice and a quote from the groundworks contractor for preparing and sowing the three large sections of Brooks Field, and if necessary, the stream bank section. Action: NB.

b. Pond works plans

The autumn pond works to remove the watercress and weed from the stream is planned for 10-11 October 2026. Action: NB to book a skip and publicise the dates. NB explained the difficulties that the silt causes and the strategies the volunteers have been researching. After discussion the Committee **AGREED** to the purchase of a floating platform to assist the works and improve safety and work rate. Action: NB. The pond warden is still in discussion with Medway Valley Countryside Partnership to arrange their attendance. Action: Pond warden.

c. Roy's Memorial Wood update

NB updated on the condition of the trees, and the survival of the newly planted oaks, after continual watering over the summer. Monitoring, and any necessary work (e.g around the bases) and watering will continue. Action: NB.

12. Cemetery - to discuss items below and make any necessary decisions

a. Preparations for Remembrance Sunday

The Committee **AGREED** the purchase of a wreath. The laying of the wreath will be decided at the October LPC meeting. The slabs have been inspected and are not in need of cleaning. Actions: NB.

b. Update on the war memorial plaque renovation

NB advised that the plaque lettering renovation project will be taken on by Assistant Clerk Eve Poulter (EP). This will include an application for a grant from the War Memorial Trust, research into the names and seeking quotes for the specialist restoration of the lead lettering. It will be started when EP's Loose Neighbourhood Plan workload reduces. Action: EP.

13. Footpaths - to discuss any matters and make any necessary decisions

a. The Greenway (KB22B)

The volunteer who organised the clearance has been thanked. He is awaiting a date from the co-ordinator of the Community Payback scheme for the installation of the weed membrane. The low tree and surface issues have been referred to KCC Public Rights of Way (PROW) awaiting response. Posters were put up on the path, and 7 volunteers have made contact to register their interest in future working parties. Action: NB to liaise with volunteers going forward.

b. Update on the Public Rights of Way noticeboards

NB has discovered that the feedback from SL to the Ramblers' contact may not have been received so will follow this up. Action: NB.

c. Issues relating to any other Public Rights of Way

Regular monitoring is taking place. Several footpaths raised by residents have been viewed and logged (Broadfield Rd KM22) and Vale Road (KM50). NB is trying to obtain the KCC PROW maintenance schedule so interim works by volunteers can be arranged when necessary. Action: NB.

14. Volunteers – to provide an update and make any necessary decisions

NB provided an update on volunteers and their activities. Special thanks are due to a planter volunteer who has restocked the two vacant planters at Boughton Parade and to litter pickers who have worked hard all summer, especially down by the stream dealing with the refuse left by those picnicking and paddling in the good weather. The Committee **AGREED** that a letter of thanks should be sent to individual volunteers. Action: NB.

MBC are hosting an event on 1 October 2026 at the Town Hall with a lunch to thank litter pickers and LPC has been given 5 spaces. NB has enquired whether any additional spaces might be available. The Committee discussed the allocation of invites. Action: NB.

15. Finance

a. To receive an update from the Responsible Finance Officer

The Environment financial information had been circulated and was noted.

b. To review the contract for street lighting servicing and maintenance and receive an update on the electricity supply costs

The unmetered electricity supply billing for the three LPC streetlights is now up to date.

DRAFT

The contract for the streetlight servicing and maintenance was reviewed and the Committee **AGREED** to continue with the current contractor. The 2026/7 annual cost is £112.54. Action: NB.

c. To note the updated 2026-2027 Management Plan and make any necessary decisions

The 2026-27 Management Plan was circulated and the planned and ongoing projects were noted.

d. To consider the 3-year budget forecast ahead of the November budget meeting

All committees will prepare a 3-year budget forecast for discussion at the budget meeting in November. The Committee discussed several items they will need to consider. Action: Committee.

16. Highways Matters – to receive an update on highways matters and to make any necessary decisions

a. Highways Improvement Plan

NB has advised the KCC Highways Engagement Officer of the Committee's comments on the 30/40mph gateway design and the wish to pick up this matter when the SGN gas mains replacement is complete. The maintenance items in this section have been logged (incorrect bend sign and vegetation reducing the width of the footway.) The revised Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) was circulated containing suggested items for inclusion. EL noted a required addition (the No Entry markings on the carriageway adjacent to the village green). Actions: NB to update the HIP and send to EL for review by the Highways Working Group prior to consulting the KCC Engagement Officer. EL will also research Speed Indication Devices (SID) and Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS). Action: EL.

b. Speedwatch

SC will be picking up the speedwatch project and liaising with NB and the Kent Police Speedwatch officer. SC will arrange for the equipment to be checked, look into required training, permitted locations, and volunteer recruitment. MW highlighted that the project may need to be considered when budget setting if the equipment is no longer working. Action: SC/NB.

17. To ratify any ROUND ROBIN decisions since 27 July 2026

None. Quotes for the "No Rod Fishing" signs are currently being collated and will be circulated for circulated for **Round Robin** agreement. Action: NB.

18. Website and media - to discuss and make any decisions as relevant

Councillors were reminded to review the Environment Committee information on the website on a regular basis and advise the office of any required updates. Action: Councillors.

19. Other Items (discussion only)

The KCC Member grant from Cllr. Robert Ford has been awarded to provide a salt bin for Carman's Close. Action: NB.

EL gave apologies for the next Environment Committee meeting on 23 November 2026.

20. Date of Next Meeting – 23 November 2026 (Budget meeting)

Meeting closed at: 9.18pm.

Signed

Dated.....