



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
LOOSE PARISH COUNCIL
Monday 16 September at 7.30pm
in the Loose Parish Pavilion, King George V Playing Field**

Councillors taking part: Vianne Gibbons (Chairman) (VG), Jim Andrew (JA), Mick Westwood (MJW), Neil Lettington (NL), Susan Hogg (SH), Michael Hogg (MH) and Mark Woodward (MW).

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

There were 3 members of the public present.

1. To receive and record any apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Charlie Hollister (CH - personal commitments), Sarah Leeson (SL- family commitment), Andrew Richards (AR - work commitments), Velma Bennett (VB - work commitments), Sue Hill (SH – personal reasons), Tony Oliver (TO - personal reasons), Kim Owen (Clerk & RFO) (KO – leave) and Amanda Baker (Assistant Clerk) (AB - illness).

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 the 15 July 2024 (Pages 1966-1973)
Minor spelling and grammatical errors were highlighted by JA to Item 6. After amendment the minutes of the LPC meeting on 15 July 2024 were duly **AGREED** and signed by the Chairman.

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

- Finance & Admin Committee Meeting on 8 April 2024 (Pages 236-238)
- Planning Committee Meetings on 11 June 2024 (Pages 664-666), 25 June 2024 (Pages 667-669) and 9 July 2024 (Pages 670-671).

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

Cllr Simon Wales (SW) drew attention to a new planning application by Cornwallis Academy. JA confirmed that this would be on the agenda of the next Planning Committee meeting. Action: JB SW will be attending the Beacon Park Developer public presentation on 17 September 2024. JB, JA and MJW confirmed that they would also be attending.

Cllr Brian Clark (BC) informed that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) consultation is now open. Although lengthy, he suggested the Planning Committee make comment on specific sections that are relevant to Loose e.g. permitted development, anti-coalescence. Action: JB BC updated on the current informal consultation regarding speed reduction on sections of the Linton Road north and south of the crossroads. Evidence gathered will be presented to the next Joint Transport Board meeting in October. VG asked for the Council to be kept updated.

BC advised that KCC were currently gathering data regarding installation of a zebra crossing outside Loose Primary School and there will be an officer review early in 2025. BC will follow progress.

BC has a motion in to full council relating to increasing protection of the Greensand Ridge.

BC asked for an update on the camp at the back of King George V playing field. NB confirmed that Maidstone Borough Council removed it on 5 September 2024.

BC raised the issue of an overgrown path behind McAlpine Crescent. The path is owned by Golding Homes, but the trees are in the gardens of Herts Crescent properties. BC will pursue a resolution.

7. To receive any reports from KCC Division Councillor Simon Webb.

No report received.

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

The team attended the Fete and spoke to residents. They have several groups booked in for talks about safety etc. The Office has made one resident referral and the Community Warden has visited.

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

No police report received. No items logged on e-watch for Loose.

NB reminded the Council that the KO had informed E-watch of the new extended Parish and provided all postcodes to be included from May 2024. They have responded explaining that they are unfunded, relying on volunteers and a free data provider, which has yet to be updated with the new boundaries. The only current alternative is for the volunteers to input the postcodes and manually update crime data. After discussion the Council **AGREED** that a letter should be sent to Kent Police regarding the outdated boundaries, the lack of crime information available, and how it could be obtained for the monthly meetings going forward. Action: Clerks' Office.

A discussion took place regarding accessibility of highways and road traffic incident data. MJW suggested the matter should be investigated by the Highways Working Group who might consider consulting the long-established Staplehurst Road Safety Group. Action: NB.

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)

A resident of High Banks had contacted the office with safety concerns regarding the derelict condition of adjacent grounds owned by the National Trust. The Wool House barn plot has been fenced off for some time but a tree recently fell on the resident's parked vehicle (photographs had been supplied). Despite attempts to contact the National Trust, there has been no improvement or resolution and the resident is concerned the site remains hazardous. After discussion the Council **AGREED** that due to the risk, the National Trust should be contacted for

comment and asked to risk assess the site, particularly the fragile wall and the trees. NL advised that in the preceding meeting the Planning Committee had just considered the current application to secure the boundary whilst the listed building renovation is investigated, so contact details could be obtained from those documents. MH suggested copying in the Conservation Officer which was duly **AGREED**. Action: Clerks' Office.

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

a. Mangravet Wood Option Agreement

After discussion, the Council **AGREED** that in view of the fact this matter is a legal agreement and those dealing with it were not present to answer any queries, it should be deferred to the next meeting. Action: KO.

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

a. Pavilion Fire Protection. (NL)

At the recent PCH meeting NL had raised the issue of fire protection in the Pavilion suggesting areas for improvement. MW (as a recently retired senior officer of Kent Fire and Rescue Service) has since reviewed the current pavilion Fire Risk Assessment document, concluding that it shows due diligence but could be improved further. MW has offered to undertake a comprehensive fire risk assessment on the building and provide recommendations and options. After discussion the Council **AGREED** MW should proceed and bring his report and options to the October LPC meeting. Action: MW & NB.

13. To receive an update on the Shed in Brooks Field. (KO)

KO has continued to investigate the Money Laundering Assessment but the responses from the Solicitor remain inconclusive. KO is chasing details of the actual documentation that would need completing and will add the matter to the October LPC meeting agenda. Action: KO.

Loose Amenities have written to the Council's Solicitors with a proposal for the rent which was circulated to Councillors. The Council **AGREED** rent at £11.07 pcm (£132.90 annually). Action: KO.

14. To receive an update on the LPC Fete and make any report necessary decisions. (NB)

NB shared the draft financial situation after the June and September fetes. Figures still require some further adjustment as they were complicated by transactions spanning different financial years, refunds from the cancelled event, and using a new card reader system. Action: NB & KO. However, the financial position was very healthy with a very large increase in income from stall holders. The additional week of rent from the funfair helped offset the expenses occurred by the cancelled June event. Specific aspects were discussed and VG thanked NB and the team for all their hard work, and particularly for agreeing to organise the re-scheduled event which ensured the Council did not lose money.

15. To review the Enquiry, Concern and Complaints Spreadsheet. (KO)

A list of all the enquiries and concerns that the office has been dealing with over the last two months had been pre-circulated. NB highlighted some of the resolved and some of the ongoing issues, and detailed two recent matters not yet on the list relating to Boughton Parade car park and the replacement of a telegraph pole in Walnut Tree Avenue. Action: Ongoing by the office.

16. Promotion of Loose Parish Council & Articles. (JB)

The social media data for July and August 2024 had been circulated to Councillors and noted.

17. To discuss Councillors' details on the website and make any necessary decisions.

The office is still working this item. The Council **AGREED** to move it to next meeting. Action: KO.

18. 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 list of Committees and members had been pre-circulated after recent updates. MH and SH will contact the Clerk with their decisions regarding Committees they will join. Action: MH & SH.

19. To review all Terms of Reference (TOR) of committees being delegated to carry out LPC business.

a. Environment Committee Terms of Reference

The Environment Committee Terms of Reference were ratified by the Council. Action: Office to update documents.

20. Finance & Funding:

a. To ratify payments made on Appx A 19 August 2024

The Appendix A for 19 August 2024 had been circulated to Councillors and noted. Authorisation was by VG & CH.

b. To ratify payments made on Appx A 16 September 2024

The Appendix A for 16 September 2024 had been circulated to Councillors and noted. Authorisation was by VG & CH.

NB advised that KO is currently working on quotes for the renewal of the insurance policy as the three-year contract finishes on 30 September 2024 and has asked if a **Round Robin** can be agreed on which insurance company the Council uses going forward. The Council **AGREED** to the **Round Robin** (5 agreements in seven days). Action: KO.

c. Update on the Barclays Bank Accounts

NB advised that after VG and KO visited the Barclays branch in Maidstone both accounts have been closed and the funds transferred to the Unity Trust Bank accounts. The office is looking into an additional account for the funds. Action: KO.

d. Update on External Auditors Mazars

The Audit Completion Report for the year ended 31 March 2024 was received from Mazars, the external auditors. The completion letter and AGAR document has been circulated to Councillors. There were no significant matters arising from the audit and the external auditor's certificate was signed. There were minor scopes for improvement as follows:

- The bank reconciliation initially provided by the Council did not include cash book figures to reconcile to the bank statement(s). In future, the Council should use the standard proforma provided in our guidance or in the Practitioner's Guide when preparing the bank reconciliation.
- The Council has left Box 10 in Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) blank. Although the answers could be inferred from other answers on the AGAR the Council should ensure all boxes are filled in, marking nil or not applicable where appropriate.
- The Council has answered Box 11b in Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) as 'No' instead of 'N/A'. Although the answers could be inferred from other answers on the AGAR the Council should ensure all boxes are filled in, marking nil or not applicable where appropriate.

KO will update the procedure notes for completing the AGAR going forward. Action: KO.

21. To review amendments to the following policies:

- a. GDPR- Data Audit Schedule & Impact Assessment
- b. GDPR- General Privacy Notice
- c. GDPR- Staff Privacy Notice
- d. GDPR- Hirers Privacy Notice
- e. GDPR-Councillors Privacy Notice
- f. GDPR- General Policy

Although the Council had previously agreed to a Round Robin agreement, there were a number of amendments proposed to the above policies. JB had made these amendments in red and circulated. The Council **AGREED** all amended policies. Action: JB.

22. To review the following policies:

- a. **Dignity at Work Policy**
The Dignity at Work Policy had been pre-circulated to Councillors and was **AGREED**.
- b. **Procedures & Policy for Authorisation of Payments**
The Procedures & Policy for Authorisation of Payments Policy had been pre-circulated to Councillors and was **AGREED**.
- c. **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests & Dispensations Policy**
The Disclosable Pecuniary Interests & Dispensations Policy had been pre-circulated to Councillors and was **AGREED**.
Action JB.

23. To review and agree the Accessibility Statement for the Council's website.

JB advised that she is still working on this and has a course to attend, after which she will prepare a statement for the next meeting. Action: JB.

24. To receive update on the Resilience Plan for the Parish. (VB)

AB has prepared some emergency information posters for the noticeboards received from Kent Resilience Forum. VB & AB are still to meet to progress the Plan. Action: VB and AB.

25. To ratify any Round Robins since the last meeting on 15 July 24.

None.

26. Information Only.

A new VE Day 80 website has been launched, which includes details of next year's national plans, a guide to taking part and a form to register involvement. Action: NB to ask VB if she is willing to lead on this.

The village green defibrillator is now registered and showing on the national network "The Circuit" as Community Heartbeat Trust are satisfied data is now secure.

The "Love Where You Live" project in Brooks Field is underway and the trees have been coppiced. The pond works will start on 23 September. Safety and public information are in place and has been circulated.

Further to the recent application, the office has been notified that the Council has been allocated a war memorial grant subject to conditions. Action: NB.

MH and SH advised that they have no internet access currently.

NL asked whether any progress had been made seeking a contractor to rectify the issue of the badger hole in the allotments. NB explained that the office was still trying to get an engineer out to view as all wanted to charge a considerable amount. A member of the public advised they have a possible engineering contact and would pass this to the office.

MH gave notice that he may not be able to attend the next meeting due to work commitments.

VG advised the Council that CH has given apologies until October for personal reasons.

27. Next meeting of the LPC 21 October 2024

The meeting ended at 9.13pm.

Dated.....

Signature