



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF LOOSE PARISH COUNCIL (LPC)

Monday 20 October 2025 at 7.30pm

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

Councillors taking part: Vianne Gibbons (Chairman) (VG), Jim Andrew (JA), Elaine Lawford (EL), Sarah Leeson (SL), Neil Lettington (NL), Mick Westwood (MW), Sue Hill (SH) and Matthew Cooper (MC). Velma Bennett (VB) arrived at 8.03pm.

Also present: Nicky Bourne (Clerk) (NB) who took the minutes, Eve Poulter (Assistant Clerk) (EP), Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) Linton & Loose Ward Cllrs: Cllr Brian Clark (BC) and Cllr Simon Wales (SW) and Kent County Council (KCC) Division Cllr: Cllr Paul Thomas (PT).

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

1. To receive and record any apologies for absence.

Previously received apologies from Cllr Tony Oliver (TO) were accepted by the Council. No apologies were received from Cllr Charlie Hollister (CH). Apologies for KCC Division Cllr Robert Ford were given by PT in agenda item 7.

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

Agenda items 14f and 21.

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 15 September 2025 (Pages 2053-2060).

The minutes for the LPC meeting on 15 September 2025 were **AGREED** and signed by the Chairman.

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

- Environment Committee Meeting: 28 July 2025 (Pages 463-466)
- Planning Committee Meetings: 1 September 2025 (Pages 730-731) and 15 September (Pages 732-733).
- Neighbourhood Plan Working Group 15 July 2025 (Pages 23-24) and 26 August 2025 (Pages 25-26).

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

SW updated that he continues to work on the Forstal Lane planning matter and a footpath issue. BC gave the positive news that a case has been put to government to extend the Kent Downs National Landscape to include the Len Valley and the Greensand Ridge (which stretches from Nettlestead to Boughton Malherbe), affording them greater protection for the future than their current Local Landscape Value designation. BC also informed that a higher level review of road closure management is being requested, as significant problems still arise even when measures put in place are compliant. EL advised BC that it may be helpful to seek out the report that was logged with KCC after the emergency A229 closure at the viaduct. Action: NB.

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

PT is liaising regularly with Southern Gas Networks (SGN) and the contractor (WCB) regarding the current works and closure. He is pushing for a feeder bus service to assist those who cannot get to either the Wheatsheaf or up to Linton Crossroads. If successful, he asked that all parties promote the service so residents are aware. When schools return there will be additional buses operating from the Wheatsheaf towards town. As advised last meeting, PT has requested a review of the previous road closure and emergency works procedures. Street works are too disjointed and MBC and KCC need better coordination and communication to improve efficiency.

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 Rd - On Monday 15th of September around 13:32. Somebody stole a recently delivered parcel from a doorstep. Crime Report No. 46/171664/25
- Mayfair Avenue - On Friday 10th of October between 01:00 and 03:00. Somebody tried to access a residential property trying the door handle. Crime Report No. 46/176045/25
- Boughton Lane - Between 00:01 on Saturday 11th of October and 06:00 on Monday 13th of October. Somebody stole lead from a school building roof. Crime Report No. 46/178545/25.

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)

- **Memorial Tree** – JA had been asked by a resident whether LPC would allow a tree to be planted in Brooks Field in memory of a well-regarded local resident. After discussion the Council **AGREED** that JA should liaise with the proposer and family, and select a suitable species to be planted near the stream. The Council also **AGREED** that if public donations were insufficient LPC would contribute to the cost. Action: JA/NB/KO.
- **Rotary Club Purple 4 Polio crocus project** – The Vice President of the Rotary Club of Maidstone Riverside (a resident of Loose for 35 years) asked for permission to plant crocus corms on the village green as part of the Rotary “End Polio Now” campaign. After discussion the Council **AGREED** but also suggested that a second location could be considered at the foot of the new trees on Boughton Parade, if quantities allowed. Action: NB.
- **Melrose Close accident prevention** – a resident had communicated concerns about the safety of children playing and pedestrians using the cut through into Melrose Close from Loose Road. A bollard is missing, motorbikes and scooters use the path at speed and there have been near misses. She has asked who might be able to help with accident prevention measures such as warning signage and a replacement bollard. The land owner needs to be established and approached. BC has been involved with Melrose Close previously and felt this would be a developer matter as it is not KCC’s land. Action: NB to investigate further.

VB arrived at 8.03pm.

10. To receive an update after the Joint Transportation Board (JTB) meeting on 15 October 2025.

BC and PT advised that the requested paper, regarding the whereabouts of developer funds collected for the Wheatsheaf junction improvements, did not appear at the JTB meeting and officers did not attend to provide any explanation. As the LPC Highways Working Group (HWG) requested sight of the paper at the JTB meeting on 13 March 2025, the Council considers this unacceptable. PT has been told that a report will be released to PT and BC in a meeting, but no date has been set. The next JTB meeting will be in 3 months. After discussion the Council **AGREED** a proposal from VG that in pursuit of transparency and financial accountability, the HWG should take up the matter and speak on behalf of LPC, reporting back to the Council. Action: HWG.

11. To discuss the following consultations and make any necessary decisions regarding an LPC response.

a. Kent County Council's Draft Strategic Statement

After discussion the Council **AGREED** the comments proposed for LPC's response by MW.

Action: NB to submit by the midnight deadline 20 October 2025.

b. Loose Valley and Tovil Conservation Area Appraisal Survey

The new Loose Valley and Tovil Conservation Area Appraisal document, map and feedback form was circulated. At the September LPC meeting BC had informed the Council of the significant extensions to the previous conservation area boundary, providing increased protection for local land. Loose will be hosting one of the two MBC consultation events, on 4 November 3.30-6pm in the Loose Pavilion.

After discussion the Council **AGREED** that the LPC response to the survey should be formulated after the consultation event. Councillors should read the new documents and any comments be forwarded to MW to collate. BC encouraged those present to support the new plan by also making individual responses and sharing the new conservation area, the appraisal and consultation event date widely to gain as much community support as possible. The deadline for the survey is 14 December 2025. Action: All Councillors/ Clerks' Office.

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

None.

13. 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. NB detailed additional concerns received since the report, mainly regarding the A229 road closure. A couple of positive offers of community volunteering support had been received and welcomed. Action: NB.

14. Finance & Funding.

a. To receive an update on the External Auditors Mazars

The letter from Mazars confirming completion of the external review for the year ended 31 March 2025 was circulated with the external auditor's report and certificate. The Council noted the comments under "minor scope for improvement in 2025/2026" referring to a small clerical error by the internal auditor, and suggesting adjustments to the risk register. Action: NB.

b. To receive an update regarding the Internal Auditor situation

Due to recent staff changes, the Council **AGREED** to engage the current Internal Auditor for the forthcoming appointment, with the intention to make a change in time for the following audit. Action: NB.

c. To ratify payments made on Appx A for 20 October 2025

The Appendix A for 20 October 2025 was ratified by the Council. EL raised a query regarding the 2 entries for HMRC and salaries. NB believed the first related to adding a new employee onto the system after the September pay roll had been completed. Action: NB to confirm.

d. To receive a full record of accounts from the RFO

The full accounts to 16 October 2025 were circulated and noted.

e. To reconcile bank balances with bank statements

The bank statements for September 2025 were reconciled with the Rialtus Business Solutions (RBS) system and signed by MW.

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

Moved to confidential item 21.

g. To review the Salts Wood waste collection contract

The Council reviewed the contract for emptying the 3 bins in Salts Wood and **AGREED** to continue with the current contractor at £58.20 + VAT per fortnight.

h. To review the Parish Online annual subscription

After sharing how the office and councillors use Parish Online the Council **AGREED** to continue with the subscription at a cost of £150 + VAT. The Office was asked to check how many users are permitted as it would be useful for the Neighbourhood Plan Working group members to have access. Action: NB.

15. Promotion of Loose Parish Council & Articles.

Social media data was circulated and noted. The Office is disseminating information on the roadworks to the LPC Community Alert subscribers, duplicating the information received directly from SGN or WCB.

16. To review the Terms of Reference of committees being delegated to carry out LPC business.

Terms of Reference for the Human Resources Board, agreed by the Board on 9 June 2025, were circulated and ratified after one agreed addition (to state the election of the Chair and Vice Chair in the procedures). Action: NB. MW highlighted the inconsistency in terminology with the Standing Orders using "HR Committee" rather than "HR Board". The Council **AGREED** the Standing Orders would be amended to refer to the "HR Board" for consistency. Action: NB.

17. To review the following policies:

a. Risk assessment task-based policy

The Risk assessment task-based policy was circulated to councillors and was **AGREED** with minor amendments proposed by SL. Action: EP. NB explained that having recently updated two risk assessments, it would be beneficial to review all risk assessments, and put them in a standardised format. SL offered support with the task. Action: Clerks' office/SL.

b. The CCTV Policy and tick sheet

The CCTV policy & tick sheet had been circulated to councillors and was **AGREED** with one punctuation correction proposed by SL. Action: EP.

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

An update on the work of the LNPWG was circulated. MW summarised the findings of the Housing Needs Survey. The local business survey will end on 24 October. The group will be attending the MBC Conservation area consultation event on 4 November. The walkabout took place on 16 September and findings will be used in the formulation of the design guidance principles in the plan. The biodiversity survey, commissioned from Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre was obtained free of charge, so the agreed spend was not required.

19. To ratify any Round Robins since the last meeting on 15 September 2025.

None.

20. Information Only

- MW informed the Council that the YMCA had just achieved the target for their replacement floor fundraising and were extremely grateful for the support of the Parish Council.
- NB shared the news from Kent Friends of the Trees that the LPC entry in the 2025 “Tree of Interest in the village” had been awarded second place. It featured the history of the ancient yew tree in the All Saints churchyard.
- NB updated that the opening of the new savings account had not been straightforward due to communication permissions. The opening deposit has now been authorised by VG and MW and confirmation of the open account should be with signatories in the next few days.
- NB updated on the Christmas meal booking and requested confirmation of numbers, meal choices and payment of deposits.
- NB updated on the staff leaving gathering and requested confirmation of numbers.

The meeting was closed to the public at 8.38 pm for a confidential item.

21. Confidential information item (VG).

VG updated the Council on staffing matters.

22. Next meeting of the LPC – 17 November 2025 at 7.30pm.

The meeting ended at 9.13pm

Dated.....

Signature

Appendix A - Finance 25/26				
As at 20 October 2025				
Balance as at 30 September 2025				
Current	UTB	Current account	20360513	94,489.62
Savings	UTB	Instant Savings account	20416234	107,321.97
				201,811.59
Direct Debits paid already taken off balances above- INFO ONLY				
All	Monthly	Lloyds Bank- Credit card	Monthly use plus x £3 charge per user	395.01
Admin	Monthly	Clear Business	Broadband at Pavilion	43.19
PCH	Monthly	Scottish Water Business	Water at Pavilion	169.90
PCH	Monthly	EDF Energy	Gas Charges for Pavilion	35.96
PCH	Monthly	EDF Energy	Electricity Charges for Pavilion	81.94
PCH	Monthly	Countrystyle Recycling	Waste Collection	32.35
PCH	Monthly	Clear Business	Gas & Electric charges Pavilion	20.27
Admin	Monthly	NEST	Staff Pension Payments	606.06
ENV	Monthly	Wynsdale Waste Management	Emptying of bins in Salts Wood	139.44
				1,524.12
Details of Credit Card Gross Payments as debited by DDR- Lloyds Bank-INFO ONLY				
Admin	CC-NB	N2U Online	Laminating Pouches	7.79
Admin	CC-NB	Marquee Media Ltd	Paper	31.90
PCH	CC-NB	National Garden Gift Voucher	Planter Compost	25.00
PCH	CC-NB	Smartwater Testing Ltd	Legionella Testing Kit	54.00
PCH	CC-NB	Home Bargains	Pavilion Supplies	33.66
PCH	CC-NB	Amazon EU	Brushes	6.99
PCH	CC-NB	Amazon EU	Cable Covers	21.88
PCH	CC-NB	Wolftix Ltd	Key Tags with Label	6.99
PCH	CC-NB	Direct2Market Ltd	Fire Brigade Padlock	13.75
PCH	CC-NB	Roadware	Green Grit Storage Bin	119.94
PCH	CC-NB	Argos	Handheld Vacuum Cleaner	25.00
PCH	CC-NB	Screwfix	All-weather Combi Padlock	22.99
Admin	CC-NB	eLearning at Work	Manual Handling Training	15.12
Admin	CC-NB	Lebara	Mobile Phone Plan	1.00
Admin	ALL	Lloyds	Charges	9.00
				395.01
Payments authorised 26 September 2025 and ratified by LPC meeting 20 October 2025				
LPC		Clear Insurance Management	Cyber Insurance	410.25
LPC		Microshade VSM	IT Host Services	493.27
PCH		The Hop Press	Signs for Pavilion	237.60
PCH		Arton Plumbing and Heating	Emergency Plumbing Repairs	114.00
Admin		Salaries and HMRC	Staffing Costs	2,920.14
PCH		Reg Hirer	Refund of Deposit and Keys	85.00
Total				4,260.26

Payments authorised 15 October 2025 and ratified by LPC meeting 20 October 2025				
PCH		Hirers	Hirers Refunds	180.00
LPC		Isle Landscapers	Regular Maintenance Sept 2025	1,315.73
Admin		Kent County Playing Fields Ass	Annual Subscription	20.00
PCH		Arton Plumbing & Heating	Replace dual flush siphon	164.17
PCH		Claire Waldron	Pavilion Cleaning	150.00
PCH		CLlr Expenses	Materials for drain repair	9.99
PCH		Fire Control Services (UK) Ltd	Fire Equipment Check	75.60
PCH		Neil Shorter Building Services	Roof tile repairs	35.00
PCH		Electrical & Security Services	Emergency light repairs in Pavilion	184.25
PCH		Jacksons Fencing	Car park security barrier	170.65
ENV		Neil Shorter Building Services	Fence construction in allotments	815.00
ENV		Isle Landscapers	Repairs to entrance of KGVPF	117.60
Admin		YMCA Maidstone	Donation	400.00
Admin		Staff	Expenses	239.49
Admin		MI Payroll Services	Payroll Expenses	50.00
Admin		Salaries	Total Salaries and NI Contributions	8,697.72
		Payments out since last statement	DR	12,625.20
		Current Account Unity Trust Bank Plus Any Income	CR	93,222.92
		Current a/c after committed payments	CR	80,597.72
UTB Deposit			CR	107,321.97
Total savings			CR	107,321.97
		Total Bank balances	CR	187,919.69
Payments authorised by VG & MW				