MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF

LOOSE PARISH COUNCIL (LPC)

Monday 19 October 2026 at 7.30pm

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

Councillors taking part: Cllr. Mick Westwood (MW) (Vice Chair) who chaired the meeting; Cllr. Jim Andrew (JA), Cllr. Sue Hill (SH), Cllr. Sarah Leeson (SL), Cllr. Loryl Nixon (LN) and Cllr. Matthew Cooper (MC).

Also present: Nicky Bourne (Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)) (NB) who took the minutes, Amanda Baker (Deputy Clerk) (AB), Stacey Champion (Assistant Clerk) (SC), Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) Linton & Loose Ward Cllr: Cllr. Simon Wales (SW), Kent County Council (KCC) Division Cllr: Cllr. Paul Thomas (PT), PC Harry Greenfield and PC Lee Tallon.

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

1. **To receive and record any apologies for absence.**
   Previously received apologies from Cllr. Vianne Gibbons (Chair), Cllr. Velma Bennett (VB), Cllr. Elaine Lawford (EL) and Eve Poulter (Assistant Clerk) (EP) were accepted by the Council. Apologies were also received from MBC Linton & Loose Ward Cllr: Cllr. Brian Clark (BC) and KCC Division Cllr. Robert Ford (RF).

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.**
   (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 21 September 2026 (Pages 2123-2130)

   The minutes for the LPC meeting on 21 September 2026 were **AGREED** and signed by MW.

   The following approved minutes were noted and adopted by the Parish Council:
   - Planning Committee Meetings: 24 August 2026 (Pages 786-787), 7 September 2026 (Pages 788-789), and 21 September 2026 (Pages 790-792).
   - Neighbourhood Plan Working Group 10 August 2026 (Pages 62-65).

Agenda Item 7 was taken next.

KCC Cllr. Paul Thomas arrived at 7.40pm.
Item 6 was taken on conclusion of Item 7.

6. **To receive any reports from KCC Division Councillors (PT).**
PT updated on the progress of the SGN gas mains replacement works. Halstow Close should soon be complete. Works at the Northleigh Close/Pickering Street/Leonard Gould junction are planned from 2-20 November 2026 with the restricted access issue. Letters should have been delivered to affected residents. Linton Road continues slowly but is progressing. PT attended the Kent Water Resilience Partnership in Ashford on 8 October 2026 and spoke with SE Water regarding the leaking water mains. They advised work is planned on the booster at Hazlitt Place that frequently trips out causing issues in parts of Loose. RF continues to push for action on the Church Street water issues. At Full Council on 5 November 2026 PT will raise questions regarding the currently on-hold Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). NB added that SGN closures will include footpath KM53 (from Pickering Street to Loose Road adjacent to the King George V Recreation Ground) from 9 November 2026. It is expected to re-open by 4 December. Pedestrians should use Walnut Tree Avenue and Northleigh Close as a diversion. Action: Updates to go in next Community Alert (SC/NB).

7. **To receive any reports from the Loose & Linton Ward Councillors. (BC & SW)**
SW advised that the decision on the new Loose Valley Conservation Area boundary has been delayed and it is now due to be reviewed at the November Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting. New affordable homes were recently opened in Tonbridge Road. The 19 flats were funded by the Housing Revenue Account and two have been shortlisted for social housing awards. The Call for Sites report has been published. JA asked for quantity clarification and SW advised there are 183 sites across the borough which suggests oversubscription and no further call for sites should be necessary in this cycle.

8. **To receive any reports/information from the Police and from E-watch.**
PC Harry Greenfield updated on changes to the workforce structure due to staffing levels and reactive redeployment to events such as protests. The Child Centred Policing team has suffered cuts, leaving only 10 county-based officers to work in all schools across Kent. The Community Safety Unit has been rebranded as the Neighbourhood Policing Team. Local issues have included catapulting and nuisance bikes. New laws on catapults are hopefully coming in soon. The team attend incidents when they can and clarified that reports and CCTV submissions should still be made as they help build evidence trails to support prosecutions. With Halloween approaching, PC Tallon highlighted 'trick or treat' posters available on the My Community Voice email. Action: Office to share on a Community Alert. The team will review suitability of locations for speed monitoring on the A229 and welcomed LPC's re-engagement in Speedwatch. Action: SC. PC Greenfield confirmed that speed monitoring sites are determined by statistical evidence from Speedwatch and historical accident data. The next Police Surgery will be on 13 November 2026 at 5pm at the YMCA. E-watch reports for Loose since the last meeting had been pre-circulated and were noted.

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. **Closure of the letter box in Church Street**
   Royal Mail has been contacted and responded that the box is showing as operational on their system. Photos of the closed box have been sent but a further response is still awaited. Action: NB.

10. **To review the "Enquiries, Concerns and Complaints" Spreadsheet.**
A report detailing the enquiries and concerns received since the last meeting had been pre-circulated to councillors and was noted. NB highlighted some of the resolved matters and productive communication with KCC relating to various Public Rights of Way.

11. **Loose Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (LNPWG) – to receive information and make any necessary decisions**
An update on the work of the LNPWG had been pre-circulated. The Regulation 14 consultation will close on 23 October 2026 and MW reminded those present to complete the survey and encourage

friends and neighbours to do so. Public engagement events have taken place and the presentation from the consultant is available on the website. This is the last opportunity to make changes to the plan contents. Once closed, responses will be reviewed by the LNPWG, the plan will be updated according to feedback and sent to MBC. MBC will run a public consultation, but no further changes can be made by LPC. Finances remain the same, with consultancy fees still to be paid but the project will come in under budget. Action: Community Alert and social media reminders for consultation completion (NB/SC).

12. To receive and discuss any items escalated by councillors, committees or the office and make any necessary decisions.

a. PCH Committee – update on accessible access to King George V car park

AB and JA explained options to improve accessibility through the main gate for wheelchairs. After discussion, the Council **AGREED** that the offer of help from a volunteer should be further explored, creating a clear project specification (which includes alterations to the fixture and enhanced visibility by painting), contacting the insurance company and creating the risk assessment. Documents to be circulated for agreement by Round Robin. Action: AB.

b. PCH: Pavilion improvements update (AB)

AB updated on the pavilion improvement project and made a proposal for a community engagement event. After discussion the Council **AGREED** to an event. Action: AB to circulate proposed dates for agreement by Round Robin. Display materials to be prepared, and online information to be shared via the website for those unable to attend in person. Action: AB/SC.

c. Community Warden service (MW)

Following the MBC Parish Conference and discussions with other parish councils, MW provided information on the Community Warden service and potential options available to LPC. After much discussion, the Council **AGREED** that ahead of the budget setting process, research should continue looking at the scope for a one or two-day per week appointment. Engagement with neighbouring parishes should be undertaken and a costed proposal drawn up for discussion at the next meeting. Action: MW/AB. JA asked for clarification on funding sources. Action: NB.

d. Community Asset transfer process

NB has communicated with MBC regarding potential asset transfers and returned the Richmond Way Green plans to clarify the boundary as requested. Questions have been asked regarding the Carlton Place allotments. No further response has been received but would be helpful before budget setting. Action: NB to follow up and copy SW into communications.

e. Councillor training and mentoring

The Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) “Nuts & Bolts of Parish Councils for Councillors” has been booked for MW (26 Nov 2026) and SL & LN (26 January 2026). LN is booked on the KALC Planning Conference (11 March 2026). Councillors were reminded to contact the Office if they wish to access any training courses. Action: NB to book MC on the Nuts & Bolts course if available.

MW shared a proposal to launch a mentoring scheme for new Councillors. After discussion the Council **AGREED** the support scheme. Interested and experienced members are asked to advise the office if they wish to mentor to a new member. Action: NB & Councillors. The support would be added to the recruitment information. Action: SC.

f. National Allotment Society membership (MW)

MW shared the National Allotment Society membership information, and the benefits of membership were discussed. The Council **AGREED** to join at the local council subscription rate of £70 per annum. Action: NB.

13. **To receive an update from the Maidstone KALC meeting held on 28 September 2026 and make any necessary decisions.**
The minutes of the 28 September 2026 meeting of Maidstone KALC, attended by VB, had been pre-circulated and were noted. MW advised that any questions should be emailed to VB for a response upon her return. Action: VB.

14. **Finance & Funding.**
    a. **To ratify payments made on Appx A for 19 October 2026.**
The Appendix A for 19 October 2026 was ratified by the Council. Payments were authorised by VG and SL.

    b. **To receive an update on the 2025/26 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).**
The completion letter and AGAR report had been pre-circulated. NB drew attention to the one Minor Scope for Improvement to start the 30-day public rights period the day after the publication, not the same day. Action: NB.

    c. **To receive an update regarding the internal auditor situation.**
NB updated on correspondence with the 2025/26 internal auditor and gave feedback from the KALC Finance Conference and communication with other parishes. After discussion the Council **AGREED** that research should continue, and options taken to the Finance and Administration meeting on 2 November 2026. Action: NB.

    d. **To receive a full record of accounts from the RFO**
The half-year accounts to 30 September 2026 were circulated and noted.

    e. **To reconcile the bank balances with bank statements**
The bank statements for August and September 2026 were reconciled with the Rialtus Business Solutions (RBS) system and signed by MC.

    f. **To ratify the total salaries as recommended by the HR Board**
The Local Government Association (LGA) agreed a national 3.3% pay award for 2026 for local government employees, back dated to 1 April 2026. On 5 October 2026, following appraisal of staff the Human Resources (HR) Board agreed single spinal point salary increases for staff with effect from April 2027. The Council ratified these increases.

    g. **To receive information on an enhancement to the LPC email service and make any necessary decisions (MC)**
MC outlined a new service that will protect email delivery and stop impersonation emailing. The Council **AGREED** to add the service to the current contract at £14 per month. Action: NB.

    h. **To review the Broadband contract and make any necessary decisions.**
MC outlined his research seeking a broadband contract that meets the basic needs of the Pavilion. The Council **AGREED** proposals should be brought to the next meeting. Action: MC.

15. **To review Terms of Reference of committees being delegated to carry out LPC business.**
    a. **Human Resources Board Terms of Reference**
The HR Board Terms of Reference had been pre-circulated following the change in the process of electing Chair and Vice Chair. The Council ratified the Terms of Reference as proposed. Action: NB.

16. **To review the following policies:**
    a. **Risk assessment task-based policy**
    b. **CCTV policy and tick sheet**
    c. **Procedures and policy for authorisation of payments**

The above policies had been circulated to councillors. MC had identified a number of potential amendments to each. The Council **AGREED** that revised documents, incorporating the changes should be created and circulated for review at the next meeting. Action: NB.

17. **To ratify any Round Robins since the last meeting on 21 September 2026.**
The following ROUND ROBIN was ratified:
For Item 11a at the Environment Committee meeting held on 28 July 2025, a ROUND ROBIN was sent on 10 October 2026: To consider quotes to design and produce a set of "No Rod Fishing" signs for the Loose stream and pond. A quote was **AGREED** (SL, JA, VB & EL) at a cost of £228.28. The signs have been received and will be erected at the pondworks working party on 25 October 2026.

18. **Promotion of Loose Parish Council & Articles.**
NB summarised promotion and publicity since the last meeting. Social media and Community Alerts have featured the Loose Neighbourhood Plan consultation and advertised for volunteers for working parties. Posts celebrating the achievements of these groups with photographs have brought high engagement. SC continues to research meaningful data to be able to analyse engagement. Action: SC. The submission for the next "In & Around Loose" magazine was completed and the edition will be out early November. SC recently attended a social media course and will be reviewing the Facebook page accordingly. Action: SC. The website continues to be updated and improved, and the Councillor profile page will be next. Action: SC. JA asked for a short article to be included on the website, giving the reasons behind the installation of the "No Rod Fishing" signs at Loose stream and pond. Action: NB/SC. Content for the next Community Alert was discussed, to be sent out before the end of the Loose Neighbourhood Plan consultation period. Action: NB/SC.

19. **Information Only**
    - Community Resilience Plan – AB had shared the draft plan and updated on progress. AB and NB had visited Staplehurst Emergency Help Team. MW asked members to review the document and consider the scope of the plan for Loose residents and for LPC. The item will be revisited at the next meeting. Action: AB.
    - Christmas Giving Tree – SC updated that the Giving Tree would be operational very soon and explained how it would work. The support of Domino's has been secured – they will host the tree and be the collection point for presents. SC is awaiting lists of gift recipients from local care homes. Nearer the time SC will seek help with deliveries. Action: SC.
    - Councillors were reminded to provide their Christmas meal deposit and choices to the Office if not already done so. Action: Councillors/SC.

20. **Next meeting of the LPC –** 16 November 2026 at 7.30pm**.**

The meeting ended at 9.17pm.

Dated……. Signature ……

Appendix A - Finance 26/27

As at 18 Oct 2026

Balance as at 30 Sept 2026				
Current	UTB	Current account	20360513	13,405.76
Savings	UTB	Instant Savings account	20416234	109,533.06
				122,938.82
Direct Debits paid already taken off balances above- INFO ONLY				
All	Monthly	Lloyds Bank- Credit card	Monthly use plus x £3 charge per user	519.88
Admin	Monthly	Clear Business	Broadband at Pavilion	46.79
PCH	Monthly	EDF Energy	Gas Charges for Pavilion	19.96
PCH	Monthly	EDF Energy	Electricity Charges for Pavilion	63.61
PCH	Monthly	Countrystyle Recycling	Waste Collection	35.50
Admin	Monthly	NEST	Staff Pension Payments	646.32
Admin	Monthly	Flotek Ltd	IT host services	437.32
Admin	Monthly	Gpeto AI	Planning tool	48.00
ENV	Monthly	Wynsdale Waste Management	Emptying of bins in Salts Wood	149.21
				1,966.59
Details of Credit Card Gross Payments as debited by DDR 16/9/26 - Lloyds Bank-INFO ONLY				
PCH	CC-NB	Ultra Secure Ltd	KGV car park - bollard socket (did not fit)	60.90
PCH	CC-NB	Ultra Secure Ltd	KGV car park - bollard socket refund	-58.11
PCH	CC-NB	Ultra Secure Ltd	KGV car park - 3 security bollards & sockets	254.34
PCH	CC-NB	Amazon	Play area finger trap plugs and foam pads	9.68
PCH	CC-NB	Amazon	Pavilion woodstain	34.99
PCH	CC-NB	Amazon - Progutter Ltd	Gutter cleaning tool	8.99
PCH	CC-NB	Amazon - Chivrose Ltd	Padlocks x3 for new security bollards	23.97
PCH	CC-NB	Tesco	Pavilion cleaning supplies	6.75
PCH	CC-NB	Toolstation	Pavilion tile / general adhesive	2.49
PCH	CC-NB	Amazon	Cordless strimmer	35.99
ENV	CC-NB	Morrisons	Compost for planters	24.00
Admin	CC-NB	KALC	Finance conference for RFO	84.00
Admin	CC-NB	HP Instant Ink	Printer ink subscription	20.99
Admin	CC-NB	Lebara	Mobile phone plan	4.90
Admin	ALL	Lloyds	Charges	6.00
				519.88
Transfer Deposit to Current Acct 16 October authorised and ratified by LPC meeting 19 October 2026				**30,000.00**
Payments made 19 October authorised and ratified by LPC meeting 19 October 2026				
PCH		Chris's Handyman Services	Security bollard installation	246.00
PCH		Claire Waldron Cleaning Services	Pavilion cleaning (July-Sept)	218.13
ENV		Streetlights	Annual maintenance (2/2)	67.88
ENV		Creative Vinyl Signs	"No Rod Fishing" signs	281.28
LPC		Isle Landscapers	Regular maintenance Sept 2026	1,368.36
LPC		Mango Print	Neighbourhood Plan consultation printing	648.00
Admin		Clear Insurance Management	General insurance	2,526.66
Admin		Clear Insurance Management	Cyber insurance	395.25
Admin		Geoxsphere Ltd	Parish Online annual subscription	180.00
Admin		Kent County Playing Fields Assoc	KCPFA annual subscription	20.00
Admin		Staff	Expenses	68.14
Admin		MI Payroll Services	Payroll Expenses	50.00
Admin		Salaries	Total Salaries and NI Contributions	11,067.51
		Payments out since last statemt	DR	17,137.21
		UTB Current Account 16/10/26	**CR**	**41,459.01**
	Current a/c after committed payments		**CR**	**24,321.80**
UTB Deposit			**CR**	**79,533.06**
Hinckley and Rugby Building Society			**CR**	**106,008.90**
Total savings			**CR**	**185,541.96**
		Total Bank balances	**CR**	**209,863.76**

Payments authorised by VG & SL