



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
LOOSE PARISH COUNCIL
Monday 18 November 2024 at 7.30pm
in the Loose Parish Pavilion, King George V Playing Field**

Councillors taking part: Vianne Gibbons (Chairman) (VG), Charlie Hollister (CH), Jim Andrew (JA), Mick Westwood (MW), Neil Lettington (NL), Sarah Leeson (SL), and Tony Oliver (TO), Susan Hogg (SH)

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

There was one member of the public present.

1. To receive and record any apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Sue Hill (SCH – Personal Commitment), PC Harry Greenfield (HG-Unwell), Velma Bennett (VB – Bereavement), Michael Hogg (MH – Work Commitment) and Andrew Richards (AR – Personal Commitment).

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 21 October 2024 (Pages 1984-1990)
The minutes of the meeting on 21 October 2024 were **AGREED** and signed by the Chairman.

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

BC advised:

- The Greensand Ridge motion he put forward to the last MBC Full Council where it is looking for enhanced protection for the ridge through national recognition of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The motion was received with unanimous support and was then passed to the Strategic Planning Committee for consideration, which BC is a member. The Committee agreed to move the motion forward to an electoral paper. Some background work had already been completed by officers and BC advised that the Ridge is fully protected across Surrey but not when it

comes into our area. Our Landscape of value is very narrow and this will be looked at going forward. The motion will now come to members as an electoral paper for consideration.

- The 30mph proposal for the Heath Road has gone forward for consideration and will be an electoral paper. The JTB Board agreed unanimously.
- A resident contacted BC in Broadoak Avenue re two trees that were diseased. One has to be felled sign but the other one does not. He contacted KCC and they advised that one is dead but the other one is impacted but was not so bad at the time of the check. He has asked KCC that once the trees are felled can they be replaced with new trees.
- At Strategic Planning Committee two management plans come to committee but were not in our area. There is now an overarching Conservation Area Management Plan that has been adopted and will give protection from planning to conservation areas that do not have management plans and this will also enhance Article 4 Directive protection.
- KCC advised that it looks like more money will be available for bus services but we will have to wait and see how that will work.

SW advise that he has been dealing with houses issues and working with BC on the above areas.

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

The Clerk read out the Report received as follows:

November and December report – Simon Webb (Member – Maidstone Rural West)

The last few months have been quite uneventful at Full Council meetings, however, as a member of Scrutiny Committee we are undertaking a 'deep-dive' into the Special Educational Needs consultation and its proposals.

This 'deep-dive' is the first of its kind for the County Council and is asking all interested parties to join the committee and other interested Members to listen to their points of view over the restructure and its proposed outcomes.

The discussions have been broad, intense and enlightening with quite a significant range of views, I for my part (having been within the education profession, as well as senior adviser for primary education for KCC) have listened and chosen not to comment unnecessarily. It will be for others hearing this afresh which will drive the agenda.

In addition to this, I have been very active in consistently challenging KCC Education Cabinet Member over the full expansion of Coxheath Primary school and the impact that this will have on the smaller primary schools within my division.

I was expecting to attend the CYPE (Children and Young People Education) Cabinet Committee on 21st November to challenge the proposal. However, for the third time the paper has been pushed back to the following Cabinet Committee. I will now attend in January 2025.

I would like to wish all Councillors, residents and colleagues a very warm and enjoyable festive period. Let's bring in a much safer, collegiate New Year too.

Kind regards

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

The Clerk advised that she had received a document from KCC on FAQs for sponsoring a Warden. The document was circulated to Councillors.

After discussion the Council agreed:

- To contact Matt Honeysett to see if any other local Parishes do not have a warden in order to consider sharing costs of sponsoring one.
- To contact KALC to see if they are aware of the situation with the Community Wardens and if they have any information on who has or has not been allocated a warden.

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

PC Harry Greenfield has been unwell following leave so there is no report but he hopes to attend the LPC Meeting in December.

E-watch

- On Thursday 24 of October between 00:01 and 23:59 in Mill Street. Somebody stole a Mercedes Sprinter, WN13***, from a car park.
Crime Report No. 46/181590/24 - Posted 28/10/2024
- On Friday 25 of October between 06:00 and 11:00 in Paynes Lane. Somebody stole a recently delivered parcel from a doorstep.
Crime Report No. 46/181536/24 - Posted 28/10/2024
- On Wednesday 23 of October between 12:00 and 12:27 in Boughton Lane. people were seen using a catapult to break windows at a Learning Academy.
Crime Report No. 46/180444/24 - Posted 25/10/2024

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. Government Consultation Paper on Remote Meetings.

There is an open consultation on enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings. The deadline for the consultation is 19 December 2024. NALC strongly welcome the deputy prime minister's announcement that the government is committed to allowing councils to hold remote council meetings.

Since temporary COVID-19 powers ended in May 2021, NALC have been at the forefront of a national campaign, working closely with the Association of Democratic Services Officers and Lawyers in Local Government and supported by other bodies such as the Society of Local Council Clerks. In her speech to the Local Government Association Conference on 24 October, Angela Rayner MP said, "It's not our place, for example, to decide whether councillors should attend your meetings remotely or use proxy votes when they need to." She then announced a consultation to "let councils make the decision for themselves."

NALC will respond and encourage all parish and town councils, county associations, and individual councillors and clerks to participate in this essential consultation. Your responses are vital in demonstrating the strong support for this flexibility, building on the momentum from the previous call for evidence.

After discussion the Council **AGREED** for the Office to complete the survey on behalf of LPC. KO to Action.

b. The office has received confirmation from MBC that the Council can go ahead and fill the vacancy due to the resignation of Mark Woodward by co-option.

11. To receive updates on the Boundary Changes and make any necessary decisions. (SL/KO

a. Mangravet Wood Option Agreement

The option was agreed at the last LPC meeting and Warners Solicitors have sent a clean copy ready for Signature. MW advised that there are still some corrections to do on the document ie index numbering and he will check it before the document is signed and send to the Office to be updated. KO/SL will advise Warners Solicitors.

b. Lease for Richmond Way

Warner solicitors have agreed for just the two Councillors who signed the Lease will need to have an electronic identity check. The Clerk has forwarded the necessary details to Warners and is awaiting confirmation that this has been done.

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

The Clerk advised that she had had a discussion with Solicitors and suggested that the identity checks could be done electronically or each Councillor will need to book an appointment with Dennis O'Connor to check documentation. The solicitors will write this week to confirm what is the best way forward. Solicitors details have been put on the VSM for Councillors.

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

- a. To discuss options for the Copper Tree Court cobbles to prevent parking issues (CH)
CH advised that the Highways working Group have suggested buying and installing the Royal British Legion silhouette figures – the Tommy male and the female – instead of bollards or planters to stop parking on the cobbles. She wants to get full LPC's thoughts so that the silhouette figures can be purchased in this year's budget. There is an issue that it is KCC land but Michelle (KCC) previously advised there is a permit that can be obtained to put something on their land if it is to help traffic issues, if the Parish Council is paying. BC advised he has contacted KCC to see if he can get the costs of the licence waived. After discussion the Council **AGREED** to installing the Silhouette Figures subject to agreement from KCC. The costs will come of the street furniture budget for 24-25.

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

Details of the Enquiry, Concern and Complaints Spreadsheet has been circulated to Councillors and noted.

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

The Social Media data has been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting and noted.

16. Finance & Funding:

- a. To ratify payments made on Appx A for 18 November 2024
The Council ratified the Payments for November. They were authorised by VG & CH. The Council also **AGREED** to pay Kent Men of the Trees by standing order going forward with effect from January 2025.
- b. To receive an update on the Internal Auditor's interim visit
The Internal Auditor visited on 13 November 2024 for an interim check and the report has been circulated to Councillors. There are no medium or high-risk issues on the report.

17. To review and agree the Accessibility Statement (JB)

KO advised that following the new website accessibility regulations JB has written a holding Accessibility Statement and KO has checked all areas of the website for Accessibility using the WIX website checker. Now that has been completed it would be a good idea to have the website checked by an independent website checker such as Lighthouse (recommended by NALC.) Once this has been completed the office can then complete the actual statement for the website.

The Council **AGREED** to use an independent company to check the accessibility of the Council's website. Office to Action.

18. To received update on Councillors' details on the Website (KO)

The Clerk advised she has worked on the Councillors details on the website and included:

- A picture of each Councillor
- Start Date
- Committee membership
- Representative details

Councillors will have a look at the website and let the Office know if any changes/additions are needed.

19. To review the following policies:

All policies have been circulated to Councillors for consideration prior to the meeting. Amendments have been received from SL & MW.

a. Health & Safety Policy

The Policy was reviewed and **AGREED** with amendments from MW & SL.

b. Training & Development Policy

The Policy was reviewed and **AGREED** with the following amendments:

- 3.2 should be amended to say that Councillors can identify their developmental needs as and when they see fit. JB to Action.
- 14.2 A tracking system needs to be set up to ensure that new Councillors attend the required training. Office to Action.
- submitted by MW & SL regarding grammatical errors etc. JB to Action.

It was also **AGREED** that the Councillors' Calendar be resurrected and sent out on a bi-weekly basis and the Office to investigate funding for Microsoft Teams software to use for online training. AB to Action.

c. Winter Policy

Councillors reviewed the Policy and **AGREED** with the amendments from MW. JB to Action.

d. Environmental Policy

The Council reviewed the Policy and **AGREED** to approve it for this year as it explains about the merger of the two areas. From next year the explanation will be removed. Office to deal and diary a note of the changes in a year's time. JB/NB to Action.

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

AB advise she had completed Part 1 of the Introduction Course on Resilience Planning. Part 2 is on 20 November 2024 and she has also completed a course on 13 November 2024. Once all workshops have been completed she will arrange a meeting with VB to take planning process forward.

21. To ratify any Round Robins since the last meeting on 21 October 2024.

None.

22. Information Only.

- NL asked if there was any progress on the badger set issue in the allotments. At the McAlpine Trust meeting on 5 November it was discussed and it is hoped that once the foliage dies back on the border with Brooks Field it will be easier to assess the situation. The Gardeners have blocked off the area concerned and people of are not allowed to use the path in that part of the allotment. NB is still trying to find a solution to the problem. The access is difficult. JA advised that precautions have been taken to ensure that allotment users are safe.
- JA advised the Council that AR, NB & himself planted the two trees in Brook Field. They have not been planted in the area that was agreed as there is brickwork under the ground.
- The Clerk advised that she has now completed the Fete Income and Expenditure document and it is on the VSM for Councillors to see. The PCH Committee have agreed that the profit will be transferred to the Pavilion Community Hub Earmarked Reserves.

- d. VG asked that a letter be sent to Bob the Cap who during the winter months year after year has helps the elderly to stay safe by putting salt down on the paths in the area. A thank you note should also be put on the website.

23. Next meeting of the LPC 9 December 2024.

The meeting ended at 8.35pm

Dated.....

Signature