



**LOOSE PARISH COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Meeting held on Monday 14 November 2022
at 7.30pm in Loose Parish Pavilion, KGVPF.**

In attendance: Councillors: Charlie Hollister (Chairman - CH), Jim Andrew (JA), Elaine Lawford (EL), Susan Luckhurst (SL), Andrew Richards (AKR) and Peter Rigby (PR).

Also in attendance: Nicky Bourne (Deputy Clerk - NB) who took the minutes, Kim Owen (Clerk - KO) and representing Southern Water, Scott Pring and Aaron Dallas. There were no members of the public in attendance.

House-keeping and meeting rules were covered by the Chairman before the meeting began.

AGENDA

1. To receive any apologies for absence

No apologies were received from Velma Bennett.

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

(For Councillors to approve/disapprove as appropriate and to agree the reason for the dispensation if approved. See dispensation form. *This follows an agreement by LPC on 17 July 17.*)
None.

5. To sign as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2022 (Pages 388-393)

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2022 (Pages 388-393) were duly **AGREED** as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

The Committee AGREED to take Agenda Item 8 next.

6. Questions/comments from the public or Community groups (3mins)

None.

7. Correspondence & phone calls received by the office

A resident reported footpaths KM55 and KM101 closed off with barriers and enquired if LPC knew whether this has been done legally, for what reason, and for how long. After investigation, it appears to be part of the SGN gas works pipeline replacement programme, but KCC PROW have been contacted for confirmation. Action: Clerks' Office to chase confirmation.

LAA have received notification that their contractor can commence building the shed on Thursday 17 November. The Office has received the PLI certificate and advised LAA that we require a risk assessment. The Committee **AGREED** that the Clerks' Office should look into the archives and start to plan for the asbestos removal when LAA have vacated the old shed. Action: Clerks' Office.

LAA have advised that the Christmas tree and the 'Carols Around the Tree' event cannot happen at Tyler's this year, and have informed the Office that they have sought and obtained the permission of the church to use the Closed Cemetery. They plan to put the tree in a section of the cemetery, on the left as you go inside the gates, where there are no burial plots. It requires a 3ft deep hole, with a 1ft square footprint, for the steel frame that the tree is bolted onto. A resident next to the cemetery has agreed to provide the power source for the lights. The 'Carols Around the Tree' event is also planned for the cemetery. LAA would be designing the safety measures to keep public safe and protect the gravestones and memorials. The event would be covered by LAA's public liability insurance.

The Chairman expressed disappointment that LPC, having the maintenance responsibility for the cemetery, and all its associated costs, had not been consulted until this stage. Major concerns were discussed and the Committee **AGREED** that LAA should be contacted and made aware of these. A request should be made for a detailed risk assessment and a formal written agreement from the church, including all protection measures and assurances. The Committee **AGREED** that use of Brooks Field should be offered as a more suitable and safe venue. Action: Clerks' Office to contact LAA.

8. Lower Loose Valley Pumping Station update – from Southern Water

Scott Pring (Regional Operations Manager for Waste Water networks) and Aaron Dallas (Field Manager for Kent Central which includes responsibility for the Lower Loose Valley Pumping Station) attended the meeting, representing Southern Water. They explained that the Lower Loose Valley Pumping Station had been problematic and unreliable, particularly over the last 11 months, with a combination of electrical and mechanical failures. The pump was installed in 1978 and it pumps to the Upper Loose pumping station and on to Coxheath treatment works. The location causes many issues as access is very narrow through the old village and down Kirkdale, so residents have to be asked to move their vehicles and Southern Water has to utilise tankers and pipes. They explained that refurbishment of the Lower Loose Valley Pumping Station is programmed for March 2023, which will install new pumps, a new control panel and a new generator to remediate failures. In the interim, a second rising main has been discovered and tested, and should serve to alleviate the need for tankers should a failure occur before refurbishment. They continue to carry out substantial testing and it is their highest priority to keep the alarm systems working, to activate a field team as quickly as they can in the event of an issue. Southern Water apologises to the residents affected when issues arise, particularly the immediate neighbour, who has the man hole required for the discharge, in their garden.

Southern Water are now investing more in preventative maintenance, and with technological and environmental improvements, focussing on increasing reliability and resilience. The planned refurbishment will take 4-6 weeks. All neighbouring residents will be duly informed.

JA asked about the current quality of the discharge and Scott Pring advised that he would find out for the next meeting. CH thanked Scott and Aaron for attending to provide the update, after the Office had battled to re-establish contact, and hoped that this could continue on a quarterly basis, in line with the Environment Committee meetings. The next meeting is on 13 March 2023 when it would be useful to update on whether the refurbishment timeline is going to plan. Action: Office to send a reminder.

9. To receive updates on recent and ongoing Environment matters and to make any necessary decisions

An update was pre-circulated to the Committee including the following matters:

Meadow - The 3rd section of the meadow was dug out by our regular volunteer on Sunday 13 November to whom the Committee is very grateful. The next stage will be to get the section rotavated, the seeds sown and the section fenced off. The orange fencing has been replaced with new as it was too ripped and tangled to re-use this time. It was **AGREED** that the Clerks' Office should proceed with the next phase. Action: Clerks' Office.

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Pond/Stream - The pond/stream working party took place on Sunday 13 November using the skip that was provided by LPC. Action: Clerks' Office to arrange removal of the skip when works are confirmed complete.

Tree works - Details from the annual tree report of the works required within 6 months have been sent to a number of contractors and we await their quotes. It requires works in KGV, Brooks Field, the Cemetery and the tree on the triangle. The Clerks' Office will continue to chase quotes and it was **AGREED** that they should be circulated for agreement by **Round Robin**. Action: Clerks' Office.

The root trip hazard in the KGV car park, caused by the tree outside the Pavilion, has been surveyed by 4 contractors and but only one proposal and estimate has been received so far. The Clerks' Office will continue to chase quotes and it was **AGREED** that they should be circulated for agreement by **Round Robin**. Action: Clerks' Office.

The works listed on the tree report for the newly planted trees in Roy's Wood were not included on the quote requests, as Councillor volunteers or the groundworks contractor have tended to these in the past. The common oak is still to be planted. Action: JA and AKR to plant. JA and AKR **AGREED** that they would also complete the works listed in the report, or refer to the Clerks' Office to contact the groundworks contractor, if necessary. Action: Clerks' Office to provide JA and AKR with the relevant section of the Tree Report.

The works required for the Jubilee oak on the village green were sent to KCC as requested, as the tree is listed as under their management.

Cemetery - The roses in the cemetery have had their annual maintenance by the groundworks contractor, and the resident from LAA has agreed to monitor and tend to them throughout the year, as necessary.

The cemetery was tidied up by the groundworks contractor in preparation for the Remembrance Day Service on 13 November. A poppy wreath was purchased and laid by Rita Hood on behalf of LPC.

Old Loose Hill - The banks and verges on Old Loose Hill have at last been cut by KCC. The drain and gully issues on Old Loose Hill have been re-reported to KCC as the 3-month window that KCC gave to complete the work has now passed, and no work has been undertaken. The work required includes the blocked drain outside Vale House and dealing with the overgrown gullies outside Old Loose Close and down the hill. Action: Clerks' Office to chase.

Fences - The KGV risk issue with the gaps in the fences is now fully resolved. It was not possible to put a second wooden post in one gap due to tree roots, so that gap has been completely shut off with chestnut paling fence. The larger gap has a solid wooden post with the chestnut paling fence extended and secured to it. It is being monitored regularly, and so far, it remains secure.

The fence that had come away in Brooks Field, that was previously repaired by the groundworks contractor, has been re-fixed at no charge.

Car Park Barriers (PCH & ENV) - The work to install the car park barriers was completed on 10 November. The sub-contractor's safety fencing will be collected over the next few days. The wooden posts are currently piled up in the car park. Action: Caretaker and Deputy Clerk to move the old wooden barriers to the skip in Brook's field.

A229 - The street light knocked down in an accident last January, was finally replaced on 24 October 2022 and shines brightly. Unfortunately, the light on the next northbound post does not illuminate, so has been reported. We are also chasing the replacement fixtures at the junction with Old Loose Hill where cones remain. The main streetlight does not work there, presumably due to the damaged wiring in the central reservation. Action: Clerks' Office to continue chasing.

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Viaduct footpath - The footpath over the viaduct keeps flooding making it impassable. When it drains it has sludge/rubbish on it making it awkward to walk over, and it is a busy route either way to schools. Thanks to EL who cleared it on the last occasion. It was reported to KCC as requiring a debris clean on 9 and 12 September and has been re-reported since the latest flooding. The status on KCC says works completed, so it will be reported again this week. Action: Clerks' Office to continue chasing.

Ongoing items – the following are still being fully actioned

- Obtaining confirmation of the plans for the entrance(s) to Forstal Mead. Action: Clerks Office.
- Creating the Parish consultation on the 20mph zone. Action: CH and Deputy Clerk to complete and circulate to the Committee.

10. Risk/General Maintenance

The quarterly walkabout of the KGV took place on 18 October and the records had been pre-circulated to the committee. All matters are in hand.

The Cemetery entrance trip hazard, noted by JA and CH on the annual risk assessment walkabout, is still undergoing investigation. One contractor visited and made suggestions, but no further communication has been received, despite chasing. Further contractors are being sought. The Deputy Clerk has a site visit with another contractor, on Tues 15 November. It was **AGREED** that the Clerks' Office should continue to seek further contractors and quotes, and circulate for agreement by **Round Robin**. Action: Clerks' Office.

During the annual inspection of the head stones on 17 October 2022 one memorial collapsed under the push test and lies where it fell, as too heavy to move. It has been recorded on the spreadsheet accordingly. It was **AGREED** that the Clerks' Office should contact the specialist for advice on options, and circulate for agreement by **Round Robin**. Action: Clerks' Office.

The cable protruding from the wall on the west side footpath down Old Loose Hill was raised. The LPC Chairman had already notified the Office of this and will be taking it to the next McAlpine meeting for discussion. Action: Chairman to update the Clerks' Office following the meeting.

CH raised the maintenance of the planters, and advised that they would remain as they are, until affected by frost, and then would be replanted for the winter. Action: CH and SL.

11. Finance

a. To agree the budget for 2023-2024

The Clerk handed out the finance report and budget information. The proposed budget for 2023-2024 was discussed and **AGREED**. The Committee discussed additional seating in Brooks Field and the possibility of installing a commemorative bench for the King's Coronation. It was **AGREED** that the Clerks' Office should look into options and bring to the next meeting. Action: Clerks' Office.

b. To update the management plan and make any necessary decisions

An updated management plan had been pre-circulated and was **AGREED** without amendment.

12. Monitoring and ratification of any ROUND ROBIN decisions

None.

13. Other Items (information only)

14. Date of next meeting – 14 March 2023

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.

Signed

Dated.....