



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

In attendance: Councillors: Charlie Hollister (Chairman) (CH), Susan Luckhurst (SL), Velma Bennett and Peter Rigby (PR). Also in attendance: Nicky Bourne (Deputy Clerk-NB) who took the minutes.

There was one member of the public in attendance.

AGENDA

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Jim Andrew and Andrew Richards.

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

The Committee **AGREED** to discuss Item 13b and Item 15 in closed sessions.

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)*

CH declared an interest in agenda item 12c.

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 the agreement made by the LPC at the meeting held on the 17 July 17)

The paperwork was not available at the last meeting, but a dispensation has now been signed and approved for CH up to May 2023

5. To sign as a correct record, the minutes of meetings held on 8 November 2021 & 31 January 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2021 (Pages 362-365) and the Extraordinary meeting held on 31 January 2022 (Pages 366-369) were duly **AGREED** as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

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

None

7. Correspondence & phone calls received by the office

A resident had alerted the office of two loose ragstone kerb stones, down by Brooks Path on Old Loose Hill. The Deputy Clerk reported these to KCC. In the meantime, one rock was thrown in stream. The same resident kindly retrieved the stone. This happened a further time, but the kerbstones were fixed back in place by KCC on Fri 11 March 2022.

A resident sent in a link to some information on the "Quiet Lanes" scheme, which referred to some signage that could possibly be obtained for the village. Unfortunately, upon researching, it appears the scheme (from 2006) was not continued. The Deputy Clerk has asked KCC Highways to clarify this but is still awaiting confirmation.

A resident, who attended the Extraordinary meeting on 31 January 2022, contacted the office afterwards to ask whether the traffic survey summary document from the meeting, could be published on the website. The Deputy Clerk had responded that the draft minutes, which contain a summary of the survey, would go on the website when finished. At the next meeting the Environment committee would discuss the revised Highways Improvement Plan, and would then decide which documents should go on the website. After discussion, the Committee **AGREED** that the website should state that anyone wishing to view the recent traffic survey data should contact the office. Action Communications and Media Clerk.

A resident had enquired whether they could help the ivy-clad Elder tree in Brooks field, by the stream. At the LPC meeting on 21 February, agreement was given in haste, due to the fast approaching nesting season. To update, the resident submitted the risk assessment, and the ivy was cut to kill it on 1 March. The dead ivy will be removed at the next pond working group in September, after nesting season, and when the next skip is in place.

A resident of the Old Squash Court (Copper Tree Court) enquired about the land ownership of the cobbled area beyond her wall. The Deputy Clerk met with the resident at the site, and queries were raised regarding who could maintain the hedges and tree outside the wall. It was also noted that the wall was significantly damaged. The Deputy Clerk has forwarded the query to KCC Highways and is waiting for a response from Claire Chewter. There has already been some discussion of this same area, as the cobbled section is regularly being used for parking, and strategies are being discussed to prevent this.

SL has been providing the office with regular evidence of overnight parking on the cobbled section of Copper Tree Court. KCC have already said that bollards are the last resort and suggested leaflets, social media or enforcement. It was **AGREED** that the Deputy Clerk would consult with the PCSO regarding the chance of using leaflets or enforcement. Action Deputy Clerk.

A company, who were unsuccessful in securing a contract for the Environment Committee, have requested to know the reasons they did not win, and the name of the chosen contractor. After discussion it was **AGREED** that providing this information was not standard business practice and should not be given.

A resident living near to the damaged streetlight on the A229, by the viaduct, had copied the Office into correspondence with KCC Highways, chasing the replacement of the light. Jennie Watson had investigated and the Street Lighting team are waiting on one utility company to advise on their plans at that location. When they have this information, the job will be programmed. The resident has also logged that the bollards in that area require a clean, so that they are more visible.

8. The Village Green & The Triangle – to discuss items below and make any necessary decisions

a. Risk assessment for the village sign in the triangle

A completed risk assessment document has been received from Loose Amenities Association for the village sign in the triangle. There are no issues.

b. Queen’s Jubilee banner and plaque on the village green

After discussion it was felt that a banner was not requested or required. The original idea was to install a resin plaque, similar to the current plaque on the ragstone boulder. It was **AGREED** that, because contact could not be made with the previous plaque maker, and with the time frame was short, the Clerks’ Office should attempt to look wider to source something appropriate for the space available.

9. Brooks Field – Pond - Roy’s Wood – to discuss items below and make any necessary decisions

a. Pond clearance and ongoing maintenance

The second pond clearance took place on 13 February. After discussion with the office, the volunteers also kindly cleared a dead badger that KCC would not retrieve from the stream.

The pond work is complete until September, and the stream is now looking extremely tidy and well-managed, after the overgrowth due to working party restrictions through Covid. The Committee **AGREED** that the group should be thanked for their efforts. Action Deputy Clerk. The skip will be collected imminently, but was postponed due to the soft ground.

Options for the ongoing waste that builds up at the sluice in Church Street were discussed. The Office has checked with MBC and they will not take it. A resident is willing to continue to transfer it to Brooks field, but the previous space he used is now occupied by the shed base. The Committee **AGREED** to either the purchase of a composter, if the resident is willing to deal with it, or to allow the continuation of making a pile near the Kirkdale gate, and once rotted, raking it into the hedge base. Action Deputy Clerk to consult the resident and agree course of action.

b. Village Green status for Brooks Field (SL)

At the LPC meeting on 21 February, village green status was supported for Salts Wood (an application had been made by BMAT). It was proposed that village green status be investigated for Brooks Field. Documentation from gov.uk and KCC has been researched, including an application form. There are no fees. Land must have been used for sports or pastimes for 20 years and there can be no landowner statement removing that right. The land must not be affected by, or identified for, development. After discussion it was **AGREED** that the Office should apply for village green status for Brooks field. Action: Deputy Clerk

10. Cemetery - to discuss items below and make any necessary decisions

a. Removal of the buddleia in the closed cemetery

Isles have completed the work to remove the buddleia that was damaging a grave in the closed cemetery.

b. Cemetery headstone check update

The Deputy Clerk has consulted with Mid Kent War Memorials regarding any stabilisation required for identified headstones, but is still awaiting a response. Action: Deputy Clerk to chase or seek an alternative specialist.

c. Repairs to the war memorial

Recent communications with the Church suggest that the faculty may be getting closer to being granted (from an email in Jan 2022). The Churchwardens are meeting next week to try to progress the matter. After discussion it was **AGREED** that the Deputy Clerk should consult the companies who provided quotes back in December 2020 for any revisions, updates or re-visits, so that accurate quotes would be ready if the faculty was finally granted. Up to date information will also be required for the Church insurance company who have requested details about start and completion dates, total value of works including VAT and professional fees, and whether under a formal contract or quote and acceptance. Action Deputy Clerk. It was also **AGREED** that a War Memorial Grant should be researched as soon as the faculty was granted. Action Deputy Clerk.

11. KGVPF - to discuss items below and make any necessary decisions

a. Matters arising from the quarterly KGVPF walkabout completed 21 January 2022

The Risk Report from the last quarterly inspection of KGV had been pre-circulated. There are no issues of concern. Most items identified come under general maintenance that the Caretaker will undertake (painting the main gates, painting benches, painting the wooden barriers, fixing a loose slab and monitoring wire fence protrusions). The triangle wall was discussed and it was **AGREED** that the repair should be stalled due to difficulties finding anyone for a reasonable price, and the likelihood it would get knocked down again quickly. Action Caretaker and Deputy Clerk to continue to monitor and raise again, if it becomes a health and safety issue. The Deputy Clerk reported that the metal base from the

vandalised bin that remained a trip hazard in the field, had finally been removed by MBC, two weeks ago.

12. Highways – to discuss items below and make any necessary decisions

a. To review the revised Highways Improvement Plan

The HIP had been re-written following decisions at the Extraordinary Environment Meeting on 31 January 2022. It had been sent to KCC Highways for comment, along with some questions regarding street lighting, and the frequency of repeater road signs. A copy of the revised HIP with these comments on had been pre-circulated. The Committee reviewed each of the ideas on the plan, in light of the comments.

1a Enforcing the existing weight limit on all Loose Village roads – the Office are still waiting for comment from the Police regarding enforcement and whether it will be possible to implement, and if so, how this might be implemented. Action: Deputy Clerk to chase.

1b One-way system down Well Street – this is not supported by KCC (because the road is a through route) and a number of residents have already expressed concern. The Committee therefore **AGREED** that this would not be progressed to consultation.

1c 20mph speed limit throughout the Loose Village roads – this was discussed at length. KCC have no funding so the approximate cost of £16000 would need to be met by the Parish. KCC have confirmed that lighting is not a requirement where average speed is lower than 24mph, but that regular signage is a requirement. Some of this signage can be roundels, but not all of it. It was **AGREED** that before any consultation could be undertaken, all facts need to be out in the open, so a walkabout should be requested with KCC Highways to establish an accurate assessment of the regulation signage. Action Deputy Clerk to request a meeting. Sue Grigg had reported that, at a recent MBC meeting, support towards “Twenty’s Plenty” campaigns had been pledged to communities where there is engagement. There was no further information regarding the nature of the support, but the Office will attempt to find out more.

1d Street Lighting and speed ramps – this is not supported by KCC as speeds are already low, and community concern had already been voiced to LPC about street lighting being installed in the area. After discussion, the Committee **AGREED** that this would not be progressed to consultation.

2. A229 extension to the 30mph section to include the viaduct, and the addition of a further pedestrian refuge. This will be reviewed further by KCC Highways, to look at the viability of the new suggestions.

3. Loose Primary School improved signage and 20mph zone in school hours. This has already been partly investigated by KCC, who have confirmed that the existing signs cannot be upgraded, but there is a chance that new posts could be installed at different locations. In the interim, SLOW markings could be put by the existing signs. It was **AGREED** that KCC should be asked to go ahead with these suggested improvements. Action Deputy Clerk to contact KCC Highways. It was **AGREED** that the 20mph zone required further consideration as speeds at school times are already very slow due to queuing. The Committee **AGREED** they specifically needed to know whether it would mean that the crossing patrol was withdrawn if the area became a 20mph zone. Action Deputy Clerk.

4. Parking causing obstructions at the top of Old Loose Hill by the Village Green. KCC Highways have agreed to add this for their list for assessment.

5. Inconsiderate parking at Lancet Lane and Copper Tree Court. KCC had carried out site visits. In Lancet Lane, the extension of double yellow lines did not score high enough as it was felt it would just push the issues elsewhere. The school warning signs were noted to be in poor condition and have been logged for replacement. At Copper Tree Court, it was confirmed that enforcement could take place so the committee **AGREED** that the PCSO should be consulted. Action Deputy Clerk.

b. Preparations for consultation on specific proposals in the Highway Improvement Plan

The Deputy Clerk and SL have both consulted Boughton Monchelsea Parish Council regarding their 20mph consultation and have obtained some resources. It was **AGREED** that the full facts about the physical impact, and practicality of signage in the specific Loose village roads, needed to be obtained before a consultation should be prepared. Action Deputy Clerk as per Agenda Item 11a (HIP Item 1c).

c. Damaged kerbs stones in Well Street

This matter was previously left that Councillors and residents wanted to see the “mock granite” stone in place. Photographs from Lenham had been provided but they wished to view actual examples. KCC Highways have been asked whether the kerbs used in Church Street, outside the Vine Church are of this type, but the answer is still awaited. Deputy Clerk to chase. It was also discussed that some Councillors and residents, along with KCC Highways, feel that once replaced with the new flat stone, the pavement will be driven over even more as they are now a flat surface. A consultation may be needed. In the interim, it was **AGREED** the existing kerb should be monitored and any stones which are a health and safety risk should be reported for action. Deputy Clerk to advise KCC Highways.

13. Risk/General Maintenance - to discuss items below and make any necessary decisions

a. To discuss the role of the caretaker in ENV maintenance

At the last PCH meeting it was noted that the Caretaker’s jobs list is very extensive and involves a considerable number of jobs, for the Environment Committee, around the village. He is not able to complete some of the tasks around the park and pavilion. The Committee **AGREED** that the Caretaker should prioritise jobs in the KGV recreation ground and the Pavilion, unless he has the spare time for others. Deputy Clerk to inform Caretaker. The Committee also **AGREED** that if necessary, the Office could seek a suitable handy person for Environment jobs. Action Clerks’ Office.

The meeting was closed at 8.38pm.

b. To review the quote for repairs to LPC-owned ragstone walls

After discussion in the closed session the Committee **AGREED** to accept the quote for necessary repairs to the ragstone walls in Brooks field, and in the Cemetery. Action Deputy Clerk.

The meeting was reopened at 8.41pm.

c. Damaged cover stones at Herts Crescent

The Deputy Clerk informed the Committee that the re-damaged cover stones on the wall at Herts Crescent, which had recently been reported to Golding Homes, have been very promptly repaired.

14. To discuss the camera in Walnut Tree Avenue and make any necessary decisions

At a previous meeting the committee agreed that the Clerk should apply for the surveillance camera again, but the Clerk was told that there would be a 2 year wait, due to the length of time camera training would take. Recent new measures have been installed in the Walnut Tree Pub Car Park, including car park monitoring and enforcement. The Clerk asked whether, in light of these, the

committee still wished her to pursue the police camera installation. After discussion the Committee **AGREED** that the PCSO should be consulted, to find out if anti-social behaviour was still an issue in the area, and if he still considered there to be a need for the camera. Action Deputy Clerk.

The meeting was closed at 8.46pm

15. To review the tenders for the groundworks contract and make any necessary decisions

The 3 tenders received by the office had been pre-circulated and were discussed in the closed session. After discussion the Committee **AGREED** to award the groundworks contract to Isles Contractors. Action Deputy Clerk.

The meeting was re-opened at 8.51pm.

16. To review the new 2022-23 management plan and make any necessary decisions

The Management Plan had been re-drafted for 2022-23 and pre-circulated for review. It was noted without amendment.

17. Finance

a. To receive an update from the RFO

The finance report had been pre-circulated by the RFO. In the absence of the RFO, the Committee was unclear whether there were any outstanding items to be taken from the published balance, and **AGREED** that they would like the RFO to clarify exactly how much was left this financial year, and whether it could be carried over and put into a new Highways Fund. Action RFO to respond.

b. To review the electricity supply contract for street lighting

The Deputy Clerk explained that the current contract for the power to the LPC-owned street lights is with EON and is a no-notice, rolling contract that is competitive and currently under budget. It was reviewed by the RFO in March 2021 and no cheaper was found. In light of this information, the current fuel rises and advice, the Committee **AGREED** to stay with the current provider EON. Action RFO.

18. Monitoring and Ratification of any ROUND ROBIN decisions

The following ROUND ROBINS were ratified:

For Item 11a (ii) at the ENV meeting held on 14 June 2021, a Round Robin was sent on 8 February 2022: To agree purchase of a plaque for the Jubilee Oak tree. The choice of Acrylic in brass colour was **AGREED** (CH JA PR SL).

For Item 12 at the ENV meeting held on 8 November 2021, a Round Robin was sent on 29 December 2021: To agree the Groundworks Specification for 2022-2025. **AGREED** (JA PR SL)

19. To discuss and agree any additions or changes to the website and media

See item 7: The Committee **AGREED** that the website should state that anyone wishing to view the recent traffic survey data should contact the office.

20. Other Items (discussion only)

None

21. Date of Next Meeting – To be advised

The meeting closed at 8.59pm.

Signed

Dated.....