



LOOSE PARISH COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Extraordinary Meeting held on Monday 31 January 2022
at 7.30pm in Loose Parish Pavilion, KGVPF.

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

There were 17 members of the public in attendance.

AGENDA

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Velma Bennett (VB) - attending KALC Area meeting.

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

The Committee **AGREED** to discuss Item 7 in closed session.

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)*

AKR declared an interest in agenda item 6.

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)

A dispensation has already been signed and approved for AKR up to May 2023 (LPC meeting 13 December 2021).

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

A resident highlighted the need to address issues of speed, the lack of safe places to cross, and poor notification of the bend on the A229 Linton Road near the viaduct. Reference was made to the Loose Neighbourhood Plan and the wish to make Loose a safer place to walk and cycle, to be encouraged alongside the climate emergency, the New Highway code and the new Active Travel England quango.

A resident gave his opinion against the proposal of a one-way system for Well Street, highlighting potential flaws as it would require overweight vehicles to return via Busbridge Road and could potentially encourage cars to speed up Well Street. The resident suggested there was a need to re-visit the regulation made with the developers which is not being adhered to and therefore having no impact. The weight restriction is already in place and it was suggested that where vehicles are identifiable, contractors should be contacted directly.

The Office had received a phone call from a resident against the one-way system proposal for a variety of reasons.

The Deputy Clerk read out 4 emails from:

- Residents of Old Loose Hill stating support for the proposed highways improvements, speed restrictions and one-way plan for the village and surrounding roads.

- Residents of Old Loose Hill raising concerns about speed, oversized vehicles, damage to vehicles, property and gardens, road rage when lanes get blocked and dangers to pedestrians. They wished to give support to the points raised at the Highways meeting on 6 December 2021.
- A resident wishing to support the introduction of a 20mph speed limit through the village and restrictions in Well Street.
- A resident of Well Street commenting in favour of the proposals from the Highways meeting, offering to contribute to costs and to help fundraising, to partake in speed watch in the village and to help monitor the one-way system with other residents. The resident detailed some of the recent incidents and confrontations when cars have met head to head on Well Street, and sent photographs of recent damage to residents parked vehicles and the ragstone wall.

CH summarised that all proposals put forward for the roads in the village would need a consultation and accurate costing by KCC. Funding would be the biggest hurdle as the budget for the Environment Committee for 2022-23 from the precept will be approximately £20000 to cover all areas (the village green, Brooks field, the allotments, the closed cemetery, bins, benches, walls, highways and groundworks) and it is already allocated to specific projects for the 2022-23 budget. AKR highlighted that a number of residents had mentioned self-funding or community/crowd funding, suggesting that might be an additional source. JA referred to the recently approved development of 9 houses behind a property on Linton Rd. Loose Parish Council Planning Committee had objected to the development, as they believe it will worsen traffic conditions. However, now going ahead, the development should get a levy which might be able to be used for alternative projects in the Parish. The Environment Committee **AGREED** this should be investigated. Action Deputy Clerk. CH explained that the levy from developers funded the Pelican crossing on Heath Road for Boughton Monchelsea Parish Council, but that none of the levy from the Forstal Lane developments benefitted Loose Parish because it sits inside the Coxheath Parish boundary.

6. To discuss the Highways Improvement Plan and make any necessary decisions

a. Feedback on the traffic survey

The Deputy Clerk explained that that the original reason for the traffic survey was to measure traffic speed, type and flow on the A229 after the Highways Improvement Plan was first reviewed in 2019. However, installation was significantly delayed due to Covid restrictions and lockdowns, which affected normal traffic patterns. In the delay period, the issues concerning Well Street had been repeatedly raised so the Environment Committee agreed to use Quiet Lanes funding to extend the survey to include 2 points on Well Street and one on Busbridge Road. A further delay by the survey company meant the equipment was installed week beginning 26 July 2021, just as the school holiday started. After explaining that the purpose of the survey was to include school run data, the company installed a second survey free of charge in term-time, for a week from 15 November 2021.

The data from the survey had been shared and analysed with KCC Highways. Key findings include:

- All points on the A229 had what KCC consider low average speeds for a 40mph zone
- Closer analysis of the A229 speed data shows that the unit just north of the viaduct recorded 25% (July) and 21% (Nov) of vehicles exceeding the published speed limit of 40mph, at the point where the speed changes to 30mph.
- Average speeds in Well Street and Busbridge Road were lowest at the bottom of Well St at 16-17mph, increasing to 19-21mph just before the change to national speed limit. Average speeds in Busbridge Road were 20-23mph.
- There is clear timed flow data showing the significant increase in traffic using Well Street at school run times.
- There is extensive data for vehicle type which shows the 7.5T weight restriction being ignored in Well Street and Busbridge Road, which supports the residents' lorry watch evidence.
- There was a marked difference in the number of vehicles crossing the data point at the bottom of Well Street (July 2472 / Nov 3098) than crossing the higher data point (July 961 July / Nov 1338).

The Deputy Clerk concluded that the data that has been obtained is extensive and should provide valuable evidence for justifying any planned actions.

b. Review of the existing Highways Improvement Plan

SL explained the history and structure of the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) and led a review of the priorities and previously proposed solutions in the first version of the HIP (created in 2020). She explained that items within the plan were considered priorities at the time of writing. Solutions listed were proposed for further investigation into feasibility and then costings, and comments were added by KCC Highways.

The current HIP priorities are listed as:

1. **A229 Linton Crossroads to the Loose Road** – reduction in the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph. The traffic surveys have recently been completed and provide evidence of speeding and various solutions continue to be explored.
2. **Improvements to the signage on the approaches to Loose Primary School** - this now links to the previous priority as traffic data has provided evidence of speeding. There have also been two recent accidents within the bend section (close to the village green). Exploration into a range of solutions is ongoing, including upgrading signage, installing a static Speed Indicator Device and a 20mph zone in school hours.
3. **A new zebra crossing on the A229 at Rosemount Close, near to 51 Linton Road** - KCC Highways have confirmed that a 40mph speed limit does not meet the criteria for a zebra crossing. Alternatives including an additional pedestrian refuge are under exploration.
4. **Parking at the top of Old Loose Hill, near the Village Green** - concern that inconsiderate parking and congestion in this area can block access to emergency vehicles.
5. **Lancet Lane and Copper Tree Court** - inconsiderate parking issues, putting pedestrians at risk. Loose Primary School and the PCSO have actioned some initiatives directly. KCC Highways will be carrying out a site visit in school drop off time.
6. **Puffin Crossing at Cornwallis Academy near the Linton Crossroads** - KCC advise that a Section 106 scheme is in the design stage for the Linton Crossroads and will be going to consultation in Spring 2022.

c. To discuss and make decisions on updates or changed priorities

SL explained that since the HIP was created, traffic issues in Well Street and the roads within Loose village had been raised regularly. Following meetings with KCC Division Councillor Simon Webb, LPC Environment Committee, KCC Highways and residents, 4 traffic calming strategies had been proposed for further investigation:

- i) Enforcing the existing weight limit of 7.5T
- ii) A one-way system taking traffic away from Well Street to Forstal Lane
- iii) A 20mph speed limit throughout 'Old Loose Village'
- iv) Street lighting to include speed ramps

After discussion the Environment Committee **AGREED** that the Well Street and Loose village issues should be inserted onto the HIP as Priority 1 to move forward for further investigation and consultation, but that KCC have already advised that some of the proposals would not be viable. The remainder of the HIP priorities would be adjusted as follows:

A229 Linton Crossroads to the Loose Road – to be moved to Priority 2 but remain high priority with the strong evidence from the traffic survey and some solutions already being investigated with the backing of KCC Highways. A resident suggested that the proposed speed reduction area should focus on starting the 30mph zone south of the viaduct.

Improvements to the signage on the approaches to Loose Primary School – to be moved to Priority 3 but it was acknowledged that this links closely the priority above. The committee **AGREED** a 20mph

zone limited to school hours should be investigated but CH warned they had been advised by KCC that if this was implemented, the Crossing Patrol provided by KCC might get withdrawn.

A new zebra crossing on the A229 at Rosemount Close, near to 51 Linton Road - to be removed in its current form. The additional pedestrian refuge crossing point would form part of Priority 2.

Parking at the top of Old Loose Hill, near the Village Green – to remain Priority 4.

Lancet Lane and Copper Tree Court – to remain Priority 5 as KCC Highways are still to carry out a site visit in school drop off time, to look at options for the area.

Puffin Crossing at Cornwallis Academy near the Linton Crossroads – it was **AGREED** to remove this priority in light of the forthcoming consultation by KCC for the whole junction.

SL explained that on behalf of LPC, she had consulted with neighbouring Boughton Monchelsea Parish Council to find out the processes and costs of their recent speed reduction scheme. They had implemented 2 separate projects (a 30mph section on Heath Road and 20mph sections in the village) at a total cost of over £32000 which was funded through the precept. Their starting point was an informal open consultation with residents, prior to an independent consultation and the Traffic Regulation Order. It was **AGREED** that the £2000 member-grant promised by Councillor Simon Webb should be used to start the informal consultation process with all residents in Loose Parish. Clerks' Office to action.

It was also **AGREED** that the Clerks' Office should find out whether street lighting was a requirement in a 20mph zone.

Short term actions were discussed and it was **AGREED** that the Forstal Lane developers should be contacted regarding the regulations put in place at the 2018 meetings, which are quite clearly being breached. Action: Clerks Office. It was also **AGREED** that the Clerks' Office should consult KCC regarding the existing Lorrywatch initiative and the possibility of obtaining official signage.

CH thanked residents for attending the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

7. To discuss the quotes for the Parish tree survey and make any necessary decisions

After discussion in the closed session the Committee **AGREED** to accept the quote from Hoods Tree Services.

The meeting re-opened at 8.57pm.

8. Other Items (Discussion only)

JA Informed the committee that the planter on the island had been repaired and painted by a resident. The Clerks' Office will contact the resident to thank him.

PR informed the committee that the damaged kerb stones at the top of Old Loose Hill, that the Deputy Clerk had recently reported to KCC, had now been repaired.

An issue previously raised with surface of the allotment path from Old Loose Hill to Bray Gardens was clarified by PR and the Deputy Clerk will carry out a site visit to take photographs and report to the KCC Public Rights of Way.

9. Date of Next Meeting – 14 March 2022

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

Signed

Dated.....