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**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF
LOOSE PARISH COUNCIL (LPC)**

Monday 19 May 2025 at 7.30pm

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

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

Also present: Nicky Bourne (Clerk) (NB) who took the minutes, Kim Owen (Responsible Finance Officer) (KO), Janet Burnett (Assistant Clerk) (JB), Amanda Baker (Assistant Clerk) (AB), Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) Linton & Loose Ward Councillors: Cllr Brian Clark (BC) and Cllr Simon Wales (SW), Kent County Council (KCC) Division Councillors: Cllr Paul Thomas (PT) and Cllr Robert Ford (RF).

There were 6 members of the public present. The Chairman explained the housekeeping rules.

1. To Elect a Chairman to the Loose Parish Council for the next year and for the elected Chairman to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

A nomination was put forward by CH and seconded by TO that Cllr. Vianne Gibbons should continue as Chairman for the forthcoming year. This was unanimously **AGREED** by the Council and accepted by VG. VG signed the Declaration of Acceptance and it was witnessed by the Clerk.

2. To Elect a Vice Chairman to the Loose Parish Council for the next year and for the elected Vice Chairman to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

A nomination was put forward by SL and seconded by JA that Cllr. Charlie Hollister should continue as Vice Chairman for the forthcoming year. This was unanimously **AGREED** by the Council and accepted by CH. CH signed the Declaration of Acceptance and it was witnessed by the Clerk.

3. To co-opt a Councillor.

The resident to be co-opted as a Councillor was not present so the Council **AGREED** to move the item to later in the meeting if he arrived. Apologies were later received and co-option will be rescheduled.

4. To receive and record any apologies for absence.

Previously received apologies were received from Cllr. Sue Hill and Cllr. Velma Bennett.

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

None.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. To agree and to sign as a correct record the minutes:

LPC minutes for the meeting held on the 14 April 2025 (Pages 2029-2034)

The minutes of the meeting on 14 April 2025 were duly **AGREED** and signed by the Chairman.

The following approved Minutes were noted and adopted by the Parish Council:

- Finance & Admin Committee Meeting 13 January 2025 (Pages 242-243)
- Planning Committee Meetings 31 March 2025 (Pages 709-710) and 14 April 2025 (Pages 711-712)
- Loose Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meetings: 25 February 2025 (Pages 13-14) and 1 April 2025 (Pages 15-16).

9. To receive any reports from the MBC Loose & Linton Ward Councillors.

BC advised that in terms of meetings, it has been a quiet time due to the election. He updated on the A229 road closure and timescale of works. The deadline of 1 June remains in place for getting roads open, although works will continue along the roads, most likely with traffic lights.

SW advised that at the recent ceremonial meeting of the full council, BC was elected Deputy Mayor.

10. To receive any reports from the KCC Division Councillors.

VG welcomed the new KCC Councillors for Maidstone Rural West (Robert Ford) and Maidstone South (Paul Thomas). Both spoke about the traffic situation and PT highlighted the community need for shuttle buses to cover the diverted bus routes. PT explained that they will continue to ask questions of the whereabouts of the money from developers for A229 junction improvements. They will work together with the MBC Councillors on this matter to get accountability. Action: KCC and MBC Councillors.

PT asked to use the Pavilion for a regular resident surgery and the Council **AGREED** the use free of charge. Action: Councillors to contact Clerks' Office to book in dates.

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

No report received but the Clerk informed the meeting that CCTV footage had been requested and provided to the police following an incident in the park. PC Greenfield has also been helpful regarding a neighbour noise complaint.

E-watch reports for Loose since the last meeting:

- Paynes Lane - Wednesday 2 April between 00:01 and 23:59. Somebody stole a recently delivered parcel from a doorstep. Crime Report No. 46/61991/25
- Linton Rd - Wednesday 9 April around 17:32. Three people, throwing stones at vehicles being driven, have chipped the paintwork of one of the cars. Crime Report No. 46/59467/25
- Boughton Lane - Sunday 13 April around 19:00 somebody stole a black Ford Puma from the road. Crime Report No. 46/68237/25.
- Linton Rd – Between 19:00 Tuesday 15 April and 06:20 on Wednesday 16 of April. Somebody stole a blue BMW 330D M, BN69***, from outside a residential property. Crime Report No. 46/64060/25
- Linton Rd - Friday 25 April around 00:05 somebody in a Fiat Punto stole fuel and flowers from a petrol station. Crime Report No. 46/68916/25
- Linton Rd - Monday 12 May between 13:00 and 13:30. Somebody damaged a Ford Fiesta parked in the road. Crime Report No. 46/79722/25

12. To receive any questions/comments from the public

(To include any communications received by the Office or items of note from the shared Concerns, Complaints and Enquiries spreadsheet since the last meeting.)

Residents raised the following matters:

- Maintenance of the Greenway, particularly the damaging effects of weeds and grass now growing onto the pathway. As volunteers are no longer forthcoming, the Environment Committee has gained agreement from KCC Public Rights of Way (PROW) that they will take on the maintenance and NB is currently investigating whether they will use weedkiller on the edges. CH assured that the situation will be addressed as soon as possible before long term damage to the path occurs. Action: NB

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- Overgrown vegetation at one entrance to the park. NB advised that this has been noted during the most recent walkabout and will be cut back imminently. Action: NB.
- Seeking volunteers to help with maintenance - VG explained that volunteers do help across the Parish but limited new volunteers have come forward despite appeals.

The list of communications received and dealt with by the Office since the last meeting (from the Concerns, Complaints and Enquiries spreadsheet) had been pre-circulated and was noted.

13. To receive information on Richmond Way Green and make any necessary decisions. (JB)

At the Planning meeting on 28 April 2025 the committee supported the principle of taking on the freehold of land at Richmond Way Green should MBC be prepared to dispose of it. It was recognised that this would be a decision for LPC to make subject to acceptable terms and conditions. After discussion the Council **AGREED** that an enquiry be made to MBC via BC. Action: BC.

14. To review and sign the lease document on the Shed in Brooks Field.

As instructed by LPC last meeting, VG and NB had worked on the lease document with Terry Davis of Loose Amenities Association (LAA) and the solicitor. The final lease document had been pre-circulated. The Council **AGREED** the document and it was signed by the Chair (VG) and Vice-Chair (CH), witnessed by the Clerk (NB). Action: Signed document to be forwarded to LAA (NB).

15. To receive an update on the Loose Amenities Association Duck Race.

The risk assessment and confirmation from MBC Safety Advisory Group is all in place for the 2025 Duck Race which takes place on Bank Holiday Monday 26 May. The pre- and post-event risk assessments of Brooks Field are diaried. Action: NB and AB.

16. To agree previously shared dates for Council and Committee meetings for 2025-2026.

The schedule had been circulated to councillors and was **AGREED**. Action: AB to update and publish on website and noticeboards.

17. To appoint Committees and members to Committees.

This includes substitutes, co-opted members and representatives to outside bodies. To also consider the number of members on each committee.

The current list of Committee & Members had been circulated to councillors and the following were **AGREED**:

- a. All councillors present, and Velma Bennett, were happy to remain on their current committees
- b. Tony Oliver to be added to HR Committee
- c. Neil Lettington to go on The McAlpine Trust
- d. Any new councillors to be asked to join the PCH Committee as still low in number
- e. Kent Association of Local Clerks (KALC) representative to remain Velma Bennett
- f. Parish Police Liaison representative to remain Neil Lettington
- g. Loose Parochial Charity representative to remain Neil Lettington
- h. Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – 3 residents have joined recently so were added
- i. Highways Working Group – CH and 2 residents.

Action: AB to update and publish amended document. SH to advise which committees she will be on.

18. To agree continuance of ROUND ROBIN agreements in line with Terms of Reference and review procedures.

The **ROUND ROBIN** procedures had been circulated to councillors. The Council **AGREED** to continue with the procedures. Action: JB.

19. To agree to continuance of 'Delegated Powers Policy' in line with Standing Orders and Terms of Reference.

The current policy and procedure had been circulated to councillors. VG thanked MW for mapping the new Financial Regulations against the policy, and the Council **AGREED** the revised policy. Action: JB.

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20. To agree to the Clerk approval or disapproval of dispensations.

The Council **AGREED** to the Clerk's approval or disapproval of any dispensations.

21. To discuss Councillors allowances and out of pocket expenses and to agree as relevant.

The Council **AGREED** that the councillors' allowance would not be taken, but out of pocket expenses would be granted, as per current procedures.

22. For members to confirm that they agree to receive ALL agendas electronically.

To also agree that these may be signed by the Clerk using facsimile.

This was **AGREED** by the Council.

23. To review and agree the new Financial Regulations for the Council.

The new financial regulations had been circulated to the Council having been **AGREED** by the Finance and Admin Committee on 7 April 2025. The Council **AGREED** the regulations with one minor amendment. Action: JB to update.

24. Finance & Funding:

a. To ratify payments made on Appendix A for 19 May 2025

The Payments were ratified. Authorised by VG & CH.

b. To review signatures for the bank accounts and make any necessary decisions

The signatories on the two Unity Trust Bank accounts are currently only VG & CH after the departure of two Councillors. The Council **AGREED** that SL and MW will become signatories and once in place KO will research and find savings accounts. Action: KO.

c. To advise Committees of the financial limit of writing off bad debts, to be included in Terms of Reference

Following agreement of the new financial regulations at the Finance and Admin meeting on 7 April 2025, the limit for any relevant committee to write off bad debts is £500. This will require amendments to the Terms of Reference for committees and will be done at their first meeting after the AGM. It was confirmed that this was not required for the Planning Committee. Action: Committee Chairs and NB.

25. To review the following Policies and make any necessary decisions.

The policies were circulated to councillors prior to the meeting.

a. Pre-application Planning Meetings Policy

The Planning Committee had reviewed the Pre-Application Planning Meeting Policy in their meeting on 14 April 2025. The Council **AGREED** the policy. Action: JB to update policy and publish.

b. Annual Investment Strategy

At the Finance and Admin meeting on 7 April 2025 the committee proposed that, in line with the new Financial Regulations (Paragraph 12.3) an Annual Investment Strategy would be prepared for agreement by LPC and added to the policy schedule. The Strategy had been circulated to councillors and was **AGREED**. It will be added to the policy schedule for review on a yearly basis. Action: JB to update policy, publish and add to the policy schedule.

26. To review and agree the Standing Orders for the Council.

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) have updated the Model Standing Orders and the Finance and Admin Committee reviewed and agreed the contents at their meeting on 7 April 2025. The revised document has been circulated to councillors for review. The Council **AGREED** the revised version with an amendment to P17 Item 15b (xiv), replacing the word "book" with "record". It was also **AGREED** that the pronouns used for different roles would reflect LPC's situation. Action: KO to update the Standing Orders and put on the website.

27. Loose Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (LNPWG) – to receive information and make any necessary decisions.

An update had been circulated to councillors.

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- The latest draft will be available at Presentation Evening on 11 June and at the Fete on 14 June.
- Community Consultation Event: 7-9pm 11 June 2025 in the Pavilion. Includes a presentation (20mins), an exhibition illustrating the Neighbourhood Plan's draft policies, an opportunity for visitors to talk to members of the Working Group, to ask questions, to comment on the proposed policies and to complete questionnaire forms.
- The exhibition will also be available to view at Loose Fete on 14 June.
- Publicity: Leaflets detailing June events and a feedback form will be delivered to addresses in the parish later this month and leaflets to be given out at the Duck Race on 26 May. Posters will be displayed on parish noticeboards and other selected locations.
- Neighbourhood Plan Area: Although informal agreement has been hinted, MBC has still not formally confirmed approval of LPC's application (submitted October 2024) to designate the whole of the new parish of Loose as the neighbourhood plan area. The Working Group continues to press for a decision.

SL queried the circulation area of "The Net". Action: JB to clarify. VG asked councillors to support and attend the publicity events. Action: Councillors.

28. To receive updates on the LPC Fete and make any necessary decisions. (AB)

Fete preparations were summarised by AB. The event will take place on 14 June 12-4pm with the funfair in attendance, a fun dog show and 35 stalls booked in so far. Sponsorship has been obtained again from Wards (50 publicity boards), Nellsar (programme production) and Albany Funerals (event costs). A new and generous sponsorship arrangement has been secured with Lillico Country Store for the dog show. Some local businesses have sponsored the dog show classes. MBC Safety Advisory Group have given approval. The interval entertainment will be a rhythm circle experience provided by Sounds Interactive CIC. Police cadets are booked to support the event but further volunteers would be very welcome. Further raffle and tombola prizes are sought. Action: Councillors to contact AB if able to help and/or provide prizes. The Deputy Mayor (BC) was invited to open the fete and will confirm with the Clerks' Office. Action: BC.

29. Promotion of Loose Parish Council & Articles.

Social Media data had been circulated to Councillors and was noted. Four Community Alerts have been written, circulated to subscribers and put on the website to report the A229 road closure updates. In & Around Loose has recently been delivered. Action: Councillors should contact the Office with suggestions of items for the next edition prior to the deadline of 11 June.

30. RISK: To receive and discuss any items of concern or potential risk escalated by Councillors, Committees or the Office.

One CCTV camera in the car park was recently vandalised and a replacement fitted at a cost of £345.24 + VAT (under risk by delegated powers).

31. Information Only

VB has offered to attend the KALC meeting re Local Government Re-organisation on 19 June. The Council can send two representatives.

32. Next meeting of the LPC – 16 June 2025.

The meeting ended at 8.50pm.

Dated.....

Signature

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Appendix A - Finance 25/26				
As at 19 May 2025				
Balance as at 30 April 2025				
Current	UTB	Current account	20360513	156,292.44
Savings	UTB	Instant Savings account	20416234	106,096.16
				262,388.60
Direct Debits paid already taken off balances above- INFO ONLY				
All	Monthly	Lloyds Bank- Credit card	Monthly use plus x £3 charge per user	1,365.75
Admin	Yearly	Information Commissioner	Registration	47.00
Admin	Monthly	Clear Business	Broadband at Pavilion	72.44
PCH	Monthly	Countrystyle Recycling	Waste Collection	32.35
PCH	Monthly	Clear Business	Gas & Electric charges Pavilion	217.75
Admin	Monthly	NEST	Staff Pension Payments	548.76
ENV	Monthly	Wynsdale Waste Management	Emptying of bins in Salts Wood	149.20
				2,433.25
Details of Credit Card Gross Payments as debited by DDR- Lloyds Bank-INFO ONLY				
Admin	CC-KO	Wix	Annual Website Fee	388.80
ENV	CC-KO	Landlife WildFlowers	Seed for the Meadow	496.99
Admin	CC-NB	Tesco	Stationery	7.00
ENV	CC-NB	Wickes	Mulch for Brooks Field	30.00
ENV	CC-NB	Pinden Ltd	Skip for Pond Works	324.00
ENV	CC-NB	Gardener's Dream	Seed for Brooks Field	89.97
Admin	CC-NB	Amazon	Councillors Name Tags	9.99
PCH	CC-NB	Tesco	Pavilion Supplies	10.00
Admin	ALL	Lloyds	Charges	9.00
				1,365.75
Payments authorised 9 May 2025 ratified by LPC meeting 19 May 25				
Admin		Microshade	Monthly IT Hosting	363.25
PCH		Hirers	Hirers Refunds	100.00
ENV		Isle Landscapers	Regular Maintenance March 25	664.48
ENV		Isle Landscapers	Regular Maintenance April 25	1,042.43
ENV		Hoods Tree Services Ltd	Tree Works	360.00
ENV		Streetlights	Maintenance Contract	65.28
LPC		In and Around Kent	Early Summer Edition 2025	158.00
LPC		Community Heartbeat Trust	Annual Defib Support	162.00
PCH		Astra	Replacement CCTV Camera	266.94
Admin		MI Payroll Services	Payroll Expenses	45.00
Admin		Salaries	Total Salaries and NI Contributions	8,498.00
				11,725.38
		Payments out since last statement	DR	11,725.38
		Current Account Unity Trust Bank Plus any income	CR	156,542.44
		Current a/c after committed payments	CR	144,817.06
UTB Deposit			CR	106,096.16
Total savings			CR	106,096.16
		Total Bank balances	CR	250,913.22
Payments authorised by VG & CH				