



**LOOSE PARISH COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Meeting held on Monday 25 July 2022
at 7.30pm in Loose Parish Pavilion, KGVPF.**

In attendance: Councillors: Charlie Hollister (Chairman) (CH), Jim Andrew (JA), Susan Luckhurst (SL), Andrew Richards (AKR), Elaine Lawford (EL) 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 Velma Bennett (VB).

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

The Committee **AGREED** to discuss Item 12a 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)*

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

None.

5. To sign as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 30 May 2022 (Pages 376-381)

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 May 2022 (Pages 376-381) were duly **AGREED** as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

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

(To include any correspondence & phone calls received by the office from members of the public)

A number of residents had contacted the office with their concerns about the impact of the recent closure of Forstal Lane, preventing access to Stockett Lane, due to storm drainage works. The diversion meant all traffic coming and going from the Forstal Mead development had to use Well Street. The office communicated with KCC Highways, Chartway Group and Cllr Simon Webb. The works were completed promptly and the road was actually open in the evenings to allow access to and from Stockett Lane.

A resident emailed concern that the No Cycling sign is missing from the Church Street end of Brooks Path and bikes are regularly using the path, putting pedestrians in danger. The missing sign has been reported to KCC, but the office also purchased and installed 2 No cycling signs for the wooden bollards, and will continue to chase KCC for a new sign. Action: Deputy Clerk

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A resident in Church St had contacted Cllr Grigg regarding the lack of opportunity to recycle their refuse. Due to the weak bridge weight restriction, they only get a black bag collection by MBC's smaller refuse vehicle. A dialogue has been opened with MBC and options are being considered, which the resident is consulting with neighbours about.

A resident from the lane off Busbridge Road, that leads to the Loose Valley, contacted the Office, frustrated after having had no success reporting regular missed collections, via MBC's online system. The Deputy Clerk reported the issue directly to MBC, it has been investigated and hopefully resolved, and the residents have been given a direct email for any future issues.

The groundworks contractor contacted the Office to report the bin overflowing and extensive litter at the Pig bench in Brooks Field. The Deputy Clerk contacted MBC to check that the bin was still being emptied on the round, and, together with the Caretaker, cleared the area.

The LAA Heritage and Environment sub-committee emailed a copy of a leaflet they wish to deliver to all houses in the weight-restricted area of the village. They have asked if they can put "Supported by Loose Parish Council" on it. The committee **AGREED** to discuss this item under Agenda item 11b.

The ongoing issue of the burst water main at the viaduct on the A229 was discussed. SL asked if issues of this scale could be emailed to all Councillors, as she had been unaware of it. The Office wishes to raise the fact that this incident has highlighted that LPC do not have a community resilience or emergency plan in place to guide staff. The Deputy Clerk has communicated with Kent Police, Southern Water, KCC Highways and has been trying to keep the community updated with facts, via the facebook page. Some Councillors have also reported concerns individually. The damage to the "Keep Left" sign, leaving exposed wires on the A229, has been reported. It was **AGREED** that the Clerks' Office will email all Councillors in the event of a future emergency issue. The committee also **AGREED** that once the current issue has been resolved, any further damage within the Parish should be collated and reported. Action: Clerks' Office. It was **AGREED** that plans to draft a resilience / emergency plan should be made, taking into consideration lessons learnt from this experience. Action: Councillors with the Clerks' Office.

KCC have responded to our enquiry from a resident of Rosemount Close, seeking to have the trees on the verge of Old Loose Hill (near High Banks) reduced in height by 30%. The land the trees are on is confirmed as "not KCC/Highways maintainable", however, as they have responsibility for keeping the highway clear, KCC would programme work for any low level branch obstructions to the road. The inspector had highlighted that for any trees on KCC land, their Tree Maintenance policy has to be followed, and they only do height reduction for valid physiological reasons, and not nuisance-related issues such as light and shading. The inspector considered these trees to be in good condition and free from signs of ill-health or major defect. After checking with land registry, the bank that they are on has no registration, although this could still mean it is privately owned. The Deputy Clerk will pass on this information to the resident, and they could investigate further with the neighbouring land owners, but if they were able to arrange works, it would be likely to be at their own expense. Action: Deputy Clerk to report back to the resident.

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

a. Village Green maintenance

SL and the Deputy Clerk have been monitoring the village green works and it was noted that it was partially edged. The contractor was contacted and explained that parked cars had prevented access to some of the kerb, so they kept returning until they found it accessible, to complete the works. It has now been finished. SL asked whether the section nearest the road had been edged and it was discussed whether this is part of the green or highway. Action: Deputy Clerk will do a site visit to check.

b. Jubilee oak plaque update

The Deputy Clerk has handed the plaque, commemorating the planting of the oak for the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, to the memorial bench creator, who is designing a platform or post, on which to mount it.

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

a. Review of remedial work in Roy's Wood (JA)

JA had completed a site survey to make a list of the repairs and materials needed for remedial work in Roy's Wood. He reported that all 11 trees are developing, with some doing better than others. There is some required maintenance, to be done in the autumn, when the new common oak will be planted. Many stakes are loose, so several need re-positioning to remain effective. Three trees are mature enough to no longer require support, so these stakes can be reused. The hornbeam to the north of the Old Loose Hill gate also requires staking. The purchase of 4 new posts was **AGREED** by the Committee. Action: Clerks' Office. JA is happy to install them with some assistance, and has the tools. AKR offered to help with the work. Action: JA and AKR to arrange date in the autumn to complete the work.

The Deputy Clerk reported that the grass cutting between the trees (requested at the last meeting) has been done by the contractor. It was also noted that the section of the fence most recently repaired, has come apart. It was **AGREED** that this should be referred to the contractor for comment. Action: Deputy Clerk

b. Progress of the meadow in Brooks Field

The Deputy Clerk and a number of councillors had viewed the meadow. CH explained that there are many different reasons why it is not as prolific as last year. The first section was originally proposed to be 20m x 20m but only 10m x 10m was created. It then had double the seed it should have had, along with booster seed. The contractor has been cutting around a 20m x 20m section, as per the original groundworks specification, hence the large unseeded areas of grass. After discussion it was **AGREED** it should be cut back at the end of September and that CH will meet with the contractor to explain and clarify future maintenance. Action: CH to contact contractor.

c. Replacement common oak update

Following agreement by **Round Robin**, the Clerk has purchased the replacement Common Oak for Roy's Wood. It is potted and currently with the Clerk. It was **AGREED** that JA would look after it until planting. Action: Clerk to deliver.

d. Progress with Village Green status for Brooks Field

The village green status application will be sent once an ordnance survey map section has been obtained to send with the completed application. Action: Deputy Clerk to complete.

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

a. Outcome of the cemetery headstone check

The outcome of the inspection of a gravestone by Mid Kent Memorials had been circulated to the Committee. It should continue to be monitored but no further stabilisation is required at this time.

b. Repairs to the war memorial

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that one updated quote has been received from one of the two companies who quoted back in December 2020. The second is still awaited.

The Deputy Clerk had asked All Saints Church for an update on the faculty application. They replied that regrettably, there has been no update from the diocese, but they have a new

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administrator starting, and this will be on her list of matters to chase. She has been asked to contact the Deputy Clerk when she has some news. Action: Deputy Clerk to chase second quote and faculty decision.

c. **Repairs to cemetery walls update**

Hurstway were hoping to start early July, but were delayed due to the heat. They intend to start early to mid-August. The Deputy Clerk has requested to be advised when they do start, as JA wished to meet with them. Action: Deputy Clerk to inform JA.

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

a. **Matters arising from the quarterly KGVPF walkabout completed 19 July 2022**

The Risk Report from the last quarterly inspection of KGV had been pre-circulated and actions noted.

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

a. **Update on the Highways Improvement Plan and communications with KCC following their staffing re-shuffle**

As requested, contact has been made with the new KCC Highways team. Councillors were forwarded an email regarding the new re-structure at the Schemes, Planning and Delivery team. Instead of one Project Manager for Kent, there are now 2 teams (East and West Kent) and these will be fully resourced in July, to roll out Parish meetings from August. We have been given a date of 22 September 2022 for the Chair and a Clerk to attend. There is a new template for the HIP and our previous HIP has been transferred to this by KCC, for discussion at the meeting. It was **AGREED** that the Deputy Clerk should review the transferred document and circulate it for agreement by **Round Robin**, prior to the meeting on 22 September. Action: Deputy Clerk.

As requested at the last Environment meeting, confirmation was sought that Priority 2 (the A229 pedestrian refuge) would still be funded by the JTB. A response had been received that a handover meeting had taken place with Jennie Watson, but that no funding would be available, so details of how the Parish could proceed through self-funding had been sent. After discussion it was **AGREED** that funding mechanisms should be investigated, including the Ward Councillor and CIL monies, prior to discussing the matter at the meeting on 22 September. Action: Deputy Clerk to discuss CIL funding with RFO and contact Ward Councillor.

b. **Preparations for actions relating to specific proposals in the Highway Improvement Plan**

At the ENV meeting on 20 May 2022, the Chairman requested sight of some 20mph scheme case studies. These had been sourced via KCC Highways and online and, it was noted that the impact was very mixed, depending on the specific location. Most schemes concluded that community awareness of the lower speed had increased.

The leaflet received from the LAA Heritage and Environment sub-committee was discussed. Whilst the Committee supported broadening the Lorrywatch scheme beyond Well Street, to include all roads under the 7.5T weight-restriction, it **AGREED** it could not include "Supported by Loose Parish Council" on the leaflet, as it was factually inaccurate and therefore misleading. Since the initial meeting with KCC Highways, Cllr Simon Webb and residents, both Kent Police and KCC Highways have confirmed that "policing and enforcing" the weight restriction would never be physically possible. In terms of enforcement, the only mechanism available is for KCC Freight to pursue the companies or contractors themselves, once provided with the evidence from the Lorrywatch. Therefore, the LPC Environment Committee supports the broadening of the evidence collection, but the information of the outcome of doing so, must be correctly communicated to residents.

The Committee also **AGREED** that the second section detailing the "20's Plenty" campaign will also confuse residents, because this particular campaign is not in line with the published KCC

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process that has been followed to develop a 20mph scheme, and which LPC are currently working on, in conjunction with KCC Highways.

Finally, as the Parish Council must work on behalf of all residents who pay the precept, they could only support something that is delivered to every Parishioner.

A suggested re-draft was proposed, and it was **AGREED** that this should be sent to the LAA Heritage and Environment sub-committee, explaining LPC's position that they support raising the profile and coverage of the Lorrywatch evidence collection, but cannot put their name to the leaflet whilst it has inaccuracies, or if it will not be delivered to every Parishioner. Action: Deputy Clerk.

The Committee discussed preparations for the public consultation on the 20mph scheme and **AGREED** the consultation document should be created as follows:

- The map created by KCC should be included in the documentation.
- Statements need to be drafted explaining the proposal, cost, funding means, and clear information given regarding signage and street lighting. Action CH and NB.
- The draft consultation documents then need to be agreed by the ENV Committee (by **Round Robin**), then the full Parish Council before going out to residents.
- Options should be available for completion and return (online, hard copy, delivery addresses or collection points).
- The consultation must be delivered to every Parish household. This would be paid for, not dependent on volunteers. Action: Office to source delivery means.

The Deputy Clerk has obtained confirmation from Cllr Simon Webb of the donation of a £2000 member grant. We have received the application form and guidance to complete when ready. It was **AGREED** some of this could fund the consultation. Action: Clerk's Office to apply, when instructed.

c. **Parking issue on the cobble stones at Copper Tree Court**

As requested, the Deputy Clerk has contacted KCC regarding the installation of bollards as all other measures suggested are proving ineffective, and cars continue to mount the pavement to park on the cobble stones. Their response is awaited. Action: Deputy Clerk to chase.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm to discuss Item 12a in a closed session.

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

a. **To discuss the replacement of the barriers on KGV**

At the LPC meeting on 16 July 2022, the issue of the damaged car park barriers, and vehicular access to the playing field had been raised and considered a risk item. It had been **AGREED** that quotes should be sought and brought to the Environment Committee meeting for a prompt decision.

After discussion in a closed session, the Committee **AGREED** to proceed with a contractor quoting £4093.60 for the installation of metal barriers. The existing wooden fence will be removed by the Caretaker. Action: Deputy Clerk.

The meeting re-opened at 8.35pm.

b. **To arrange the annual walkabout (due in August)**

The annual Parish walkabout is due, having taken place previously on 3 August 2021. EL and SL expressed interest in being involved. It was **AGREED** the Deputy Clerk would circulate dates to CH, SL and EL. Action: Deputy Clerk.

c. **Tree survey report**

The tree report had been received, with an apology for the delay, immediately prior to this meeting. It was **AGREED** the Deputy Clerk would circulate for discussion next meeting. Action Deputy Clerk.

d. **Lower Loose Valley Pumping Station**

As requested, contact has recently been made with Southern Water, regarding the Lower Loose Valley Pumping station. The customer contact centre has provided a case number and forwarded the request for an update to the relevant current personnel. If further communication is not forthcoming the Deputy Clerk has been advised to follow it up, as it is now logged on their system. Action: Deputy Clerk

13. Finance

a. **To receive an update from the RFO**

The finance report had been pre-circulated by the RFO and noted.

Phase 3 of the meadow was discussed and it was **AGREED** that it should proceed but that CH would review the site with the groundworks contractor, before proposing the location.

The emergency funding of the barriers was discussed and it was **AGREED** that where possible, small pockets of ear-marked money should be used up, from both the ENV and PCH budgets, along with the possibility of using some CIL monies. Action: RFO to calculate.

14. To discuss the management plan and make any necessary decisions

The 2022-23 Management Plan had been pre-circulated. The updates were noted.

15. Monitoring and Ratification of any ROUND ROBIN decisions

The following **ROUND ROBIN** was ratified:

Agenda Item 12a at the ENV meeting held on 30 May 2022, a Round Robin was sent on 19 July 2022: To agree the purchase of a replacement Common oak at a cost of £28. **AGREED** (CH PR SL AKR).

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

It was **AGREED** that if the communication regarding Lorrywatch was amended so it was accurate, by the LAA Heritage and Environment Committee, it could be publicised on the website. Action: Communications and Media Clerk.

17. Other Items (information only)

Concern was raised over the risk to residents of the Old Loose Hill diversion route because access for emergency services vehicles is currently impeded.

A road sign in Well St has been knocked down and can be seen lying in the verge.

The following have been actioned and resolved so are now closed:

- The large branches of storm debris from the tree at Salts Avenue have been removed
- The weight restriction sign under the viaduct has been cleaned
- The drain at the bottom of Well St / High Banks is intermittently flooding across the road so being regularly monitored
- The reported overgrown footpaths (from High Banks to Heath Road, and Well Street to Old Loose Hill) have been cleared.
- The gully / trip hazard on the allotment footpath was visited by JA and will be monitored.

18. Date of Next meeting – 12 September 2022

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

Signed

Dated.....