



**LOOSE PARISH COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Meeting held on Monday 22 May 2023
at 7.30pm in Loose Parish Pavilion, KGVPF.**

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

Also in attendance: Nicky Bourne (Deputy Clerk - NB) who took the minutes.

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 Elect a Chairman to the Committee for the forthcoming year

A nomination was put forward by SL and seconded by AKR that Cllr Charlie Hollister should continue as Chairman for the forthcoming year. This was unanimously **AGREED** by the Committee and accepted by CH.

2. To Elect a Vice-Chairman to the Committee for the forthcoming year

A nomination was put forward by SL and seconded by EL that Cllr Velma Bennett should continue as Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year. This was unanimously **AGREED** by the Committee and accepted by VB.

3. To discuss and agree any additions or changes to the Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference had been pre-circulated to the Committee. The Committee **AGREED** the Terms of Reference without amendment. Action: Clerk to update date and LPC to ratify.

4. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Jim Andrew (JA) (on holiday) and Peter Rigby (PR) (on holiday).

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

(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.

8. To sign as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2023 (Pages 398-402)

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2023 (Pages 398-402) were duly **AGREED** as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

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

None.

10. Correspondence & phone calls received by the office

a. Kent Plan Tree expression of interest

Two emails and attachments regarding the KCC Tree Establishment Strategy "Plan Tree" had been pre-circulated. After discussion the Committee **AGREED** that a representative from Kent Men of the Trees should be invited to view Brooks Field for advice on suitability and location options. Deputy Clerk to action.

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

a. Planters

After discussion the Committee **AGREED** that CH and SL would tidy up and replenish the planters, contacting the Clerk to assist with purchases as necessary. SL suggested succulent plants that retain water should be purchased to help reduce the workload for those who do the watering. Action: CH & SL. It was noted that the gold strip on the planters had peeled off in places and it was **AGREED** that the Deputy Clerk would contact the company for comment. Action: Deputy Clerk.

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

a. MBC "Love Where You Live" grant update for pondworks

The bid made to the MBC "Love Where You Live" grant scheme by the Deputy Clerk and a resident from the pondworks volunteers was successful. £5000 has been awarded and the pondworks volunteers are now planning the proposed works. These will include creation of an island in the pond by digging a 3 metre trench to separate the bank of Brooks Field from the reed bed. The additional channel will improve water flow, helping flush silt through the pond, reducing the need for expensive dredging and reducing the dangers associated with the deep silt for the volunteers who clear the vegetation in this area. It will increase water storage capacity to further help maintain flood risks and the reed bed island will provide a safer nesting area for wildfowl amongst the bulrushes as it will be less accessible to hunting foxes. The Committee **AGREED** that the Office should write to the Pondworks co-ordinator to thank him for highlighting the grant scheme, and making the proposal, and to keep them updated with progress. Action: Deputy Clerk.

b. Meadow Update (CH)

Although not able to be present at the meeting, JA had recently visited the meadow and reported as follows: *"There are a lot of buttercups this year outside the planted areas. However it looks as if "things" were about to come on the new patch. Is it too early to get a survey done on the areas planted to see how effective they have been? A survey would also provide a baseline to monitor for new flowers appearing"*. After discussion, the Committee **AGREED** that it was too early to survey because the meadow needs to come into flower fully to see what appears, so it should just be monitored over the next couple of months. Decisions about Phase 4 would be made on the outcome of the survey. Action: Deputy Clerk to monitor. The Committee also **AGREED** that potential surveyors should be sought and the matter should be added to the agenda of the July Environment Committee meeting. Action: Deputy Clerk.

c. Roy's Wood Update (JA)

JA had also recently inspected Roy's wood trees and confirmed that the rabbit guard has been fitted. He reported as follows: *"There is no sign of life in the Common Oak planted last year. It also appears that the Texan Oak at the north end of the wood has died. The rest seem OK, some doing better than others. I suggest we monitor for a few more months and then cast a net to see if we can get replacements for what is dead"* The Committee **AGREED** the suggestion. Action: JA/AKR to monitor.

“Regarding a new tree to replace the one felled by the pavilion my suggestion would be a hornbeam planted in Brooks Field near the one we won from Kent Men Of The Trees which is in the corner south of The Chase. Hornbeams do well and I think there is room between the existing one and the Pig Seat. Hornbeams need space as they have a big spread. Planting time would best be left until the autumn. I think there is a case for Roy’s Wood to be left as it is without addition.” The Committee **AGREED** that advice would be sought by the Kent Men of the Trees representative at a site visit, as per agenda item 10a. Action: Deputy Clerk.

d. Coronation Bench

Examples of benches commemorating King Charles III coronation were circulated. The Committee **AGREED** their preference to be purchased and installed in Roy’s Wood. Action: Clerk’s Office.

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

a. Repairs to the war memorial update

A 28 day public notice was put up on the Closed Cemetery gates and another in the Church on 12 April 2023. The Deputy Clerk has asked the Church Administrator for an update on the Faculty permission status, but there is a new Administrator finding her feet, so she is trying to find out. The Deputy Clerk has chased the specialist repairer for a revised quote, as so much time has elapsed since the initial inspection and estimate, and he has promised we will receive one by 9 June. Priority will be given to seeking grant funding and contacting the War Memorial Trust once the Faculty is confirmed in place. Action: Deputy Clerk

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

a. Matters arising from the quarterly KGVPF walkabout completed 24 April 2023

The quarterly KGVPF walkabout report had been pre-circulated. The Committee **AGREED** that any decisions regarding the tree stump in the car park should be made by the PCH Committee. Action: Deputy Clerk to add to PCH agenda for meeting on 26 June 2023.

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

a. 20mph consultation update

The consultation document has been printed and the Office are arranging delivery. It is proposed that it will go out from 5 June, with the deadline for responses set for 7 July. The online survey will go live on the same date that delivery starts. The Office will create a record of responses, checking against Parish addresses. Unfortunately, Cllr Simon Webb has retracted the £2000 Member grant that he promised in several public meetings, for the consultation process. He has advised that he will now only pay for the printing and some administrative time, but not the delivery cost. The Committee **AGREED** that the small amount remaining in the ear-marked Rural Lanes fund should to be used. Action: Clerk. The Committee expressed their extreme disappointment at this unprecedented situation of retracting promised funding, and **AGREED** that the records of meetings should be produced, and the matter be taken up with Cllr Webb so that an explanation can be given to the residents who were present when the money was promised. Action: Clerks’ Office.

b. Drainage Issues in Loose village escalated to Cllr Simon Webb

The Deputy Clerk contacted Cllr Simon Webb regarding the history of the issues with drainage reporting and lack of maintenance. Cllr Webb contacted KCC Highways Officers who responded that they needed all the locations logged on the KCC reporting system. This had already been done but the Deputy Clerk is currently compiling a summary document for the Highways Officer. Some issues are having to be re-reported where they now say “Work completed”, because the issue remains unresolved or has re-occurred. For

example, the drain outside Vale House, which took 9 months to be cleared, and also needed a pot hole repair due to the continual flow of water, is now blocked again. Action: Deputy Clerk to follow up.

c. **Forstal Mead Egress**

The Deputy Clerk contacted KCC Highways for comment regarding the Forstal Mead egress following Chartway's response that they had installed all the physical measures to deter vehicles from turning right towards Well Street, as per the planning application and in accordance with the Section 278 agreement reached with KCC Highways. The Deputy Clerk passed on the Council's concerns that these physical measures are ineffective, due to the widened road, and that vehicles can easily, and therefore do turn right to use Well Street as a through route. As no response has been received so far, the Deputy Clerk has asked Michelle Norris, our KCC Highways advisor if she can follow this up as she forwarded the issue to colleagues previously. Action: Deputy Clerk to follow up.

d. **Highways Improvement Plan**

The Deputy Clerk explained that she had not yet circulated the latest version of the Highways Improvement Plan that was modified considerably by KCC Highways, because it has become a very clumsy document to follow. As requested, the Deputy Clerk has invited KCC Highways to a face to face meeting to discuss and agree the priorities, and then refine the document, but is awaiting a response. The Committee **AGREED** that the Deputy Clerk should still send the HIP, as it stands, to the Committee so Councillors have time to digest it before the next meeting on 24 July, when they should also have the the outcome of consultation, and a date for a meeting with KCC Highways. Actions: Deputy Clerk.

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

a. **Tree works update and the annual tree survey**

The tree works have been completed as per the quotes. With the additional works to the Pavilion car park tree, they came in at £60 over budget, which will be taken out of this year's treeworks budget. The last annual report was completed on 27 May 2022 so is due for completion. The Committee **AGREED** the same contractor should be used for continuity as they were happy with the works completed and the competitive price. Action: Deputy Clerk to contact contractor to arrange re-inspection.

b. **Brooks Field pre and post duck race risk assessments**

The Clerks' Office have calendared the pre duck race risk assessment on Wednesday 24 May and the post duck race risk assessment on Tuesday 6 June 2023.

c. **Brooks Field Sign**

The Deputy Clerk circulated a sketch of the proposed new signage for Brooks Field. After discussion the Committee **AGREED** that 2 signs should be ordered for the Old Loose Hill and Kirkdale entrances. Action: Deputy Clerk.

17. Finance

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

The Deputy Clerk circulated the Environment Committee finance report and LPC Ear-marked Reserves report from the Clerk. The documents were noted.

b. **To review the lighting agreement for the power supply to the LPC lights**

The lighting agreement for the three LPC streetlights (one in Walnut Tree Avenue and two in McAlpine Crescent) was moved by EON to N Power Business Solutions with a slight price reduction. The cost is currently £195.15 + vat which includes the maintenance contract and electricity costs. The Environment Committee **AGREED** to continue with the current lighting agreement. Action: Clerk.

c. To discuss the 2023-24 Management Plan and make any necessary decisions

The first draft of the Management Plan for 2023-24 was circulated. All sections highlighted for discussion had already been addressed during the meeting and the Deputy Clerk will incorporate relevant notes in the Management plan.

18. Monitoring and Ratification of any ROUND ROBIN decisions

None.

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

EL raised discussion regarding whether there was a need for public information regarding good practice with tree maintenance. The Committee **AGREED** this could be included in a future edition of In & Around Loose. Action: Deputy Clerk.

20. Other Items (discussion only)

EL and NB attended the KCC Highways presentation of the re-drafted Linton Cross roads plans. Since the last meeting plans have been changed to include widening on both sides of Heath Road, in addition to the planned filter lanes on the A229 from Linton to Coxheath and from Loose to Boughton Monchelsea. A public consultation should be out in early June but KCC advised that there was no funding currently in place for the scheme.

The village green has recently been partially cut. The Deputy Clerk will check with KCC regarding completion, and then contact the LPC groundworks contractor to tidy up the edges as per the annual contract.

Concern was voiced about the closure or reduction in opening hours of Tovil waste recycling centre, as recently circulated in the news. This would inevitably cause an increase in fly tipping in the local area. The Office will look out for further updates.

21. Date of Next Meeting – 24 July 2023

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

Signed

Dated.....