



**LOOSE PARISH COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Meeting held on Monday 10 October 2022
at 7.30pm in Loose Parish Pavilion, KGVPF.**

In attendance: Councillors: Charlie Hollister (Chairman) (CH), Jim Andrew (JA), Elaine Lawford (EL) and Peter Rigby (PR). Also in attendance: Nicky Bourne (Deputy Clerk-NB) who took the minutes.

There were no members of the public in attendance.

AGENDA

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Velma Bennett (VB), Andrew Richards (AKR) and Susan Luckhurst (SL).

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

None.

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 an agreement by LPC on 17 July 17.*)
None.

5. To sign as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2022 (Pages 382-387)

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2022 (Pages 382-387) 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 resident contacted the Office following a recent Loose Amenities Association meeting, in which email correspondence between David Brazier, KCC Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, and Helen Grant, MP was discussed. The resident provided a quote from David Brazier regarding the design of the entrance to the Forstal Mead development, stating that it was being configured to discourage development traffic using Well Street. The resident raised the point that the design and measures in place are entirely ineffective, and asked how they could be challenged, and made more effective. The resident has tried to contact MBC Planning, as a member of the public, without success, and was told that as the build had gone ahead, the matter was out of their hands. The Committee discussed the site entrance and exit and **AGREED** that the original conditions of the application should be sought and reviewed. Action: Clerks Office. They **AGREED** that a letter should be sent to the developer, to MBC Planning and to KCC Highways requesting improvements to the junction configuration, to make it more difficult to turn right towards Well Street. The reason for the request must be stated clearly, that unsuitable traffic continues to use Well Street, causing damage to property, the infrastructure and danger to the public. A written acknowledgement of receipt of the letter should be requested from each party. Action: Clerks Office. The Committee also noted that there are currently two entrances to Forstal Mead and **AGREED** clarity should

be sought as to whether the newer entrance is just a works entrance, or whether it will become a permanent access point. Action: Clerks Office to enquire.

The resident also referred to a Department of Transport pilot project cited in the email from David Brazier. The trial scheme would allow highway authorities to enforce some moving traffic laws including weight limits. As this is one of the issues in the area of Loose that has a 7.5T weight restriction, the resident asked whether LPC knew any further information about the trial. The Deputy Clerk reported that some time ago, as a resident, she had read about a pilot scheme for the B2163 Leeds/Langley road, where cameras were going to be trialled to record HGV's, but had not seen anything further or more recently. The Committee **AGREED** that the Clerks' Office should try to find out more and send any information to the resident. Action: Clerks' Office.

A resident, who lives in the Parish, contacted the Office, concerned about the condition of some neighbouring houses and their grounds in the resident's road. The office has conducted a site visit and the Committee **AGREED** that the Community Warden team should be contacted to discuss the matter further. Action: Clerk

Confirmation has been received from KCC Highways that they have closed the Well Street rag stone kerbing issue on their system. This follows the Environment committee's agreement that the kerbs should be monitored for health and safety issues, but not replaced. The replacement kerb stones offered were not in keeping with the conservation area, and the Committee and KCC Highways feel that they would increase the number of drivers mounting the pavement, because the kerbs are flat topped. This would endanger pedestrians, and increase the likelihood of further damage to the pavement or private properties. No further issues have been reported since Sept 2021.

A resident has contacted the office to complain about increasingly regular loud music from the Walnut Tree Pub, continuing late into the evening on consecutive weekends. The Clerk has advised the resident that he could report the matter to MBC, as a noise complaint, via their online reporting tool. As an employee of the pub, CH abstained from the discussion. After discussion the Committee **AGREED** that the Ward Councillor should be informed of the complaint, as she had been involved with a similar issue in a different location in the Parish. Action: Clerk to inform Ward Councillor.

The Ward Councillor has informed the Office of a long-standing issue in Leonard Gould Way, with a tree that is causing structural damage to a house. It sits on a section of land built out to narrow the road, but it is directly in front of a property. It has grown significantly over the years, such that the roots are causing damage to the paving slabs and porch of the house. The office has been copied in to ongoing dialogue over who should be responsible for the property repairs and tree maintenance. After discussion, the Committee **AGREED** they would like the matter to be monitored and they wished to be kept updated. Action: Clerks' Office to monitor and Ward Councillor to provide any update.

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

a. Jubilee oak plaque update

The plaque, commemorating the planting of the oak for the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, has been installed by the memorial bench creator. They will be repairing some scratches and doing annual maintenance on the bench, as previously agreed, shortly.

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

a. Roy's Wood remedial work and the replacement of the Common Oak (JA)

JA and AKR completed some routine maintenance on the young trees, and some restorative work after vandalism in Roy's wood. The top of one tree had been snapped off but it appears to be surviving.

JA presented the potted Common Oak at the meeting, and after a discussion about its health, the Committee **AGREED** it should be planted and monitored. Action: JA and AKR

b. **The meadow in Brooks Field**

CH had visited the meadow with the Clerk and contractor. They measured the area and CH clarified the exact dimensions and maintenance requirements going forward, with the contractor. Seeds have been purchased for Phase 3 and the area now needs to be dug out. The Committee **AGREED** that the Clerks Office should contact the volunteer who helped with phases 1 and 2 and that any costs incurred e.g. fuel, should be covered. Action: Clerks' Office. Once a date for digging has been arranged the area will be marked out.

c. **Pond clearance works for 2022-23**

The Deputy Clerk had contacted Derek Corbett regarding plans for pond maintenance and skip requirements this year. He advised he will be organising a working party this month, or early November, and reported that the watercress and reeds had not grown too much this year. However, there is work to be done on the tree on the bank of Brooks Field. The ivy in it had been cut through last year, with a view to further work this Autumn. Subject to what is found, there may be a need for skip space for any waste. They hope to just require one skip, but it would definitely be no more than two this year. He advised that any tree trimming or felling would first be notified to LPC, so that appropriate approvals could be sought before work commences. Action: Clerks' Office to arrange a skip when the working party date is agreed.

d. **Progress with Village Green status for Brooks Field**

The Village Green status application was submitted and the Deputy Clerk shared sight of the public consultation document. The consultation is for 6 weeks, ending 7 November 2022. If successful, the site will be added to the legal record, known as the Register of Village Greens, and will benefit from the statutory protections afforded to Village Greens (which prohibit any future encroachment/development).

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

a. **Update on repairs to the cemetery walls**

The contractor has completed the works on the cemetery walls and Brooks Field, Old Loose Hill side. JA has inspected the repairs, which are currently very bright, but will weather.

b. **Repairs to the war memorial**

There has been no further update on the faculty application via All Saints Church. The second stonemason is being chased for a revised quote. Action: Deputy Clerk to continue to chase both.

CH raised the subject of preparations for Remembrance Sunday. The Deputy Clerk updated the Committee on the condition of the path, and showed a photograph, and it was **AGREED** that they did not require a clean this year. After discussion, the Committee **AGREED** that the contractor should be contacted to diary a tidy up and grass cut, prior to Remembrance Sunday on 13 November. Action: Deputy Clerk.

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

a. **Update on the entrances/exits by the Walnut Tree Avenue footpath**

The contractor has installed one post in the largest gap in the KGVPF hedges, to reduce the risk of bikes exiting onto the footpath at speed. They were unable to install the second post due to tree roots. LPC has therefore been invoiced for half the work. The Deputy Clerk had requested a quote to fix the end of the chestnut paling fence more securely, as it is being pushed aside to create a new gap. This was circulated, and after discussion the Committee **AGREED** the quote. Action: Deputy Clerk to inform contractor. The Deputy Clerk had also asked for some alternative solutions to address the issue of the gap with the tree roots, but has not yet received these. It was **AGREED** that they could be circulated for agreement by **ROUND ROBIN**. Action: Deputy Clerk.

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

a. **Update on the complaint regarding management of the A229 viaduct road closure**

The document produced by SL and EL on the closure of the A229 and diversion decisions following the burst water main at the viaduct was sent to KCC, with a request for it to be put on the next KCC Parish Seminar agenda. These are taking place on Tuesday 11 and Thursday 13 October. EL will be attending the Tuesday meeting and will feedback to the next LPC meeting.

The Committee discussed the structural inspection of the viaduct, as they have yet to be provided with any detail, evidence or documentation. The Committee **AGREED** that the Clerk should contact the Structural Asset Manager to obtain written evidence. Action: Clerk

b. **Update on the Highways Improvement Plan and meeting with the new KCC Highways team**

Following the restructure at KCC Highways, CH and NB attended a meeting with Michelle Norris from the newly formed KCC Highways West Kent team. They reviewed the HIP and discussed each priority in depth. The HIP has been modified to a different template and the number of priorities reduced. The following priorities remain:

- i) Consulting on a 20mph zone for the roads within Old Loose village
- ii) Considering measures that could be installed on the north-bound A229, near the viaduct, to increase the prominence of the speed limit change from 40mph to 30mph on the Loose Road.
- iii) Investigating measures to increase safety for pedestrians around Loose Primary School through enhanced signage, possibly a temporary speed limit reduction at school drop off and collection times, and addressing dangerous parking, as evidenced on the Copper Tree Court cobble stones.

The following were moved to historical priorities:

- Village Green double yellow lines (KCC deemed not viable)
- Lancet Lane extension of the double yellow lines (been inspected and KCC believe this would move the issue elsewhere).

Michelle Norris reiterated there is very little or no funding available, so every initiative must work towards being self-funded. Sources may include using some precept, CIL monies or a Member grant. She stressed that community education can also be a very effective tool in raising awareness, and suggested consulting with the local schools regarding safe crossing points and safe parent parking. The Committee **AGREED** that the Clerks' Office could work on community education messages, contacting the relevant schools for support. Action: Deputy Clerk.

CH commented that the new structure is still not confirmed, and personnel may continue to move about, so building relationships may take some time. The meeting was virtual with use of online mapping tools to view the areas under discussion. Whilst these tools are helpful, they do not give the full context of the environment. The Committee **AGREED** with CH that LPC should continue to push for a site visit, at least annually, to provide a real-life understanding of the issues. Action: Clerks Office.

Since the meeting, MN has amended the HIP, but it is slightly muddled and will require further amendment. Action: Deputy Clerk.

During the meeting, the damage and failure to repair the street light adjacent to 1 Linton Road, was discussed. MN advised that a formal complaint should be made. The Committee **AGREED** that the Clerks' Office should go ahead. Action: Clerks' Office.

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

Post-meeting, Michelle Norris (KCC Highways West Kent team) sent through some sample documents that will be useful starter points and templates for the 20mph Parish consultation. The committee **AGREED** that CH and the Deputy Clerk should proceed to create the draft, including everything agreed at the previous meeting. They will then send it to Michelle Norris for review and advice from the KCC team. Action: CH and Deputy Clerk. In keeping with the

Committee's previous decisions, Michelle Norris advised that the consultation should include the map produced by KCC showing the necessary street furniture, details of all likely costs, the facts on current speeds in the locality, and an open question as to what the community feel should be the priorities regarding traffic and road issues in the Parish.

d. **Update on the LAA Lorry Watch leaflet**

The amendments to the Lorry Watch leaflet, agreed by LPC, and proposed to LAA, were taken to their next meeting, where they were subsequently approved. The flyer was produced, including "Supported by LPC". LPC did not receive a copy before it was circulated to residents in the weight restriction zone of the village. The Clerks' Office were only made aware it had been delivered when they enquired whether the amendment had been agreed. After discussion it was **AGREED** that, as it has not been possible to deliver the information across the whole of the Parish at the same time, it would now be circulated using the In and Around Loose publication and the website. Action: Communications and Media Clerk.

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

a. **Annual monitoring of the stability of LPC owned ragstone walls and the cemetery headstone check**

CH and JA **AGREED** to carry out the annual monitoring on Monday 17 October at 4.30pm.

b. **Matters arising from the annual walkabout (completed on 1 August 2022)**

The annual Parish walkabout was completed on 1 Aug 2022. The report was pre-circulated to the Committee, along with the Action List of items requiring attention, and a record of progress with these. CH raised concern over the state of the gullies and the verges in Old Loose Hill. These items were removed from the new 2022-2025 Groundworks specification because KCC had accepted responsibility for their maintenance. The gullies and verges were reported to KCC after the walkabout, and the separate responses to both issues stated that they would be programmed within 3 months. To date, no work has taken place, residents continue to report blocked drains to the Clerk's Office and there are now trees growing within the gullies. The Committee discussed the inadequacy of the KCC maintenance schedule and it was **AGREED** that the Clerks' Office should follow up each report with KCC, one week prior to the end of the quoted 3-month period, requesting a date that the work will be completed. Action: Deputy Clerk.

c. **Tree survey report**

The tree survey report had been pre-circulated. After discussion it was **AGREED** that 3 quotes should be sought for all work advised within the 3-month timeframe, (with the exception of Roy's Wood, which is being managed by JA and AKR). Action: Deputy Clerk

It was also noted that the report includes the Jubilee Oak in the village green, which is listed as KCC's maintenance responsibility on their reporting tool map. The Committee **AGREED** that the necessary maintenance reported in the survey, should be logged with KCC. Action: Deputy Clerk.

CH informed the Committee that a resident had raised an issue about a tree in the far north-east corner of KGVPF. The tree is not included on the LPC tree maps, but a site visit confirmed it exists. The Committee **AGREED** CH should discuss the tree with the author of the tree report to get it added. Action: CH.

d. **Lower Loose Valley Pumping Station**

After a positive initial response, and being allocated a case number, no further communication has been received from Southern Water regarding the condition and future of the Lower Loose Valley Pumping station. The Deputy Clerk has chased this through the customer contact centre, but is still awaiting a response. Action: Deputy Clerk to continue to chase.

13. Finance

a. To review the contract for Street Lighting servicing and maintenance

The annual contract was reviewed and the Committee **AGREED** to continue with the existing contractor for street lighting service and maintenance. Action: Clerks’ Office to update record of contracts.

b. To receive an update from the RFO

The Environment Committee finance report and LPC Ear-marked Reserves report were circulated and noted. CH asked those present to review the reports, and give thought to next year’s spending priorities, in preparation for the budget meeting on 14 November 2022.

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

The Deputy Clerk drew attention to updates on the 2022-23 Management Plan, and advised that most projects were on track without issue. The updates were noted.

15. Monitoring and ratification of any ROUND ROBIN decisions

None.

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

It was **AGREED** that the Lorry Watch information should be included in the In & Around Loose publication and be put on the website. If further content is still required for In & Around Loose, it was **AGREED** that Phase 3 of the meadow could be featured.

17. Other Items (information only)

MBC have replaced the bus shelters at the Linton Crossroads.

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

- Kerbstones reported missing at bottom of OLH have been replaced
- A resident reported slipping on the steps to KGV opposite the village green. EL kindly cleared them and reported the debris to KCC. Resident C Lack assisted by removing the pile of debris because KCC PROW, after visiting the site, categorised ‘No action required’. The reason given was that current budget constraints limit their standard to ‘good enough’ and they do not have the budget to go out to clear the debris.
- The bench in Salts Wood that was pushed off its fixings has been repaired by BMAT.
- Following the viaduct road closure, the damaged kerb stones and Keep Left sign at the top of Old Loose Hill have been repaired.

The Clerks’ Office continue to chase all other open matters.

18. Date of next meeting – 14 November 2022

The Committee were reminded that this would be the budget meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm.

Signed

Dated.....