



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

**Monday 17 February 2025 at 7.30pm
in the Loose Parish Pavilion, King George V Playing Field, ME15 9RG.**

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

Also present:

Brian Clark (BC - Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) Loose & Linton Ward Councillor), Simon Wales (SW - MBC Loose & Linton Ward Councillor), Amanda Baker (AB - Assistant Clerk), Janet Burnett (JB - Assistant Clerk), Kim Owen (KO - Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)), and Nicky Bourne (NB - Clerk) who took the minutes.

There were two members of the public present.

1. To receive and record any apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Vianne Gibbons (Chairman) (VG - family commitment), Andrew Richards (AR - family commitment), Susan Hogg (SH - illness), Michael Hogg (MH - work commitment), Sue Hill (SCH - car issue) and Velma Bennett (VB - work commitment).

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

The Council **AGREED** to take agenda item 18b as confidential.

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.

(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.

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

- LPC minutes for the meeting held on the 20 January 2025 (Pages 2006-2014).
The minutes for the LPC meeting on 20 January 2025 were **AGREED** after a minor amendment and were signed by the Vice-Chairman.

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

- Planning Committee Meetings 13 January 2025 (Pages 696-697), 27 January 2025 (Pages 698-699) and 23 December 2025 (Pages 694-695).
- Loose Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meetings: 20 August 2024 (Pages 5-6), 15 October 2024 (Pages 7-8) and 19 November 2024 (Pages 9-10).

6. To receive updates on the boundary changes and make any necessary decisions. (SL)

a. Mangravet Wood Option Agreement

SL advised that the Option Agreement document signed at the last LPC meeting did not include a witness signature. The solicitor attended and witnessed the re-signing of the agreement by CH and JA on behalf of LPC and SL on behalf of North Loose Ltd.

b. Lease for Richmond Way

The LPC signatories on the transfer document (VG & AR) have completed the identity verification process. The Solicitor advised that the value of the land needed to be certified and then the transfer could be submitted for registration. BC offered to research whether listed on MBC's asset register. Action: BC. A resident present at the meeting, who is a Chartered Surveyor, offered their assistance if required.

7. To receive any reports from the Loose & Linton Ward Councillors. (BC & SW)

Local Government Reform - SW updated that Kent has not been accepted on the Devolution Priority Programme. Time will now be spent working on structures going forward, to be planned by March, but not confirmed until November 2025. MBC Democracy and Governance Committee has been discussing how to manage the currently unparished areas and is proposing to set up a town council. There has been some concern from local Parishes that they might be absorbed as part of this. SW clarified that this was not the case. If Parishes on the urban edges wished to be part of this, they might choose to, but no Parish could be forced to lose its current independence. SW and BC will keep LPC informed as planning progresses.

Loose Conservation Area Review – BC updated that this goes to strategic review in the March meeting and then, if agreed, out to public consultation. It should include some boundary amendments which will protect the area further.

Joint Transportation Board (JTB) – the rearranged JTB in February was also cancelled. There should be a meeting in March. There is still an opportunity for the Church Street residents to submit a question. NB updated on the Church Street situation following KCC Cllr Simon Webb's meeting with the residents. Feedback is awaited on an enquiry into the works (by KCC Highways) upstream of the property and any impact they might have had. The decision as to whether to table a question will most likely depend on the outcome of the enquiry.

Planning application at Shernolds (for a children's home) – residents have contacted BC with concerns. JB updated that this will be on the next LPC Planning agenda for the meeting on 3 March 2025. Action: JB.

Highways licence for the installation of the Tommy statues – the licence is now in place and covers the whole corner of Copper Tree Court round onto Loose Road and has no deadline. The office is currently seeking a highways accredited installer. Action: NB.

Nuisance bikes on King George V Recreation Ground on Saturday 15 February 2025 – BC had been contacted by witnesses to the incident. NB has reported to the police and provided CCTV images.

8. To receive any reports from KCC Division Councillors

None received.

9. To receive any reports/information from the Community Warden Team.

None received.

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

None received but Beat Officer PC Harry Greenfield, NB and SW attended the Parish Cluster meeting on 11 February 2025 where PC Greenfield updated on his work in Loose. He has been dealing with parking issues, nuisance youths, loose dogs, neighbour disputes and nuisance motorbikes. PC Greenfield thanked NB for providing CCTV footage which had helped with identification in some incidents. SW asked PC Greenfield to check the status of the litter issue at the garages in Walnut Tree Avenue. All parishes were asked to encourage residents to register for My Community Voice local information alerts, and to continue to report any incidents via 101 as collective reports can help policing and identification. Action: Office to invite PC Greenfield to the Annual Parish Meeting and fete to promote My Community Voice. Action: NB/AB.

E-Watch

- Linton Road, Loose: On Tuesday 21 January 2025 around 03:50. Somebody stole a black Ford car from a driveway. Crime Report No. 46/11522/25. Posted 24 January 2025.

11. To receive any questions/comments from the public or organisations.

(To include any letters/e-mails received by the Clerk from members of the public)

Loose Amenities Association (LAA) - The Chair of LAA attended to raise awareness that they are struggling to find volunteers, particularly trustees, jeopardising the future of the charity. Those present recognised LAA's important role maintaining and protecting the land they own in Loose Valley, enabling it to be accessed for the whole community to enjoy. Ideas and opportunities for increasing public awareness and recruitment were discussed. BC offered to discuss with the Hayle Park Nature Reserve trustees and Valley Conservation Society. Action: BC. The Council **AGREED** that a volunteering portal could be added to the website to promote a wide range of community volunteering opportunities in one place. This would be followed up with a publicity campaign. Action: NB. LAA would be invited to the Annual Parish Meeting and fete providing promotional opportunities. Action: NB/AB.

Transport for South East consultation – the office has received a request for an organisation response to their recently published Draft Transport Strategy setting out a vision for transport in the region. The Council **AGREED** the office should circulate the information and councillors should respond directly to the office. Action: NB/LPC.

Parking on Loose Road - a resident has contacted the office seeking action on the issue of pavement parking along Loose Road. Investigations are ongoing and responses are awaited from the police and parking enforcement team. Action: NB to chase. Action on the issue is also a priority on the LPC Highways Improvement Plan and was discussed at a recent meeting. Action: NB to progress.

12. To receive and make any necessary decision on a request from the Chair of the Environment Committee regarding upcoming meadow project decision-making and funding. (CH)

CH updated the Council regarding the meadow project, having had to withhold funds in earmarked reserves due to the pondworks project in Brooks Field last year. As per the financial regulations, quotes are being sought for the next phase of the project, but due to the timing of seed sowing, a decision on the spending will be needed before the next scheduled Environment meeting. CH requested, and the Council **AGREED** that quotes could be circulated to the Environment Committee for a decision by **ROUND ROBIN**. Action: CH/NB.

13. To receive an update on the shed in Brooks Field. (KO)

KO has forwarded instructions from the conveyancer to MH with regard to completing the necessary checks with his specific circumstances. SL and MW have completed the process electronically. JA, SH and SCH still need to visit the Conveyancer's office. CH and TO located their email instructions and will complete the process. Action: Councillors to complete verification. KO to follow up with councillors not present at the meeting. Action: KO.

14. Risk: To receive and discuss any items of concern escalated by Councillors, Committees or the Office and make any necessary decisions:

a. To receive an update on the badger sett issue in the Loose allotments (AR & NB)

The report from the site visit by badger experts had been pre-circulated. The options within it were discussed. Due to the very high costs and likelihood the issue would recur and move elsewhere in the plot, the Council discussed other potential remedial solutions to safeguard allotment users. It was **AGREED** that the badger expert should be consulted regarding the alternatives discussed. Action: NB. It was **AGREED** that the report, costs and any other proposals should be discussed at the next McAlpine Trust meeting. Action: AR.

15. To review the Enquiry, Concern and Complaints Spreadsheet. (NB)

A report detailing the enquiries and concerns received since the last meeting had been pre-circulated to councillors and was noted. Three additions since publication were highlighted, but all had been discussed earlier in the meeting under agenda items 7 and 11.

16. Promotion of Loose Parish Council & Articles. (JB)

Social media data had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting and was noted. The "In & Around Loose" article has been submitted and features the new Neighbourhood Plan for Loose, Chequer tree planting, information on the Annual Parish Meeting on 24 March 2025 and the Loose Fete and Dog Show on 14 June 2025. Some website modifications are ongoing and work will shortly start on creating the volunteering portal. Action: NB.

17. Finance & Funding. (KO)

a. To ratify payments made on Appx A for 17 February 2025.

The Appendix A was ratified by the Council. Payments were authorised by VG & CH.

The Council **AGREED** that going forward the RFO did not need to attend all meetings in person and should make the judgement as to whether specific financial-related agenda items required her attendance. Action: KO. MW suggested specific financial items could also be included higher up on the agenda, so the RFO could leave once items had been covered. Action: NB.

18. Loose Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – to receive information and make any necessary decisions on the following:

a. Progress report from Councillor Westwood (MW)

MW updated the Council on progress so far. The application to designate the whole of the new parish as the Neighbourhood Plan area is still with MBC, awaiting a review this month. The group has been working on publicity (the website and "In & Around Loose"), reviewing the content of the existing plans and seeking the consultant quotes. The working group has reduced from six to four members and is seeking more volunteers, including at least one more parish councillor. TO offered to join the group. Other recruitment opportunities were suggested and will be implemented. MW outlined the budget and the group will be seeking grant funding. Actions: Loose Neighbourhood Plan Working Group / JB.

The following agenda item to be discussed in closed session:

- b. **Consultancy support quotes to be reviewed and a decision made on the Consultant to be employed**

The Consultancy support quotes were discussed in closed session and the Council **AGREED** to accept Option D. Options A, B and C to be thanked for their quote, but advised that they have been unsuccessful. Action: JB.

- c. **Maidstone Borough Council's plan to commission a Housing Needs Survey**

MBC have contacted the Parish Council with the offer of commissioning a Housing Needs Survey free of charge. The survey will be commissioned by RACE (Rural and Community Enabling) and would involve contacting each household in the Parish to survey current or likely housing needs. The working party feel that the community engagement would add to the Neighbourhood Plan and recommended approval. After discussion it was **AGREED** that the offer should be accepted. Action: JB.

19. To ratify any Round Robins since the last meeting on 20 January 2025.

None.

20. To review Policies and Procedures.

- a. Retention and Disposal Policy

The Retention and Disposal Policy had been pre-circulated to councillors and was **AGREED** with one typographic amendment. Action: JB.

- b. Retention Document Appendix List

The Retention Document Appendix List had been pre-circulated to councillors and was **AGREED**. SL suggested a coding system could assist management of the list and will provide the office with an example. Action: SL & JB.

Fire protection of key documents was raised. The office will review the quantity of documents needing to be secured in hard copy and will research current good practice. Action: NB.

21. To discuss VE Day 80 – 8 May 2025 and make any necessary decisions.

After discussion the Council **AGREED** that VE Day 80 should be commemorated at the Community Coffee Morning on 14 May 2025 (Action: JB/AB) and it will be the theme for the 2025 Fete (Action: AB/NB). TO suggested the Loose Area History Society could be invited to be involved in the coffee morning. Action: AB.

22. Information Only.

- a. JA made an observation that children have been fishing in the stream and it is the spawning season. Measures have been taken previously but enforcement is an issue. To be discussed at the next Environment Committee meeting.
- b. JA brought up the matter of litter on the village green. To be discussed at the next Environment Committee meeting.
- c. Annual Parish Meeting preparations are underway. It has been advertised in "In & Around Loose" and invitations have gone out to the Ward and KCC Councillors. Cllr Webb is unavailable but will send a report. Invitations to exhibitors will go out this week.
- d. The groundworks specification went out as planned. The deadline is 12 March 2025, to be discussed and agreed at the 17 March 2025 LPC meeting.

**23. Next meeting of the LPC - 17 March 2025 at 7.30pm.
Note the Annual Parish Meeting – 24 March 2025 at 7pm.**

The meeting ended at 9.22pm.

Dated.....

Signature