



Community Alert

Loose Parish Council (LPC) – Keeping you updated

Issue No. 27

31 January 2022

Letter from Ward Councillor Susan Grigg

January 2022

2 Old Loose Close
Loose

Dear Neighbour

I am taking this opportunity to write to you to explain why I have taken the decision to leave the Liberal Democrat Party and serve the remainder of my term as an Independent Councillor.

As you all know, my heart is in Loose and it is my home. I have lived here for most of the last 45 years and I care deeply about its protection. I promised 12 years ago to do everything I could to protect and maintain our conservation area and the anti-coalescent belt (the area that separates us from neighbouring villages).

It has been a challenging time over the last few years with Central Government forcing MBC to deliver huge numbers of houses in the Borough and, in my role as Vice-Chair of the Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee, I had been fully involved in ensuring that all Councillors were advised of potential developments in their areas and assisted in drafting a Local Plan that had all Member agreement. That all changed after the last election when the Conservative Party won an overall majority and took the Chairs & Vice-Chairs of every Committee.

A decision was made to include a site called 'Beacons Park' into the Local Plan. This was done at the eleventh hour and it was the only site included without public consultation. This site sits on Heath Road in Coxheath and threatens the anti-coalescent belt between Coxheath and Loose. The Local Plan states it will be for 85 houses but the developer intends to put in an application for 197 houses and it will be seriously considered as there is space available.

If a site is in the Local Plan then it is virtually impossible to oppose any housing application as it is deemed an acceptable area to develop by the Council. I spoke at Full Council and refused to support the plan because of the breach of process concerning 'Beacons Park' and requested that the removal of the site be dealt with as a separate item. Unfortunately, the Liberal Democrats wanted many alterations and put forward a singular amendment. It was never going to be accepted. The argument became a battle between the two main parties and the result was that the amendment was refused and 'Beacons Park' remained in the Plan.

I resigned from the Party the next day stating that political posturing within the Council had caused harm to the countryside and to the residents of Loose. Four political colleagues agreed regarding the infighting - including the Leader of the Liberal Democrats and ex Leader of the Council, Councillor Martin Cox. The five of us are now sitting as Independent Councillors but working together under the umbrella name of 'The Maidstone Group' putting the best interests of residents before political interest.

I am continuing to oppose the site at Beacons Park.

As I was voted in as a Liberal Democrat, I felt it was important that an explanation was given regarding my change of political status.

I wish you all a very happy, healthy and safe New Year.

Councillor Susan Grigg
Mobile: 07706 052495

For information: 'Beacons Park' is the land immediately east of the recent Forstal Lane development. It extends south to Heath Road and north to the Loose parish boundary.

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