



**MINUTES OF THE
LOOSE PARISH COUNCIL
Monday 15 April 2024 at 7.30pm
in the Parish Pavilion, KGVPF**

Councillors taking part: Vianne Gibbons (Chairman) (VG) Charlie Hollister (Vice Chairman) (CH), Peter Rigby (PR), Jim Andrew (JA), Andrew Richard (AR), Tony Oliver (TO), Mick Westwood (MJW), Mark Woodward (MW), Neil Lettington (NL) and Sarah Leeson (SL).

Also present: Nicky Bourne (Deputy Clerk) (NB), Janet Burnett (Assistant Clerk) (JB), Amanda Baker (Assistant Clerk) (AB) and Susan Grigg (Maidstone Borough Council Ward Councillor) (SG) Kim Owen (Clerk and RFO) (KO) who took the minutes.

There were 5 members of the public present. The Chairman explained the housekeeping rules.

1. To receive and record any apologies for absence.

Apologies have been received from Elaine Lawford (EL) (Away), Velma Bennett (Work Commitment), Simon Webb (SW) (KCC Divisional Councillor), and PC Harry Greenfield. No apologies were received from Sue Hill.

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.

The Council noted that MJW, SL, NL & MW are members of the North Loose Ltd (Agenda Item 8). There is no pecuniary interest.

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 minutes:

LPC minutes for meeting held on the 18 March 2024 (Pages 1931- 1939).

The minutes of the meeting on 18 March 2024 were **AGREED** and signed by the Chairman.

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

- Planning Committee Meetings 8 January 2024 (Pages 647-648) and 19 February 2024 (Pages 649-650).
- Pavilion and Community Hub Committee 13 November 2023 (Pages 374-377).

The Council **AGREED** to take Agenda item 13 next.



6. To receive any reports from the Loose Ward Councillor Susan Grigg. (SG)

SG advised:

- There has been an issue with the changeover of contractors for the refuse collection. Recently there has been glass left on the road following a refuse collection but was cleared up quickly once reported to Maidstone Borough Council.
- That following a litter pick in Walnut Tree Avenue two knives were found by the garages.
- That this is her last meeting as the Ward Councillor for Loose. It has been a pleasure working with Loose Parish Council over the last thirteen years. VG thanked SG for all her hard work and said she will be missed.

JA asked if SG was able to help to get a map of the new Loose Parish. Brian Clark (Ward Councillor – South Ward) said he will contact MBC and request the document.

7. To receive any reports from KCC Division Councillor Simon Webb. (SW)

No report received.

8. To discuss the changes to the Parish Boundary and make any necessary decisions. (KO)

Following the meeting with NLRA on 20 March 2024 the following was discussed and agreed:

- a) Greenway Spraying – The Clerk has spoken to the current contactor and discussed the Council taking over the spraying contract. NLRA have confirmed that they will be paying for the March 2024 spray and the contract will then be taken over by the Council.
- b) Transfer of lease for Richmond Way – The Clerk has provided evidence to MBC that Loose Parish Council is a going concern and now we need to confirm that the Council is happy with the lease. KO has circulated the lease to all Councillors. The Council **AGREED** to the lease.
- c) Boundary Walk – Sean Carter has invited all Councillors to the last NLRA boundary walk on Saturday 27 April meeting at the YMCA at 2pm. It may be a good idea for Councillors to attend the walk to get to know the new area of the parish. The Office staff will be attending.
- d) Ancient Woodland – At the meeting on 20 March 2024 it was agreed that Mike Smith would be the legal representative to do the Deed to Assign and the Council have agreed to pay the legal fees.
- e) Discount Cards – The discount cards and the discount offer sheet have been printed. The office has arranged for the documentation to be distributed with the In and Around Loose magazine this month. The article welcomes people to the new parish.

At a meeting on 10 April 2024 MJW and JA met with Sean Carter who debriefed on the work NLRA has been doing with KCC regarding the Shields Crescent, Armstrong Rd, Wheatsheaf and Boughton Lane junctions. There has been a lot going on. It would be for the new parish's benefit to continue these discussions. There are also other junctions on the A229 ie Linton crossroads to consider. The Clerk will add an agenda item at the AGM once a date has been agreed (Agenda Item 21).

Pympes Court - PR asked about the houses between Pypmes Court and Stockett Lane. Are they still in the Loose Parish? The Office will check. Action Office.



9. To receive an update on the shed in Brooks Field and the Duck Race 2024. (KO)

- a. The Clerk has chased the Council's solicitor for an update on the Heads of Lease for the Shed and Denis O'Connor confirmed that a little while ago he spoke with Terry Davis on the heads of terms and agreed with him that he would prepare a reasonably straightforward draft lease, to be sent to the Council for approval and then on to Terry and he has chosen a form of draft and is working on the same and will come back to the Council accordingly.
- b. The Risk assessment for the Duck Race has been circulated to Councillors. After discussion the Council **AGREED** the risk assessment but would like it mentioned that for column "Measures taken by" there is no mention of who is actually responsible to do each action. Action the Office.
- c. The colour for the repaint of the shed door has been agreed by CH and Terry Davis as Buckingham Green but it has not yet been repainted.

10. To receive updates on the LPC Fete and make any necessary decisions. (NB)

NB updated on the progress with the organisation of the 2024 Loose Fete and Fun Dog Show:

- The poster has been completed and launched on the social media and website.
- This generated over 45 enquiries for stalls and 30 have fully booked in, so the up to date figure is more than the total number and income last year.
- Secured South Park WI to run the Pavilion refreshments for a stall fee and they will also have a stall on the field
- The documentation has been submitted to the Maidstone Borough Council Safety Advisory group
- Purchased 2 card readers
- Big push to collect raffle and tombola prizes – The Deputy Clerk asked if any Councillors have contacts to request raffle and tombola prizes from.
- With regards to programmes the Council **AGREED** that they will not be delivered to all houses but made available on the day and prior to the event in local shops and venues. An online programme will also be available from the website.

11. To receive any reports/information from Community Warden Team.

No report received.

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

No report received and no new E-watch entries.

13. 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)

- a. Several different residents have contacted the office regarding the continuous water flow down Church Street. This was reported in January by NB and a number of these residents. It is causing issues with the road surface (pot holes, flooding, slippery green algae) and for adjacent properties (damp). It has now been escalated to include Neil Baker (KCC Highways Cabinet member) who assures he is following the conversations and is consulting engineers. Residents have shared documents from KCC with plans for new drains in 2003. Simon Webb advised he has spoken to the Highways Cabinet member and he is monitoring the ongoing situation.



Residents raised concerns about the issues at the meeting and after discussion the Council **AGREED** to contact Simon Webb and ask that when a meeting is arranged the Flood Management Team (Emma Burdett) are involved in the discussions. Action the Office.

- b. A resident reported concern about regular fishing in the Loose stream and asked if No Fishing signs could be put up. The issue has been discussed with LAA, the pond works co-ordinator and the advice of the Environment Agency is being sought. The Council will wait for the response from the Environment Agency. Action for Office to chase.
- c. Residents advised that the Cornwallis Licence application by Future Schools Trust (FST) would be going to the MBC Licensing hearing on 18 April due their objections being received. Some residents will attend. FST have confirmed to MBC that the Licence is for restricted use (e.g. the fireworks event). LPC are not permitted to attend because their comments were made after the deadline (due to the meeting schedule) but the proposal that the licence will not be open, as feared, meets with their submitted comments. SG similarly agrees. She advised that both the premises licence and the noise issue will be discussed at the hearing. The Council **AGREED** that they will wait for the outcome of the Hearing before any further action to be considered.
- d. Love Loose Hate Litter volunteers have written to LPC and to Cllr Sue Grigg as they are unhappy that MBC changed their mind and will not replace the removed bin on the Green. SG consulted John Edwards at MBC and it is because there is enough capacity with two bins on the Green already. LPC agrees we have to accept the situation and as the 2 bins are not the open type, the issue with animals raiding the bins should be reduced. Cllr Sue Grigg has responded. NB will monitor the area regularly.
- e. The specialists consulted about the findings of the Closed Cemetery annual inspection reported back after their site visit. The only necessity is to lie flat one large gravestone at a cost of £250. JA, AR and NB have inspected the stone and consider it to require a specialist for health and safety reasons due to the size and weight, and because it needs lifting out first, without breaking. Knotweed has returned to south east corner of the cemetery and in the garden next door.
The Council **AGREED**:
- To the cost of laying the gravestone flat. NB to Action
 - For CH to spray the knotweed in the Cemetery. CH to Action
 - To the office contacting the owner of the house next door to the cemetery to advise him of the situation. Office to Action.
- f. Bearsted football club have asked whether they could use the field once again on a Tuesday evening 5-6.30pm for their juniors training to keep them active through the summer. There have been no issues previously, they have PLI and their presence deters antisocial behaviour on the field.
The Council **AGREED** for Bearsted Football Club to use the Field. Office to advise.
- g. We have received an invoice for KALC for 2024-2025. The cost is based on the tax-based figures for 2023/2024 in the Parish at 74.5p per 23-24 tax-based unit to a maximum of £1700 plus a standing charge of £65.00 (all subject to VAT). Next year the



calculation will be based on the Council's tax base for 24-25 of 3066.9 so this will mean an increase of fees to £1700 (maximum) plus £65.00 standing charge on current rates. The Council **AGREED** to continue with the membership of KALC. Office to pay invoice.

- h. Terry Davis from Loose Amenities Association has sent the Council an option to deposit funds with the Council's solicitors for the 20mph project. This would mean that:
- I. It is for the express purpose of paying KCC for 20 mph work
 - II. It cannot be withdrawn by LAA except in the event of cancellation or failure of the proposal
 - III. It cannot be used or accessed by LPC
 - IV. It is released in tranches to KCC as and when requested by them upon the direction of LPC without recourse to LAA
 - V. LAA indemnify LPC from all and any possible additional costs incurred by them administering the proposal

The Council **AGREED** to go forward with the option. Clerk to advise Terry Davis

- i. Loose Parish Council has been advised by the Loose Gardeners that there is a large badger set in the allotment. They have taped off the area but the hole is six feet deep and the rest of the badger set may collapse, a survey needs to be done. The set extends into Brooks Field and children play in the trees at the top of the field on the boundary with the allotment site. The office has consulted the West Kent Badger group for advice. Office to Action.

14. Finance & Funding.

- a. To ratify payments made on Appx A for 15 April 2024.
The payments for April were ratified. Payments were authorised by CH & VG.
- b. To agree Earmarked Reserve for fiscal year 24-25.
At the F & A Committee Meeting on 8 April 2024 it was agreed that the following monies were to be earmarked for 24-25:
- I. Block Drain £390 invoice to be paid out of 23-24 budget.
 - II. PCH Committee agreed that £234 to be Earmarked for payment 24-25.
 - III. ENV Committee agreed (Meeting 11 March 24) that the meadow budget for 23-24 of £1000 be earmarked for 24-25.
- The committee also **AGREED** that the CILs money for 18/504327/Full will be allocated to Neighbourhood Plan Committee and to rearrange the layout of the Earmarked money into groups for 24-25. Clerk to Action.
- c. To receive full record of accounts from RFO.
The full record of accounts was circulated to Councillors and noted.
- d. To review Community Heartbeat agreements.
The contract is currently £135.00 per year. The Office works well with the company. The Council **AGREED** to continue with the contract. Clerk to Action.
- e. To reconcile Barclays Bank statements with the RBS System.
The Barclays Bank Statements (Community Account and Premium Business Account) were reconciled with the RBS System and signed by AR.
The Clerk advised that the process of closing the Barclay Accounts is taking longer than expected. The bank requires all signatories to sign the closure form. Office Action.



At the F & A Committee meeting on 8 April 2024 it was agreed that the Council will open two new savings accounts (CCLA & Nationwide). However, with the election coming up the Clerk would like to wait to discuss the signatories for the new accounts until the AGM. The Council **AGREED**.

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

Since the last meeting the office has been dealing with the following issues:

- The continuous water flow down Church Street (see Agenda item 13a)
- Footpath sign down at Kirkdale – confirmed as LAA property. It has been removed to the shed and awaits reinstalling.
- Litter issues in Kirkdale arising from bin bags not collected by the Brooks Field gate – reported to MBC who discovered Suez did not have the specific arrangements for Kirkdale on computer, so have asked them to amend. MBC sent the street cleansing team to clear up the area.
- A resident new to the area sought information on toddler activities so was signposted to appropriate activities and contacts.
- Several lorry watch signs had been noted missing. These had been up for two years and suffered in recent weather. NB has obtained replacements from KCC and the signs are now up.
- A tree house has appeared in the bushes bordering Walnut Tree Avenue and the KM53 public footpath. Due to the nature of the structure, and the proximity to the footpath, it creates a potential hazard to footpath users and has had to be reported to KCC Public Rights of Way.
- A section of the recently replaced pedestrian barriers at the top of Old Loose Hill has been destroyed once again and has been reported for replacement.
- Cones and temporary safety barriers left in various places around the Parish have been reported for collection.

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

The Social Media Data has been circulated to Councillors and noted.

17. To receive and discuss any items of concern escalated by Councillors, Committees or the Office

None.

18. To ratify any ROUND ROBINS used since 18 March 2024. (KO)

None.

19. To review Policies and Procedures. (KO)

a. Working Alone Policy

The Council **AGREED** the Policy with no amendments.

b. Press and Media Policy

The Council **AGREED** the Policy with the following amendments:

- Section 3.1 Bullet 4 'who' should read 'whose'
- Section 5.4 Delete 'Under the 1960's Act' and inserting 'The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, ...' and then replace the hyphen after 2014 in line 2 with a comma.
- Section 8.1 'Clerks Office' should read 'Clerk's Office'
- Section 8.2 Reword the sentence to include details of Hirers on the website.

c. Use of the KGVPF and Brooks Field Policy



The Council **AGREED** with the following amendment:

Describe Areas, Paragraph 2 Final sentence after 'but' insert 'the field '

- d. Policy for the Press & Public on attending & reporting meetings

The Council **AGREED** to move this Policy to the next meeting for approval.
Office to Action.

20. To receive an update on the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) and make any necessary decisions.

The APM was held on 25 March 2024. 36 Residents attended. Some of the subjects discussed/raised were potholes, road closures, speed limits and boundary changes. The office felt that the event went well but they will need more help in the kitchen to serve teas and coffee at the start of the event. After discussion the Council agreed to the next APM will take place on 24 March 2025.

21. To discuss the schedule of Meetings for 2024-2025 and make any necessary decisions

The draft schedule of meetings for 24/25 has been circulated to Councillors for agreement. After discussion the Council **AGREED** the following:

- a) AGM to be held on 13 May 2024
- b) The first Environment Meeting to be held on 20 May 2024.
- c) The last Planning meeting of 2024 will be on 23 December 2024
- d) The Annual Parish Meeting will be on 24 March 2025
- e) The McAlpine Trust Meetings will be added on 3 July 2024 and 9 October 2024
- f) No LPC meeting in August 2024
- g) LPC meeting in December will be 9 December 2024

Office to update meeting schedule.

22. To discuss the D Day 80 – 6 June 2024 and make any necessary decisions. (VB)

The D-Day arrangements are coming together. For the coffee morning a lamp has been purchased and JB will put together some articles for the display. The Fete team are working on the D-Day theme.

23. Information Only.

- a. Pond works project update – the planning consent for the tree works has been received but works have now been programmed to start on 2 September due to the nesting season.
- b. The two oak trees grown by a local family were planted in Brooks Field on Thursday 11 April with the help of Cllr Jim Andrew, Cllr Andrew Richards and NB. The family had planted acorns in pots when their two girls (now 5 and 7 years old) were born. The family have emailed their thanks to the Council for allowing them to do this in a special space they can continue to visit.

24. Next meeting of LPC 13 May 2024.

The Meeting ended at 21.40

Dated.....

Signature