



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
LOOSE PARISH COUNCIL**

**Monday 9 December 2024 at 7.30pm
in the Loose Parish Pavilion, King George V Playing Field**

Councillors taking part: Charlie Hollister (Vice-Chairman) (CH), Jim Andrew (JA), Mick Westwood (MW), Neil Lettington (NL), Sarah Leeson (SL), Susan Hogg (SH), Michael Hogg (MH), Susan Hill (SCH) and Vianne Gibbons (Chairman) (VG) joined meeting at agenda item 11.

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

There was one member of the public present.

1. To receive and record any apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Brian Clark (BC) (MBC Ward Councillor – Hayle Park Nature Reserve Event), Tony Oliver (TO – Away) and Velma Bennett (VB - Weather Conditions). There were no apologies from Andrew Richards.

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.

(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 18 November 2024 (Pages 1991-1998)
The minutes for the LPC meeting on 18 November 2024 were **AGREED** and signed by the Vice-Chairman.

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

- Planning Committee Meetings 16 September 2024 (Pages 678-680), 30 September 2024 (Pages 681-682), 14 October 2024 (Pages 683-685) and 11 November 2024 (Pages 686-688)
- Pavilion and Community Hub Committee Meetings 3 June 2024 (Pages 383-387) and 2 September 2024 (Pages 388-393)
- Environment Committee Meeting 1 July 2024 (Pages 436-442)

6. To receive any reports from the Loose Ward Councillors. (SW)

SW advised:

- The Highways Team have agreed the Licence for the Tommy statues on the Cobble Stones at Copper Tree Court and have waived the fee. BC has completed the necessary documentation. Highways have asked for Council Public Liability insurance details to ensure that there is cover for the statues should any injuries occur. Office to Action.
- We are dealing with Golding Homes with the vegetation leading the green open space and they have written to the tenants to get the vegetation cut back. It is the tenant's responsibility and SW will monitor the situation to see if the work is completed.
- The information regarding TPOs is all on the website (JB dealing)
- The Highways items are still rumbling on.

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

The report received in November 2024 also covered December 2024.

MW advised that SWebb does not represent residents in North Loose as he covers Maidstone Rural West. Paul Cooper covers North Loose as it is part of Maidstone South. After discussion it was **AGREED** to invite Paul Cooper to the next LPC meeting.

JA asked SW if he has any information on the proposal for a Unitary Authority in Kent. SW advised that the Government are keen to implement Unitary Authorities. There would be one in Kent and it would have an elected Mayor. Another option is to have an elected Mayor with three Unitary authorities below. That would be East Kent, North Kent and West Kent. It means it would go from four Councils to one saving on Directors etc. That is as far as the proposals have got. In theory, less authorities work better.

The downside is it could mean nothing gets done for a couple of years while boundaries etc are sorted out. Parishes will stay the same and may become more important as they are on the ground.

NB advised that at the Clerks' Conference it was felt that Parishes will become more important if these changes go ahead and many areas currently unparished would become parished.

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

The Clerk advised that she has received a response regarding sponsoring a warden from both KALC and the Community Warden team. The areas no longer covered with the Community Warden are

- Bearsted
- Boughton Monchelsea
- Chart Sutton
- Coxheath
- Harrietsham
- Lenham
- Headcorn (although I believe they have directly employed their own warden)
- Marden
- Staplehurst

KALC are currently organising a workshop for January which will explain more about the sponsorship for parishes.

After discussion the Council **AGREED** for the Office to attend the KALC Workshop when arranged and report back to the Council.

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

No report received.

E-Watch

- Between 00:01 on Tuesday 19 of November and 23:59 on Wednesday 20 of November in Loose Road. Somebody stole a bin from a business property.
Crime Report No. 46/200547/24 - Posted 27/11/2024
- On Tuesday 19 of November between 07:40 and 11:30 in Carlton Gardens. Somebody stole a black Ford Eco Sport, EO64***, from a parking bay.
Crime Report No. 46/196955/24 - Posted 21/11/2024

10. 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)

None.

11. To receive updates on the Boundary Changes and make any necessary decisions. (SL/KO)

- a. Mangravet Wood Option Agreement
SL advised that a clean copy of the agreement has been received and the Solicitor should have been attending this evening to discuss any queries Councillors might have about the document. Unfortunately, he is unable to attend for personal reasons. The Council agreed to move the agenda item to next month's meeting.
- b. Lease for Richmond Way
There is no update from Solicitors (See 11a) and this item will also be moved to January LPC meeting.

12. To receive an update on the Shed in Brooks Field. (KO)

The Clerk has advised that she has informed the Council's Solicitors that they would like a full AML identity check. By using this method Councillors will not need to attend the Solicitors offices to carry out the check. This would be done electronically using a Councillor's mobile phone and email address. Any Councillor without a mobile phone will still need to attend the Solicitors' offices to carry out the necessary checks. Councillors will also need to complete the PEP form which has been circulated to all Councillors. One Councillor is unwilling to complete the process. After discussion the Council **AGREED**:

- That the Clerk is to contact the Solicitors to see what the situation is with one Councillor not being prepared to complete the checks.
- To submit the three PEP forms completed at the meeting to the Solicitors
- To submit details of Councillors who are happy to do the AML identity check.
Clerk to Action

13. To discuss and agree the Neighbourhood Plan Strapline. (MW)

An update on the Neighbourhood Plan has been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Following agreement by LPC in October, the Parish Office has sent to Maidstone Borough Council an application to designate the whole of the new area of Loose as the area to be covered by the updated Loose Neighbourhood Plan. At the time of writing, MBC officers are assessing the application. They will then issue a public notice and secure formal approval (expected in the coming weeks).

Information on the work undertaken by the Steering Group and the status of the application to MBC has been published on LPC's Facebook page and notice boards. The Parish Office is working on making changes to LPC's website so that this information can also be published on a new and dedicated Neighbourhood Plan page. A further news item will be issued on receipt of MBC's formal approval of the new Neighbourhood Plan area.

The Steering Group is seeking quotations from four consultants who have expressed an interest in supporting LPC in its work on the new Neighbourhood Plan. Responses will be assessed in January.

The Steering Group has confirmed LPC's eligibility for central government funding, although availability of this funding for the next financial year is yet to be confirmed. Details have been obtained from other parish councils about costs associated with producing their neighbourhood plans. This information will inform the estimate of the Group's proposed budget requirement for 2025-26 (to be processed in line with LPC's usual budget protocols). The steering group is down from six to four members and the Committee will be looking to recruit residents and Councillors to the Group in the New Year. The Group would like to have a strapline as the original Loose Neighbourhood plan had one. Some suggestions were made and the Council **AGREED** that the strapline for the new Neighbourhood Plan would be 'Our Community, Our Plan, Our Future'. The Council also **AGREED** to put a note about the plan in the next edition of In and Around Loose. Office to Action.

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

- a. To receive an update on the badger set issue in the McAlpine Allotments (NB)
NB reminded the Council of the difficulties the Office has had finding any professional help to deal with the badger set issue on the allotment border with Brooks Field. A company called Badger-Gon has been approached for advice and they have reviewed photographs and videos of the site. They are offering a service costing £400 which includes an initial onsite survey, a detailed quote for proposed work, a timeline for the work, an application for the necessary Natural England Licence and any site meetings required by governing bodies. After discussion the Council **AGREED** to proceed with this service. It was suggested that Cllr Richards attend the site meeting with NB if available. NL offered to be a back-up if required. Action: NB
- b. Update on the actions from the Fire Risk Assessment and to make any necessary decisions (NL).
NL advised that the report was done on 22 September 2024 and there were 18 recommendations to consider. Six of the actions are short term and need to be completed within in three months. The cost is about £1200.00 and work needs to be done by the end of January. There are 7 medium term actions including plaster boarding the outside store ceiling After discussion the Council **AGREED**:
 - The faulty emergency light and two new emergency lights outside both entrances be agreed by Round Robin.
 - To have the plasterboard work completed at a cost of £507.00
 - Loose Wires to remove lighting and replace with LED Lighting.
 - To get two more quotes for a Fire Alarm

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

Details of the Enquiry, Concern and Complaints spreadsheet had been circulated to Councillors and noted.

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

The Social Media data had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting and noted. The Clerk advised that she has received some comments from JA regarding the website and these amendments will be made accordingly. She asked that Councillors look at the websites and make any comments on the layout etc as this is helpful to the office.

17. Finance & Funding. (KO)

- a. To ratify payments made on Appx A for 9 December 2024
The Appendix A was ratified by the Council. They were authorised by VG & CH.

18. To review the following policies:

- a. Freedom of Information Policy and scheme of details
The Policy was reviewed and it was **AGREED** that:
 - The Office will check the location of the Guide to Freedom of Information document with the possibility of adding a link to the information.
 - The link at the end of the policy is not working and should be ICO.org.uk.
Office to Action ready for final agreement.
- b. Social Media Policy
The Policy was reviewed and **AGREED** without amendment. Office to Action.

19. To ratify any Round Robins since the last meeting on 18 November 2024.

None.

20. Information Only.

- a. AB advised that the date for the Fete is set for Saturday 14 June 2024, 12pm to 4pm. The theme is still to be decided. Any help from Councillors would be much appreciated.
- b. JA advised that there is a planning application for the Campfields site coming up in the new year. The developers want to come to the Planning Meeting on 27 January 2025 to present the application. Any Council members can attend the planning meeting if they wish to do so. VG asked that the office to check who can and cannot vote at the meeting. Office to Action.
- c. MH advised that he and SH will not be at the next LPC meeting due to personal commitments.

21. Next meeting of the LPC - 20 January 2024

The meeting ended at 8.40pm

Dated.....

Signature