



**LOOSE PARISH COUNCIL  
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES  
Meeting held on Monday 24 July 2023  
at 7.30pm in Loose Parish Pavilion, KGVPF.**

**In attendance:** Councillors: Charlie Hollister (CH), Elaine Lawford (EL), Susan Luckhurst (SL) and Andrew Richards (AKR). Jim Andrew (JA) 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.

House-keeping and meeting rules were covered by the Chairman before the meeting began.

**AGENDA**

**1. To receive any apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Velma Bennett (VB).

**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 the agreement made by the LPC at the meeting held on the 17 July 17).

None.

**5. To sign as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2023 (Pages 403-407)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2023 (Pages 403-407) were duly **AGREED** as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

**6. Questions/comments from the public or Community groups (3mins)**

None.

**7. Correspondence & phone calls received by the office**

- a. A resident contacted the Office regarding the collapsed ragstone wall on Old Loose Hill beneath their Rosemount Close property. They have been advised by KCC Highways and LPC that their planned repairs will need to go through Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) Planning as the site is in the conservation area. Matter ongoing.
- b. A resident contacted the Office regarding the closed cemetery looking a little unkempt. After a site visit, it was evident that the contractor had already visited and completed scheduled maintenance a short while after the resident had visited. The resident also want to register their disapproval of any "events" being held in the closed cemetery. NB replied to clarify that

this was the agreed view of LPC, as recorded in the Environment Committee minutes of 14 November 2022.

- c. The Loose Swiss Beaver scout leader contacted the Office to ask if they could repeat a litter pick in King George V recreation ground (KGV), which they helpfully carried out on Monday 19 June, after the fete weekend. NB met with them to pass on the thanks of the Council.
- d. A resident of Kirkdale contacted the Office regarding wall damage alleged to have been caused during the new shed building works. NB discussed the matter with a member of Loose Amenities Association (LAA) and replied to the resident to explain that they should continue to consult directly with LAA as they had organised the works.
- e. A resident made contact regarding elders overgrowing into his garden from Brooks Field. CH and NB visited the property and advised they could be trimmed back without issue.
- f. A resident contacted the Office regarding flooding on the viaduct after substantial rainfall. NB carried out a site visit and checked the drains were clear. The water had already subsided and NB updated the resident, assuring her we are regularly monitoring this area because the recent wind and rain has brought down significant debris.
- g. A resident contacted the Office regarding two loose kerb stones on Old Loose Hill near Brooks Path. NB had already noticed and logged these with KCC Highways. In the meantime, one fell away so was escalated to the Highways Steward who contacted the Office last Wednesday to say she had requested action within 7 days. NB to monitor.
- h. A resident from Copper Tree Court contacted the Office regarding regular poor parking choices by parents dropping children to Loose Primary School. The junction and sight lines were regularly blocked causing safety issues for drivers, and cars crossing the pavement to park on the cobbles were putting pedestrians at risk. The Office has been collating photographic evidence of these parking issues for some time and has been in communication with KCC Highways, the Primary School and the new Beat Officer PC Burns. The Committee **AGREED** that when the school returns in September NB should follow up on plans to meet with a member of the Leadership team and/or Eco Council to discuss publicity campaigns around this issue, as well as poor parking elsewhere in the roads around the school and at KGV car park. The Committee also **AGREED** that the site should also be shown to KCC Highways when they attend for their site visit in September and the possibility of random interactions by the Beat Officer be discussed further. Action NB.
- i. The Property Management Company responsible for Leonard Gould estate made contact to say that at their recent AGM, residents had raised the issue of parking on the junction of Pickering Street and Leonard Gould Way regularly blocked the entrance to the estate, and caused refuse collections to be cancelled. They have already contacted MBC and KCC Highways but been told nothing would be done to enforce parking near junctions on minor roads as priorities are to keep main routes flowing and improve safety at crash sites. NB replied to say we have similarly contacted MBC, KCC and Kent Police about these issues for both Leonard Gould Way and Northleigh Close residents and got the same response. The Committee **AGREED** that the issue should also be raised with KCC Highways when they attend for their site visit in September, and that NB should also seek advice from PC Burns, our Beat Officer. Action NB.
- j. The Office was contacted by members of the Maidstone Ramblers who volunteer for KCC Public Rights of Way, because they had been tasked with clearing some local footpaths. They asked for permission to park in the car park whilst working locally, which was agreed as there were no conflicts with Pavilion hirer usage.

- k. Residents contacted the Office regarding the lack of action on a repeatedly reported water leak in Pickering Street. NB chased up South East water who provided a date for the works (subject to no emergency works occurring) and the leak has now been fixed.
- l. A graffiti trail was reported between KGV and Linton Crossroads including on the basketball court, road signs, street name signs, and inside the Linton Road bus shelter. NB photographed and reported each site to the MBC graffiti team who did an excellent job removing all of it over the next few weeks. The office has passed on the thanks of the Council to the graffiti team for their effective response.

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

**a. Open Litter Bins**

The LPC open “tulip” bins have been causing litter issues at their various sites because animals are able to raid them so easily. NB made an enquiry about the cost of more effective bins to John Edwards (MBC Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm) (JE). He has offered to replace any open bin that is close to the highway, but will not replace those a distance away (such as the two in KGV and the one by the Pig Bench in Brooks Field). The cost of a bin is £300 plus £150 installation. After discussion the Committee **AGREED** that NB should discuss the list with JE to confirm how many he would be prepared to fund and whether this includes disposal of the old bins. A list in priority order would be created after inspection on the annual walkabout in August. Action: NB.

**9. Brooks Field – Pond - Roy’s Wood – to discuss items below and make any necessary decisions**

**a. Meadow Phase 4**

A meeting has been arranged for 14 August 2023 in Brooks Field with the groundworks contractor to discuss the progress of the meadow project so far, and plans for Phase 4. Action: CH, KO and NB to meet contractor.

The resident who kindly voluntarily dug out all the last phases has been contacted. He is keen to help again and would be available from early October. He believes the slope will not be an issue, but suggested a site visit early in September to check and decide whether he should source a larger digger. Action: NB to contact and meet in September.

**b. Roy’s Wood update (JA)**

Both JA and AKR had recently visited Roy’s Wood independently, and confirmed that the replacement Common oak showed no signs of life. The Texan oak in the north end has signs of life lower down, and the Committee **AGREED** that the advice of the Kent Men of the Trees (KMOTT) representative should be sought regarding sourcing a replacement Common oak. Some stakes need securing and one tree requires a longer stake for support. The Committee **AGREED** to the purchase and AKR and JA will liaise regarding completing the works before the KMOTT visit on 24 August. Action: JA and AKR.

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

**a. Repairs to the war memorial update**

The Church advised that on 16 June 2023 (after more than two and a half years) a Faculty has been granted by the Diocese for the repairs to the war memorial. NB has also obtained updated estimate for works from the second contractor. After discussion, the Committee **AGREED** which specialist contractor to proceed with. The actual figure will depend upon the outcome of initial cleaning but is likely to be in excess of £4000. Action: NB to advise contractor.

NB is currently working on a War Memorials Trust grant application but they will only fund a maximum 50% of the cost, depending on severity of the damage. Action: NB.

CH suggested and the Committee **AGREED** that a clear photographic record should be made before the works were started and then after completion. Action: NB

**11. King George V Playing Field (KGVPF) - to discuss items below and make any necessary decisions**

**a. Matters arising from the quarterly KGVPF walkabout completed 24 July 2023**

The quarterly KGVPF walkabout report had been pre-circulated. The substantial growth of a tree in the far corner was discussed. The overhang is now providing a screen and the Committee **AGREED** that a quote should be sought to raise the crown to eliminate opportunities for anti-social behaviour (ASB). This should be arranged under delegated powers in view of the risk of ASB. Action: NB.

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

**a. 20mph consultation outcomes and consequent actions**

The consultation results summary document had been pre-circulated to the Committee. After discussion the Committee **AGREED** that the outcome should be posted on the LPC Facebook page and on the website as soon as possible, and put in the next Community Alert and In & Around Loose publications when they are next due. The traffic, speed and parking issues raised by residents would be discussed at the meeting with KCC Highways in September to consider what might be feasible and economically viable to progress, and therefore what should be included as the priorities in the revised Highways Improvement Plan.

A letter sent to the LPC Chairman on 19 July 2023 from Loose Amenities Association, offering some funding towards a 20mph zone, had also been pre-circulated. The Committee **AGREED** that LAA should be thanked, but noted that the offer came in some time after the consultation had closed, and that the response should be made by the Chairman. Action: VG

**b. Highways Improvement Plan and preparations for KCC Highways site visit**

The Deputy Clerk had pre-circulated the most recent version of the HIP that LPC's KCC Highways consultant had re-drafted after a meeting with CH and NB in March 2023. After discussion it was **AGREED** that the list of the traffic, road-condition and parking issues raised by residents should be collated in preparation for the September site meeting with KCC Highways. Action: NB. The Committee discussed a draft route to enable the walkabout to take in as many of the issues raised, prior to sitting down to review the Highways Improvement Plan.

**c. Drainage Issues and actions update**

The Deputy Clerk continues to monitor and re-report drainage issues. This matter is ever-changing as work is continually being programmed, for example, notification for Mill Street and Well Street works was received today for drainage cleansing to take place on 25 July 2023. The drain by Vale House is blocked once again and the overgrown gully adjacent to Old Loose Close has never been addressed, so these will be pursued. Action: NB.

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

**a. To arrange the annual walkabout (due in August)**

The annual walkabout will take place on 14 August ending up in Brooks field to meet with the groundworks contractor regarding the meadow.

**b. Tree works update and the annual tree survey**

The quote for the Annual Tree Survey had been pre-circulated along with a quote for works required in KGV where a tree is leaning on a resident's fence. After discussion the Committee **AGREED** to proceed with the tree survey at a cost of £500 and the necessary tree works at a cost of £150. Action: NB

**c. To arrange the date for the annual cemetery headstone and ragstone walls checks**

NB advised that the last surveys took place on 17 October 2022, so both are due before the next Environment Meeting (23 October 2023). Action: NB to forward all paperwork to JA and CH who will then arrange date(s) to carry out the surveys.

**14. Finance**

**a. To receive an update from the RFO**

The Deputy Clerk had pre-circulated the Environment Committee finance report and LPC Ear-marked Reserves report from the Clerk. The documents were noted.

**b. To note the updated 2023-24 Management Plan and make any necessary decisions**

The updated Management Plan for 2023-24 was circulated and noted. As per agenda item 8a, NB will bring any further information about bin replacements to the next meeting for discussion. Action: NB

**15. Monitoring and Ratification of any ROUND ROBIN decisions**

None.

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

As per agenda item 12a, it was **AGREED** that the 20mph consultation outcome should be posted on the Facebook page and on the website as soon as possible, and put in the next Community Alert and In & Around Loose publications when they are next due. Action: NB

**17. Other Items (discussion only)**

Kent Men of the Trees ‘Trees in Villages’ competition - JA/AKR/KO will be meeting Nigel Heriz-Smith from KMOTT on 24 August at 10am starting at the KGV. Rita Hood has been notified of the date. When at Brooks Field, JA/AKR will ask for guidance regarding the best species and location for the new tree to replace the one felled at the Pavilion car park, and advice regarding whether there is adequate and suitable space to make an application for trees with the Kent Plan Tree project. In preparation, the Office will produce a short list of questions regarding Plan Tree for JA/AKR prior to the meeting. Action: NB

Planters - the replacement gold tape has arrived and NB will replace it in the next few days.

Pondworks - £5000 has now been received and NB has been in contact with the project organiser who is drafting an action plan and consulting with Medway Valley Conservation Partnership and current pond works volunteers. Nesting season will prevent practical work starting until early September. NB and DC will meet once the action plan is drafted.

The groundworks contractor has been asked to tidy the village green edges. They have completed the allotments hedges inside and out as requested.

NB attended Parish Liaison meeting with Kent Police where the role of the Beat Officer was discussed, along with a summary of what PC Becca Burns had already achieved. Beat Officers are being trained to enforce speeding and Parish Councils can request support (the speed guns are currently being recalibrated). They emphasised that with limited resources, Parish Councils with active Speedwatch campaigns would be favoured as they would have an evidence base. PR explained the current situation with Speedwatch and the various regulations for operating. After discussion NB offered to look into the revival of the scheme as the current timing with the outcome of the 20mph zone, and the incidents on the A229 may bring forth more volunteers. Action NB.

Fly tipping data was shared with Boughton Monchelsea, Chart Sutton, Coxheath and the Farleighs seeing significant increases in their country lanes. Loose figures remained tiny. The proposals for the Tovil Tip closure were discussed but it was emphasised that this is an ongoing discussion.

**18. Date of Next Meeting – 23 October 2023**

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Signed .....

Dated.....