



**LOOSE PARISH COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Meeting held on Monday 27 November 2023
at 7.30pm in Loose Parish Pavilion, KGVPF.**

In attendance: Councillors: Charlie Hollister (Chairman - CH), Jim Andrew (JA), Elaine Lawford (EL), Susan Luckhurst (SL), Andrew Richards (AR) and Peter Rigby (PR).

Also in attendance: Nicky Bourne (Deputy Clerk - NB) who took the minutes, Kim Owen (Clerk & RFO – KO).

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 (attending area KALC meeting).

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 an agreement by LPC on 17 July 17.*)
None.

5. To sign as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2023 (Pages 413-417)

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2023 (Pages 413-417) were duly **AGREED** as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

6. To receive any questions/comments from the public (3mins)

(To include communications received by the Clerks' Office or other committees)

A resident had made contact concerned that the Walnut tree on the triangle at the entrance to Walnut Tree Avenue was overgrowing her property. The Deputy Clerk had completed a site visit and taken a photograph. The resident sent further photographs which were pre-circulated to the committee. After discussion, the Committee **AGREED** that as the tree had not been identified as requiring safety works in the recent inspection, it would need to be referred to the contractor for re-inspection, but this would not be immediate. The Committee **AGREED** that if the resident wished to prune any of the branches overhanging her boundary in the meantime, she was entitled to do so. Action: Deputy Clerk to inform the resident and refer the matter to the tree contractor.

7. To receive updates on recent and ongoing Environment matters and to make any necessary decisions

An update was pre-circulated to the Committee including the following matters:

Meadow – The Deputy Clerk met with the volunteer who has previously dug out the meadow, to discuss Phase 4. He feels the scale of the job, with the amount of material to be moved, requires a dumper truck and should be done in the spring when the ground is not as soft. JA informed the Committee that he and the Chairman had inspected the site of the old shed, and felt that it would benefit from some of the removed top soil. The Chairman explained that she had been looking into machinery hire charges for budget preparations and would contact the volunteer to discuss the matter further, but that works would be unlikely to take place until March. Action: CH. Funding would be further discussed in Agenda item 9a.

Pond/Stream - The third skip that the pond working party thought would be needed, was not actually required, so there is some budget remaining to purchase the requested replacement buckets and waders for smaller volunteers. An additional skip might still be needed after the winter for further reed and water cress removal but this could also be arranged within budget. The Committee **AGREED** that the purchases could be made with the remaining budget for 2023/24. Action: Clerks Office.

KCC Love Where You Live project – two quotes for the works required to dig a channel and create an island in the Loose stream have been received and were pre-circulated. The pond works could be carried out within the grant budget, but the tree works required to gain access would need alternative funding. After discussion the Committee **AGREED** that the Chairman would consult the project organiser and they would speak with the local tree contractor regarding the necessary tree works. Action: CH. The Deputy Clerk would look into any additional sources of grant funding. Action: Deputy Clerk.

Parish Tree works – A quote request has been sent to the contractor for works listed on the annual tree safety inspection as being required within 12 months. The quote is awaited and will be circulated by **Round Robin** as agreed at the 23 October 2023 Environment meeting. Action: Deputy Clerk.

The works listed on the tree report for the newly planted trees in Roy's Wood were not included on the quote request, as Councillor volunteers have tended to these in the past. Councillor Andrews and Councillor Richards had received the list of works from the Deputy Clerk and confirmed that they would be happy to do the work, and did not feel any budget was needed. Action: JA/AR.

The Clerk had previously advised of one tree in the allotments causing concern and the Committee had already agreed that this should be inspected, and included in future safety inspections. Concern has been raised about a couple of additional trees which are in Brooks Field (but only accessible from the allotments) and the Committee **AGREED** that these should be inspected at the same time. Councillors queried who would pay for the tree works in the allotment and the Clerk advised that she was waiting to see the minutes of the last McAlpine Trust meeting to see what had been discussed. Actions: Office to identify the trees and arrange inspection. Clerk to request McAlpine Trust minutes.

Village Green – The outstanding matter of the tidy up of the village green edges has now been completed by the ground works contractor. Photographs were circulated.

High Banks wall damage – the collapsed wall at the junction with Old Loose Hill has been fully repaired. Barrier damage was also reported and works are programmed on 1 December (with a road closure).

Old Loose Hill – A new landslip has appeared adjacent to the junction with High Banks, beneath a property on Rosemount Close and has been reported to KCC.

Drainage – the issue of the overgrown gullies outside Old Loose Close has not been picked up and dealt with by KCC drainage teams. It has been referred to Susan Laporte in our recent other communications and it is hoped that if a site visit of the A229 does go ahead, a visit to this issue can be included. CH reported that the gully has been blocked with some ragstone and the Committee **AGREED** the Office

should continue to chase KCC for action as they have previously accepted the maintenance is their responsibility. Action: Deputy Clerk.

Councillor Richards advised that the drain at the junction of Well Street and High Banks was blocked again and the overflowing water ran across the whole carriageway, becoming a sheet of ice in the mornings. Action: Deputy Clerk to urgently report to KCC.

Cemetery - the cemetery was tidied up by the ground works contractor in preparation for the Remembrance Day Service on 13 November. The poppy wreath was purchased and laid by Rita Hood on behalf of LPC.

Highways Improvement Plan Priority 1 (A229) – The Deputy Clerk is still chasing repairs to street furniture and fixings from various incidents near the village green. The latest accident knocked down the last remaining illuminated keep-left beacon on the most southerly refuge. The installation of new barriers on the bend was programmed for 18 November 2023 but works did not take place. The Deputy Clerk continues to chase the replacement fixtures on the large central refuge at the junction with Old Loose Hill, where the main streetlight still does not work. Reports are being made to the usual KCC Report a Fault online tool but Michelle Norris has backed these up with email queries to senior Highways colleagues. Susan Laporte is also involved in chasing some matters and offered a site visit which has been accepted, but a date is awaited. At some point last week 2 new “megaflecta” bollards were installed on the middle refuge. NB has queried whether the illuminated lamp post will be re-installed and Michelle Norris is following this up.

In a brief update meeting this afternoon Michelle shared the news that the assessment into moving the 30mph signage further south has been completed, but confirmed that it does not meet Department for Transport (DfT) criteria so cannot happen. Instead, Michelle been asking what could be put in place. She is brainstorming a wide range of alternatives that can increase the visual impact of the refuges, warn drivers of the approaching bend and the need to slow down. She is also exploring alternative funding streams that she might be able to access. This is all under discussion so cannot be shared publicly at this point. After discussion the Committee **AGREED** that they would like to have sight of the investigation report to understand the reasons. Action: Deputy Clerk to request a copy.

Highways Improvement Plan Priority 2 (School zone)– Michelle Norris has ordered new signage for the school warning signs as the existing signs are not to current regulations. The Deputy Clerk has submitted reports to KCC for the re-painting of the road markings.

Michelle Norris will shortly be having a meeting to discuss a wide range of ideas for measures to increase safety and driver awareness of the speed limit, the bend and the school crossing, but much will depend on compliance with DfT criteria, design, installation and maintenance costs. She will feed back afterwards, hopefully with some permitted proposals.

Viaduct footpath - The footpath over the viaduct has been reported for cleansing now that all the leaves are down. The leaves and rain have left a layer of slippery sludge making it awkward to walk over, and it is a busy route either way to schools. This was reported to KCC but we were advised it should be the MBC street cleansing team, so has been forwarded. Action: Clerks’ Office to monitor. Councillor Lawford advised that the plastic barriers at the site of the accident need re-setting as there is a danger of them falling on to the carriageway. Action: Deputy Clerk to report to KCC. Councillor Andrew expressed concern that some of the ragstone might have been removed. Action: Deputy Clerk to check photographs taken over time and report to KCC if proven.

Defibrillator Re-paint – Two quotes had been received to re-paint the telephone box on the village green that houses the defibrillator. After discussion, the Committee **AGREED** a contractor at a cost of £300. Action: Deputy Clerk to advise contractor and programme works.

Bin replacement by MBC – John Edwards (MBC) has agreed to replace 6 tulip bins that sit close to the highway (outside Loose Primary School; on the Village Green; by the allotment gate; at Salts Ave; at the Herts Crescent bus stop; and on Brooks Path at the junction of Kirkdale and Church Street). He will not replace the one in Brooks Field by the Pig bench or the two in King George V Recreation Ground (KGV). After discussion, the Committee **AGREED** to accept the generous offer and but also replace the bin by the Pig bench with one large enough for the amount of refuse at that site. This would be paid out of the street furniture budget. The two open bins at KGV will remain, as they cause less issue because the Caretaker litter picks daily and can clear up any rubbish removed by scavenging animals overnight. Action: Deputy Clerk to contact John Edwards to arrange for works to be programmed.

Bird boxes / Insect hotels – the Deputy Clerk circulated examples of bird boxes and insect hotels as requested at the last meeting and after discussion the Committee **AGREED** to purchase one of each, to be fixed onto the new shed. Action: Clerks’ Office.

War Memorial – the Deputy Clerk has asked the Church Administrator for a copy of the faculty agreement, and any time restrictions, in order to proceed to seek a grant towards the repairs. Action: Deputy Clerk to chase up and continue seeking a grant and arranging the works.

8. Risk/General Maintenance

The quarterly walkabout of KGV took place on 25 October 2023 and the records had been pre-circulated to the committee. Most matters are in hand. The issue of a gap developing in the hedge near the basketball court was discussed and the Committee **AGREED** that it should be monitored regularly for any increase in size or report of incident. The installation of another post was a possibility if the situation changed but currently, due to the tighter location, bikes are not able to get onto the footpath at the dangerous speed that caused issues where the other post had to be installed. Action: Deputy Clerk and Caretaker to monitor.

The annual inspections of the cemetery head stones and LPC ragstone walls took place on 4 October 2023 with a number of actions. As requested at the last meeting, the specialist contractor has been contacted for advice on identified headstones, but the response is still awaited. As previously agreed, the outcome will be circulated for agreement by Round Robin. Action: Clerks’ Office.

9. Finance

a. To agree the budget for 2024-2025

The Clerk had pre-circulated the finance report and budget information. The proposed budget for 2024-2025 was discussed and **AGREED** as follows:

Code	Environment Item	Budget
4200	General Maintenance	£2500.00
4205	Street Lighting	£500.00
4210	Street Furniture	£1000.00
4215	Tree Works	£2500.00
4225	Planting Planters	£1000.00
4230	Pond Works	£1500.00
4235	Village Green Improvements	£300.00
4240	Meadow	£1000.00
4245	Save to Invest War Memorial	£300.00
4250	Save to Invest Fencing (B Field)	£400.00
4255	Save to Invest Noticeboards	£100.00
TBC	Cemetery Works	£400.00
	Save to Invest Highways	£3000.00

The Committee also **AGREED:**

- Any budget needed for NLRA areas will be decided at a later date. Action: Committee and RFO
- That because the quote received for the War Memorial is dependent on the number of letters requiring repair, the Deputy Clerk should obtain an accurate quote to be able to apply for funding. Action: Deputy Clerk
- CILs Money Ear Marked Reserves (EMR 342) will be held until funding for the war memorial is determined, and any remaining funds will be added to Highways Save to Invest. Action: RFO
- The Meadow budget for 23/24 may need to be held in EMR to pay any invoices in 24/25 that relate to 23/24. Action: RFO

b. To update the management plan and make any necessary decisions

The Deputy Clerk had pre-circulated the 2023-24 Management Plan, which had been updated to show completed items, and those that are still outstanding. After discussion it was **AGREED** that all incomplete items should be carried over to the 2024-25 plan when drafted. Action: Deputy Clerk.

10. To ratify any ROUND ROBIN decisions since 23 October 2023

None

11. Website and Media – to discuss and make any decisions as relevant

Publicise the pond project and future works in Brooks Field when plans have come together, for information, and also for safety and access arrangements. Action: NB

12. Other Items (information only)

- Noticeboard at Post Office – the LPC name section has come off and needs re-fixing. Action: Deputy Clerk
- Councillors raised the issue of the loose and noisy man hole cover on Loose Road. The Deputy Clerk advised of the actions taken so far. It belongs to Southern Water and action is being chased.
- Councillor Richards informed that a local social media group post advised that Southern Water were currently doing generator works at the pumping station. Some residents had been advised by a leaflet. The Office had not been advised so the Deputy Clerk will investigate and contact Southern Water for an update.

13. Date of next meeting – 11 March 2023

The meeting closed at 9.03pm.

Signed

Dated.....