



Loddon Town Council

The Old School | Church Plain | Loddon | NR14 6EX

www.loddontowncouncil.gov.uk

Minutes of The Annual Meeting of Loddon Parish held on Wednesday 10 April 2024 at 7.00pm in the Hollies Rear Hall

Present:

Chairman of Loddon Town Council: Andy Woodman

Loddon Town Council: Jane Hale, Kay Mason Billig, Julie Appleby, Mervyn Pointer, Liz Marsham, Colin Binfield, Natalie Henry

Loddon Town Estate Charity: Julie Ponsford

Holy Trinity Church: David Owen (Rector)

County and District Cllrs: Kay Mason Billig and Jeremy Rowe

In Attendance: Emily Curtis (Town Clerk), Anne Barnes, (Locum Responsible Finance Officer, RFO), Jo Leonard (Administration and Allotment Officer, AAO) and six members of the public.

Absent: None.

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** Sam Bailey had given advance notice that she would be late. A member of the public had sent her apologies.
- 2. To Approve the Minutes of the Meeting Held on the 12 April 2023**
Minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2023 were **approved** as a correct record with no amendments.
- 3. Chairman's Annual Report:**
It's now a full year since I was elected as Chair of Loddon Town Council, a position I've been very proud and privileged to hold.

Loddon is a fabulous small market town and place to live with a vibrant and engaging population that provides an exciting range of shops, services, and business, not only to the residents of Loddon but also to the nearby villages.

We also host an unrivalled number and variety of clubs and societies for a town of our size which all contribute to making Loddon the exciting and welcoming place that it is.

We have achieved a great deal in the past year which would have not been possible without my fellow councillors, Town Clerk, and dedicated staff.

In particular, I'd like to thank and bid farewell to June Strickland who has recently stood down after some 15 years of sterling service including holding the chair and leading the Personnel Committee. I'd also like to thank my Vice Chair, Colin Binfield, who is a great help to me and has been instrumental in his diplomatic leadership of the Playing Field Committee and the recovery of the Jubilee Hall Management Committee, now in good hands.

We have also seen the triumphal emergence of the Love Loddon Community Group, led by Julie Appleby, who have transformed areas such as Farthing Green, Church Plain and the Staithe. My thanks to you all.

The completion of the, now approved pending a referendum, Loddon and Chedgrave Neighbourhood Plan has been a great achievement from a host of participants and will guide both us and the South Norfolk Council as we move forward – it will also entitle us to a greater share of the infrastructure levies charged to land developers.

The Loddon Community Larder has gone from strength to strength during the year and is a facility that we should all be proud of, again thanks to all involved. The Council has also been able to distribute many small grants to Loddon's clubs and societies to support their activities.

The Coronation Celebration showcased local talent, clubs and societies, and we are so grateful to the volunteers and support of the community for ensuring the success of this event. The remembrance parade and ceremonies were a success as always, thanks to the hard work of Loddon RBL and it was wonderful to see the people of Loddon taking part and lining the streets. Loddon also didn't disappoint with its annual Christmas light display.

Loddon will continue to need to adapt to respond to the dramatic increase in population developments both in Loddon and Chedgrave and the associated increase in demand for its services. The council is actively involved in the planning processes but, at the end of the day, is a consultee only as decisions are made by the district council.

This also applies to our roads and traffic/parking challenges where we can recommend and comment, but control lies with the Norfolk County Council.

In these respects, I'd like to record the council's thanks to our South Norfolk councillors Jeremy Rowe and Kay Mason-Billig and also to Kay as our County Council councillor.

The Loddon & Chedgrave Playing Field Committee continues to work jointly with Chedgrave Parish Council to ensure that the Playing Fields and Tennis Courts are a well-used and maintained area for the residents of both parishes. The L & C PFC is also very proud to announce that the Tennis Club has been awarded Norfolk Tennis Club of the Year for 2 years running and continues to grow in membership.

Congratulations are also due to Loddon United Football Club who won the Norfolk Junior Cup last year and also hosted a pair of very successful junior tournaments.

This year has seen a major organisational and administrative change to the Jubilee Hall which is now much better positioned for the future, and which would not have been possible without the strenuous efforts and commitment from the trustees.

We continue to make improvements to our existing parish lands and facilities with the new allotment gate, and additional allotment water pump.

The Staithe toilets and showers, for so long a drain on the council's funds because of vandalism, have been running well and free from costly repairs. However, I was disappointed to see the spate of vandalism across the town over last summer. This is not an imported problem – it is committed by members of our community and as a community we all need to take note. We have installed additional CCTV in the town to act as a deterrence and to ensure that we can support the Police with their efforts to catch the perpetrators.

Looking forward to the coming year we will see the completion of the refurbishment of the Library Annex and council offices, and the upcoming Chet Valley Summer Fete in July, improvements to our footpaths, new Church Plain bus stops with electronic boards and discussions on the future of The Hollies.

The biggest noticeable change for us in the next year is likely to from be the housing developments along Beccles Road and Langley Road in Chedgrave.

The council, at the timing of writing, has two councillor vacancies. We are always glad to welcome interest in councillor positions as well as volunteers for our various groups.

I'm proud to be part of Loddon, I hope you are too. It's a very special place – let's keep it that way.

Andy Woodman
Chair of Loddon Town Council

4. Clerk's Annual Report:

Another productive year for Loddon Town Council. It is not my place to outline the achievements of the various Committees and groups, so I would just like to give my grateful thanks to those people who have participated in the last twelve months.

I would like to thank all of Loddon Town Council Councillors for the time and dedication they give to the Council, especially within their representative and Committee roles. Also, a special mention to LTC's Chairman and Vice-Chairman Andy and Colin, for their continued support and commitment to the roles. Sadly, we have recently received June Strickland's resignation as a Cllr of Loddon. I know June will be greatly missed, and I wish her all the best.

I would also like to thank all the volunteers for their participation at meetings and particularly at the Council events. The Council would not be able to carry out their many activities without the hard work and support of these dedicated community spirited people. The Council are also very lucky to have a hard working and loyal staff team.

Paul our Parish Warden keeps the Council compliant with health and safety checks, ensures the parish lands and facilities are well maintained and his presence out and about in the community is invaluable for the Council.

Jo our Allotment and Admin Officer ensures that the allotments are well managed and keeps on top of the office administration, particularly for our events.

Carla our Neighbourhood Plan Officer for her dedication with assisting the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to a conclusion. We have enjoyed working with Carla and wish her all the best.

Anne our Locum Responsible Financial Officer for ensuring that the Council meeting its financial obligations in a timely and methodical manner and for stepping in until we appoint our permanent RFO in the near future.

Lastly, we are also very grateful to the contractors who have worked with us in the last twelve months to help us to complete our projects or maintain LTC's facilities and public open spaces.

The recently completed strategic planning meeting was an insight into the Councillors ideas and plans that the Councillors have for the future of Loddon, and I look forward to engaging with the community, and working with the Councillors and volunteers to investigate and facilitate these future initiatives.

Emily Curtis
Town Clerk

5. Events Committee Annual Report

Following the success of the Platinum Jubilee Fete in 2022, 2023 saw the events committee organise the Coronation Celebration on 6th May to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III. Keen to ensure it was a different event to the fete, and also taking into account some feedback, we decided to hold the event in the centre of the town, utilising the many great spaces we have available. Stalls and activities stretched from the Staithe to The Hollies, including in St Johns and Holy Trinity, with live music on Church Plain providing the centrepiece for the event. As ever, our dedicated team of volunteers, councillors and officers ensured that the occasion was a great success, again demonstrating that there is an appetite in the community for these events.

The dust had only just settled on the Coronation event, when planning began for our 2024 event. This will be a fete held on Saturday 6th July 12-5pm on the Loddon & Chedgrave Playing Field. We have taken what we learned from the planning of the Platinum Jubilee Fete to inform a good deal of our decision making and have got a number of food stalls signed up already, and continue to advertise for other stalls and attractions. As ever, if anyone would like to volunteer some time to help in the planning, or on the day itself, then any and all support is greatly appreciated. It can be hard work, but it is very rewarding when you see everyone having such a great time.

Cllr Liz Marsham
Chair of Events Committee

6. Personnel Committee Annual Report

The Committee, in line with the Terms of Reference, has met four times this year to discuss relevant personnel matters brought to the Committee.

We continue to support the Clerk and staff in their day-to-day jobs and ensure that the Council complies with the requirements of employment laws and best practice in providing good working conditions for staff.

We have recently overseen the appointment of a locum Responsible Finance Officer following the departure of the previous Finance Officer. At present we are in the process of recruiting a replacement Finance Officer who we hope to have in place, at the latest, by the end of July.

In closing, I would like to thank June Strickland as Chairman of the Personnel Committee for her hard work and dedication to this Committee over many years.

Colin Binfield
Vice Chairman Personnel Committee

7. Loddon & Chedgrave Playing Field Committee Report

The Loddon and Chedgrave Playing Field Committee (PFC) is a joint committee of Loddon Town Council and Chedgrave Parish Council and has responsibility for the management of the playing field including the tennis courts but excluding the skate park, play area, the Jubilee Hall and car park.

The committee has met four times this year and has dealt with the issues that have arisen over that period. We have fostered a much closer working relationship with the Football Club (LUFC) and changed the way that LUFC contribute to the cost of hiring the football pitches.

The Playing Field Committee also has responsibility for the Tennis Club which has, for the second year running, been voted Tennis Club of the Year for Norfolk.

The tennis courts have been refurbished and new floodlights will be installed shortly. Whilst the Tennis Club has gone from strength to strength, it is fair to say there are some issues that need to be resolved so that the Club can continue to prosper.

Colin Binfield
Chairman Loddon & Chedgrave Playing Field Committee

8. Tennis Club Subcommittee Annual Report

The tennis club subcommittee was formed a year ago to:

- Encourage members of the local community, of all ages and abilities, to play tennis
- Support the PFC with the management of the club facilities
- Promote membership to ensure future investment in the tennis courts

Club membership has risen to 150 (roughly 50% adults, 50% juniors) and annual membership revenue is ~£4,000. In the past year, the club has won Norfolk Club of the Year for the second time. The club has launched walking tennis and Parkinsons tennis groups, run free competitions for adult members and entered teams into the Norwich City leagues; the mens team won promotion in their inaugural season. The club hosted two successful fundraising events and a well-attended Christmas Party.

This summer the club will again be entering mixed, mens and ladies teams in local leagues and running its first club championships. On Friday 19th April it will be hosting a quiz at The JubHub, all Councillors are invited, please contact Rik Balfour to reserve your table. From a financial perspective, the increased court usage requires increased provisioning for court maintenance, but this can be covered by the increased membership revenue. The biggest challenge for the club is managing membership growth with only 2 courts; in particular, offering courts for members and pay-and-play at peak times, which is when the club's successful junior sessions, adult coaching and club sessions are also most popular.

Rik Balfour
Loddon Tennis Club Subcommittee Chairman

9. Love Loddon Community Group Annual Report

Spring/Summer 2023

We began a campaign to recruit volunteers to help to spruce up Church Plain in preparation for the Coronation Celebrations at the beginning of May. After our call for help on social media in March, about 15 volunteers turned out for the initial clearing of the flower beds and preparation for turfing.

A local landscaping company MCH Landscaping, kindly donated their time and LTC paid for the turf which was laid successfully.

The planters along the High Street were replaced and these and the flower towers were planted with a red, white, and blue theme.

Over the Summer, a 'watering rota' was organised by our AAO, watering cans provided and accessible to all and as a result the planting flourished until Autumn.

One of our volunteers restored the Sustrans Milepost at the Staithe and the oak post under the Loddon Town sign of Alfric.

September

A meeting was held for the newly named Love Loddon Community Group, to discuss tidying Farthing Green and make other plans. Cllrs CB and MP now also involved.

A morning was subsequently spent clearing the area and Spring bulbs planted.

The British Legion bench was restored by one of the volunteers and a proposal for two new benches was made.

The planters elsewhere in the town were also planted with winter pansies, which unfortunately weren't so successful due to frost/wind.

December

A few volunteers came together before the Victorian Evening, to clear Church Plain car park of leaves.

February 2024

Volunteer/Cllr meeting was held in the Swan to discuss plans for the year.

'Clean up and Bloom' grant of £300 secured from SNC by our RFO.

March

Our first working session of the year was held to clear the area of overgrown shrubs by the Co-op, plant primroses in the planters for the Spring and tidy the back of Church Plain.

April

A subsequent working group met at the Staithe, where the B-Line bed was tidied and replanted with lavenders, the car park swept, and litter picked. The Staithe history board was cleaned.

Future projects for 2024 (dates TBC):

More work/planting needed at Farthing Green

Town planters with summer bedding and watering rota

Tidy area in front of the Hollies (subject to holly trees being cut back)

Tidy area in front of the Terrace (if no resolution in sale is achieved)

More tidying at the Staithe (subject to SNC works commencing)

Spring bulb planting in the Autumn

Possible relocation of EDP 'Village of the Year 2005' sign and new noticeboards

Cllr Julie Appleby

Love Loddon Community Group

10. **Chet Valley Community Larder Annual Report**

We are extremely lucky to have a core volunteer group of around 14 who look after/manage the Community Larder. We have been able to access some grant funding which is allowing us to purchase staple food stuffs weekly for the larder and also encourage healthy eating by providing fresh fruit and vegetables.

Just before Christmas we ran our second 'Christmas Bag Event' to help put a bit of cheer into the homes of those who were struggling – providing extras (chocolate for kids), things you wouldn't buy if you didn't have any spare money, even some Christmas decorations.

We are also extremely lucky many residents are donating what they can for those that are not so fortunate. The larder can be a bit like a bring n buy – if you have to buy a net of 6 lemons and only want 2 – donate the other 4 and take a couple of apples? The Allotments Association have also been very generous and spread the word among their members and if they have had surplus they have donated it to the larder.

We will be fund raising over the coming summer months to ensure that we can continue to help those that need it. We will also have donation boxes.

Cllr Jane Hale

LTC Cllr Lead for Chet Valley Community Larder

11. **Chet Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Annual Report**

During the past year the Committee met monthly until they submitted the Plan for Regulation 14 – scrutiny.

The Committee worked extremely hard (and I would like to thank them all for their hard work and input) to gather evidence from landowners and other stakeholders to ensure that residents were kept informed with updates in Contact each month.

In September 2023, the plan was submitted to South Norfolk Council for Regulation 14 – where everyone is reconsulted on what we consider our final plan, one or two comments

came back but nothing much so progression has now been made to Regulation 16 whereby an independent inspector is employed (not at our expense) to check the plan is in line with the Local Plan/Greater Norwich Local Plan and we are now awaiting for it to come back to go to Referendum when all residents are asked if they agree with the contents of the plan for the next 15 years or so. If the majority of those who vote do agree, the plan is 'Made' and becomes part of the planning process, and all applications must abide with the contents of the plan. It gives greater weight to comments made by both Parish Councils and ensures that designs, biodiversity, density and sites are in accordance with our plan.

Needless to say, this will have to start being reviewed in the next 5 years or so!

Cllr Jane Hale

Chairman of the Chet Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

12.1 County Councillor:

As usual a busy year representing you at County, District, Town and Parish council levels.

Last year I was privileged to be elected as leader of Norfolk County Council, a very big role but one that I have enjoyed very much. It's a bit like standing under a waterfall at times but very rewarding. However, my most important job is representing you, the people who elected me as their local councillor and I will continue to do that as long as you keep voting for me. I try not to bring politics into being one of your local representatives and am happy to work with and help anyone as your councillor.

One of the biggest changes that has happened over the last year has been the acceptance by the County of a Devolution deal for Norfolk. This will bring £600 Million pounds to Norfolk over the next 30 years for economic development and will give us local control over things like the Adult Education budget. The ambition is to tailor skills to the jobs we need here in our county, so that our young people have proper career paths and well-paid jobs. We need better infrastructure in roads, electricity and water. We want to attract new businesses to our county and improve the quality of life for all residents. With more control over how taxpayers money is used locally, we can spend it on what we need, not on what is dictated by government.

There have been a lot of issues surrounding water recently, either too much or too little! I have been working with Anglian Water and the Environment Agency on how we join up all the bodies responsible for water management, so that we can have a plan for the future. It is not just about responding to issues, it is about preventing them happening.

Locally we have seen the mobile phone signal improve massively since the introduction of the new phone mast at Chedgrave. The days of not being able to get a signal in the middle of Loddon are gone. I hope this will help people who do not have a land line at home, as being able to call for assistance if needed, is essential.

We have had a few issues with the new roundabout on the A146 with several accidents recently. The signage will be improved to help make the roundabout more visible and I hope that this will prevent any further incidents. I am in conversations with the planners about the outstanding improvement for George Lane and the finishing that is outstanding on St Georges Park.

The saga of the bridge over the Chet goes on. Having secured the funding for replacing this, I thought the rest would be simple! The District Council have had a false start with the contractor they were using to get permission to do this work from the Environment Agency. However, they do now have new drawings for the works to the bridge and progress is again

being made. I hope that this time next year I will be able to report some success for this project. I have funded a new camera for the Staithe car park to help combat any anti-social behaviour, which I know has been of concern to residents.

I was pleased to be able to take part in the Coronation celebrations last year and thank all of you who supported this local event.

If I can help in any way, you can contact me at kay.masonbillig.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk

Kay Mason Billig
County Councillor and District Cllr

12.2 District Councillor:

Please see above for District Cllr Kay Mason Billig's Report.

District Cllr Jeremy Rowe gave a verbal report.

12.3 Loddon Town Estate Charity

This past year saw new challenges faced by many as the cost-of-living increases continued to affect households and the Trust was able to help a number of families and individuals with items ranging from white goods to floor coverings. Our secretary, Julie Ponsford, has carried out a great job in dealing with the enquiries and, where the Trust has been unable to help, has directed enquirers to organisations that possibly could. I hope that the higher profile of the Trust within the community will encourage more people to come forward if they need assistance in any way.

From an income perspective, the Trust received a number of generous donations from members of the community including The White Horse PH which donated 50% of its year's fundraising efforts. Income increased by almost 74% on 2022. In addition, the investments continued to earn good dividends.

As we head into what could continue to be a challenging time financially, I hope the Trust can reach those in the community in need of support and can continue the wonderful work it has done for many years now.

Finally, Brian Cox, a Trustee for many years, stood down in August and I would like to thank him for the support he gave me, as Chair, and the Trust. As Brian leaves, we welcome Levi Lovelock as a new Trustee and I look forward to his contribution to the Trust's work as we move forward.

Julie Ponsford
Loddon Town Estate Charity Secretary

12.4 Loddon & Chedgrave Jubilee Hall Management Committee (JHMC)

This past year there have been a lot of changes and progress made at the Jubilee Hall. There have been changes in staff, an increase in Trustees and a general increase in Trustee engagement. This has led to exciting developments that we believe will help safeguard the hall for the future, enabling it to serve as a local community hall for years to come.

Our most exciting development is a soon to be launched online booking management system that will enable users to book and cancel the hall more easily and reduce the administration for the hall significantly. This system will allow our newly hired Hall Manager, Sarah, to focus on community engagement and core maintenance tasks.

This year has not been without its struggles, changes in staff, lack of processes and administration issues have led to a lot of Trustee time being spent keeping the hall going. I (Chair) am extremely proud and grateful for how the Trustees have joined together, taking on the day to day running of the hall and also taking on the challenge of planning for the halls future. We have truly appreciated the understanding and assistance from the local community and councils during this time.

We are excited to see what 2024 has instore for the hall.

Jessie Powell
Chairman of JHMC

12.5 Holy Trinity Church

Brief highlights and low lights of the past year.

We sadly suffered vandalism to numerous panes of glass in Holy Trinity in August 2023. This coincided with similar, but more extensive, damage to windows in All Saints, Chedgrave. The police spoke to several named youths but all denied actually causing the damage.

Xtra! - is our after-school church - with a regular gathering of youngsters and adults.

Noah's Ark - for Toddlers & Carers - overseen by Reverend Alison is well received by parents and carers.

I have been privileged to be a Governor of Loddon Primary Federation - I stepped down from the role at the end of last term (March 2024).

The church in Loddon is a satellite to Norwich Foodbank, this is co-ordinated voluntarily by Barry Gibson. During the year we have distributed an increased number of food parcels to families, couples and individuals in need. This serves a different need to the Community Larder.

During the past calendar year, the church community has run Food in School Holidays lunches.

Another 'successful' Open House was co-ordinated last year by Nina.

We are grateful to those who assist in maintaining the churchyard of Holy Trinity and for the financial contribution the church council receives for its mowing.

Generally, people abide by the legal regulations for what is permissible to be introduced on to graves in the churchyard. Although some do not.

Inconsiderate parking in St John's Car Park by those doing so without permission continues to cause distress to those who need to use it to access services or activities in the church building or lecture hall.

The Church's finances are solely provided for through generous giving, legally authorised fees and grants for specific issues. Maintaining the fabric of two listed buildings, and their curtilage is a significant financial responsibility.

David C. Owen (Rector)

12.6 Loddon Building Preservation Trust (LBPT)

Taken from annual accounts for 2022.

The trustees/directors who served the charity though the period and to the date of this report:

Laurence Dainty

Derek Land

Sophie Garrett

Margaret Shearmur

Louisa Garamukanwa

The charity is incorporated charity governed by a charitable deed. The trustees are responsible for the running and the maintenance of the facilities. The trustees meet

monthly. There are currently five trustees. More trustees are required to manage the building and to take on the renovation that the building requires.

The aim of the trust is to maintain some of Loddon's community buildings and keep them open for the use of community clubs and activities.

Throughout the year, work continued to develop the contract with the Nursery for a long lease.

Larry Dainty spends about six hours a month taking bookings, showing new users around and generally caretaking both the Hollies and Nursery buildings.

Despite constant efforts, no further progress has been made to build a team to renovate the Hollies building. In the absence of any volunteers coming forward to help, the trustees have engaged consultants to develop the strategy for the building and, based upon this, put together a bid for grant funding. At the time of writing, meetings have been held with stakeholders such as Loddon Parish Council and Norfolk County Council and input has been provided to the Neighbourhood Plan.

Sophie Garrett
LBPT Trustee

12.7 Loddon Community Gym

It has been a good year for Loddon Community Gym. We have increased our membership by about ten percent over the year and attendance has also improved. We do suffer a decline in attendance during school holidays as many of our members are parents and grandparents and many prefer outdoor activities when the weather is good but overall attendance has been very strong.

Late last year we introduced chair-based exercise classes. These are targeted at those who are less fit and unable to participate in our regular gym sessions. These have been well supported and we will be generating further publicity to promote this activity in the near future.

April will see the gym celebrating it's 10th anniversary. We have joined forces with the British Heart Foundation to raise money for both our organisations. The British Heart Foundation will be demonstrating CPR at our celebration on the 26th April.

We have welcomed new members to the gym committee during the year and we are looking forward to continuing to improve the services we provide to the local community in the coming years. Our progress over the last couple of years has been greatly assisted by the support we have received from Loddon Town Council.

Clive Rowland
Loddon Community Gym Honorary Treasurer

12.8 Other reports as received

13. Public Forum

A member of the public asked District Cllr KB if a phone mast will be installed on George Lane as there is very poor mobile coverage for the St Georges Park area. A discussion was had regarding the recent accidents at the George Lane roundabout.

14. Date of the Next Meeting

Annual Meeting of the Parish - Wednesday 9 April 2025 at 7.00pm.

The meeting ended at 19.49pm.