

TESTON PARISH COUNCIL

These Minutes were approved by the Council at its meeting on 26th November 2019

Minutes of Meeting on 24th September 2019

Cllr Christopher Douglass – Vice Chairman in the Chair Maidstone Borough Cllr Mrs Fay Gooch (part)
 Cllr Roger Levett
 Cllr Robin Owens Mrs Michelle Tatton (Clerk)
 Cllr Miss Dawn Page
 Cllr Mrs Nina Wheat 5 members of the public

Before the meeting commenced Cllr Douglass drew attention to the Council's policy on photographing and broadcasting of Parish Council meetings. No intention to film, photograph or broadcast was declared.

19/097	Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and/or Other Significant Interests: In the interests of transparency, all Parish Councillors declared an interest in (a) Ash Tree Corner, Courtlands Verge and the Allotments, as the Parish Council owns the land; (b) the Village Green and Village Hall as Custodian Trustees; (c) Teston Land Conservation Trust Matters as they are Trustees; (d) Teston Village Stores CIC as they are Directors of the CIC; and d) Cllr Douglass, Cllr Owens, Cllr Miss Page and Cllr Mrs Wheat have an interest as members of Teston Village Hall Management Committee.			
19/098	Apologies for Absence: were received from Cllr Coulling and these were agreed .			
MEETING ADJOURNED FOR COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC				
- A planning issue was raised by a resident regarding development in the Conservation Area. Cllr Douglass indicated that the matter would be discussed by Cllrs under item item 19/138 below. - A matter was raised about the Village Hall. Cllr Douglass would telephone the resident in his capacity as Chair of the Hall.				
MEETING RECONVENED				
19/099	Minutes of Meeting on 30th July 2019: These were approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman of the meeting.			
19/100	Ordering of Agenda: There were no changes			
	Administration and Finance			
19/101	Statement of Accounts: A Statement of Accounts had been circulated prior to the meeting showing a balance of £35,947.73 from which the following bills were authorised for payment including a post-dated cheque for the Clerk’s salary for October:			
	24.09.19	3148	RBLI Poppy Wreath	50.00
	24.09.19	3149	Eon Street Lighting Charges Invoice 01.09.19	31.44
	24.09.19	3150	M Tatton - £490.62 - Clerk's a) Salary September 2019	353.95
			b) Office Allowance July-September 2019	136.67
	31.10.19	3151	M Tatton Clerk's Salary October 2019	353.95
	24.09.19	3152	PKF Littlejohn Auditor Fees	240.00
	24.09.19	3153	Teston Tapestry Account - APM Report (adjusted)	42.43
	24.09.19	3154	Teston Village Hall - Hire Charges April - September 2019	56.00
	24.09.19	3155	M Tatton Expenses August-September 2019	64.22
			TOTAL	£1328.66
	Currently the estimated year end position is in the region of £17,300. A statement relating to the Tapestry Account had also been circulated showing a current balance of £5,282.58.			

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19/102	*	Policies and Procedures a) Update regarding Standing Orders Review: The Chairman had produced a draft which the Clerk would consider as soon as possible. b) Risk Assessment: It was noted that, with the agreement of the Chairman, the Clerk had shared the Parish Council's Risk Assessment with Watlington Parish Council. c) Pensions Auto-enrolment: The Chairman had taken necessary steps to liaise with the Pensions Regulator now that the Council is operating a PAYE Scheme. The Clerk confirmed that even if a scheme were to be offered she would not wish to be enrolled and therefore there was no further action for the Parish Council to take at this time.
19/103	*	Annual Return for the Year ending 31st March 2019: The audit has been concluded and the necessary documents had been placed on the notice board and website.
19/104		Tapestry Article to Promote Future Parish Council Vacancies: An article would appear in the November edition to encourage interest ahead of next year's Parish Council election.
19/105	*	Tapestry Matters, including: a) Appointment of a second Joint Editor: Cllr Douglass had met with the Joint Editor and prospective Joint Editor who was keen to take on the role. The Chairman would now meet with both. b) Teston Tapestry Fund: There had been no suggestions for projects as yet. An article would appear in the next edition of Tapestry.
19/106		Accessibility Requirements for Public Sector Websites: It was noted that the Clerk had been in touch with the support provider for the KCC provided Parish Council website. There were indications from KCC that they would no longer be able to offer Parish Council websites free of charge. Cllr Ms Burgon asked about traffic through the website. The Clerk did not have data to hand but suspected it was relatively low. However, there was an expectation that Parish Councils would have websites. Cheap and even free options were available although there would no doubt be hosting costs. The matter would be kept under review.
19/107		Review of Grants for Village Hall and Churchyard Maintenance: Deferred to the next meeting.
		Planning
19/108		i) New/pending decisions a) TM/17/01595/OAEA and 17/503416/ADJ Land East Of Hermitage Lane And South Of London Road Maidstone Kent Adjoining Authority: Outline application for the erection of up to 840 dwellings (including affordable homes) with public open space, landscaping, sustainable drainage systems, land for a Primary School, doctors surgery and for junction improvements at Hermitage Lane/A20 junction, and a link road between Poppy Fields roundabout and Hermitage Lane. Vehicular accesses into the site from Poppy Fields Roundabout and Hermitage Lane. All matters reserved with the exception of means of access – Decision awaited b) 19/500452/FULL River Barn, Tutsham Farm, West Farleigh Erection of dwelling and associated works with parking and landscaping as shown on drawing references: DHA/10757/11; 15; 16; 18; and 19; and unreferenced existing elevations received 26/02/19 Refused - 29.03.19 Appeal pending c) APPEAL 19/500059/REF Erection of a boundary fence Barham Court Tonbridge Road Teston ME18 5BZ: Site meeting has taken place. Refused 25.07.19 It was noted that there are ongoing discussions with Maidstone Borough Council d) 19/503121/FULL 13 Tonbridge Road Teston Maidstone Kent ME18 5BU: Erection of first floor extension and alterations – Approved 21.08.19 e) 19/503300/FULL Crown City Chinese Restaurant Tonbridge Road Teston Kent ME18 5BU Erection of a three bedroom dwelling with creation of a new access and dropped kerb (Comments submitted) Refused 06.09.19 f) 19/01621/FL Sports Grounds Beacon Avenue Kings Hill West Malling Kent Provision of an extension to the side of the existing Sports Pavilion to provide two additional changing rooms, enhancement of existing sports pitches with 1 no. additional senior grass pitch, 2 no. tennis courts, 2 no. dual use courts (tennis and netball), 1no. cricket square and outfield, a 2190m trim trail with 6 stations, associated

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	lighting and fencing, and additional parking for 60 cars; being the provision of off-site sport and recreational enhancements required by Outline Application TM/13/01535/OAEA (Phase 3 Kings Hill) – Decision awaited ii) To consider any newly submitted applications/ratify submissions made, including: a) TM/18/03031/OAEA 18/03031/OAEA 18/03031 - Site North of Amber Lane, Kings Hill (TMBC) Redevelopment to provide up to 85 Class C3 residential units, together with landscaping, open space and other associated works. All matters reserved for future approval except for access (Site 5.4) Application refused – 11.07.19 Responses to Planning Inspectorate due 10th October. Public Inquiry due to start 3rd December. To agree to the Chairman attending and speaking on the Parish Council's behalf. b) APP/H2265/W/19/3235168 18/03032/OAEA Heath Farm Wateringbury Road East Malling West Malling Kent (TMBC) Redevelopment to provide up to 40 Class C3 residential units, together with landscaping, open space and other associated works. All matters reserved for future approval except for access (site 5.5) Application refused – 11.07.19 (Appeal reduces proposal to 24 homes). Responses to Planning Inspectorate due 10th October. Public Inquiry due to start 3rd December. To agree to the Chairman attending and speaking on the Parish Council's behalf. In relation to both Heath Farm and Amber Lane, it was agreed that, if possible, the Chairman should meet with the Chairmen of other local Parish Councils including East Malling & Larkfield, Wateringbury and Kings Hill and, as necessary, register Teston Parish Council as a Rule 6 party so as to be able to take an active part in the Public Inquiry. c) 19/01359/FL Cromar Nursery 39 Livesey Street Wateringbury Maidstone Kent ME18 5BQ Redevelopment of existing commercial nursery and garden centre with 4 detached residential units with associated alterations to existing access and extension and conversion of existing barn into car parking barn. Comments had already been submitted regarding the cramped layout of the proposed development and effect on the nearby junction at North Pole. These comments were ratified. Cllr Levett reported that he had seen signs on London Road, Maidstone regarding the proposal for two 15 storey buildings on the B&Q and Lidl/Matalan sites in Maidstone. He requested that this be brought to the attention of the Chairman.
19/109 *	Local Plan Review and Call for Sites: A draft had been circulated to Cllrs and it was agreed this should be submitted on behalf of the Parish Council. An update from Maidstone Borough Council regarding timing of release of the Call for Sites outcome was noted.
19/110 *	Tonbridge & Malling Local Plan: TMBC continued to liaise with the Inspectors. It remained unclear when the Examination would be able to commence but this was not likely to be for some time yet as a further phase of consultation would need to take place. This was expected to commence in early October.
19/111	Tunbridge Wells Local Plan Consultation 20th September – 1st November: The Chairman had attended a public meeting arranged by the Save Capel campaign group. It was agreed that a response to the consultation should be drafted and submitted before the deadline. There was particular concern regarding the effect on local roads from increased traffic.
19/112 *	Assets of Community Value Registration: This would be actioned shortly by the Clerk.
19/113 *	Abbeyfield Development: It was noted that the crane was still in place. Cllr Levett suspected it would be there for some time yet. Otherwise there were no matters to report.
	Highways and PROW
19/114	Highways Spreadsheet: A spreadsheet of current matters had been circulated. It was noted that: a) The channel below Court Lodge Farm seemed to be clear of vegetation; b) The speed table at North Street, Barming was still not lit. It was agreed that the Clerk should challenge Highways as to whether a table at Malling Road would need lighting; c) Parts of the northern footway on Tonbridge Road west of Crown City had been marked up for repair; d) The gullies on Malling Road did not appear to have been cleansed and this would be chased; e) An Ash Tree on the A26 below Court Lodge Farm was suffering with Ash Dieback. This had been raised with KCC. KCC had also been asked to cut back vegetation growing from this verge over the footway;

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	f) Cllr Ms Burgon had seen what appeared to be extensive damage to the surface of Malling Road that morning. The Clerk would take a look after the meeting; g) The ancient highway from North Lodge to North Pole Road was in poor condition, with mud and deep water across the track immediately to the north of North Lodge and vegetation interfering with access along the whole of the route. It was noted that previously a ditch directed water into the pond but this was no longer maintained. This would be reported. h) Further flytipping had taken place at Livesey Street. The landowner had been advised about previous incidents but had not replied. The Clerk would send details of the most recent problems. Maidstone Borough Council would not remove the items as they were not on public land. Air Quality Diffusion Tubes: It was noted that data was being received. Some locations showed high readings but Teston's did not appear to be of concern.
19/115 *	Speed Surveys: There was lengthy discussion regarding the purpose and need for surveys. Quotations had been received confirming that two traffic surveys carried out simultaneously would cost £400 plus vat together with a possible further £185.20 if licences were required. It was recognised that speeding was an issue on both Malling Road and Tonbridge Road and that hopefully data from surveys would provide useful evidence to support calming/road safety measures. Cllr Miss Page proposed, Cllr Levett seconded and it was agreed unanimously that surveys be carried out on Malling Road and Tonbridge Road. Councillors queried the location on Tonbridge Road and wondered whether a survey in the vicinity of Ash Tree Corner would be more appropriate than the site further west suggested by the contractor. Regarding Malling Road, it was felt that the best site would be between the southern end of Fairlawn Close and Courtlands. These locations would be put forward. However, it was agreed that ultimately the Council would be guided by the contractor.
19/116 *	Traffic Island on Tonbridge Road in the Vicinity of Ash Tree Corner and proposal by Cllr Douglass and Cllr Levett for a Pelican-style crossing on Tonbridge Road and enhanced road markings: Cllr Levett suggested that a letter be sent to the Maidstone's MP, Helen Grant, and to the Leader of KCC. Following further discussion, it was agreed that initially Cllr Levett would attend the MP's surgery to discuss the matter. Attendance could then be followed up with a letter. Rather than an island Cllr Douglass suggested that an alternative option would be a pelican crossing. The Clerk was asked to investigate what the minimum amount of lighting is required for such a crossing. The Clerk would provide details prior to Cllr Levett meeting with the MP
19/117 *	Purchase of Solar Powered, Moveable Speed Monitoring Equipment (deferred): Nothing to report.
19/118 *	Faulty Street Light: KCC had been instructed to remove the street light. On attending, the contractor found that the condition of the light required emergency attention. This would result in an additional cost of £115. In the Clerk's absence this expense for critical work had been authorised by the Chairman. This action and cost was ratified.
19/119 *	Fingerpost to Village Centre, Shop and Church: The Clerk had been given a budget of £200 to purchase and install the fingerpost. The fingerpost itself had cost £64 (plus vat) and the quotation from Maidstone Borough Council to install totalled £187.50. Therefore, the total cost would be approximately £50 more than originally budgeted. It was agreed that Maidstone Borough Council' quotation for installing the quote should be accepted.
19/120	Speed Watch: Possible volunteer interest in resurrecting Teston's Speedwatch Scheme was noted. However, it was understood that the County Speedwatch Co-ordinator was currently on extended leave and so it might be difficult to arrange the necessary training in the immediate future.
19/121	B2163 Verge: The Chairman and Cllr Levett have met with representatives from Medway Valley Countryside Partnership. The quotation for work by MVCP had previously been agreed at £250 plus vat for labour and c£120 for top soil. Regarding the wildflower mix, a figure of c£50 had been discussed. However, Cllr Levett advised that this was more likely to be in the region of £114.50. Cllrs agreed the additional cost for the seed mix, and authorised the Clerk to hold an additional £100 for contingencies. Quotations for twice yearly cutting and raking of the verge were awaited. MVCP had looked at the bank on the northern side of the A26 between The Street and Barham Court and would be sending through a proposal for possible work. This might include hedging.

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19/122		Bollards on the western side of The Street: Problems had arisen with vehicles parking between the bollards. The Parish Council considered whether additional bollards could be installed, or a short ranch-style fence similar to that at Penenden Heath. Ragstone boulders were also raised as a possible solution. It was noted that any work would need to be approved by KCC Highways. It was agreed that the Clerk should write to the restaurant asking that they encourage visitors not to park on the grass verge and should also investigate the cost of ranch-style fencing and ragstone boulders.
		Environment
19/123		Allotments a) Regular Inspection Report from Cllr Douglass: Four plots had become vacant. These would need strimming off. Quotations were being obtained. b) Water Bills: Nothing to report. c) Allotment Meeting on 15th October at 8pm: This was noted.
19/124	*	Ambulance Sirens: Nothing to report.
19/125	*	Defibrillator: Cllr Coulling had offered to check the date of expiry of consumables.
19/126		Teston's Trees and Hedges a) Removal of access gate on the A26 east of The Street: The Clerk had written to the resident seeking a reply within 14 days. It was agreed that if the resident did not return with a satisfactory answer the matter should be reported to Maidstone Borough Council and KCC Highways. b) Ash Tree Corner: This has not yet been removed but should be done shortly. c) Replacement Prunus Pandora for Village Green: Cllr Levett would chase delivery of both this tree and those for Ash Tree Corner. The delivery charge had been quoted as £73 plus vat but he hoped this could be reduced. d) Kent Men of the Trees – Trees in the Village Competition 2019: The report had yet to be received.
19/127		Beacon Yuletide and VE Day 2020 Events: An article advertising the event would appear in Tapestry in November. It was agreed that a flyer for the beacon event would be useful. The Clerk would design a poster and Cllr Ms Burgon would organise printing. The £500 budget in line 139 of the Financial Statement for beacon event costs was thought to be more than adequate. It was noted that Chairman was considering the possible wording etc for a plaque for the beacon.
19/128	*	Village Green/Village Hall Boundary: Nothing to report.
19/129	*	Telephone Kiosk re-painting and broken light: This work should be completed by BT in October.
19/130	*	Removal of seating from play area at Teston Bridge Country Park: The Clerk had received a response from KCC. They advised that some picnic benches had been lifted into the play area by members of the public and located in areas that conflicted with safe areas around play equipment and these had to be removed for health and safety reasons. They had noted that there were other benches placed close by so from which people could supervise their children. It was not a policy to have no benches in all play areas and they would look at installing some standard benches, subject to available budget. The resident who had raised the matter commented that she had not seen picnic benches inside the play area. The seats she had used and which had been removed were ordinary wooden benches not dissimilar to the one at Ash Tree Corner although of an older type. There were also two on the approach to the play area which were removed and but had now been reinstated. It was felt that in order to supervise very young children it was necessary to have these seats in the play area, especially for the benefit of those who were older or less mobile. It was agreed that the Clerk should clarify the situation with KCC and report back to the next meeting.
19/131	*	Seat at Crown City: The Clerk had obtained a quote from Maidstone Borough Council for £845 for supply and installation of a seat similar to the ones installed on Tonbridge Road. As this was not an insubstantial amount, it was felt that, initially, it would be worth seeing whether the existing seat could be repaired with a metal plate and it was agreed that Cllr Ms Burgon would arrange for her husband to have a look and would

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	let the Clerk know whether it could be mended. Meanwhile the Clerk would obtain details of a recycled plastic type seat as installed at Barming. Cllr Mrs Gooch commented that Barming Parish Council were very pleased with these seats and they were very hard-wearing and easy to maintain.
19/132 *	Graffiti at Teston Level Crossing: Cllr Coulling had been in contact with Network Rail who had indicated that the matter would be dealt with only at a convenient time. He had also asked whether the container is still required.
19/133 *	Ragwort west of Teston Lane: The ragwort in the private field on the north western corner of Teston Lane had been dealt with. KCC had advised that ragwort is intermittently pulled from the grazing areas but if it is an area 100m away from affecting grazing stock or neighbouring land it would be left in place as per the DEFRA code of practice guideline recommendations. Staff endeavour to hand pull any within 50m of grazing land or neighbouring grazing land on a regular basis and then areas within 50-100m each year to mitigate the risk of it spreading. The extent to which ragwort had been pulled this year was being checked with the Ranger.
19/134	Play Area Matters a) Village Green fencing: Nothing to report. b) Annual Play Inspection Report: The Clerk would recirculate the report which would be considered again in November. Cllr Levett was concerned about ongoing strimmer damage. Another Cherry was noted to be failing, and there was strimmer damage to the wooden play equipment. It was felt this should be pointed out to the contractor. c) Inspection Rota: September – Cllr Douglass; October – Cllr Miss Page; November – Cllr Owens
	Other
19/135	Highways Seminar 28th November at Ditton Community Centre: Cllr Coulling would be attending. Cllr Ms Burgon left the meeting at this point.
	Consultations – to consider responses
19/136 *	a) Central Government Consultation on proposed reforms to permitted development rights to support the deployment of 5G and extend mobile coverage – closing 4th November: This was noted.
19/137	ANY LATEST REPORT UPDATES FOR NOTING ONLY
	War Memorial Troughs: It was noted that the troughs had been tended and looked excellent. The Clerk was asked to pass on the Parish Council's thanks to the volunteers.
19/138	Confidential Items: It was resolved that the press and public to be excluded from the items 19/139-142 below on the basis that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted
19/139 *	Enforcement issues: Four enforcement matters were discussed and the position was noted. Cllr Mrs Gooch offered to look into a matter relating to land near the river. The Clerk would send details.
19/140	MBC Call for Sites – impact on Teston: It was noted that the result of the Call for Sites would be available shortly.
19/141 *	Village Hall Matter: Cllr Douglass and Cllr Miss Page provided an update and this was noted. This would be removed from future Agenda.
19/142 *	Civic Matters: It was agreed that the Clerk would purchase another book identical to the first.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.45pm

Date of next regular meeting of the Council – 7.30pm 26th November 2019 at Teston Village Hall

Clerk: Mrs Michelle Tatton 10 Clare Wood Drive, East Malling, Kent ME19 6PA Telephone: (01732) 521889 E-mail: testonparish@aol.com