

TESTON PARISH COUNCIL

These Minutes were approved by the Council at its meeting on 28th January 2020

Minutes of Meeting on 26th November 2019

Cllr Peter Coulling - Chairman
Cllr Christopher Douglass
Cllr Ms Tina Burgon
Cllr Roger Levett
Cllr Robin Owens
Cllr Miss Dawn Page
Cllr Mrs Nina Wheat

Maidstone Borough Cllr Mrs Fay Gooch (part)

Mrs Michelle Tatton (Clerk)

No members of the public

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

19/155	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. It was noted that in respect of discussions and decisions relating to Maidstone Borough Council's Call for Sites the Clerk had granted dispensations to Cllr Miss Page and Cllr Mrs Wheat with regard to their membership of the Parochial Church Council and Cllr Mrs Wheat as a Courtlands resident.																																																
19/156	Apologies for Absence: None.																																																
MEETING ADJOURNED FOR COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC																																																	
• None.																																																	
MEETING RECONVENED																																																	
19/157	Minutes of previous meetings: The Minutes of the meetings on 24th September and 22nd October 2019 were agreed as a correct record of the meetings and signed by the Chairman.																																																
19/158	Ordering of Agenda: There were no changes.																																																
	Administration and Finance																																																
19/159	a) Statement of Accounts: In view of the detailed Budget calculations available to the meeting the Statement of Accounts had been confined to the bank reconciliation and payments due. The Statement confirmed a balance of £30,861.43 from which the following payments were authorised for payment:																																																
	<table><tr><td>19.11.19</td><td>3158</td><td>Water Plus - Allotments water bill November 2019</td><td>55.83</td></tr><tr><td>26.11.19</td><td>3159</td><td>Maidstone Borough Council Diffusion Tubes</td><td>313.62</td></tr><tr><td>26.11.19</td><td>3160</td><td>QualiTree Services Ltd - Tree works Ash Tree Corner and Courtlands</td><td>212.40</td></tr><tr><td>26.11.19</td><td>3161</td><td>Nurture Landscapes Ltd - Grounds Maintenance July - October 2019</td><td>680.40</td></tr><tr><td>26.11.19</td><td>3162</td><td>Three Counties - Tree planting Ash Tree Corner and Village Green</td><td>90.00</td></tr><tr><td>26.11.19</td><td>3163</td><td>Kent County Council - MVCP Wildflower verge work</td><td>1446.00</td></tr><tr><td>26.11.19</td><td>3164</td><td>Eon Street Lighting Charges Invoice 25.10.19</td><td>12.17</td></tr><tr><td>26.11.19</td><td>3165</td><td>M Tatton Clerk's Salary November 2019</td><td>353.95</td></tr><tr><td>31.12.19</td><td>3166</td><td>M Tatton - TOTAL Cheque £490.62 a) Clerk's Salary December 2019</td><td>353.95</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>b) Office Allowance October - December</td><td>136.67</td></tr><tr><td>26.11.19</td><td>3167</td><td>M Tatton Clerk's Expenses October-November 2019</td><td>139.61</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>TOTAL</td><td>£3794.60</td></tr></table>	19.11.19	3158	Water Plus - Allotments water bill November 2019	55.83	26.11.19	3159	Maidstone Borough Council Diffusion Tubes	313.62	26.11.19	3160	QualiTree Services Ltd - Tree works Ash Tree Corner and Courtlands	212.40	26.11.19	3161	Nurture Landscapes Ltd - Grounds Maintenance July - October 2019	680.40	26.11.19	3162	Three Counties - Tree planting Ash Tree Corner and Village Green	90.00	26.11.19	3163	Kent County Council - MVCP Wildflower verge work	1446.00	26.11.19	3164	Eon Street Lighting Charges Invoice 25.10.19	12.17	26.11.19	3165	M Tatton Clerk's Salary November 2019	353.95	31.12.19	3166	M Tatton - TOTAL Cheque £490.62 a) Clerk's Salary December 2019	353.95			b) Office Allowance October - December	136.67	26.11.19	3167	M Tatton Clerk's Expenses October-November 2019	139.61			TOTAL	£3794.60
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		The separate Tapestry account showed a balance of £4858.47 which was noted. As noted in previous Statements, the PSS Grant had already been expended. b) Budget 2020-21 and Precept: The Budget was circulated and considered in detail. The Chairman observed that an increase in the precept to £25,500 would represent an increase of 2%. He recommended approval of the budget, subject to confirmation in January. This was agreed. The Clerk would circulate the list of Parish Precepts to Councillors.
19/160	*	Policies and Procedures - Standing Orders Review: The Clerk had not yet had an opportunity to review the draft from the Chairman but hoped to be able to look at this during December/January.
19/161	*	Tapestry Article to Promote Future Parish Council Vacancies: The November Tapestry had included an item and this would be repeated as necessary.
19/162		Tapestry Matters, including: a) Appointment of a second Joint Editor: The Chairman reported upon his recent meeting with the current Editor and proposed Joint Editor and arrangements had now been confirmed and this was noted. Cllrs thanked the new Joint Editor for coming forward. b) Teston Tapestry Fund: An article would be placed in Tapestry shortly.
19/163	*	Accessibility Requirements for Public Sector Websites: The Chairman reminded Cllrs that the EIS site would be closed in September 2020. It was noted that Cantium, with whom Parish Council are being encouraged to take out service contracts, are a whole-owned subsidiary of KCC. The Chairman had obtained statistics on usage of the Parish Council's website. Average 'hits' per year were in the region of 3500. It was agreed that the Chairman should take the matter up with KALC and KCC's relevant Cabinet Member to push for an acceptable solution. The Clerk observed that she was likely to require training to ensure she was complying with the regulations.
19/164		Review of Grants for Village Hall and Churchyard Maintenance: The Chairman recommended that there should be no further grants to the Church or Teston Village Hall within the current financial year over and above the already approved grants of £250 to the Church and £750 to the Hall. In relation to the Hall it was agreed that the grant could be used for maintenance of the grounds as well as the fabric of the Hall.
19/165		New Year's Day Event: A budget of £200 was agreed for wine and £50 for nibbles. The Chairman would organise the wine through Majestic. Disposable glasses were considered but Cllrs felt that glass was preferable. Cllr Miss Page confirmed that the Church had some glasses and these could be brought to Village Hall for New Year's Day. It was agreed to purchase 30-50 wine glasses and 50 tumblers to donate to the Church within a budget of up to £100.
16/166		Quotations for Grounds Maintenance 2020-21: It was agreed that the quote from Nuture Landscapes for regular grass cutting of all the usual areas during the next financial year be accepted. The Clerk would ask them to please take great care regarding the strimming. In relation to hedges, the Clerk had asked for clarity of the timing and frequency of cuts. It was agreed that the following timescales be followed: Village Green - mid/late September and end-February (including February 2020) Courtlands - early September Tonbridge Road/Allotments hedge - mid/late September end-March (including March 2020) It was noted that the Allotments hedge contractor understood the pedestrian safety issue which might mean cuts had to be considered during the nesting season. It was understood that cutting could take place during this season provided hedges were checked beforehand for nesting birds.
		Planning
19/167		New/pending decisions and any newly submitted applications etc <i>i) New/pending decisions</i>

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	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 – Approved 21.11.19 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) 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 – Refused 04.09.19 d) 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 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) – Approved 08.10.19 Note that the approval includes a condition that the flood lights shall only be illuminated when the pitches and/or courts are in use and the flood lights shall be angled so that there is no light spill outside the pitch area and there shall be no illumination outside the approved hours of operation. The sports pitches, courts and cricket wicket and outfield shall not be used or operated outside the hours of 08:00 to 22:30 Mondays to Fridays; 08:00 to 22:00 on Saturdays and 08:00 to 20:00 on Sundays or Public and Bank Holidays. e) 19/01359/FL Cromar Nursery 39 Livesey Street Watlington 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 – Approved 21.10.19 f) 19/505128/LBC 1A-2 Livesey Street Teston Maidstone Kent ME18 5AY Listed Building Consent for the replacement of 14no. windows and 2no. door canopies, including structural repair to masonry crack – Approved 7.10.19 g) 3-4 Livesey Street Teston Kent ME19 5AY Listed Building Consent for the replacement of 12no. windows and 2no. door canopies – Approved 16.10.19 h) 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 Public Inquiry due to start 3rd December at The Orchards Conference Centre, East Malling i) APP/H2265/W/19/3235168 18/03032/OAEA Heath Farm Watlington 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 – Planning Appeal has been withdrawn ii) Newly submitted applications/ratify submissions made, including: a) 19/505329/FULL 2 Leigh Terrace Malling Road Teston Maidstone Kent ME18 5BH Erection of a single storey side extension – response due 28th November. It was agreed that no objection be raised.
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19/168		Local Plan Review and Call for Sites: Cllr Mrs Gooch arrived during this item. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Clerk had met with Planning Officers at Maidstone Borough Council to discuss the sites that had come forward in Teston. The Borough Council's analysis would be ongoing until the spring. It was agreed that a Village Meeting be arranged for Saturday 18th January 2020 at 2pm in the Village Hall, after which the Chairman expected that the Parish Council would write to the Borough Council, and residents would be reminded that they could also write. Cllr Levett asked about air quality generally which the Chairman confirmed was a consideration. Cllr Levett also raised the prospect of generating electricity from the River. Cllr Mrs Gooch said she would raise this with the Borough's Climate Change Group.
19/169	*	Adjoining Authority Local Plan Consultations: a) Tonbridge & Malling Local Plan Further Consultation – responses due by 4pm on 23rd December: The Inspectors appointed to examine the Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan had requested that the Council conduct an additional consultation relating to material published since the submission of the Plan to the Secretary of State in January 2019 and how this has or has not affected the soundness, legal compliance and meeting the Duty to Cooperate of the Local Plan. It was agreed that the Chairman and Clerk would look at the material and consider a response. b) Tunbridge Wells Local Plan: The consultation had closed. Next steps would be monitored.
19/170	*	Assets of Community Value Registration: The Clerk hoped to make progress with outstanding matters over the next few months. It was agreed that the Clerk liaise with Cllr Ms Burgon.
19/171	*	Abbeyfield Development: No issues had been reported.
		Highways and PROW
19/172		Highways Spreadsheet: A spreadsheet of items had been circulated. The following items in particular were noted: 1. Information had been received regarding pelican/puffin crossings and this was noted. Cllr Levett had been in touch with Helen Grant and, if she was re-elected, he would meet with her in the New Year. 2. The gullies in Malling Road had been reported for cleansing and work was scheduled. 3. The uneven footway on the north side of the A26 had been repaired. 4. It was not clear what was happening regarding the dying tree that had been reported to Highways. 5. The Highways Steward was arranging for the north side of the A26 between The Street and Barham Court to be sided. This was welcomed. 6. It was thought the flytipping at Livesey Street had been removed and the landowner was taking steps to secure the entrance to his land. 7. Pooling water issues on the bridleway north of Livesey Street had been reported. No further update was available. 8. Flytipping on the track to Ripton Farm had been removed. 9. Highways had reported the raised drain cover at The Street to Southeast Water and had suggested the Parish Council chase SEW directly if needed. 10. The damaged salt bin on the A26 below Court Lodge Farm had not yet been replaced. This would be monitored. 11. The footway in need of repair at Teston Lane had been passed by Kent Highways 'to others'. It was not understood why this had happened. The Clerk would investigate. 12. Overgrown vegetation alongside the Country Park would be monitored. 13. The Clerk had been in touch with Highways regarding ownership of a triangle of footway outside the garage of the White House. Highways did not accept that this was within their ownership. This matter would be pursued with KCC's Cabinet Member for Highways. 14. It was noted that the air quality diffusion tube at Crown City was showing a reading of around 25 which was within acceptable limits. By a majority vote it was agreed that the Parish Council would not continue with monitoring in 2020.
19/173	*	Speed Surveys/Traffic Calming: Since the last meeting the Chairman had clarified dates of previous surveys. The last surveys had taken place in June 2011.

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		Given the works at Wateringbury crossroads, it was agreed that the Malling Road survey and Tonbridge Road, near the Farm Shop, should take place at the end of June 2020. Regarding speed tables, the Clerk had provided some details. It was noted that the table at Barming was still not lit and this would be monitored over the next few months. Cllr Levett would take a photo of the table at Biddenden.
19/174	*	Traffic Island on Tonbridge Road in the Vicinity of Ash Tree Corner: There was nothing to report. The matter would be raised with the County Member after the elections.
19/175	*	Purchase of Solar Powered, Moveable Speed Monitoring Equipment (deferred): Nothing to report.
19/176	*	Faulty Street Light: Work to remove the light was complete and the final EON lighting bill had been received. As yet no invoice has been received from KCC for removal costs.
19/177	*	Fingerpost to Village Centre, Shop and Church: The sign had been delivered to the Chairman. Maidstone Borough Council would be chased regarding installation.
19/178	*	Speed Watch: A further article would be placed in Tapestry to encourage someone to come forward to help with organising those volunteers who had expressed an interest in being involved.
19/179		Tonbridge Road Eastern Verges a) Work to create a wildflower verge on the corner of the B2163: Work was complete and it was felt that MVCP had done a good job. It was agreed that the Parish Council would approach Kent Highways with an offer to take over maintenance of the verge with a request for an allowance per square metre. It was suggested that Highways could continue to cut a metre alongside the footway. The quotation from Three Counties for cutting the verge was accepted although there was no need for the verge to be cut until next autumn. Cllr Levett advised that the verge should be cut no lower than four inches. b) Details from MVCP regarding possible works to the verge below Court Lodge Farm: The Chairman and Cllr Levett had spoken with MVCP regarding possible works on the northern side of the A26, including planting of a hedgerow. Quotations were considered. The Chairman felt that a soakaway should be incorporated although MVCP would not carry out that aspect of the work. Cllrs were asked to consider the details ahead of the next meeting.
19/180		Bollards on the western side of The Street: The possibility of ragstone boulders was considered and rejected. Regarding new posts, Cllr Levett suggested that if oak posts were to be used then in order to preserve them they should be tanalised with a sleeve coming up 2 inches above the soil. Three quotes would be obtained from KTC Services for a) placing new bollards at closer intervals, b) adding chains between those bollards and, as an alternative, c) adding a cross piece. Cllr Levett was asked to arrange a site meeting which he and the Chairman would attend. Regarding permission for the work, the Clerk referred Cllrs to s96 of the Highways Act 1980. However, given the presence of the village sign, seat, bollards, trees (some of which had been planted by the Parish Council) and bulbs, and the fact that the Parish Council had maintained the grass for many years, Cllrs felt that there was no need to obtain a separate permission. It was noted that the verge is owned by a Trust which in all likelihood is now defunct.
		Environment
19/181		Allotments a) Regular Inspection Report from Cllr Douglass: It was noted that there were still some vacancies. The Clerk would place an article in Tapestry for February. b) Shelter: Cllr Douglass had raised this with some tenants. It was suggested that the matter be deferred until January but a shelter was not favoured. MBC has confirmed that the Allotments are not covered by an Article 4 Direction although there is one to the south.
19/182	*	Ambulance Sirens: Nothing to report.

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19/183	*	Defibrillator: The Chairman had confirmed that the consumables expire in October 2021. The Clerk had made a note.
19/184		Teston's Trees and Hedges a) Removal of access gate on the A26 east of The Street: The gate had been removed. b) Ash Tree Corner: The Ash Tree had been removed and replanting work was complete. c) Replacement Prunus Pandora for Village Green: This work was also complete. d) Kent Men of the Trees – Trees in the Village Competition 2019: The report had been received. Unfortunately, Teston did not feature as a winner this year. e) Submission by the Clerk of an application to manage the trees on Teston Village Green: The canopy of the Indian Bean tree on the Village Green was quite low and it was likely the trees along the edge of the Village Green would also need attention in the not too distant future and periodically other trees would need attention. Following consultation with the Chairman and MBC the Clerk had submitted an application for a management regime covering a period of 15 years that would allow routine maintenance to keep the canopy of the trees raised to 2 metres. This had been validated with a target determination date of 26th December (19/505694/TCA). The Clerk would contact the Borough Council to point out that their reference to Teston Village Hall as the site address was an error.
19/185		Beacon Yuletide and VE Day 2020 Events: Final arrangements for the evening were discussed and approved . A budget of up to £75 was agreed for nibbles and £350 for drinks. Any drinks surplus would be used for the New Year's Day event in the Village Hall.
19/186	*	Village Green/Village Hall Boundary: The Chairman had taken some measurements.
19/187	*	Telephone Kiosk re-painting and broken light: The Kiosk had been painted and the Clerk had thanked BT. The light had been chased. Unfortunately, BT were having difficulty getting replacement lights but had given an assurance that the matter had not been overlooked.
19/188	*	Removal of seating from play area at Teston Bridge Country Park: Following the September meeting the Clerk had contacted KCC again regarding reinstatement of benches in the play area but had not received a response. A reminder had been sent.
19/189		Seat at Crown City: The Clerk had gone back to MBC to see whether they could supply a seat similar to those provided for the A26 and at a lower cost than the recent quote. Further details were awaited. The Clerk had obtained details of the plastic seating installed at Barming and this was noted.
19/190	*	Play Area Matters a) Village Green fencing: This would be removed from the Agenda for the time being. b) Annual Play Inspection Report: The ROSPA Annual report had been recirculated together with previously obtained quotations for safety surfacing under the chain trail. The Chairman advised that MBC still had some funding for capital works on play areas. At present MBC required Parishes to match-fund. Cllr Ms Burgon would be reviewing the play area and its equipment, pending which Cllrs would defer any decision on replacing the surfacing. c) Inspection Rota: November – Cllr Owens; December – Cllr Mrs Wheat; January – Cllr Coulling; February – Cllr Ms Burgon
		Other
19/191		Highways Seminar 28th November at Ditton Community Centre: The Chairman would be attending.
19/192		Date for Annual Parish Meeting 2020: Due to 2020 being an election year, and difficulty finding a Tuesday in May, it was proposed that the Annual Parish Meeting take place on 24 th March subject to Village Hall availability. The Clerk was requested to check this date with Cllrs by email before booking. It was noted that the Annual Parish Meeting must take place between 1 st March and 1 st June.

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19/193		Dates of Meetings during 2020/21: With 2020 being an election year for the Parish Council it was noted that the Annual Meeting of the Council would need to take place sooner than usual and 19th May was suggested. The following calendar of dates for May 2020 – March 2021 was proposed, subject to availability of Teston Village Hall: in 2020 - 19th May, 28th July, 29th September, 24th November; in 2021 - 26th January, 30th March. The Clerk would check this date with Cllrs before booking.
		Consultations – to consider responses
19/194	*	a) Strengthening Police Powers to Tackle Unauthorised Encampments – closing 5th March 2020: The Government consultation to criminalise the act of trespassing when setting up an unauthorised encampment was noted. It was agreed that the Chairman and Clerk liaise regarding a response. b) Transport for the Southeast – closing 10th January 2020: this was noted. c) KCC Proposed Modifications to the Minerals Sites Plan – closing 14th January 2020: This was noted. d) Review of Local Authority Financial Reporting and External Audit: Call for Views – closing 20th December: The Review would be examining the existing purpose, scope and quality of statutory audits of local authorities in England and the supporting regulatory framework. The Chairman would prepare and circulate a draft response.
19/195		ANY LATEST REPORT UPDATES FOR NOTING ONLY
		- It was noted that immediately before the meeting commenced a resident had attended to express appreciation to the Parish Council in helping in resolving an issue that had been raised at a previous meeting. - The second Condolence Book had been received. This would be held by the Clerk until needed. - Cllr Miss Page reported on a matter affecting the Church. A response would be drafted and circulated as soon as possible. - An issue had been raised by a member of the public regarding horses using pavements and leaving horse droppings. It was agreed that an article be placed in Tapestry in the New Year.
19/196		Confidential Items: It was resolved that the press and public to be excluded from the items 19/197-199 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
19/197		Enforcement issues: Information on current issues was received and noted.
19/198		MBC Call for Sites & related matters: There was no confidential information to be received.
19/199	*	Civic Matters: Nothing to report.

Date of next regular meeting of the Council – 7.30pm 28th January 2020 at Teston Village Hall

(Available at meeting: Agenda, Clerk's Report, Correspondence List, Financial Statement, and Highways Sheet)

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