

TESTON PARISH COUNCIL

These Minutes were approved by the Council at its meeting on 30th July 2019

Minutes of Meeting on 28th May 2019 at 7.30pm in Teston Village Hall

Cllr Peter Coulling – Chairman
Cllr Christopher Douglass
Cllr Roger Levett
Cllr Robin Owens
Cllr Miss Dawn Page
Cllr Mrs Nina Wheat

Cllr Mrs Fay Gooch (Maidstone Borough Council

Mrs Michelle Tatton (Clerk)

No members of the public

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

19/001	Election of Chairman and Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office: Cllr Levett proposed that Cllr Coulling be re-elected as Chairman. This was seconded by Cllr Douglass and agreed unanimously. The Chairman signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office which was witnessed by the Clerk.		
19/002	Election of Vice-Chairman: Cllr Levett proposed, Cllr Mrs Wheat seconded and it was agreed that Cllr Douglass be re-elected as Vice-Chairman.		
19/003	Declaration 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. Cllr Miss Page and Cllr Mrs Wheat declared an interest in items 19/014a) and c) Grants to the Pioneers and to St Peter & St Paul Church for churchyard maintenance.		
19/004	Apologies for Absence: were received from Cllr Ms Burgon and these were agreed. Apologies had also been received from Cllr Mrs Stockell.		
MEETING ADJOURNED FOR COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC			
Public session: There were no members of the public present.			
MEETING RECONVENED			
19/005	Minutes of previous meeting on 26th March 2019: These were approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.		
19/006	Ordering of Agenda: No changes were requested.		
	Administration and Finance		
19/007	Review of Standing Orders, Policies and Procedures, Including GDPR: The Chairman had prepared a redraft of the GDPR Policy which had been sent to the Clerk. This would be finalised and circulated with a view to adoption at the July meeting. Standing Orders would be looked at shortly.		
19/008	To agree the appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies: <table border="1"> <tr> <td>a)</td><td>Kent Association of Local Councils: It was agreed that Cllr Coulling and Cllr Douglass should continue as the Council's KALC representatives.</td></tr> </table>	a)	Kent Association of Local Councils: It was agreed that Cllr Coulling and Cllr Douglass should continue as the Council's KALC representatives.
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	b) Teston Village Hall Management Committee: It was agreed that Cllr Douglass, Cllr Mrs Wheat and Cllr Owens would continue to act as representatives to the Village Hall. It was noted that Cllr Miss Page is a Member of the Village Hall Committee on behalf of the Church.																																																																				
19/009	Insurance Renewal: It was agreed that the Parish Council should renew the policy with the existing provider for a premium of £331.97.																																																																				
19/010	Renewal of Subscriptions: It was agreed that the following subscriptions be renewed for 2019/20: a) Local Councils Update £75 b) CPRE £36 c) KALC £252.56 plus VAT d) Local Council Review £17 e) Action with Communities in Rural Kent £52 f) Kent Men of the Trees – expected to be £25 (not due until end March 2020)																																																																				
19/011	Dates and times of Parish Council meetings for 2018/19: It was proposed and agreed that the July meeting date be changed from 23rd July to 30th July. All other dates remained unchanged i.e. 24th September and 26th November; and in 2020 28th January, and 31st March. Cllr Mrs Gooch offered her apologies for the July meeting. There would be an Allotments Meeting for tenants on 15th October 2019 at 8pm.																																																																				
19/012	Statement of accounts: A Financial Statement showing a balance of £41317.18 had been circulated, from which the following payments were approved for payment: <table><tr><td>28.05.19</td><td>3120</td><td>Kent Association of Local Councils Subscription 2019-20</td><td>303.07</td></tr><tr><td>28.05.19</td><td>3121</td><td>Communicorp Subscription - Clerks and Councils Direct</td><td>75.00</td></tr><tr><td>28.05.19</td><td>3122</td><td>CPRE Subscription 2019-20</td><td>36.00</td></tr><tr><td>28.05.19</td><td>3123</td><td>NALC Local Council Review Subscription</td><td>17.00</td></tr><tr><td>28.05.19</td><td>3124</td><td>ACRK Subscription 2019-20</td><td>52.00</td></tr><tr><td>28.05.19</td><td>3125</td><td>Gary's Landscapes - Hedge Maintenance a) Village Green</td><td>260.00</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>b) Courtlands Hedge</td><td>320.00</td></tr><tr><td>28.05.19</td><td>3126</td><td>Eon Street Lighting Charges Invoice 01.05.19</td><td>30.92</td></tr><tr><td>28.05.19</td><td>3127</td><td>QualiTree - Tree Survey</td><td>384.00</td></tr><tr><td>28.05.19</td><td>3128</td><td>M Tatton Clerk's Salary May 2019</td><td>353.95</td></tr><tr><td>28.06.19</td><td>3129</td><td>M Tatton Clerk's Salary June 2019</td><td>353.95</td></tr><tr><td>28.05.19</td><td>3130</td><td>Zurich Municipal - Insurance Renewal</td><td>331.97</td></tr><tr><td>28.05.19</td><td>3131</td><td>Mr D Buckett Internal Audit Fees</td><td>320.70</td></tr><tr><td>28.05.19</td><td>3132</td><td>M Tatton Clerk's Expenses April - May 2019</td><td>141.40</td></tr><tr><td>28.06.19</td><td>3133</td><td>M Tatton Office Allowance April - June 2019</td><td>135.00</td></tr><tr><td>28.05.19</td><td>3134</td><td>Miss D Page - APM Refreshments</td><td>4.59</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>TOTAL</td><td>£3119.55</td></tr></table> For the purposes of this meeting the Clerk had estimated the year end figure based on budget figures. From July onwards there would be a more detailed estimate of future costs.	28.05.19	3120	Kent Association of Local Councils Subscription 2019-20	303.07	28.05.19	3121	Communicorp Subscription - Clerks and Councils Direct	75.00	28.05.19	3122	CPRE Subscription 2019-20	36.00	28.05.19	3123	NALC Local Council Review Subscription	17.00	28.05.19	3124	ACRK Subscription 2019-20	52.00	28.05.19	3125	Gary's Landscapes - Hedge Maintenance a) Village Green	260.00			b) Courtlands Hedge	320.00	28.05.19	3126	Eon Street Lighting Charges Invoice 01.05.19	30.92	28.05.19	3127	QualiTree - Tree Survey	384.00	28.05.19	3128	M Tatton Clerk's Salary May 2019	353.95	28.06.19	3129	M Tatton Clerk's Salary June 2019	353.95	28.05.19	3130	Zurich Municipal - Insurance Renewal	331.97	28.05.19	3131	Mr D Buckett Internal Audit Fees	320.70	28.05.19	3132	M Tatton Clerk's Expenses April - May 2019	141.40	28.06.19	3133	M Tatton Office Allowance April - June 2019	135.00	28.05.19	3134	Miss D Page - APM Refreshments	4.59			TOTAL	£3119.55
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19/013	Parish Services Scheme: It was noted that the Year End Certificate had not been received. The Clerk had prepared a break down which demonstrated that all the funds had been spent. It was agreed the Clerk would submit the details as soon as required.
19/014	Grants and Payments to Village Organisations: It was agreed that the following grants/payments be made for 2019/20: a) Pioneers: £125 for assistance with Hall Hire; b) TVHMC: £750 for assistance with grounds maintenance at Teston Village Hall, evidenced against invoices. The Parish Council would consider in September whether a further grant should be made. c) St Peter and St Paul: £250 for assistance with Churchyard maintenance, evidenced against invoices. The Parish Council would consider in September whether a further grant should be made. It was noted that the Church might incur expense in removing an Ash Tree. d) Tapestry Payment for Inclusion for Regular Items of Information for the Year 2019/20: It was noted that in 2018/19 the Parish Council made a payment of £230 for the inclusion of regular items (with additional payment made for the Annual Parish Meeting Report). The Parish Council had also funded the publication of Tapestry while it was in transition with expenses totalling £187.57. It was agreed that the Parish Council would contribute £230 for regular items for 2019/20 but the sum of £187.57 should be offset against this figure so that a cheque would be issued to Tapestry for £42.43.
19/015	Annual Return for the Year ending 31st March 2019: a) Internal Auditor's Report: This was noted. The Chairman referred to page 2 – paying the Clerk additional hours. This was noted. The Clerk was under pressure hours-wise and was not keen to take on further hours. Cllr Levett suggested that the Clerk might have an assistant. The Clerk was asked to consider the matter. The comments relating to grants from the Tapestry funds was noted. The Chairman questioned whether updating Standing Orders was trivial. The comments regarding a laptop for the Clerk were noted with disappointment. Councillors were happy with the current arrangements in the knowledge that full back up arrangements were in hand. Under the heading 'Budgetary Control' there appeared to be a word missing in the first sentence. The Chairman asked the Clerk to check. It was noted that the ICO fee had been paid before the audit had taken place. In view of a change in the Clerk's circumstances a PAYE Scheme had been established. The full reasons for this should be pointed out to the Internal Auditor. b) Outcome of Governance Review: Cllr Owens and Cllr Mrs Wheat had met with the Clerk to carry out a review. They had tested a sample of transactions and were happy that the accounts reconciled. Everything had been found to be in order. The Chairman thanked Councillors for their help. c) Approval of updated Asset Register: This was noted and approved. The Chairman suggested that there were additional items that might be self insured in future e.g. the beacon and allotments fencing. This would be considered at a later date. Meanwhile, the Clerk was asked to change the reference to Teston Wood to Ripton Wood and Kings Farm to Ripton Farm. d) Approval of the Governance Statement at section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return: The statements were read by all Councillors and approved. Section 1 was signed by the Chairman and the Clerk. e) Approval of the Accounting Statements at Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return: The statement had been signed ahead of the meeting by the Clerk. The statements were approved and signed by the Chairman. The Clerk explained the situation regarding the restatement of figures in Boxes 6 and 9. f) Review of Sink Fund: It was agreed that the self insurance sink fund be increased by £500 to £2,500.

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19/016	Review of Risk Assessment: The Chairman had reviewed the general Risk Assessment. This would be circulated with a view to adopting in July or September.
19/017	* Managing Future Parish Council Vacancies and Generating Interest: The Chairman had spoken with a potential candidate.
19/018	Tapestry Matters: a) Current position with regard to appointment of a second joint Editor: Mr McGlynn had taken up one of the volunteer editor roles and the Chairman was liaising with him. A second volunteer was still being sought. b) Arrangements for a Teston Tapestry Fund: Deferred to July.
19/019	Clerk's Office Allowance: There is no longer a dispensation and a settlement arrangement needs to be agreed with HMRC. The Chairman recommended that the allowance be increased to £545 per annum and this was agreed .
19/020	KALC Bullying and Complaints Policy: The Chairman recommended that this be adopted provided that the definition of members relates to Parish Councillors, and that the Clerk is the only member of staff. This was agreed .
	Planning
19/021	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) 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) Decision awaited c) 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) Decision awaited d) 19/500781/FULL 11 Tonbridge Road, Teston ME18 5BU Single storey rear and first floor side extension Approved – 17.04.19 e) 19/500952/TCA The Cottage West, Church Street, Teston ME19 5AJ Conservation area notification to 6x Bay Trees - to be removed (A,B,C,D,E,F as shown on plan), Group of Bay trees to be removed (G as shown on plan), 7x Mix of Bay and Holly trees - to be removed (H,I,J,K,L,M,N as shown on plan) and 11x Mix of Bay and Holly trees - to be reduced to a 2m hedge, accept trees Z,R,Q to be removed (Q,R,S,T,U,V,W,X,Y,Z,A1 as shown on plan) No objection – 27.03.19 f) 19/501198/LBC 1a-2 Livesey Street, Teston ME18 5AY Listed Building Consent for proposed re-tiling of existing Kent Peg tile roof – Approved 26.04.19 g) 19/501199/LBC 3-4 Livesey Street, Teston ME18 5AY Listed Building Consent for proposed re-tiling of existing Kent Peg tile roof – Approved 26.04.19 h) 19/500452/FULL River Barn, Tutsham Farm, West Farleigh

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	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 28.03.19 i) APPEAL 19/500059/REF Erection of a boundary fence Barham Court Tonbridge Road Teston ME18 5BZ: Site meeting has taken place. Decision awaited ii) Newly submitted applications/ratify submissions made, including: a) 19/502350/TCA The Old Post Office Church Street Teston ME18 5AH Conservation Area notification Re felling of trees in rear garden on the rear boundary: T1 Young Lawson Cypress (Conifer) - Fell to ground level. T2 Young Holly: - Fell to ground level The Chairman felt that the trees were not quality tree. The Council would raise no objection. b) 19/502403/SUB 1A-2 Livesey Street Teston Maidstone Kent ME18 5AY and 19/502404/SUB 3A-4 Livesey Street Teston Maidstone Kent ME18 5AY Submission of details pursuant to Conditions 4: Method Statement & 5: Tile sample (original application ref: 19/501198/LBC). Given the remote location, the Clerk had asked what measures would be adopted to secure the old, re-usable tiles against theft. This response was ratified.
19/022 *	Local Plan Review and Call for Sites: Chairman reported upon latest position. The Call for Sites had closed. The KALC-led Coordinating Team was continuing to meet with MBC. Cllr Levett raised the need for protecting the Valley. The Chairman confirmed that the Team was aware of the concerns. Cllr Levett was also concerned about the increase in light pollution across the Valley from Tutsham Farm. The Chairman would review the current Local Plan to see what it says regarding light pollution to see whether the policy could be strengthened.
19/023 *	Air Quality Diffusion Tubes: Readings from the tubes were now coming back from the laboratory although it would be a few months before trends were established.
19/024 *	Tonbridge & Malling Local Plan: The Clerk reported on a letter received by TMBC from the Planning Inspectors raising a number of further issues which could result in a further period of consultation being necessary before the Examination could go ahead.
19/025 *	Assets of Community Value Registration: The Clerk would liaise with Cllr Miss Page regarding progress of the application relating to the Church, and contact the Secretary to Teston Club regarding the status of the application regarding the Club.
19/026 *	Abbeyfield Development: Nothing to report.
	Highways and PROW
19/027	Highways Spreadsheet: A spreadsheet of current issues had been circulated and was noted. Cllr Levett noted that there are a number of blocked gullies. The Clerk was asked to find out when the next routine maintenance would be taking place. The Clerk would contact Cllr Mrs Stockell to see whether she could help regarding a project to have a better visual impact at the Village crossroads in terms of surface and painting. Cllr Levett reported upon cars parking in Church Street West just before the junction with Tonbridge Road, making visibility poor for those trying to cross from the path at the eastern end of Ash Tree Corner. The Chairman would monitor.
19/028 *	Traffic Island on Tonbridge Road in the Vicinity of Ash Tree Corner: The response from KCC Cabinet Member Cllr Mike Hill had been negative. The Chairman would review and report back.
19/029 *	Purchase of Solar Powered, Moveable Speed Monitoring Equipment: Deferred to the next meeting.
19/030	Faulty Street Light: KCC had confirmed in writing via Cllr Whiting that they do not view the light on the A26 opposite Teston Lane to be necessary on safety grounds. On this basis, the Chairman recommended that the light should not be repaired and that it should be removed. Members voted upon the proposal with all in favour save for Cllr Levett who abstained.

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	Quotations for removal would be obtained. Meanwhile, it was agreed the Clerk would contact Eon to see whether the power supply could be switched off, at no cost, to avoid further unnecessary charges.
19/031	* Speed Watch: Nothing to report.
19/032	B2163 Verge: Issues with insurance have meant that the work could not go ahead as planned but a solution had been found via Medway Valley Countryside Partnership who had more than the required insurance (£10 million) and licence for weed spraying. Mr Pritchard had advised that the site is quite disturbed and may be supporting a population of reptiles and so the timing of any work would need to be considered carefully. Work along the following lines was proposed: Cut back and level ground where appropriate Top and level with top soil Rake and prepare ground for seed sowing. Distribute seeds on site Introduce a species rich neutral wildflower soil mix suitable to the site Build and establish areas for reptile hibernacula on site Cost £250 ex VAT plus the cost of materials (the rough estimate was £120 for 3 tons topsoil and £30-£40 for wildflower seed). A suitable bi-annual cut and removal of arisings thereafter (July and November) would be required to maintain and enhance floral diversity. MVCP would be able to do the work in the autumn. Weed killing would be deferred until later in the year. Ongoing maintenance was likely to be in the region of £200-300 per annum. It was agreed that work should proceed in line with the proposal from MVCP. Quotes would be obtained for the removal of arisings. Cllrs should bear in mind the cost of ongoing grass cutting – the Clerk recalls that a previous quotation, several years ago, was for around £115 per cut of the verge but this would not have included removing the arisings from the site. If the project is a success the Parish Council will consider a similar project on the north side of the A26.
	Environment
19/033	Allotments a) Inspection Report from Cllr Douglass: It was reported that the plots were generally in good condition. There was nothing currently in need of attention. The gaps in the fencing on the Tonbridge Road had closed with the additional planting although Cllr Douglass felt that some more planting should be considered in the autumn. b) Replacement posts: This issue had been resolved. c) Water Bills: The supply had been successfully transferred. The Clerk would pass the latest Castle Water Statement to the Chairman. The Clerk was asked to place an item on the July Agenda regarding a rent increase from November 2019.
19/034	* Ambulance Sirens: Nothing to report at present.
19/035	* Defibrillator: The consumables needed to be checked. The Chairman would try to do so.
19/036	Teston's Trees and Hedges a) Removal of south access gate on the A26 east of The Street: This would be reviewed again in July. b) Tree Inspection Report: This had been circulated. Sadly, the Ash on Ash Tree Corner would need to be removed as it was diseased. The Clerk would obtain a quotation from QualiTree for removal and it was agreed the Clerk should be given a budget of £200 to get the work done. Cllr Levett raised the issue of replacement. The suggestion had been for a Manor Ash. Cllr Levett had checked and discovered that this would not be possible without a licence. He proposed an Acer Compestre Lienco as an alternative which would be slow growing and compact. It was felt that the matter needed some thought and Cllr Levett was asked to put a proposal together for the next meeting. d) Kent Men of the Trees – Trees in the Village Competition 2019: It was noted that Teston's entry had been registered. The Judge should be in contact with Cllr Levett shortly.

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19/037	Beacon Yuletide Event Saturday 21st December: It was noted that the Church would be decorated that day for the Carol Service on the Sunday. It was felt that wine and nibbles could possibly be provided in the Church as an alternative to the Hall, with lighting of the beacon on the Village Green. The promise of a donation of logs had been received. It was agreed that the matter should be progressed. An item would be placed in the September edition of Tapestry.
19/038	* Village Green/Village Hall Boundary: This was outstanding.
19/039	* Telephone Kiosk broken light: This was still broken. The Clerk would chase.
19/040	Play Area Matters Village Green fencing: A response had been received from MBC indicating that a formal request should be made for pre-application advice. It was agreed that the Clerk should proceed with that application, subject to a budget of up to £150. This would hopefully establish what, if anything, MBC would consider appropriate along the roadside of the Village Green. No decision upon installation of fencing would taken place prior to there being a village-wide discussion. Fencing the Beacon: Deferred to the next meeting. Inspection Rota: Cllr Coulling asked to change from June to July. The following was proposed and would be checked with Cllr Ms Burgon: June – Cllr Ms Burgon; July – Cllr Coulling; August – Cllr Levett.
19/041	Damage to Church Railings: The railings had been repaired by a volunteer. The Chairman commended the quality of the repair.
	Other
19/042	Annual Parish Meeting 14th May 2019: It had been suggested at the APM that the shop would benefit from advertising/signage. The Clerk would obtain a quotation for signage.
19/043	* Book of Condolence: The book had been purchased and would be stored at the Hall. Cllr Douglass would arrange for the Clerk to be sent an invoice for Parish Council storage.
19/044	Police and Parish Liaison Meeting 6th June 7pm Police Station, Palace Avenue: This was noted. Cllr Mrs Gooch would be attending on behalf of Barming Parish Council and would report back.
19/045	Fete on the Green 15th June: It was confirmed that the Church could use the Village Green for the event subject to the usual conditions. This would also apply to the Nursery Group's Sports Day.
19/046	KALC AGM on Monday 17 June: This was noted. There were no comments regarding nominations.
	Consultations – to consider responses
19/047	* None to date
19/048	ANY LATEST REPORT UPDATES FOR NOTING ONLY
	It was noted that the Chairman would be attending a meeting arranged by MBC regarding Affordable and Local Needs Housing.
MEETING ADJOURNED TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING REPORTS	
	a) Teston Village Stores CIC Matters The stock-take would take place on Friday 31st May and Saturday 1st June
	b) Teston Land Conservation Trust Matters - The fence repairs at the Barming end were complete - Finances were reasonably healthy

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		A pile of brambles in Ripton Wood would need to be dealt with, possibly by burning in the autumn
MEETING RECONVENED		
19/049		Confidential Items: It was resolved that the press and public to be excluded from the items 19/050-19/053 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
MEETING ADJOURNED AND RECONVENED IN PRIVATE		
19/050	*	Enforcement issues: The current status of enforcement matters in the parish was noted.
19/051		MBC Call for Sites – impact on Teston: This was discussed and the situation noted.
19/052	*	Preserving the Gap Between Teston & Barming, Land Registration and Trees in Need of Protection: This was discussed and the situation noted.
19/053		Village Hall Matter: Cllr Douglass reported on a matter concerning the Village Hall and this was noted.

Date of next regular meeting of the Council – 7.30pm 30th July 2019 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

Signed Chairman
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