

TESTON PARISH COUNCIL

These Minutes were approved at the meeting on 28th September 2021

Minutes of Meeting on 27th July 2021
7.30pm Teston Village Hall

Cllr Peter Coulling – Chairman
Cllr Christopher Douglass
Cllr Ms Burgon
Cllr Owens
Cllr Miss Page
Cllr Mrs Wheat

Mrs Michelle Tatton (Clerk)

KCC Cllr Simon Webb
MBC Cllr Mrs Fay Gooch

Members of the public - 3

The Chairman drew attention to the pandemic arrangements in terms of seating. Attention was also drawn to the Parish Council's Standing Orders on the Photographing, Recording, Filming or Broadcasting of Teston Parish Council Meetings. No intention to record the meeting was declared.

21/041	Declarations of Interest: In the interests of transparency, all Parish Councillors declare that they have 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; d) Cllr Douglass, Cllr Owens, Cllr Miss Page and Cllr Mrs Wheat have an interest as members of Teston Village Hall Management Committee; and e) Cllr Burgon, Cllr Owens, Cllr Miss Page, and Cllr Mrs Wheat have an interest as members of the Parochial Church Council.
21/042	Granting of Dispensations: The Chairman provided some background. The Clerk reported upon her review of dispensations. During discussion it was clarified that Cllr Douglass was both Chairman and Treasurer of the Village Hall. It was the Clerk's considered view that: a) without a dispensation the number of persons able to participate in business relating to the CIC, TLCT and Village Green Charity would be so great as to impede the transaction of the business, given that all Parish Cllrs were Directors of the CIC, and Trustees of TLCT and the Village Green Charity and that it was in the interests of persons living in the authority's area for a dispensation to be granted, save that Cllr Coulling should be excluded in relation to monetary decisions in respect of the CIC in view of his 'enhanced' position within the CIC; b) it was in the interests of persons living in the authority's area for dispensations to be granted in respect of the Church, save that Cllr Miss Page, as Churchwarden, and Cllr Mrs Wheat as Treasurer, should be excluded in terms of monetary decisions, and that it was otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation to ensure a wide balance of views can be shared as part of the decision making process; c) it was in the interests of persons living in the authority's area for dispensations to be granted in respect of the Village Hall, save that Cllr Douglass, as Chairman and Treasurer of the Village Hall, should be excluded in terms of monetary decisions, and that it was otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation to ensure a wide balance of views can be shared as part of the decision making process; The Clerk noted that only in very limited circumstances did she anticipate that a dispensation might be required by an individual Cllrs in relation to Parish Council owned land and that it would be appropriate for each application to be considered on its merits at the appropriate time. The Clerk had contacted the Monitoring Officer to seek advice and confirm her understanding of the position. While that advice was awaited any decision taken would be an interim decision and would be subject to review upon receipt of further advice. However, the dispensations the Clerk proposed to grant were in line with dispensations that had been granted previously in terms of excluding those with greater responsibility within the respective organisations from voting in relation to monetary matters. The Clerk confirmed the dispensations, as set out in the table below, which took immediate effect and

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this was noted.



21/043 Private items: None.

21/044 Apologies for absence: None.

Meeting adjourned to receive comments and questions from members of the public

- It was reported that 5 drains on the A26 between The Street and Teston Lane, together with the drain by the level crossing, were silted up. The Clerk would report these for cleansing. In relation to drainage, Cllr Levett suggested that the Parish Council try to speak with Kent Highways to consider getting the landowners on the north side of Tonbridge Road at the western end of Teston to run a bund to retain the mud and, to a certain extent, the water. A different method would be needed for the tracks. This was noted. It was noted that Highways had responded quickly regarding the recent floods.
- A resident raised concerns regarding the speed of traffic on the Malling Road, in particular on the section without a pavement and suggested a speed hump was needed. The question of traffic speed on both Malling Road and Tonbridge Road would be considered under item 20/053.

21/045 Minutes of Meeting on 15th June 2021: The Minutes were approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

21/046 Ratification of Decisions: Decisions taken since the last meeting, as set out at the end of these Minutes, were ratified.

Administration and Finance

Statement of Accounts: A Financial Statement showing a balance of £38,439.41 had been circulated prior to the meeting, from which the following payments were authorised:

27.07.2021	3279	Maidstone Borough Council Supply and fit new village sign post	1344.00
27.07.2021	3280	Gary's Landscape B2163 hedge	140.00
21.08.2021	3281	M Tatton Clerk's Salary August 2021	362.79
27.07.2021	3282	M Tatton Expenses July	16.24
27.07.2021	3283	D Williams Return of Allotment Deposit Plot 19	25.00
27.07.2021	3284	D Lewis Return of Allotment Deposit Plot 8	25.00
27.07.2021	3285	Playsafety Ltd Annual Play Area Inspection	82.20
TOTAL			£1995.23

It was noted that there had been some additional expenditure relating to the Allotments and at the end of the year the notional Allotments account was likely to be in debit. Cllrs were asked to bear this in

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	mind in respect of Allotment rents. In relation to Tapestry, income had been impacted as a result of a number of advertisers not renewing and so a downward trend in funds was expected at the end of the financial year. It was noted that a payment had been in respect of a cut of the TLCT hedge at Ripton Wood. That work had been carried out at the same time as other work at the Allotments. The matter would be placed on the next Agenda to consider whether the payment should be covered by way of a grant to TLCT or whether this should be reimbursed.
21/048	Annual Return for the Year ending 31st March 2021: The outcome of the Audit was awaited.
21/049	Date of Annual Parish Meeting: It was felt that, at present, holding a meeting in the Village Hall with a usual attendance of 25-30 people would be difficult. While noting the requirements to hold an Annual Parish Meeting, it was recommended by the Chairman that the matter be considered in September and this was <u>agreed</u> .
21/050	Standing Orders Review: The Chairman would review and bring a recommendation to the next meeting.
21/051	Risk Assessment: The Clerk had circulated a revised Risk Assessment to Cllrs. The Chairman drew attention to the proposed changes including some additional measures in relation to bank accounts. This would be brought back to the next meeting to allow Cllrs to consider fully in the interim.
21/052	Grants to village organisations, and Tapestry: items a) – c) being deferred from the June meeting: a) TVHMC - £250: This was <u>agreed</u>. Cllr Douglass did not participate in the discussion or vote. b) St Peter and St Paul - £250 for assistance with Churchyard maintenance: This was <u>agreed</u>. Cllr Miss Page and Cllr Mrs Wheat did not participate in the discussion or vote. c) Transfer to the Tapestry Account for inclusion of regular items of information for 2021/22: Following discussion it was <u>agreed</u> not to make a payment in this financial year. This would remain on the Agenda for next year. d) Grant to TLCT to Fund a Kissing Gate at Ripton Wood: Trustees were looking to install a kissing gate which was likely to cost around £750. Cllrs were asked to consider ahead of the next meeting whether the Parish Council should make a grant.
	Highways
21/053	Highways Spreadsheet: A spreadsheet detailing routine highway issues had been circulated prior to the meeting and this was discussed. It was <u>agreed</u> to involve Cllr Webb in resolving the issue of water flowing across the pavement below Court Lodge Farm, and in pressing Highways on the issue of resurfacing Malling Road. There was a large pothole outside Barham Cottage. This would be reported.
21/054	Highway Improvement Plan including Tonbridge Road Crossing: The HIP had been updated and circulated to Parish Cllrs. This included 7 items: 1. Malling Road speed limit – to either extend northwards the current 30mph zone by about 150 metres, just beyond Knole Farmhouse; or Introduce a 40mph zone between North Pole pub and current 30mph zone; or a combination of both; 2. Traffic island at or close the junction with Church Street (West) – due to significant problems for pedestrians crossing the Tonbridge Road, especially at rush-hour, and vehicles not responding to the 30mph limit on that section of Tonbridge Road; 3. Virtual platform at, or just north, of the Malling Road / Livesey Street junction – due to excessive speeding into and out of the village. It was noted a street light might be required; 4. Virtual platform at the central village crossroads - to enhance pedestrian safety near the Preschool, Village Hall, village shop and Teston Club; 5. Enhanced pedestrian crossing facility at Crown City Restaurant – viewed as unsafe by Teston House and other residents using it, because of the speed of traffic approaching from Barming and drivers' insensitivity to any pedestrians crossing;

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6. Junction of The Street with Tonbridge Road - vehicles cutting the corner at speed when turning into The Street from the Barming direction, with pedestrians forced to cross The Street as there is only a pavement on the eastern side;
7. South Lodge Bend - crash barrier installed on the wrong part of the bend.

Two articles had been included in the latest edition of Tapestry regarding Malling Road and Tonbridge Road. The Chairman noted that there had been several traffic surveys over the years. In respect of Malling Road, a speed camera had been explored for the Livesey Street junction but as many people were against it as for it. A pavement had been considered but the cost was prohibitive and remained extremely unlikely. Traffic calming and 20mph zones had also been explored.

The Chairman noted a range of possibilities for Malling Road including reductions in the speed limit and a speed indicator device. Cllr Ms Burgon raised the possibility of a cycle path but it was generally felt that Malling Road was not wide enough to accommodate a cycle path and would not offer a reasonable solution for protecting pedestrians.

It was noted that physical traffic calming features would require lighting and that the mood of the village was to remain dark.

The Clerk noted that in relation to any moveable speed device consideration would need to be given, from an insurance point of view, to the risks associated with moving it.

Cllr Miss Page and Cllr Owens had reservations about a 40mph to North Pole and whether it would make any difference. However, it was **agreed** to accept Cllr Webb's offer to speak with Highways regarding speed limits.

Following a full discussion, Cllrs **agreed** that a moveable SID should be progressed with 3 posts, with 1 of those on Tonbridge Road. The cost was expected to be up to £3,000 and a contribution would be sought from Cllr Webb.

In relation to Tonbridge Road, the Parish Council had been pursuing the possibility of a pedestrian refuge just to the west of the Farm Shop entrance. The position regarding the current PWLB loans was noted.

Over 10 years a new loan would cost just over £1,000 per year.

Cllr Mrs Wheat raised the issue of the crossing at Crown City. This had not yet been discussed with Kent Highways in detail.

Cllr Levett noted that a pedestrian crossing sign on the eastern side had been promised but had never arrived. This would be added to HIP as number 5.

Cllr Levett suggested a double white line should be painted between the two crossings and this was noted.

It was **agreed** that the Parish Council should pursue plans for the traffic island. The Clerk would contact Kent Highways and a PWLB application would be prepared for up to £10,000.

Planning

i) New/pending decisions

a) 20/505234/TPOA Barham Mews Tonbridge Road Teston Kent

TPO application to (A1) 1 x Sweet gum - remove low horizontal limb, (A2) 1 x Horse chestnut- re pollard height 10m and spread 10m pollarded branches to 5m in length, these will be cut back to previous pollard points leaving main stem at 5m. (T30) 1 x Horse chestnut-re pollard Current height 18m and spread 16m, previously pollarded branches are approximately 8m in length, these will be cut back to previous pollard points leaving main stem at 10m, (A6) 1 x False acacia- fell, (TR1) 1 x Holly-fell (GR1) - Conifers- fell a group of small Conifers as shown on tree location plan **Decision awaited**

b) 20/02749/OA Land South Of Barming Station And East Of Hermitage Lane Aylesford
Outline Application: erection of up to 330 dwellings (including 40% affordable homes), together with associated open space, play areas, and landscaping (including details of access) **Decision awaited**

c) 20/506111/FULL 20 Courtlands Teston Maidstone Kent ME18 5AS

Erection of single storey front and rear extensions, including loft conversion with front, rear and side dormers **Refused 29.03.2021**

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d) 21/500422/TCA Becketts Croft Malling Road Teston ME18 5AR

Conservation Area Notification: WORKS TO FRONT OF PROPERTY G1 11 Limes adjoining front of property: - Reduce by 14m to old pollard points at 7m. G6 Group of Sycamore and Leylandii on front boundary in wedge between neighbouring property: - Remove to ground level. WORK TO REAR OF PROPERTY T1 Eucalyptus on rear boundary: -Remove to ground level. G2 Group of Cherry, Portuguese laurel and Holly on rear left hand boundary: - Remove Holly and Cherry to ground level and remove large Portuguese laurel to 1.5m. H1 Large Portuguese laurel within mixed hedge running from G2 along left hand rear boundary: - Remove to 200mm above ground level. G3 - Group of Sycamore and Holly on rear left hand corner: - Remove sycamore to 200mm above ground level; - Reduce Holly to height of adjacent Leylandii removing 4m of growth. T2 Cherry (dead) on rear right hand boundary: - Remove to ground level. G4 Group of Norway maple, Willow and Oak, including Honey locust: -Reduce Oak, Norway maple and Honey locust by no more than 3m in height to finished height of 8m; - Remove Willow to 200mm above ground level. G5 Group of Holly, Hazel, Portuguese laurel and Cotoneaster: - Reduce by no more than 4m to height of neighbouring gutter. WORKS TO RIGHT HAND SIDE OF PROPERTY P1 Magnolia and Holly: - Reduce by no more than 1.5m. The finished height of both magnolia and holly will be 2.5m T4 Lime on rear boundary: - Reduce to height of previous pollard points (8m finished height) removing 12m of growth; - Growth from lower section of crown - reduce by no more than 2.5m. T5 Elder in far right hand corner of property adjacent to T4: - Remove to height of wall. T6 Robinia (dead): - Remove to ground level **Split Decision – 20.05.2021.**

Objection raised in relation to the Limes and a TPO served; no objection to other tree work.

It was agreed the Clerk should contact the owner regarding the highway boundary hedge.

e) 21/500757/FULL and 21/500759/LBC The Old Post Office Church Street Teston

Change of use from a post office to residential use, new shop front and access gates **Approved 16.04.2021**

f) 21/500900/FULL Heather Bank Malling Road Teston Maidstone Kent ME18 5AU

Demolition of single storey rear extension and erection of single storey rear extension with rooflight and balcony above **Approved 06.05.2021**

g) 21/501029/TPOA St Peter And St Paul's Church Church Street Teston Maidstone Kent

TPO application to prune back overhanging branches of one Red Oak to boundary wall of churchyard **No objection 22.06.2021**

h) 21/501275/FULL Gunwalloe 59 Tonbridge Road Teston Maidstone Kent ME18 5BT

Demolition of single storey rear extension and erection of single storey rear extension with rooflight and balcony above **Approved 13.05.2021**

i) 21/501988/TCA The Cottage East Church Street Teston ME18 5AJ

Conservation area notification to reduce height of one Holly, from 10m to 3m, and reduce lateral spread from 5m to 4m **No objection 26.05.2021**

j) 21/501770/FULL Wealden Court Church Street Teston Maidstone Kent ME18 5AG

Change of use from office to a single residential dwelling, including conversion of existing garage/store to personal home working unit with adjacent gym, partial demolition of detached store to create new patio with existing southern and western walls retained, and erection of 1.8m close boarded boundary fencing with 300mm trellis. Erection of new double garage to side with storage space and utility room, removal of western parking area to create garden, and associated landscaping and ecological enhancements **Approved with conditions 02.07.2021**

k) 21/00881/OA MOD Land South Of Discovery Drive Kings Hill West Malling Kent

Outline Application: Development of up to 65 dwellings (all matters reserved other than access) **Decision awaited**

k) 21/01490/FL (TMBC) Cromar Nursery 39 Livesey Street Watlington Kent ME18 5BQ

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	Redevelopment of existing commercial nursery and garden centre with 4 detached residential units with garaging facility and, associated works, including vehicular access (amendment to existing planning permission TM/19/01359/FL, not implemented) Approved 19.07.2021 I) 21/503333/SUB Gunwalloe 59 Tonbridge Road Teston Maidstone Kent ME18 5BT Submission of details to discharge Condition 2 (Biodiversity scheme) of planning permission 21/501275/FULL Decision awaited ii) Newly submitted applications/ratify submissions made, including: a) 21/503796/SUB Wealden Court Church Street Teston Maidstone Kent ME18 5AG Submission of Details to Discharge Condition 4 - Method Statement, Condition - 6 windows, Condition - 7 Hard and Soft Landscape, Condition 9 - Tree protection Details, Condition 10 - Biodiversity enhancement scheme and Condition 11 - (a) Storage and screening of 4 bicycles, refuse bins and (b) Collection of refuse bins subject to 21/501770/FULL The Parish Council appreciated the applicant's efforts to conform with the conditions. However, it was noted that amended drawings had been submitted for the windows. It was assumed those amended drawings would take precedence over the originals. It was agreed the Maidstone Borough Council should be asked to require the bathroom, lobby and kitchen existing windows be replaced with top opening windows with obscure glazing to Pilkington Glass Privacy Level 3, in all parts of the windows, opening and non-opening.
21/056	MBC and TMBC Local Plan Updates: TMBC do not now have a Local Plan in place and are more vulnerable than they would wish to be to speculative development. The Chairman gave an update regarding the Maidstone Local Plan. The Regulation 19 consultation was expected to take place in the autumn.
	Environment
	Allotments Update a) Inspections and turnover of vacant plots: Cllr Douglass reported on his recent inspections. One plot has been re-let. b) Intrusion by rabbits under the southern boundary and to consider action: Cllr Douglass noted 3 access points. He had advised the new tenant that they are at liberty to stop up the holes. It was agreed that a roll of chicken wire should be purchased at up to £40 for use for this purpose. c) Water rates and latest meter reading: A leak had been identified recently and cured. The Chairman continued to monitor meter readings.
21/057	War Memorial Troughs: It was agreed to register thanks to the volunteers who tend the troughs which were looking very good.
	Other
21/058	Proposal for a Flower Trough Beneath the Notice Board: Cllr Douglass suggested a brick trough of approximately two metres by half a metre by half a metre, with black coping stones. He had had an initial conversation with a contractor. The trough would technically be on Village Hall land and the Management Committee would consider whether it could fund. No decision was taken regarding any contribution from the Parish Council.
21/059	Church Commissioners' Pastoral Scheme: No further news.
21/060	HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee: The Clerk had circulated details of the Jubilee Beacons and Queen's Green Canopy scheme. It was agreed that the event should be marked with lighting of the beacon and that there should be a permanent commemoration of some description. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Cllr Miss Page would have an initial discussion and would invite Mr Astridge to be involved. Cllr Ms Burgon noted that Ramsay Day would be taking place next July and so some volunteers would be especially busy

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21/061	MBC Consultation Upon Whole Council Elections: It was noted that Barming and Teston could be combined with Heath Ward as a 3 member ward if the status quo was maintained of voting by thirds. A change to whole council elections could mean that Barming and Teston might remain as a 1 member ward. It was <u>agreed</u> that a response should be submitted supporting whole Council elections.
21/062	Clerk's Report for Noting Only: There was nothing to report. The ROSPA Report had been received on the day of the meeting. This was noted and would be considered.
21/063	Exceptional Delegated Authority: It was <u>agreed</u> that EDA should continue until the next meeting when it would once again be reviewed.
21/064	Maidstone Ward Cluster Engagement Meetings: Engagement meetings were being arranged between Maidstone Borough Councillors, the Community Protection Team and Maidstone Police with regard to Community Safety within designated Ward Clusters. Having stated initially that Parish Councils were not invited, a representative from each Parish Council was now being invited to attend their Ward Cluster Meeting. It was noted that Barming and Teston had been grouped with Heath and Allington. It was <u>agreed</u> that the Chairman should be the representative, with the Vice-Chairman as substitute, and that the Parish Council should seek the right to join with a rural cluster.
Confidential Items	
21/065	There were no confidential items.
21/066	Enforcement issues: None.

Date of next regular meeting of the Council – 7.30p.m. on 28th September 2021 at Teston Village Hall

Following the meeting brief updates were provided by the Chairman on the following:

Teston Land Conservation Trust

- The bank account was looking reasonably healthy
- Steps needed to be taken to manage the ragwort

Teston Village Stores CIC

- The situation was noted to be stable
- Accounts were in the process of being prepared for the last financial year.

List of Decisions Taken by the Clerk Since 19th May 2021

Under the Agreed Scheme of Delegation During COVID-19 - Ratified Under Item 21/046 above

Detail	Decision and background	Date
Various vegetation clearance work	It was noted towards the end of June that the wildflower verge on the south side of Tonbridge Road was in need of strimming. A cut had been anticipated but the timing had not been confirmed. The Clerk obtained a quote. By combining the cut with hedge cutting work at the allotments, and the TLCT hedge, it was possible to achieve a small reduction in cost. A complaint had been received regarding the roadside allotments hedge and growth alongside the access road and over the gate was substantial. Following consultation with Cllrs the work was authorised and has now been done.	30.06.2021
Tree Preservation Order	Becketts Croft, Malling Road Details of the TPO were shared with Cllrs. Cllrs were given the opportunity to comment on a draft response prior to submission. It was felt that the trees are in need of attention and that the TPO should not be confirmed and a detailed response was submitted on this basis by the Clerk.	01.07.2021
Trimming of hedge at the corner of the B2163	The Parish Council has occasionally trimmed the hedge in front of the memorial seat at the corner of Teston Lane to maintain views from the seat over the valley. It was noted at the beginning of July that the hedge was becoming overgrown. Following liaison with the adjacent owner, when it was established that the hedge is not on his land, a quotation of £140 was obtained for cutting it back. Cllrs were asked for their views by email, and following a majority indicating they were in	13.07.2021

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	favour of the work going ahead the Clerk accepted the quote.	
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Clerk: Mrs Michelle Tatton

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