

TESTON PARISH COUNCIL

These Minutes were approved at the meeting on 27th July 2021

Minutes of Meeting on 15th June 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 - 5

Prior to the meeting commencing the Chairman drew attention is 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.

21/023	Declarations of Interest: In the interests of transparency, all Parish Councillors declare that 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; and d) Cllr Douglass, Cllr Owens, Cllr Miss Page and Cllr Mrs Wheat have an interest as members of Teston Village Hall Management Committee.
21/024	Granting of Dispensations: The Chairman and Clerk had discussed the situation. The Clerk wished to clarify a few matters regarding the Village Hall and the Church so this item would be deferred until the July meeting when a recommendation would be made.
21/025	Items to be Discussed in Private: None.
21/026	Apologies for Absence: Received from Cllr Levett and these were <u>accepted</u> .

Meeting Adjourned

Comments and Questions from Members of the Public

- At the request of a member of the public, Item 21/035 Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) and 21/038 regarding the Church would be brought up the Agenda and dealt with immediately after 21/028 but would be minuted as they appeared on the Agenda.
- A member of the public asked whether Teston Lane had been considered for inclusion in the HIP. The Chairman noted, in relation to a 20mph zone, it is exceptional to have a 20mph zone without street lighting and villagers have been strongly in support of a dark village. Particular rules state that there must be at least one additional feature such as a road hump or narrowing or a platform. Physical changes might not be welcomed by immediate neighbours. Regarding Teston Lane, the Chairman felt that physical measures near the level crossing would be more difficult than some parts of Malling Road.
- It was reported that the graffiti on the green box by the level crossing had been removed but the grey box still needed attention. This would be raised with Network Rail
- The drain in Teston Lane was due to sorted on the evening of the meeting. The engineer had reported to the resident that there might be some cracks in the drain. The resident was grateful to the Parish Council for their help in getting the work programmed.
- A resident asked about other deterrents against speeding. Reference was made to Boxley which has concrete planters. The Chairman stated that the Parish Council maintains a good dialogue with Kent Highways and Teston's new County Cllr might be able to assist. The Chairman noted that if there was a planter it would need to be lit.
- A resident felt that a raised platform is needed at Leigh Terrace to slow traffic and/or a camera at the junction with Livesey Street and asked if it would be possible to self-fund a camera, expressing

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disappointment that the Police do not carry out speed checks. The Chairman noted that a questionnaire had been circulated previously regarding aspeed camera but there were then as many against it as for it.

- A resident reported that there was a lot of overgrown shrubbery on Tonbridge Road. The Chairman noted that the north side was especially difficult. Another resident had been asked to take some photographs. Meanwhile the hedges on the south side by the TLCT field would be cut soon.

Meeting Reconvened

21/027 **Minutes of the Meeting on 18th May 2021:** These were approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

21/028 **Ratification of Decisions:** A list of decisions taken by the Clerk since the last meeting as set out at the end of these Minutes was ratified.

Administration and Finance

Statement of Accounts: A Financial Statement showing a balance of £40,228.20 had been circulated to Cllrs, from which the following bills were approved for payment:

Date	Cheque	Details	Amount
15.06.2021	3272	NEJ Plumbing & Heating - Allotments Water Tap Repair	65.00
31.07.2021	3273	M Tatton Clerk's Salary July 2021	362.79
15.06.2021	3274	M Tatton Clerk's Expenses to 15th June 2021	21.04
15.06.2021	3275	A Tatton Web and Admin Support	12.50
15.06.2021	3276	David Buckett – Internal Audit	320.70
		TOTAL	£782.03

The Chairman pointed out the projected year end reserves of c£26,000 including £2,500 for self-insurance. This was quite healthy and therefore some small projects throughout the year could be considered.

Annual Return for the Year ending 31st March 2021:

a) Internal Auditor's Report: This had been circulated to Cllrs and was noted. It was agreed that the Chairman and Clerk would look at this in detail, in respect, for example, of additional items on the website and Clerk's Office Allowance. A comment regarding Risk Management was noted. The Parish Council considered itself to be very risk aware.

b) Outcome of Governance Review undertaken by Cllr Owens: Cllr Owens had met with the Clerk and had no concerns to raise. He was satisfied that proper records were being maintained and adequate financial control procedures were in place.

c) Approval of Asset Register: An updated Asset Register had been circulated confirming assets of £27,691 which was approved.

d) Approval of the Governance Statement at section 1 of the Annual Return: The statements were approved. Section 1 was signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

e) Approval of the Accounting Statements at section 2 of the Annual Return: The Clerk had certified the Accounting Statements prior to the meeting. The statements were approved and signed by the Chairman.

21/031 **Date of Annual Parish Meeting:** County Cllr Simon Webb arrived at the beginning of the item. With restrictions continuing it was not felt that a meeting could be held at this point but the matter would be kept under review.

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21/032	Grants to village organisations, and Tapestry: decision deferred from May meeting: a) Pioneers - £125: It was <u>agreed</u> that Cllr Douglasss should let the Clerk know when the hall has been hired up to a total of £125. b) TVHMC - £250: Deferred until dispensations had been resolved. c) St Peter and St Paul - £250 for assistance with Churchyard maintenance: Deferred until dispensations had been resolved. d) Transfer to the Tapestry Account for inclusion of regular items of information for 2021/22: It was noted that the Tapestry account was looking healthy. Deferred pending clarity on whether the Annual Parish Meeting would take place.
21/033	Exceptional Delegated Authority: It was <u>agreed</u> that at the end of the meeting the EDA mechanism should continue until the next meeting.
	Highways
21/034	Tonbridge Road Crossing: An update was received from the Chairman who noted that the 40mph and 30mph zones had been established relatively recently and that traffic surveys are carried out regularly. The Chairman, Vice Chairman and Clerk had held a series of meetings with Highways regarding the possibility of a traffic island near Ash Tree Corner. A site had been identified to the west of the Farm Shop entrance. Highways had indicated that if the Parish Council contributed £2,000 for legal costs and £8,000 for design costs Highways would then meet the construction costs of around £35-40,000. The current prediction was that the Parish Council's financial reserves at year end March 2022 would be in the region of c£25,000. It was noted that the Parish Council also has the power to raise funds via the Public Works Loan Board. There are currently two outstanding loans with one of those loans maturing in 2024. The traffic island would assist those needing to cross the road and should help to some extent in moderating traffic speed. Regarding Malling Road, the Parish Council had considered a 20mph previously and a speed camera. A pavement had been considered but this would require compulsory purchase which was not financially viable. The HIP does include a virtual platform at Livesey Street and at the village crossroads. A reduction in the speed limit between Leigh Terrace and North Pole could be sought as a buffer to the 30mph limit. Some concern was expressed that as there are no homes alongside the northern end of Malling Road drivers would not stick to the speed limit. Cllr Ms Burgon did not feel the Parish Council should rule out options that would include street lighting. It was <u>agreed</u> that the Chairman would draft an article Following discussion, it was <u>agreed</u> that an article should be placed in Tapestry regarding the Tonbridge Road refuge, pointing out the cost, and regarding Malling Road in respect of a 40mph buffer, virtual platform, SID device. Street lighting would be mentioned. The Parish Council would check with Highways that it would not find itself in the position of paying £10,000 but getting nothing.
21/035	Road Safety/Highway Improvement Plan: This item was largely covered under 21/034 above. It was noted that the Parish Council had been pushing for a full resurfacing of Malling Road but it was doubted this would happen soon.
	Planning
21/035	21/01490/FL (TMBC) Cromar Nursery 39 Livesey Street Watlingbury Maidstone Kent ME18 5BQ 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) It was <u>agreed</u> that there would be no comment on this amended application, having previously objected to the original which was nevertheless granted, as Highways made no adverse comment, somewhat surprisingly.
	Other

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21/036	Proposal for a Flower Trough Beneath the Notice Board: With the hedge removed the area under the new notice board looked distinctly bare. It was agreed that Cllr Douglass should provide detail for possible solutions to be discussed at the next meeting.
21/037	Tree Preservation Order – Becketts Croft: The Chairman thanked Cllr Mrs Gooch for her assistance following the granting of a provisional TPO on the Limes alongside the road. It was agreed that the Lime Trees needed to be brought back to order and that the Parish Council should object to the TPO and the way it came about. The Chairman should attend the Planning Committee when the matter is considered.
21/038	Church Commissioners’ Pastoral Scheme: It was reported that Cllr Ms Burgon, Cllr Owens, Cllr Page Cllr Mrs Wheat had been appointed to Teston Parochial Church Council which now had 7 members plus the Area Dean. The Chairman provided some background to the Scheme and the representations and objection made by the Parish Council to the Judicial Committee seeking leave to Appeal. The outcome of the process was awaited. If unification went ahead Teston’s PCC would cease to exist. Cllr Mrs Gooch expressed her views and reservations. Cllr Ms Burgon noted the historic significance and uniqueness of Teston’s Church. The Chairman had raised with MP Helen Grant the issue of Churches falling outside the regulations regarding Assets of Community Value.
21/039	Book of Condolence: One of the Books of Condolence had been made available following the sad death of the His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. This was currently with the Chairman for safekeeping. As needed, a second book was available.
21/040	Clerk’s Report for Noting Only: Nothing to report.

Date of next regular meeting of the Council – 7.30p.m. on 27th July 2021 at Teston Village Hall

List of Decisions Taken by the Clerk Since 18th May 2021 Under the Agreed Scheme of Delegation During COVID-19

Detail	Decision and background	Date
Broken allotment tap	On 18 th May it was reported that a tap at the allotments had broken and water had been escaping. A tenant had taken action and turned the water off. Following consultation with Cllr Douglass, urgent steps were taken to have the tap fixed so that water could be restored. pouring out water overnight.	19.06.21

Clerk: Mrs Michelle Tatton

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