

TESTON PARISH COUNCIL

These Minutes were approved at the meeting on 18th May 2021

Minutes of Virtual Meeting Held on Zoom on 23rd March 2021

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

Mrs Michelle Tatton (Clerk)

Members of the public - 1

The Chairman drew attention to the Parish Council's Standing Orders on Photographing, Recording, Filming or Broadcasting of Teston Parish Council Meetings. No intention to photograph, record, film or broadcast the meeting was declared.

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 Miss Page and Cllr Mrs Wheat have an interest as members of Teston Village Hall Management Committee.

20/042	Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and/or Other Significant Interests: Cllr Miss Page and Cllr Mrs Wheat declared an interest in item 20/049.			
20/043	Apologies for Absence: Cllr Owens had sent his apologies due to a clash of meetings and these were <u>accepted</u> .			
20/044	Minutes of Meeting on 26th January 2021: These were <u>approved</u> as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.			
20/045	Decisions Taken by Clerk under the Scheme of Delegation Since 26th January 2021 as Set Out in the attachment: These were <u>ratified</u> .			
<i>Meeting Adjourned</i>				
Public session: There were no questions from the member of the public. For the benefit of the public the Chairman noted the change to the website, the replacement of the notice board, and the ongoing situation on Tonbridge Road and the efforts to achieve a crossing.				
<i>Meeting reconvened</i>				
	Finance and Administration			
20/046	Statement of Accounts: The Clerk had circulated details via email. The year end figure for reserves was expected to be in the region of £18,000 excluding the Tapestry Account and this was noted.			
	The Clerk would provide further analysis after the year end.			
	The following payments were <u>authorised</u> as follows:			
	23.03.21	3251	M Tatton a) Clerk's Salary March 2021	362.79
			b) Office Allowance January - March 2021	136.25
			c) Expenses February - March 2021 Total Cheque -	
		£567.07	68.03	
	3252	A Tatton - Web Support	44.00	
			£611.07	

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	Other
20/047	Clerk's Report for Noting: The Chairman drew attention to the planting on the north side of the A26 below Court Lodge Farm. The weeds had been sprayed off twice. The wildflowers would be planted very shortly. Regarding Old Post Office application for a change of use, the Parish Council had been content to leave to Maidstone Borough Council although had questioned whether the old windows should be obscured glass. Work to replace the village sign post was expected to take place imminently. A very high water bill had been received for the allotments in the sum of 652? The Chairman and Vice-Chairman had inspected and discovered a join in a plastic pipe servicing one of the taps was leaking. When the stopcock was turned off there was no issue but switched on there was a steady bubble of water coming through the join at a rate of about a metre per minute. Work to repair the leak was being organised under the Clerk's delegated powers. The contractor would be asked to consider making the pipe secure physically and in terms of risk from freezing. The Clerk and Cllr Douglass would be liaising regarding the hire of a skip, the cost of which was expected to be up to £300.
20/048	Confidential Items: It was resolved that the press and public be excluded from item 19/049 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
20/049	Proposed Pastoral Scheme for St Peter & St Paul: The Church Commissioners had determined that the proposed pastoral scheme should proceed with a combined benefice and a unified parish. Any appeal against the decision would be to Her Majesty in Council i.e. via a judicial review. The back office of the Supreme Court had advised that it is normal not to charge court fees. The Church Commissioners had been asked to commit now that if an appeal is lost they would not seek costs against the Parish Council. They had indicated that they would not seek costs up until the appeal goes live but were reserving their position thereafter. The deadline for lodging any appeal was 29th March. It was <u>agreed</u> that the only objection to the scheme was in relation to the unification of the parochial parishes of Barming and Teston, with no objection to combination of benefices. It was noted that there would usually be a village meeting to discuss the situation but this had not been possible in the current circumstances and this was considered to be unsatisfactory. Following a full discussion it the Parish Council <u>resolved</u> to appeal the decision of the Church Commissioners subject to subsequent clarification of costs.

List of Decisions Taken by the Clerk Since 20th January 2021 Under the Agreed Scheme of Delegation During COVID-19

Detail	Decision and background	Date Taken
Planning application	21/500187/PNOCLA Wealden Court Church Street Prior notification for the change of use of offices to 1 no. residential unit. For its prior approval to: Transport and Highways impacts of the development; Contamination risks on the site; Flooding risks on the site; Impacts of noise from commercial premises on the intended occupiers of the development and Provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses. Comments were sought from all Cllrs. There was no objection raised in principle. Conditions were proposed to ensure the adequacy of parking, restrict occupation to one family, and for obscured glazing to the south facing bathroom. A response was submitted on this basis.	21.01.2021
Tapestry Advertising Fees	With the approach of the new financial year consideration was given to whether the advertising fees should be increased for the period April 2021 to March 2022. The views of Cllrs were sought by email. It was felt that	18.02.2021

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	advertising rates should be held at their current level for the year ahead given the likelihood that the pandemic may have impacted negatively on some advertisers. The matter could not be left until the next formal meeting given its closeness to the end of the financial year and the need to give advertisers advanced notice of prices.	
Grounds Maintenance Contracts 2021-22	Following the last Zoom Parish Council Meeting the Clerk in conjunction with Chairman made enquiries of the preferred contractor to clarify terms of the contract, specifically in relation to indemnity and termination. Following receipt of responses these were shared with all Cllrs and it was agreed that the position had been clarified satisfactorily and that the Clerk should confirm the contract with Landscape Services. It was also agreed that the quotations from Gary's Landscapes for cutting the Village Green and Courtlands hedges should be accepted, together with the quotation from Three Counties Contracting for cutting the Allotments hedge and the wildflower verge on the south side of Tonbridge Road.	18.02.2021
Tree Application	21/500422/TCA Becketts Croft Malling Road Teston ME18 5AR – Various tree works Details were submitted to all Cllrs. It was felt that the work had been probably been needed for some while and would probably be beneficial to neighbours. On this basis a response was submitted raising no objection subject to the Tree Officer and Conservation Officer considering the work to be acceptable.	18.02.2021
Notice Board Policy	An update of the Notice Board Policy had been circulated prior to the Zoom meeting in January. As a result of discussion at that meeting a few minor changes were made to clarify access for placement of notices. These changes were shared with all Cllrs for comment following which the Policy was deemed suitable for adoption.	18.02.2021
	21/500757/FULL and 21/500759/LBC The Old Post Office Church Street Teston Maidstone Kent ME18 5AH Change of use from a post office to residential use, new shop front Cllrs were asked for comments. It was noted that, while no viability assessment had taken place, there had been a small general store and an occasional Outreach Post Office opposite this property since 2013. Regarding appearance, it was noted that the current shop window would be replaced, with openable top panels over the main windows and obscure glazing in the four main window panels. Glazing in the old door and whether the door or its glazing would be replaced was unclear. It was felt that the change would be noticeable and fairly prominent at the village crossroads and the view of the Conservation Officer would be important and the Council would support those views. The Clerk submitted a response on this basis.	03.03.2021
Notice board installation costs	A quote for installing the soon to be delivered notice board was received and circulated. Although the quote was higher than anticipated it was the general view that the quote be accepted, particularly given the time sensitivity with delivery of the board expected shortly with installation planned over Easter when the Pre-school would not be in the Village Hall. Accordingly, an advance was made to the contractor for £650 on account of materials.	10.03.2021
Tree Application	21/501029/TPOA St Peter And St Paul's Church Church TPO application to prune back overhanging branches of one Red Oak to boundary wall of churchyard View were sought from all Cllrs with the except of Cllr Miss Page who had submitted the application on behalf of the Church. It was the collective view that Cllrs should support the Tree Officer, including any variations to the work proposed, with the assumption that <i>particular attention be given to the Red Oak, including the effect of work on the tree's balance, stability, on-going health and appearance.</i> The Clerk submitted a response on this basis.	12.03.2021

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Signed.....Chairman

Date: 18th May 2021