

Teston Parish Council

These Minutes were approved at the Meeting on 30th November 2021

Minutes of Meeting on 28th September 2021
7.30pm Teston Village Hall

Chairman of the Meeting - Cllr Christopher Douglass (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Coulling (part)
Cllr Ms Burgon (part)
Cllr Levett
Cllr Owens
Cllr Miss Page
Cllr Mrs Wheat

Mrs Michelle Tatton (Clerk)

Members of the public - 1

Cllr Douglass 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.

21/067	Chairmanship of the Meeting: It was noted the Chairman of the Parish Council would not arrive until later in the meeting. In the circumstances, and in line with Standing Orders, Cllr Douglass took the chair.
21/068	Declarations of Interest and Dispensations: 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; d) Cllr Douglass, Cllr Miss Page and Cllr Mrs Wheat declared an interest as members of Teston Village Hall Management Committee, and Cllr Owens although declarations at the start of the meeting should be seen in the context of item 21/080 below; and e) Cllr Burgon, Cllr Owens, Cllr Miss Page, and Cllr Mrs Wheat declared an interest as members of the Parochial Church Council.
21/069	Apologies for absence: Cllr Coulling had indicated that he would be arriving late to the meeting as a result of required attendance at a Maidstone Borough Council meeting. Cllr Ms Burgon also had a prior engagement but hoped to attend later. These apologies for late attendance were <u>accepted</u> . County Cllr Simon Webb and Maidstone Borough Cllr Mrs Fay Gooch had sent apologies.
Meeting adjourned to receive comments and questions from members of the public	
- The footway in Church Street had been repaired but there were still several holes. The resident noted that the pavement was very uneven with multiple layers added over the years. There was concern that it had not all been fixed with some bad holes particularly towards the far eastern end. The resident would send photographs to the Clerk who would then take the matter up with Kent Highways. - It was reported that the tree opposite The Rectory was being hit by the dust cart, and footballs have been punctured by the spikes. A request was made for the trees along the edge to be pruned. Cllr Levett would inspect the trees. - Since Covid the noise from the railway had worsened. Cllr Douglass recalled that the matter had been raised previously and the response from Network Rail had been reported in Tapestry. The Clerk found Network Rail's response and read this to the meeting. It was noted that the path over Boathouse Meadow is a public footpath on the definitive map and could not be closed. The Clerk would re-circulate the response from NR to Cllrs who could consider whether the matter should be raised again. - There was concern that vehicles were still entering Barham Court via Church Street East at speed. On one morning recently 8 vehicles were observed travelling at excessive speed between 8am and 9am. Cllr Miss Page noted that this was also happening at other times of the day. The matter would be discussed further under Agenda item 21/089.	

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21/070	Minutes of meeting on 27th July 2021: It was noted that Cllr Levett had been omitted from the attendance list. With this addition, the Minutes were <u>approved</u> as a correct record of the meeting and signed by Cllr Douglass.			
21/071	Re-ordering of Items on the Agenda: No changes were felt to be necessary.			
21/072	Ratification of Decisions: Decisions taken by the Clerk since the last meeting, as set out at the end of these Minutes, and in line with delegation of authority, were <u>ratified</u> .			
	Administration and Finance			
21/073	Statement of Accounts: A Financial Statement showing a balance of £35358.54 had been circulated prior to the meeting. The following payments were <u>authorised</u> :			
	28.09.2021	3288	PKF Littlejohn Audit Fee	240.00
	28.09.2021	3289	M Tatton - RBLI Wreath (to reimburse card payment)	50.00
	28.09.2021	3290	M Tatton a) Clerk's Salary September	362.79
	28.09.2021		b) Office Allowance - Total cheque £499.04	136.25
	28.09.2021	3291	Paul Maitland - water pipe repairs at Allotments	139.50
	28.09.2021	3292	M Tatton Clerk's Salary October 2021	362.79
	28.09.2021	3293	P Coulling - Magnets for noticeboard	11.99
	28.09.2021	3294	M Tatton Clerk's Expenses to 28th September 2021	34.16
	28.09.2021	3295	A Tatton - Website and general assistance to 28.09.21	10.00
			TOTAL	£1347.48
Cllr Douglass noted that the notional amount held for the allotments is now in debit.				
21/074	Annual Return for the Year ending 31st March 2021: The external audit had been concluded routinely. The necessary papers had been placed on the noticeboard and the website.			
21/075	Standing Orders Review: (deferred from July meeting) It was <u>agreed</u> to defer to a future meeting pending consideration by the Cllr Coulling.			
21/076	Risk Assessment: An updated Risk Assessment had been circulated to Cllrs and this was <u>approved</u> .			
21/077	Grant to TLCT to Fund a Kissing Gate at Ripton Wood (deferred from July meeting) It was <u>agreed</u> in principle to consider a grant for a gate should TLCT make an approach to the Parish Council for funding.			
21/078	TLCT Hedge: A payment of £75 had been made by the Parish Council for cutting of the hedge along the roadside of Ripton Wood. It was <u>agreed</u> to treat this payment as a grant to TLCT.			
21/079	Remembrance Day: It was <u>agreed</u> that a donation of £50 should be made for the wreath. Payment would need to be made electronically and this would be organised by the Clerk who would be provided with a cheque in reimbursement. Wreath to be delivered to Cllr Coulling.			
21/080	Parish Council Members of Village Hall Committee: Cllr Owens had requested to stand down from the Village Hall Committee. Cllr Miss Page, as an existing Committee Member for the Church, proposed that she could represent the Parish Council and a member of the public already on the Committee would be able to represent the PCC. This was <u>agreed</u> . Cllr Coulling arrived towards the end of this item. Cllr Douglass remained in the Chair.			
	Planning			
21/081	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			

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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**
It was noted that the application would come to TMBC's Area 3 Planning Committee on 30th September. Cllr Coulling had requested to speak in person.

c) 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**

d) 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 – **Approved 29.07.21**

e) 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 **Decided 06.09.21 – Split decision** – Approved in respect of the method statement, tree protection method, biodiversity enhancements, storage/screening of bicycles/refuse bins/collection of refuse bins; refused in respect of landscaping

ii) Newly submitted applications/ratify submissions made

a) 21/504210/FULL 3 The Bungalows Church Street Teston Maidstone Kent ME18 5AH
Demolition of conservatory and erection of single storey rear/side extension – **Comments submitted and decision awaited**

b) Barnjet Layby, Tonbridge Road Barming - Street Trading Application – Comments submitted and decision awaited

c) 21/504688/FULL Keepers Cottage Teston Corner Teston Maidstone Kent ME18 5BA
Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of single storey rear extension, orangery and conversion of existing garage to an annexe for use by disabled relative, incorporating new pitched roof - **Comments submitted and decision awaited –**

d) 21/504878/LBC Becketts Croft Malling Road Teston Maidstone Kent ME18 5AR
Listed Building Consent for demolition of a two storey and a single storey rear extension. Erection of a two storey and a single storey rear extension with alterations to ground floor rear rooms – **Comments submitted and decision awaited**

e) 21/504080/FULL 12 Courtlands Teston Maidstone Kent ME18 5AS
Installation of solar panels to garage roof and convert two hipped roof ends to gable ends
While there was no objection to solar panels, there was some concern that conversion of the roof from hipped to gabled would be out of character with the overall locality.

f) 21/504912 The Cottage East Church Street Teston ME18 5AJ
Erection of summerhouse, potting shed, fence and retention of small greenhouse (part retrospective)
The Parish Council would be guided by the Conservation Officer. If s/he objects, the Parish Council

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	would support that objection, subject to seeing its detail.
21/082	MBC and TMBC Local Plan Updates: Cllr Coulling reported on the latest position and would circulate a written report to Cllrs shortly.
	Environment
21/083	Proposal for a Flower Trough Beneath the Notice Board: The Village Hall Committee had discussed the matter and agreed that a trough under the notice board would be suitable. Cllr Douglass would progress as Chair of the Village Committee and obtain some costings. Cllr Coulling proposed that the Parish Council consider a grant of £500 to the Village Hall (in addition to the £250 already agreed at the July meeting) provided a brick-built trough is established, and this was <u>agreed</u> . Cllr Douglass did not take part in the vote.
21/084	Play Area: a) Inspection Rota: October – Cllr Coulling; November – Cllr Burgon; December – Cllr Levett b) Play Area Inspection: The ROSPA report was noted. Cllr Coulling observed that the Maidstone BC grant for play areas had been exhausted but Maidstone KALC were exerting pressure to establish further grant funding. Cllr Ms Burgon offered to secure the net of the goal using cable ties as this was loose at the top of the frame and it was <u>agreed</u> she should go ahead.
21/085	Allotments a) Update from Cllr Douglass upon inspections and turnover of vacant plots: Some plots were noted to be in need of attention. Cllr Douglass suggested that unless those plots were brought into order the tenancies should not be renewed. b) Purchase of chicken wire for securing the southern boundary: The tenants had sorted the problem themselves and Cllr Douglass had not had to buy any chicken wire. c) Latest water meter readings and emergency work to fix a leak: Another leak had occurred due to broken pipework. The pipe had now been repaired and buried lower down. No other leaks were apparent. It was hoped water rates would stabilise. d) Allotment rent increase for the period November 2021 – October 2022: Due to the current Covid situation it was not proposed to hold an allotment meeting. Cllr Douglass proposed an increase in rent of £2 for Teston residents, and £5 for non-Teston residents, putting rent at £20 and £30 respectively and this was <u>agreed</u> .
21/086	Silver Birch at Western End of Tonbridge Road: A resident had raised an issue with a tree on the western verge and this was noted. It was felt that the trees on the verge have a positive effect both visually and in terms of driver behaviour. It was <u>agreed</u> that the Parish Council should ask Highways to look at the tree but before any work is undertaken they should consult with the Parish Council. It was further <u>agreed</u> that the Parish Council approach KCC regarding ownership of the verge.
21/087	Work at Teston Country Park: During the last week the Environment Agency had commenced work at the Country Park to install a 3.5 metre wide 'road' from the car park to the sluice. While it was recognised that the EA had certain powers, the issue was permanence. Cllr Coulling and the Clerk were in email contact with the KCC Cabinet Member and the Head of Country Parks.
	Highways
21/088	Highways Spreadsheet: Current and new routine maintenance items were noted and the spreadsheet was updated.
21/089	Highway Improvement Plan: Cllr Coulling had circulated a report to Cllrs prior to the meeting. In response to the article in Tapestry a total of 11 responses had been received (3 of which were from the same individual). In essence there were 35 different suggestions which fitted into 20 different categories. A number of follow-on actions had been proposed. It was <u>agreed</u> that Cllrs would consider and feed comments back to the Clerk who would then have delegated authority in conjunction with Cllr Coulling to take matters forward.

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	It was noted that the issue raised by the member of the public was included within the report and so would be considered. It was agreed that a traffic survey should be undertaken within a budget of around £250 plus vat.
21/090	Loan of Teston's Speedwatch Equipment to Nettlestead Parish Council: The Clerk had been liaising with Nettlestead PC following their request. It was agreed that the terms on which the equipment would be loaned would be as follows: 1. Nettlestead PC will store the equipment securely between sessions 2. Nettlestead PC will replace the two batteries at its own cost 3. The equipment will be returned to Teston PC at one month's notice along with the replacement batteries which Nettlestead PC will gift to Teston PC 4. Teston PC offers no assurance of the state of the equipment, including its accuracy 5. Nettlestead PC will insure the equipment against loss and damage and provide evidence that such insurance is in place. It was understood Nettlestead PC were agreeable to these terms. The Clerk would put Nettlestead's Clerk in touch with Cllr Coulling so that arrangements could be made to hand over the equipment.
21/091	Parking of Network Rail Vehicles at Livesey Street Near Junction with Malling Road: The Clerk had contacted Network Rail on two occasions regarding the parking of their vehicles at the junction. They had promised to ask their drivers not to park at this location. However parking was continuing. It was agreed that the Clerk should write again before escalating the matter. On rail issues, Cllr Burgon noted that there were perhaps 3 occasions recently when the barrier at the level crossing had jammed which had then caused considerable congestion, with drivers reversing onto Tonbridge Road. The Clerk was asked to contact Network Rail to seek an assurance that the fault was cured, and to question why signage is not put up to warn drivers not to turn into Teston Lane when such problems occur.
	Other
21/092	Notice Board Policy: A revised policy had been circulated and this was discussed. Cllr Miss Page noted the history of the previous board and did not feel it reasonable that the Church should be limited to 4 pieces of A4 and had felt under pressure previously to agree that. The Church had access to a third of the old notice board. Cllr Levett noted that it was Cllr Miss Page's willingness to lose the original Church notice board that led to the working arrangement for the previous notice board (that was financed by the Parish Council of the day). However, it was noted that the Parish Council financed and installed the new noticeboard at the edge of the Village Hall grounds, with permission from Teston Village Hall Management Committee and that the Parish Council is responsible for its ongoing maintenance, insurance and usage arrangements. Cllr Ms Burgon felt that the policy might be useful in future but in the current circumstances there should be co-operation. Cllr Coulling felt that the draft policy included the necessary flexibility, but agreed that it should be revisited, as Cllr Miss Page stated that she felt unable to raise her concerns when the policy was originally established. It was proposed that the draft policy be redrafted to reflect that the left-hand bay be for use by Teston Church, save that, if there is insufficient space for the Parish Council's notices in the two other bays, these would take precedence over those Church notices.
21/093	Church Commissioners' Pastoral Scheme: Nothing further had been heard formally, but Cllr Miss Page stated that the Area Dean had recently said that he expected to hear by end-October whether the Parish Council may appeal the Church Commissioners' decision.
21/094	HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee: The Village Hall has been booked. Part of the celebration could include placing a plaque on the proposed trough under the notice board. The working group had met and further details would be shared in due course.
21/095	Date of Annual Parish Meeting: (deferred from July meeting) It was still not felt that a meeting could be arranged at the present time. The 2022 Annual Parish Meeting would be arranged for as early as possible within the designated period.

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21/096	Parish Council Meeting Dates for 2022: The following dates were noted: 25 th January; 29 th March; 31 st May; 19 th July; 27 th September; 29 th November.
21/097	Arrangements for New Years Day Event: The Hall had been booked for New Year's Day 2022 and 2023. For New Year's Day 2022, where possible, supplies would be obtained via the shop within a budget of around £250.
21/098	Yuletide Event: It was decided that there would be no event this year.
21/099	Clerk's Report for Noting Only: KCC were consulting upon a reduction in speed limit from the national speed limit to 40mph on the A26 at Watringbury from just west of Bijou Nurseries to just west of Pizien Well Road. This was noted. Cllr Levett would be inspecting a tree on the Village Green that was causing concern for a neighbour and would report to Cllrs. The pavement at Courtlands had been surfaced but parts had been left and were not satisfactory. Photos would be sent to the Clerk who would raise the matter with Highways.
21/100	Exceptional Delegated Authority: It was <u>agreed</u> that EDA should continue until the next meeting.
Meeting Adjourned	
Teston Land Conservation Trust matters - The fence between lower Boathouse Meadow and the field towards Barming needed attention. The cost would be split with the adjacent owner. - Network Rail had been given permission to park inside the gate of the woodland area under a licence. - The Farm Business Tenancy with the Young Farmers would be due for renewal shortly. Trustees were asked to consider whether this should be extended. Cllr Levett noted that the fences needed attention. - It was noted that the western wall of the hopper huts might be made more weatherproof. - The Young Farmers had been asked for a quote for cutting Boathouse Meadow. Teston Village Stores CIC matters - Finances were reported to be stable at present, aided by sponsors. - At some point an application may be made to the Parish Council for an annual grant. - There were now only 4 volunteers and a lack of staff had almost caused a closure on more than one occasion. - Alcohol sales are starting to pick up.	
Confidential Items	
21/101	It was <u>resolved</u> that the press and public to be excluded from the items 21//102 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.
21/102	Enforcement issues: It was <u>agreed</u> that the Web Assistant be requested to map certain developments that were identified so that, as necessary, the matter could be raised with Maidstone Borough Council. A potential enforcement breach was noted. It was <u>agreed</u> this be raised with MBC.

'Date of next regular meeting of the Council – 7.30p.m. on 30th November 2021 at Teston Village Hall

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List of Decisions Taken by the Clerk Since 27th July 2021 Under the Agreed Scheme of Delegation During COVID-19

Detail	Decision and background	Date
Street Trading application	Barnjet Layby, Tonbridge Road Barming - Street Trading Application – Comments submitted and decision awaited Details were circulated to all Cllrs. No objection was raised subject to the following: 1. To be noted that trading is from a trailer, not a stall. 2. No advertising material should be visible, except when street trading is in operation. 3. That the immediate area is kept tidy and free of any rubbish, particularly at busy times and in windy weather 4. Any plastic chairs and tables put out are kept as close as possible to the vicinity of the van or as close as possible to the field boundary, to protect the safety of customers 5. Concerns about the environmental safety of the layby because of overnight lorry parking is addressed, as appropriate in consultation with KCC. Appropriate signage should be established and measures should be taken to prevent overnight parking because of the absence of toilet facilities. 6. Via KCC, MBC should ensure that deep pot-holes are addressed very soon to protect the safety of the business. A response was submitted on this basis.	02.09.2021
Planning Application	21/504878/LBC Becketts Croft Malling Road - Listed Building Consent for demolition of a two storey and a single storey rear extension. Erection of a two storey and a single storey rear extension with alterations to a ground floor rear rooms Details of the application were circulated to all Cllrs for comment. No adverse comments were received and the Clerk responded to the consultation to note no objection subject to the. Conservation Officer's input.	13.09.2021
Planning Application	21/504688/FULL Keepers Cottage Teston Corner - Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of single storey rear extension, orangery and conversion of existing garage to an annexe for use by disabled relative, incorporating new pitched roof. Details were circulated to all Cllrs. No objections were raised and the Clerk responded on this basis.	13.09.2021

Clerk: Mrs Michelle Tatton

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Signed.....Chairman
 30th November 2021