

Minutes of Meeting on 29th March 2022
7.30pm Teston Village Hall

These Minutes were approved at the Meeting on 31st May 2022

Cllr Coulling (Chairman)
Cllr Douglass (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Levett
Cllr Owens
Cllr Miss Page
Cllr Mrs Wheat

Mrs Michelle Tatton (Clerk)
Cllr Webb (KCC) (part)
Members of the public - 0

The Chairman drew attention 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.

22/021	Declarations of Interest and Dispensations: In the interests of transparency, all Parish Councillors declared 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; (e) Cllr Douglass, Cllr Miss Page and Cllr Mrs Wheat declared an interest as members of Teston Village Hall Management Committee and (f) Cllr Owens, Cllr Miss Page and Cllr Mrs Wheat declared an interest as members of the Parochial Church Council. No other declarations were made.				
21/022	Apologies for Absence: These were received from Cllr Ms Burgon and <u>agreed</u> . Cllr Mrs Gooch had also sent her apologies.				
Meeting adjourned to receive comments and questions from members of the public					
There were no members of the public present.					
22/023	Minutes of Meeting on 25th January 2022: These were <u>approved</u> as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.				
22/024	Re-ordering of Items on the Agenda: No changes were required.				
22/025	Ratification of Decisions: The decisions taken by the Clerk since the last meeting, as set out at the end of these Minutes, and in line with the delegation of authority, were noted and <u>ratified</u> .				
Administration and Finance					
22/026	a) Statement of Accounts: A Financial Statement showing a balance of £27,464.21 had been circulated prior to the meeting. The following payments were <u>authorised</u> :				
	29.03.2022	3314	M Tatton total £709.79 a) Clerk's Salary March 2022		370.37
			b) Clerk's Backpay year April 2020-end February 2022		97.98
			c) Clerk's Office Allowance January - March 2022		136.25
			d) Clerk's Expenses end January to March Meeting 2022		105.19
	29.03.2022	3315	A Tatton web and admin - approximately 1.5 hours		15.00
	29.03.2022	3316	Teston Village Hall Hire and Storage Charges for year to date		123.00
	29.03.2022	3317	Teston Parochial Church Council		250.00

		TOTAL	£1097.79
	It was noted that the estimated year end position was £26,641.42. Regarding the Tapestry account, printing costs would be going up. It was felt that the quality of print from TMBC was very good and there was no wish to change suppliers. Some new advertisers had come forward had this would hopefully lead to a small surplus in the next financial year. In terms of the allotments, it was noted that notional funds were now in debit. The situation regarding payments for the trough would be resolved with the Village Hall at the next meeting.		
22/027	Clerk's Salary Award for period April 2021-March 2022: The National Joint Council for Local Government Services had finally agreed new rates of pay applicable from 1st April 2021. The new hourly rate applicable from 1st April 2021 for SCP14 was £12.21. The Chairman had calculated a new monthly rate of £370.37 and this was <u>agreed</u>. The Chairman had calculated backpay for the period 1st April 2021 to 28th February 2022 at £83.42. While looking at the figures, the Chairman had also noted that the wrong hourly rate had been applied for the year 2020-21 (£11.96 instead of £12.00), resulting in an underpayment in that year of £14.56. Therefore, the total backpay amounted to £97.98 across both years and this was <u>agreed</u>.		
22/028	End of Year Audit and Financial Review: An appointment had been arranged with the Internal Auditor for him to visit the Clerk on 25th April. The Clerk would arrange to meet with Cllr Owens and Cllr Mrs Wheat for their purpose of a financial review following the audit but before the next Parish Council meeting.		
22/029	Updating of Bank Signatories: With specific reference to the online form that must be completed, it was <u>resolved</u> that: 1) Cllr Ms Tina Burgon be added as a signatory to each of the Parish Council's bank accounts with Natwest, and that Gillian Berry, Olive Oxley, and Alan Perkins be removed 2) if we add or remove Authorised Signatures in the "Add or remove individuals" section of the form, the Bank will update our mandate accordingly for the accounts we specify in the form's "About your business" section 3) if we change the Signing Rules in the "Account Signing Rules" section of this form, the Bank will update our mandate accordingly for the accounts we specify in the form's "About your business" section 4) the Bank can phone the individuals we have identified as "Call Back Contacts" to confirm or correct any instructions or information that we have given the Bank 5) and the current mandate will continue as amended.		
	Planning		
	i) New/pending decisions a) 20/505234/TPOA Barham Mews Tonbridge Road Teston Kent TPO application: Various tree works – Permitted 03.02.2022 b) 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 c) Barnjet Layby, Tonbridge Road Barming - Street Trading Application Comments submitted and decision awaited d) 21/506761/FULL Durley Tonbridge Road Teston ME18 5BU Erection of single storey rear extension with light lanterns, to create semi-independent accommodation ancillary to main dwelling: To ratify comments submitted by the Clerk – Withdrawn 01.03.2022 e) 21/506857/TCA Becketts Croft Malling Road Teston ME18 5AR TPO Application for (G1) 11 x Limes - reduce to form 'French pollard' to finished height of 12m and		

	Self seeded Lime on end of group - fell trees (as show on Tree location plan). (T4) - Lime - -reduce to height of previous pollard points (8m finished height) removing 12m of growth and remove all basal growth back to source – No objection 15.02.2022 The Chairman noted that a road closure was likely to be required so that the work could take place.
22/030	f) 22/500140/FULL The Cottage East Church Street Teston Erection of potting shed and fence, and retention of summerhouse and small greenhouse (part retrospective) (resubmission of 21/504912/FULL) – Decision awaited g) 22/500838/TCA 1 Woodlands Close Teston ME18 5AL Conservation area notification to remove three Conifers – Decision awaited h) 22/500956/FULL Woodlands Cottage Livesey Street ME18 5AY Erection of a detached games room and garden shed, to replace existing prefabricated large garage and storage shed (Resubmission of 21/506217/FULL) – Decision awaited i) 22/501171/TCA Witches Wood Tonbridge Road Barming (incorrect address noted) Notification of works in a Conservation Area T1 (Red Oak) - Carry out 30% (Approx. 3m Reduction) – Decision awaited j) TMBC 20/02749/OAEA Land South of Barming Station 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) Appeal, Planning Inspectorate reference 3288065 – Decision awaited ii) Newly submitted applications/ratify submissions made It was noted that the Parish Council's own application for tree work on the Village Green had been submitted and validated. The Village Hall Committee would be progressing with an application for work to reduce the Beech.
22/031	MBC and TMBC Local Plan Updates: The TMBC Local Plan process was likely to take at least another 18 months to reach Regulations 19 stage. It was noted that Tunbridge Wells BC was being challenged on duty to cooperate. Regarding MBC's Plan, the Reg 19 draft would be submitted imminently to the Secretary of State along with a number of MBC's own main modifications.
	Environment
22/032	Teston Bridge Country Park: The Chairman thanked Cllr Webb and Cllr Mrs Gooch for their strong support. a) Environment Agency work: A formal planning application was awaited for whatever the Environment Agency wished to leave on site permanently. Regarding the overflow car park, the work undertaken was outwith permitted development rights and this had been raised; b) Play Area work: The Country Parks Team had been allocated post Covid funding with which they would be replacing play equipment across their country parks. The Clerk had asked what would happen with the existing play equipment. This would be chased. c) Potential resurfacing of public footpath west of the Country Park: The Clerk asked the PROW Team whether anything could be done to deal with the mud on this popular route, noting that keeping the path 'natural' was important to the Parish Council and urbanisation with a hard surface would be a concern. The response from the Public Rights of Way team was noted. The situation would be watched very carefully. d) Liaison Meetings: A Liaison Meeting would take place on 17th May. The Chairman and Clerk would attend, and Cllr Douglass if the Chairman became unavailable. It was <u>agreed</u> that the Country Park should remain as natural as possible and that the Liaison Group should be consulted before any other development takes place.
22/033	Tree Work a) Tree Application for felling of Silver Birch at Teston Village Green: As reported under 22/030(ii) the application had been submitted and validated. b) Teston Village Hall work to the Beech within the Hall grounds: It was noted that the Village Hall would be proceeding with an application to reduce the Beech.

22/034	Church Hedge and Churchyard Maintenance: The hedge had not yet been cut. The Clerk would chase. The work would include the section of hedge on the boundary of the churchyard and this was agreed by the Church. The Parish Council wished to explore whether there was anything else it could do with respect to helping with maintenance of the churchyard. Cllr Miss Page noted that the Church's gratitude for the financial contribution already made but any additional financial contribution would be welcomed. Cllrs were asked to consider the matter ahead of the next meeting.
	Highways
22/035	Highway Improvement Plan: An article had been placed in Tapestry regarding the possibility of a mobile speed indicating device although it had not made clear that the intention was to have 3 mounting poles, allowing the SID to be moved. The Chairman reported on a meeting which he, Cllr Webb and the Clerk had attended with KCC regarding mobile SIDs. Equipment via KCC would cost in the region of £9,000. Cllr Webb had offered to assist with a contribution and had already set aside £2,500 from his KCC Member Fund, depending on the cost and the type of SID. It was noted that some equipment was available that could record and store vehicle speed data. It was agreed in principle, and subject to any further responses to the Tapestry article, to - explore further the options for a mobile SID - ideally the SID would be mobile across 3 sites - if it was only possible to have only one SID it should be located at the junction of Malling Road and Livesey Street - if the option of multiple SIDs could be secured, a further two mounting sites would be located on Tonbridge Road at the eastern and western ends - ideally the SID would have enhanced capability to flash up the actual speed of passing vehicles (not just remind them of the limit) and store speed and numbers of vehicles for subsequent analysis - it would be acceptable for the device to be battery powered, subject to checks on battery capability. Cllr Webb noted that a SID could not be in one place for too long and on the Tonbridge Road the battery would run down quite quickly. A Highway Spreadsheet upon routine items had been circulated prior to the meeting.
22/036	Parking of Network Rail Vehicles at Livesey Street Near Junction with Malling Road: The Clerk provided an update from the PCSO who would attempt to contact the driver of the vehicle.
	Other
22/037	MBC's Local Plan Review: See Minute 22/031
22/038	Ward Boundary Consultation: A review of Ward boundaries was underway. An initial suggestion from officers had placed Teston with Coxheath and the Farleighs. The next iteration put Teston with an expanded Barming – Teston and Barming Heath. MBC's relevant Committee had approved Barming Heath with Teston. It was agreed that the Parish Council would support this proposal. The Chairman noted that the Ward boundaries were not respectful of Parish boundaries in all cases but there would be a review of parish boundaries in the next year. A draft response to the Boundary Commission had been circulated to Cllrs. The Clerk would send this to Cllrs again for urgent comment prior to submission.
22/039	TMBC Active Travel Consultation – closing 18th April: It was noted that the proposals included the potential resurrection of plans to close North Pole Road. Cllrs were also watchful of potential changes at Teston Road. It was agreed Cllrs should send comments to the Clerk who was given delegated authority to respond in consultation with the Chairman.
22/040	HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee: It was confirmed that the beacon would be lit on Thursday 2nd June. The sum of £500 was agreed for refreshments for the event. As to marking the Jubilee with a permanent feature, the Chairman had been investigating a plaque and had approached the company that provided the slate for the trough and had obtained a quote

	for around £500 plus vat plus delivery and installation. It was agreed that this should be pursued within a budget of £1,500 excluding vat for purchase of the plaque, engraving, delivery and installation. The form of wording was discussed and noted. It was agreed that the final details would be worked up by the Jubilee Working Group, circulated to Cllrs by the Clerk for final urgent comment, and the Clerk would then have delegated authority to place the order. The positioning of the plaque would be subject to further discussion once options had been fully investigated but given the lead time for preparation of the plaque it was felt the order should not be delayed. A budget of £500 excluding vat was agreed for the purchase of commemorative mugs. Primary school children would receive a mug free and others would be available for sale. It was noted by the Clerk that in the event that mugs were offered for sale no vat could be recovered on the purchase cost. Cllr Miss Page reported that she had made contact with a piper.
22/041	Community Safety Ward Cluster Meetings: The current position was reported upon by Chairman.
22/042	Arrangements for Annual Parish Meeting on 17th May: It was agreed, with some reluctance, that no guest speaker would be invited given the uncertainty of residents attending. A budget of £25 was agreed for refreshments and £25 for a leaflet to be delivered with Tapestry.
22/043	Church Commissioners' Pastoral Scheme: The outcome was noted. Teston would cease to exist as a separate ecclesiastical Parish.
22/044	Lorry Movements on Malling Road: The continued increase in lorry movements on Malling Road was a concern. Further enquiries would be made.
22/045	Clerk's Report for Noting Only i) Play Area Rota: March – Cllr Owens; April – Cllr Mrs Wheat; May – Cllr Coulling; June – Cllr Ms Burgon; July – Cllr Levett; ii) Damage to Village Green: The damage seemed to be resolving itself but this would be monitored and, if necessary, the Clerk would follow up on the previous request for a quote for work to restore iii) Standing Orders: This item will return to a future Agenda iv) Train Horns: The Clerk had reported to Cllrs regarding further exchanges with Network Rail. Network Rail did not support the removal of whistle boards at this crossing. They had noted their longterm solution to close the footpath crossing and this had been noted. Any propose closure should be subject to a formal consultation process. v) Other items to note a) Assets of Community Value Status: To be progressed in due course. b) Possible Future Grant to Teston Village Stores CIC: Need to be monitored. c) Village Green/Village Hall Boundary: To be progressed in due course. d) Removal of seating from play area at Teston Bridge Country Park: To be reviewed and progressed as necessary in due course. e) Ambulance Sirens: To return to a future Agenda. The Chairman reported that he had been approached by the Chairman of Teston Club regarding the siting of an 'Unknown Tommy' metal statue. Possible locations were discussed but no decision was taken.
22/046	Exceptional Delegated Authority: It was agreed that EDA should continue until the next meeting.
Meeting Adjourned	
• Teston Land Conservation Trust matters: With specific reference to the online form that must be completed to update bank signatories, it was resolved that: 1. Tina Burgon, Christopher Douglass and Nina Wheat be added as a signatory to each of Teston Conservation Trust's bank accounts with Natwest and Olive Oxley, Alan Perkins and Robert Wells	

- be removed
2. if we add or remove Authorised Signatures in the “Add or remove individuals” section of the form, the Bank will update our mandate accordingly for the accounts we specify in the form's “About your business” section
 3. if we change the Signing Rules in the “Account Signing Rules” section of this form, the Bank will update our mandate accordingly for the accounts we specify in the form's “About your business” section
 4. the Bank can phone the individuals we have identified as “Call Back Contacts” to confirm or correct any instructions or information that we have given the Bank
 5. and the current mandate will continue as amended.

Other TLCT matters

- The stile opposite the Country Park was broken and had been replaced. KCC PROW were donating 2 bags of aggregate to build up the ground to reduce the step up;
- Upper and Lower Boathouse Meadow would be mown in due course at a cost of £150 per field;
- The hedge at Ripton Wood would be cut in the autumn. Cllr Levett noted that further planting was required to fill in the gaps and this was noted.

• **Teston Village Stores CIC matters**

With specific reference to the online form that must be completed to update bank signatories, it was **resolved** that:

1. Tina Burgon and Nina Wheat be added as a signatory to each of Teston Village Stores CIC bank accounts with Natwest, and that Rebecca Collins and Alan Perkins be removed
2. if we add or remove Authorised Signatures in the “Add or remove individuals” section of the form, the Bank will update our mandate accordingly for the accounts we specify in the form's “About your business” section
3. if we change the Signing Rules in the “Account Signing Rules” section of this form, the Bank will update our mandate accordingly for the accounts we specify in the form's “About your business” section
4. the Bank can phone the individuals we have identified as “Call Back Contacts” to confirm or correct any instructions or information that we have given the Bank
5. and the current mandate will continue as amended.

Other CIC matters

- Cllr Coulling provided an update on staff/volunteer matters;
- The general financial position was discussed and noted.

	Confidential Items
22/047	It was <u>resolved</u> that the press and public be excluded from items 22/048 and 22/049 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
22/048	Allotments: The tenancy issue had been resolved as the tenant had voluntarily surrendered their plot.
22/049	Enforcement issues: An enforcement matter was noted. The Clerk would chase MBC for an update.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.15pm

Date of Annual Parish Meeting – 7.30pm on 17th May 2022 at Teston Village Hall

Date of Annual Meeting of the Parish Council – 7.30pm on 31st May 2022 at Teston Village Hall

Decisions Taken by the Clerk Since 25th January Under Agreed Scheme of Delegation

Ratified under Agenda item 22/025

Detail	Decision and background	Date
Planning Application	22/500140/FULL The Cottage East Church Street Teston Erection of potting shed and fence, and retention of summerhouse and small greenhouse (part retrospective) (resubmission of 21/504912/FULL) Comments were sought from all Cllrs, following which the following response was submitted: Teston Parish Council supports approval of this application. Should Officers be minded to recommend refusal, we request they speak to Teston's Clerk explaining why and, if a recommendation to refuse is then logged, we request to speak at Planning Committee.	07.02.2022
Planning Application	22/500838/TCA 1 Woodlands Close Teston ME18 5AL Conservation area notification to remove three Conifers With one proviso, the Parish Council has no objection to the proposed work; that proviso is that a condition is applied to any approval. As the applicant is not the owner of the trees, that condition should state that the work only proceeds with the written approval of the owner of 1 Woodlands Close (the site of the trees), with that approval evidenced to MBC before work proceeds. If such a condition is not to be applied by MBC, the Parish Council requests to be briefed via the Clerk on how MBC would ensure that the work does not proceed without the owner's approval.	08.03.2022
Data Protection Fee	A notification was received regarding payment of the Data Protection Fee to the ICO. By signing up to pay by Direct Debit the Council would have the opportunity to save £5. Cllrs took the view that this should be done. The Clerk and Chairman liaised, the form was completed, and the DD has been set up. Payment will be made in early April each year.	25.02.2022
Village Green hedge works	Following the January Meeting, the Chairman met with the contractor to discuss work to the Village Green hedge. It was subsequently proposed that more extensive work be undertaken than initially anticipated i.e. to reduce the height of the hedge by around 5 feet and cut it back hard. The work was quoted at £1,120 plus £60 per load for removal of the cuttings. The views of Cllrs were sought. It was noted that while the hedge had been given a significant trim in September 2018 it had not had a really heavy cut since 2014. Having received comments the Clerk accepted the quotation. A query was raised about the section of hedge alongside the Church adjacent to the Village Green which it was felt should be reduced to the same height. Following further comments from Cllrs, a quote from the contractor for £340 to reduce the height was accepted	25.02.2022 and 02.03.2022
Tree Application	The Clerk and Cllr Levett met with the tree surgeon to discuss the Silver Birch at Teston Village Green. The tree surgeon felt that removal of the whole of the heavy branch would create too large a wound and would leave the tree vulnerable to failure, but he noted that the heavy branch has an off-shoot part way. He felt that the lower part could be removed and other reduction work could take place which would be satisfactory in terms of maintaining the tree in a health/stable shape. However, he noted that the tree is now quite mature. A quote was subsequently received detailing this possible work and, as an alternative, felling. The tree is of concern to the neighbour and is leaning towards the play frame. Views were sought from Cllrs who indicated a preference for felling the tree and planting a replacement. The Clerk has submitted the necessary tree application to Maidstone Borough	17.03.2022

	Council and has accepted the contractor's quote to fell, subject to outcome of the application.	
Tree Application	22/501171/TCA Witches Wood Tonbridge Road Barming (incorrect address noted) Notification of works in a Conservation Area T1 (Red Oak) - Carry out 30% (Approx. 3m Reduction) Comments were sought from all Cllrs, following which the following response was submitted: We note that the site address is incorrect, as we assume the application relates to the Red Oak in the churchyard of Teston's Church, not Witches Wood. Therefore, the site is in Teston parish and not Barming. Has this misunderstanding resulted in any error in terms of public notice and how will this be corrected? We recall the Red Oak is subject to a TPO. If the application is to cut off overhanging boughs beyond the applicant's boundary wall into the churchyard, we object. If the Tree Officer is of the view that the requested work within the boundaries of the applicant's property is reasonable and would not endanger the tree, we have no objection. If the Tree Officer's view is that the tree would require re-balancing by work within the churchyard, we object to the application until we have had the opportunity to consider the Tree Officer's findings.	16.03.2022

End