

Teston Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting on 31st May 2022
7.30pm Teston Village Hall

These Minutes were approved by the Council
at its meeting on 19th July 2022

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

Mrs Michelle Tatton (Clerk)

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.

22/050	Election of Chairman and Chairman's Declaration of Office: It was proposed by Cllr Levett, seconded by Cllr Mrs Wheat and <u>agreed</u> that Cllr Coulling be re-elected as Chairman. Cllr Coulling duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office which was witnessed by the Clerk.
21/051	Election of Vice-Chairman: It was proposed by Cllr Levett, seconded by Cllr Miss Page and <u>agreed</u> that Cllr Douglass be re-elected as Vice-Chairman
21/052	Declarations of Interest: 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.
21/053	Apologies for Absence: Cllr Ms Burgon had sent apologies which were <u>approved</u> although she was subsequently able to attend later in the meeting arriving during item 22/063. Cllr Owens arrived during consideration of item 22/060. Apologies were also received from Cllr Mrs Gooch.
There were no public questions, there being no members of the public present	
22/054	Minutes of Meeting on 29th March 2022: These were <u>approved</u> as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.
22/055	Ratification of Decisions: The decisions taken by the Clerk since the last meeting, as summarised at the end of these Minutes, and in line with the delegation of authority, were noted and <u>ratified</u> .
22/056	Ordering of Agenda: No changes were proposed.
	<u>Administration and Finance</u>

22/057	Review of Standing Orders, Policies and Procedures and Risk Assessment: The Chairman and Clerk would clarify the position outside of the meeting regarding the previously suggested review of Standing Orders and report back to the next meeting. The Clerk had noted that the Risk Assessment had been updated in September 2021.																																																																
22/058	Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies: a) Kent Association of Local Councils: It was <u>agreed</u> that Cllr Coulling and Cllr Douglass be reappointed as the Parish Council's representatives to KALC. b) Teston Village Hall Management Committee: It was <u>agreed</u> that Cllr Douglass, Cllr Miss Page and Cllr Mrs Wheat be reappointed as the Parish Council's representatives to the Village Hall. Some issues relating to storage and cleaning were noted but these were considered to be matters to be dealt with by the Village Hall directly.																																																																
22/059	Insurance: It was <u>agreed</u> that the insurance policy be renewed with Zurich Municipal, the premium being £336.29.																																																																
22/060	Renewal of Subscriptions: Cllr Owens arrived during consideration of this item. Payments were <u>agreed</u> as follows: a) Local Councils Update £75 b) CPRE £36 c) KALC £284.78 plus VAT d) Local Council Review £17 e) Action with Communities in Rural Kent £60 f) Kent Men of the Trees – this was expected to be £25. No subscription had been paid in 2021/22. The Clerk was instructed to wait for KMoTT to request payment.																																																																
22/061	Dates and times of Parish Council meetings to the end of March 2023: The following dates were <u>noted</u> – 19 th July, 27 th September, 29 th November, 31 st January and 28 th March																																																																
Administration and Finance																																																																	
22/062	Statement of accounts: i) A Financial Statement had been circulated by the Clerk showing a balance of £47,704.19 from which the following payments were approved for payment:																																																																
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	31.05.2022	3334	Three Counties Contracting - strim of wildflower verge west of Teston Lane	144.00
			TOTAL	£3,224.57
	The Clerk reported that she had worked a considerable amount of overtime during the last month. It was agreed that the Clerk's overtime should be paid. The Internal Auditor had commented on the Clerk's hours and this was noted. The Clerk was working 33 hours per month on average i.e. 3 hours above her contracted hours and with no allowance for holiday. This was of concern to Cllrs who were keen to find solutions. The Chairman requested Cllrs to be disciplined in their communications to ensure best use of the Clerk's time. Cllrs agreed that the Clerk could allocate up to 20 hours work per month to Mr Tatton (who had been assisting with website administration and some other limited tasks). This would be paid at the national minimum wage rate. ii) General position regarding the Parish Services Scheme and year end PSS Certificate: The grant for 2021-22 had been expended in full. The Clerk was authorised to complete any Certificate required by Maidstone Borough Council.			
22/063	Annual Return for the Year ending 31st March 2022: a) Internal Auditor's Report: The contents of the report were noted. In response to some specific points raised, • Cllrs felt that the website should not be over complicated but the Clerk and Website Administrator could look at how to make it more inviting; • In future the Budget could be uploaded to the website; • The previous review of Standing Orders had been a non-trivial task and the layout was designed to make future reviews simpler; • In relation to play area inspections, Cllrs were satisfied they had the necessary competence and level of diligence to perform their function adequately; • Cllrs were satisfied with the current level of the sink fund. Cllr Owens was asked to bring forward a recommendation in future if he felt the fund needed to be reviewed; • The Auditor had raised some questions regarding the Clerk's scale of pay, noting that national pay scales did not reflect levels of pay in the South East. It was agreed that Cllr Mrs Wheat and the Clerk would discuss this and the level of the Clerk's Office Allowance outside of the meeting; • Cllrs were satisfied with their understanding of GDPR and emails were handled ethically with GDPR in mind. b) Governance Review: Cllr Owens and Cllrs Mrs Wheat had met with the Clerk to discuss finance and governance. They reported that they had found processes and procedures to be accurate and acceptable. There were no recommendations. c) Approval of Updated Asset Register: An updated Asset Register had been circulated. It was noted that PWLB Loan 3 would be fully repaid next year. In relation to the removed items noted at the bottom of the Asset Register, the Chairman asked that the bollards and notice board be given some additional detail. d) Agreement of the Governance Statement at Section 1 of the Annual Return: Cllr Ms Burgon arrived during this item. 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. f) Public Inspection Period for the Exercise of Electors Rights: The Clerk advised that the necessary Notice would be placed on the notice board and website tomorrow with the period of public inspection running from Monday 13th June to Friday 22nd July.			
22/064	Grant to Teston Village Hall for 2021-22: It was agreed that a payment be made to Teston Village Hall of £150.70 to bring total grant funding for the period to the agreed sum of £750.			
22/065	Grants to Village Organisations for 2022-23 a) Pioneers (previously £125): The Pioneers were reported to be meeting regularly			

	again. It was agreed that the Parish Council would pay up to £125 for hall hire to be evidenced by an invoice from the Village Hall. b) Teston Village Hall (previously £750): It was agreed that a grant of £500 be made towards maintenance subject to the Clerk being provided with evidence of expenditure. c) St Peter and St Paul (previously £250 for assistance with Churchyard maintenance): Deferred to a future meeting. d) Possible support for Community Coffee Stop: The Chairman provided some background. It was reported that the organisers had now resolved the insurance position. Their first event had been well attended. Deferred to be reconsidered if a need arose.
22/066	Purchase of Arnold Baker Local Council Administration 13th Edition: It was agreed that the Clerk should arrange purchase, the cost through SLCC being £137 plus £4 delivery.
	Planning
22/067	Planning: New Decisions a) 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 b) Barnjet Layby, Tonbridge Road Barming - Street Trading Application Comments submitted and decision awaited c) 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) – Permitted 23.03.2022 d) 22/500838/TCA 1 Woodlands Close Teston ME18 5AL Conservation area notification to remove three Conifers – No objection 12.05.2022 e) 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) – Approved 27.04.2022 f) 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 g) 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 – Appeal allowed 12.05.2022 h) 22/501491/TCA The Village Green Church Street Teston Kent Conservation area notification: Fell one Silver Birch and grind stump – Tree Officer has advised of intention to place a TPO on the tree Cllr Mrs Gooch had been asked to intervene. While work to the Silver Birch could not proceed currently it was understood work to the Catalpa could go ahead as this had only been noted in the application and was subject to a previous extant permission i) 22/501682 7 Fairlawn Close Teston Maidstone Kent ME18 5AX Lawful Development Certificate for a proposed loft conversion with a flat roof dormer, Juliet balcony to rear and 4no. velux windows to front Elevations (resubmission 21/506283/LAWPRO) – Approved 27.05.2022 j) 22/501863/FULL 7 Fairlawn Close Teston Maidstone Kent ME18 5AX Erection of a front porch with pitched roof – Approved 27.05.2022

	k) 22/502011/TCA Teston Village Hall Church Street Teston Conservation area notification: Reduce one Beech to previous points (by 15%) Starting Height:19m to 17.5m Starting Radial Width: 6m to 4.7m; Fell & grind one Silver Birch and replace with suitable species – Decision awaited l) 22/501778/LBC 2 Hillside Cottage Malling Road Teston ME18 5AN Listed building consent for the renewal of the rear dormer, replacement windows and doors including internal and external repairs. install mechanical ventilation to bathroom and kitchen, 3no. external lights. Retrospective replacement ceiling works to the top bedroom – Decision awaited m) 22/501777/FULL 2 Hillside Cottage Malling Road Teston ME18 5AN Renewal of the rear dormer, replacement windows and doors including external repairs and 3no. external lights. Retrospective replacement of ceiling works to the top bedroom – Decision awaited
22/068	MBC and TMBC Local Plan Updates: The Chairman reported upon a letter from the Planning Inspector requiring a number of matters to be clarified but signalling that he wished Stage 1 of the Examination to start on 6th September. This would deal with soundness, duty to co-operate and housing numbers. Stage 2 would look at specific sites and would probably begin in October/November. The Plan included 2 Garden Communities with some smaller development throughout the Borough. Teston might have to accommodate 25-30 houses. Cllrs supported the Chairman's continued involvement with the KALC Coordinating Team. The Chairman provided an update regarding the TMBC Local Plan. Lack of a Local Plan was making it very difficult for the Council to refuse development at this end of their Borough.
	Environment
22/069	Teston Bridge Country Park: The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Clerk had met with the Country Parks Team for the first Teston Bridge Country Park Liaison Meeting. a) Environment Agency work: The Parish Council had asserted that there was no need for a road across the park to the lock. The EA had stated that depending on the solution for the sluice there would be no need for a road. The work on the sluice and gantry would now take place in 2023 and the road would stay at least until then. Resurfacing had taken place as the surface had become slippery. The position regarding the crane pad was noted. The hard treatment applied to the overflow car park had been flagged at the meeting. This would be subject to an application to KCC, but any application for the road would go to MBC. b) Play Area work: The equipment at the Country Park had been refurbished by KCC using Covid recovery funds. The Parish Council had expressed an interest in taking some of the old equipment but this had not been permitted due to health and safety issues.
22/070	Tree and Hedge Work: a) Silver Birch at Teston Village Green: Action was frozen in light of the Tree Officer's objection to felling. The Clerk had been in touch with Cllr Mrs Gooch. b) Teston Village Hall's application for work to the Beech within the Hall grounds: The contractor had included the Silver Birch in the application in error. Cllr Douglass confirmed the application had been withdrawn and would be resubmitted in due course in relation to the Beech only c) Proposed work to the hedge at Courtlands: Cllr Mrs Wheat had taken some photographs. The hedge needed attention. It was <u>agreed</u> that a hard cut on the top and road side be carried out including at the Malling Road end to deal with sight lines. d) Other tree and hedge issues: Once the work to the Courtlands hedge had been done neighbours would be contacted regarding their hedges. It was noted that the Lime Tree at Courtlands needed a good lift to meet highways

	regulations. It was agreed the Clerk should make the necessary application and obtain a quote from Qualitree. At Woodlands Close a section of wall had fallen down some while ago and there was concern about whether the stability of the trees has been affected as these were sitting some 2-3 feet above the road. The Chairman would provide the Clerk with some further detail and she would then contact the Tree Officer. It was noted that there was a lot of overgrowth on the north side of Tonbridge Road. The Chairman would schedule a walk for the early autumn. There was an overgrown hedge at Church Street. The Chairman would speak with the resident. Cllr Miss Page noted that nothing further had been heard regarding the Red Oak. The situation would be checked.
22/071	Allotments Report: It was noted that all plots were let. Nothing further to report.
	Highways
22/072	Highway Improvement Plan and Highway Spreadsheet of Routine Items: a) Update with regard to a possible mobile speed indicating device: It was noted that signs that display messages or smiley faces are not approved by Kent Highways. Only signs that display speeds are acceptable. A resident had pointed out some radar equipment that is an assist to Speedwatch which logs data. This was currently being evaluated. The Clerk was asked to chase Toby Butler. The cost and logistics of moving a mobile camera were discussed. A quote for a fixed device would be requested. b) Review of Routine Items: A number of items had been completed and would be removed from the list. Regarding weed spraying, it was noted that someone had been seen carrying out the work. A check would be made to see whether all the footway repairs at Church Street East had been completed.
22/073	Parking of Network Rail Vehicles at Livesey Street Near Junction with Malling Road: The Clerk reported that Teston's new PCSO (who had been Teston's PCSO previously) had confirmed that her predecessor had contacted Network Rail. However, as vehicles continued to be parked at this location she had offered to take and look when she had a moment and, if possible, would speak with the owner asking that vehicles be parked elsewhere.

22/074	British Horse Society Application to designate Livesey Street as a BOAT: The BHS had written to some local residents setting out their intention to seek a correction of the Definitive Map. No direct notice was received by the Parish Council from the BHS. Section 66 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 defines a BOAT - ‘A Byway Open to All Traffic means a highway over which the public have a right of way for vehicular and all other kinds of traffic, but which is used by the public mainly for the purpose for which footpaths and bridleways are so used’. The Clerk had been in touch with the BHS and KCC noting that the Parish Council would not support redesignation as a BOAT nor the installation of a barrier. The response from BHS was noted. KCC had advised that they have a duty to investigate all duly made applications but at present there is was a very long backlog and it would be some time before the application was allocated to an Officer. In due course, a full investigation would take place and if the rights were found to exist the County Council would have a duty to make an Order. KCC would be unable to consider factors such as the need for the route or how desirable it may be. It would turn on the evidence and whether or not this showed that the route should be recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement as a BOAT. Consultation would be carried out in due course with all local Authorities who have an interest in the area including the Parish Council, together with statutory undertakers. local user groups or other organisations that may be able to assist with resolution. It had been confirmed by KCC that any designation as a BOAT would result in no change to the County Council’s maintenance obligations. The PROW Team could not say at this stage what rights currently exist but if Livesey Street were to be recorded as a Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) it would give a right of use for those on foot, pedal cycle, horse, horse and cart and motorised vehicles. Following discussion, it was <u>agreed</u> that the Parish Council should object to designation of Livesey Street as a BOAT if it is an ancient highway.
	Other
22/075	Ward Boundary Consultation: The Parish Council’s response to the Boundary Commission had been submitted. Next steps were awaited.
22/076	HM The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee: a) Update regarding event planning and installation of the commemorative plaque: The Chairman circulated a timetable. It was noted that the West Malling community Choir would attend to sing. The plaque had been installed and would be unveiled on the evening. b) Arrangements for sale of commemorative mugs: It was <u>agreed</u> to sell these at £5 each in the shop. Money from sales would come back to the Parish Council. A mug would be offered for free to primary aged children. This would be announced on the night, in the July Tapestry and by way of a notice on the notice board. Residents would have 1 week to claim a free mug. c) Future actions, including any additional budget: The cost of the plaque had exceeded the original estimate. The additional c£100 cost was <u>ratified</u>.
22/077	Community Safety Ward Cluster Meetings: Teston had repeatedly asked to be placed in Rural Ward Cluster 3 as opposed to Ward Cluster 1 with Barming and Allington. Maidstone Borough Council had finally responded, indicating that Ward Cluster groupings were being reviewed with the Chairman of Maidstone KALC and Inspector Kent to agree a way forward.
22/078	Lorry Movements on Malling Road: One of the four companies on the site had applied for a licence to base additional vehicles at the site behind Knole Farm. The Parish Council had entered into dialogue with that company. The Chairman provided an update on other matters relating to the site.
22/079	Clerk’s Report for Noting Only – See Clerk’s Report attached a) Play Area Rota: June – Cllr Ms Burgon; July – Cllr Levett; August – Cllr Douglass; September – Cllr Miss Page. It was noted that the annual play inspection was scheduled to take place in July;

	b) Damage to Village Green: The damage to the surface of the green which occurred at New Year had been slowly resolving itself. Further disturbance was caused during the recent hedge works but, again, hopefully this would right itself; c) Other items to note: - Assets of Community Value Status: To be progressed in due course. - Possible Future Grant to Teston Village Stores CIC: Need to be monitored. - Village Green/Village Hall Boundary: To be progressed in due course. - Removal of seating from play area at Teston Bridge Country Park: To be reviewed and progressed as necessary in due course. - Ambulance Sirens: To return to a future Agenda.
22/080	Exceptional Delegated Authority: It was <u>agreed</u> that EDA should continue until the next meeting.
Meeting Adjourned	
Teston Land Conservation Trust matters - Cllr Coulling reported on communications with Network Rail. - The topping had been done in Boathouse Meadow but the gate work was outstanding. Teston Village Stores CIC matters - Cllr Coulling reported upon staff matters. - The stock take had been completed.	
	Confidential Items
22/081	It was <u>resolved</u> that the press and public to be excluded from the item 22/082 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
22/082	Enforcement issues: No updates.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed.

Decisions Taken by the Clerk Since 29th March Under Agreed Scheme of Delegation

For ratification under Agenda item 22/055

Detail	Decision and background	Date Taken
TEN Application	TEN would be required to meet licensing requirements for Jubilee event. Cost £21	06.04.2022
Tree damage, Teston Village Green	Broken branch on Prunus. Health and safety risk requiring early action. Cost £50	10.04.2022
Planning application	22/501682/LAWPRO 7 Fairlawn Close - Lawful Development Certificate for a proposed loft conversion with a flat roof dormer, Juliet balcony to rear and 4no. velux windows to front elevations (resubmission 21/506283/LAWPRO) Time for response expiring before next meeting.	26.04.2022
Planning application	22/501863/FULL 7 Fairlawn Close Teston Erection of a front porch with pitched roof Time for response expiring before next meeting.	29.04.2022

Jubilee Plaque	The Council had agreed at the March Meeting that the Parish Council would pursue the installation of a memorial plaque. Timing required the order to be placed to enable installation prior to the Jubilee. Total cost £904.20.	06.05.2022
Planning application	22/502040/FULL Durley Tonbridge Road Teston Erection of a single storey rear extension and internal alterations, to provide semi independent living accommodation for an elderly family relative Time for response expiring before next meeting.	09.05.2022
Planning application	22/501777/FULL 2 Hillside Cottage, Malling Road, Teston and related Listed Building application Renewal of the rear dormer, replacement windows and doors including external repairs and 3no. external lights. Retrospective replacement of ceiling works to the top bedroom And related application 22/501778/LBC for Listed Building Consent Time for response expiring before next meeting.	09.05.2022 and further comments lodged on 19.05.2022

Date of next Parish Council meeting – 7.30pm on 19th July 2022 at Teston Village Hall

End