

Teston Parish Council

These Minutes were approved by the Council
at its meeting on 26th September 2023

Minutes of Meeting on 25th July 2023
7.30pm in Teston Village Hall

Cllr Peter Coulling (Chairman)
Cllr Christopher Douglass (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Roger Levett
Cllr Mrs Nina Wheat

Mrs Michelle Tatton (Clerk)
Members of the public - 4

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.

23/050	Declarations of Interest: In the interests of transparency, all Parish Councillors declare 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 Mrs Wheat and Cllr Ms Burgon have an interest as members of Teston Village Hall Management Committee; and Cllr Ms Burgon and Cllr Dawn Page have an interest as members of Barming with Teston PCC. No other interests were declared.			
23/051	Apologies for Absence: These had been received from Cllr Ms Burgon and Cllr Miss Page and were <u>agreed</u> . Cllr Mrs Gooch had also sent apologies.			
Meeting adjourned to receive comments and questions from members of the public				
A question was raised regarding Hermitage Quarry. This would be dealt with under Agenda item 23/063 which would be brought up the Agenda to be dealt with after 23/055.				
23/052	Minutes of previous meetings: The Minutes of 30th May and 27 th June 2023 were <u>approved</u> as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.			
23/053	Ratification of Decisions: Decisions taken by the Clerk since the last meeting as set out at the end of these Minutes were <u>ratified</u> .			
23/054	Ordering of the Agenda: As noted above, item 23/063 would be dealt with after item 23/055			
	<u>Administration and Finance</u>			
23/055	Statement of accounts:			
	i) Receipts, bills for payment including ratification of payments made since the last meeting, and claims for refund of expenses: A Statement of Accounts showing a balance of £49113.96 had been circulated prior to the meeting from which the following payments were <u>authorised</u> :			
	Date	Cheque	Payee	Including VAT
	25.07.2023	3398	M Tatton TOTAL £479.31Clerk's Salary i) July 2023	400.70
			ii) Clerk's Expenses	78.61
	25.07.2023	3399	Mrs N Wheat APM Expenses	8.90
	25.07.2023	3400	Teston Village Hall - Grant for 2022-23	500.00
	25.07.2023	3401	M Tatton Clerk's Salary August	400.70
		Water Plus Payments Allotments Water invoice dated		
25.07.2023	3402	21.07.2023	38.50	

	area, and installation of new path parallel to the carpark edge linking it to the bridge – Request to be referred to KCC's Planning Committee f) 23/502037/FULL 8 Readers Court Teston Maidstone Kent ME18 5EY Erection of a garden room with associated works – Decision awaited g) 23/01186/FL 182, 184 and 186A B C D And E Tonbridge Road Watlingbury Conversion and extension of existing 4x residential units to create 7x residential units, with additional storey and alterations to the existing building facade – Decision awaited. If Watlingbury Parish Council requested it, the Parish Council would submit comments b) Pending Decisions/New Applications: None received.
23/062	Maidstone Local Plan Review: Stage 2 of the Examination had concluded. The Inspector had written to Maidstone Borough Council raising some matters of interest. MBC had requested permission to submit main modifications. In due course, further consultation would take place which would be reviewed by the Coordinating Team.
23/063	Kent Minerals Plan – Possible Extension of Hermitage Quarry: The Chairman explained the background to the Minerals Plan and assessed need. Only Hermitage Quarry had come forward in response to KCC's Call for Sites for a hard rock site. A meeting had taken place at Larkfield Village Hall, held by KCC, which the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and the Clerk had attended. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Cllr Levett had also met with the Chief Executive at the Quarry. There were concerns regarding air overpressure and level of decibels. It was noted that ear damage could be caused at 120db. Some properties would be very close to the quarry and there was a significant possibility that 120db would be exceeded. A response from the Parish Council had been submitted raising a number of concerns including the impact of blasting and need for professional modelling, deficiencies with current monitoring records, impact on public rights of way, power lines, and the possibility of dedication of reinstated land as public land to be held in trust. The full response would be placed on the notice board. In due course the draft Minerals Plan would need to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for public inspection. Any planning application would be separate to the Minerals Plan process. It was noted that TMBC had submitted a response. A response from MBC had not yet been seen.
	Environment
23/064	Teston Bridge Country Park: a) Update upon Environment Agency work: The Chairman had spoken with the Environment Agency but had heard nothing further. It was <u>agreed</u> that the EA should be chased and an FOI would be submitted if necessary. If a meeting was offered the Chairman would attend, with the Clerk and/or the Vice-Chairman. b) Any other Country Park matters: There were no issues not otherwise discussed elsewhere on the Agenda.
23/065	Tree, Hedge Work and routine maintenance: a) TPO on Village Green Silver Birch: An application for works, presenting 2 options, had been submitted. The Clerk would ensure the matter was chased, if still outstanding, before the September meeting. b) Hawthorns on the Village Green: The Clerk had approached the contractor regarding crown lifting, and light trimming on the road side. The contractor had suggested the Hawthorns be cut on the village green side as well. It was <u>agreed</u> that before any work was done the permission for work on all village green trees should be reviewed and renewed to seek a perpetual permission for crown lifting to 2 metres from the ground and keeping back from the road. The position with the Lime Tree at Courtlands would also be checked. c) Update from Clerk upon work authorised under delegated authority: No items raised.
23/066	Allotments Report: Cllr Douglass provided an update. One plot would become available shortly and a new tenant had been identified. The Chairman would be reviewing the Tenancy Agreement. Cllr Douglass would bring forward a proposal for revised rent at the September Meeting.
23/067	War Memorial: The clean of the War Memorial had been booked.

23/068	Train Horns: No further news.	
23/069	Formal Recording of the Village Green Boundary at the Village Hall End: The Chairman and Vice-Chairman had reviewed the boundary between the Village Green and Village Hall. They concurred that the boundary: 1. Starts at the post on which the gate swings 2. Goes straight to the top corner (in the photo) of the play surface surround 3. Goes along that surround to its end 4. Then goes parallel to the edge of the hard paving until it meets the boundary with the neighbour. This was agreed. The information would be placed with the Village Green deeds.	
23/070	Play Area: The Chairman had inspected in July and noted that the swing cradles, chains and bolts should be considered for refurbishment. The goal net could also do with replacing. It was agreed that the Chairman and Clerk make some enquiries and bring the matter back to the September meeting by which time the Annual Play Inspection Report would be available. It was agreed that the Clerk should set up a shareable online play inspection record sheet.	
	Highways	
23/071	Highway Improvement Plan and Highway Spreadsheet of Routine Items: to i) Update upon discussions with Kent Highways, including upon a Keep Clear box on The Street at Court Lodge Farm entrance: There had been no progress. The Planner would not accept a Keep Clear box. This would be pursued in due course. ii) Review of regular items: A spreadsheet of current issues had been circulated. The following matters were noted: 1) Pooling of water at Livesey Street: the exact position of the problem would be checked and noted on the spreadsheet. 2) Kent Highways had done a lot of work on the verge below Court Lodge Farm. It was hoped the streaming of water over the pavement had finally been resolved but time would tell. The matter would be removed from the list. 3) Highways had advised that the difference in height between the carriageway and adjacent 'pavement' did not meet the criteria for a trip hazard. The matter would be removed from the list. 4) Nothing further had been heard about clearance of the diverter channel on Lord Falmouth's track on the north side of the A26 towards Watlingtonbury. This would be chased again before winter. 5) The missing bus stop sign near Valley Court had been replaced with a temporary one 6) News was awaited regarding the filling of potholes on Livesey Street. This would be chased again. 7) Roadworks signs that had not been collected had gone but there was now a frame for a sign approximately 100 metres further on from pillbox towards Barming at Witches Wood on the eastern side of A26 and another at Teston Club (which may be a South East Water sign). These would be reported for collection. 8) It was noted that weed treatment had taken place on 5th May with the second treatment due at the beginning of September, and the visibility cut should just have taken place. This would be checked, but for now the item would be removed.	
	Other	
23/072	Possible Film Club at Teston Village Hall: The Chairman was hopeful that, with collaboration with the Village Hall, a Club could get up and running in the Autumn.	
23/073	Collaboration with Teston Village Hall Management Committee on repairing the roof leak above the shop and replacing the side gate with a "chicane", including any funding: The leak was on the flat roof. An alloy saddle needed to be installed and the air conditioning unit moved to	

	enable water to drain. One quotation had been obtained and another would be sought. Cllrs considered it important for the issue to be resolved and it was agreed that the Parish Council would fund repair up to £2,500 plus vat to resolve the issue.
23/074	D Day 80 – 24th June 2024: It was agreed that an event should be held. Item to be kept on the Agenda.
23/075	Church Christmas Fayre: A request had been received to use Teston Village Green for this event. This was agreed but it was considered essential that the event was organised by an insurable entity. The same terms would apply as for the Village Fete.
23/076	KALC AGM Motions: It was noted that any motions should be submitted by 22 nd September. Any suggestions should be sent to the Chairman and Clerk.
23/077	Consultations: to consider responses a) Community Governance Review: comments due 6th August https://letstalkmaidstone.uk.engagementhq.com/community-governance-review b) Public Space Protection Order: comments due 6th August https://letstalkmaidstone.uk.engagementhq.com/dog-control-pspo-2023-review c) Parish Charter Consultation: comments due 23rd August d) MBC Budget Consultation: comments due 28th August https://letstalkmaidstone.uk.engagementhq.com/budget-consultation-2023 e) KCC Local Transport Plan: comments due 18th September https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/local-transport-plan-5 f) KCC Community Warden Consultation: comments due 3rd October - noted https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/community-warden-service?tool=survey_tool#tool_tab It was agreed that the Clerk have delegated authority in consultation with the Chairman to respond to items a), b) c), and e). Cllrs should respond to item d) personally if of interest.
23/078	Clerk's Report: The Clerk's written report was noted . No other matters were raised.
23/079	Exceptional Delegated Authority: It was agreed that EDA should continue until the next meeting.
Meeting Adjourned	
Teston Land Conservation Trust matters Ripton Wood Permissive Access: A 300 metre long path would cost in the region of £15,000. Cllr Douglass suggested a kissing gate would be required with brambles to be removed, and possibly space for a couple of cars. A kissing gate could be installed first with a path at a later date if there was sufficient interest. Cllr Levett was concerned that the boundary hedging needed to be thickened up and made more secure as it had gaps. It was not thought the boundary could be made totally secure but some infill planting could be undertaken. Cllr Coulling would liaise with MVCP upon hedging work, with a budget agreed at up to £500. In due course, Cllr Coulling would raise the access issue with the Chairman of the Trust and the matter would be discussed again in September. - Boathouse Meadow Grazing: The Chairman provided an update regarding possible new arrangements for grazing. This would require work to bring the boundary fencing up to specification. Teston Village Stores CIC matters Shop Equipment: The new display freezer had been installed. An ice cream freezer would arrive shortly. These had been funded through a grant from the Kent Community Foundation.	
	Confidential Items
23/080	It was resolved that the press and public to be excluded from item 23/081 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
23/081	Planning and Enforcement issues: The Chairman provided an update which was noted.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.55pm

Date of next meeting: 7.30pm on 26th September 2023 at Teston Village Hall

**Decisions Taken by Clerk Since 30th May 2023
Under Scheme of Delegation
For ratification under Agenda item 23/053**

Detail	Decision and Background	Date Taken
Wildflower verge A26 west of Teston Lane	It was reported by the Chairman that the verge was very overgrown and in need of a cut. This verge is on the Maintenance Schedule detailing works which the Clerk may action under delegated authority approved by the Council under Minute 22/153(b). The Clerk arranged for the verge to be strimmed for the agreed price of £120 plus vat.	08.06.2023
Removal of broken branch on Catalpa	In the days before the Village Fete it was reported that a branch had broken on the Catalpa on the Village Green. The Clerk authorised the removal of the branch which was undertaken by a local resident at no cost to the Council.	15.06.2023
War Memorial Cleaning	At the last meeting the Clerk was given authority to agree a price for this work. The Clerk subsequently agreed a price with the contractor of £650 plus vat i.e. within the defined budget. Work to be undertaken in time for Remembrance Sunday.	17.07.2023

End