

Teston Parish Council

These Minutes were approved by the Council
at its meeting on 28th November 2023

Minutes of Meeting on 3rd October 2023
7.30pm in Teston Village Hall

Cllr Peter Coulling (Chairman)
Cllr Christopher Douglass (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Robin Owens
Cllr Mrs Nina Wheat

Mrs Michelle Tatton (Clerk)
Members of the public: None

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.

23/109	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 has an interest as a member of Barming with Teston PCC. It was noted that in line with the dispensations issued Cllr Douglass would be permitted to speak regarding item 23/90 but would not be able to vote.
23/110	Apologies for Absence: Cllr Miss Burgon and Cllr Levett had sent apologies and these were <u>accepted</u>.
23/090	Rural England Prosperity Fund - Village Hall Solar Panels and Associated Works: The Chairman invited the Vice Chairman to take the Chair for this item. The Chairman had shared a substantial part of the email trail with Maidstone Borough Council. A draft planning application had been shared with officers but no comment had been received at the time of the meeting. The grant making team within MBC had not been able to provide assurance in terms of risk. The Chairman had made clear the constraints upon carrying out some of the work during the autumn half term. Planning consent would not be available before half term. In terms of the Grant Agreement, the Chairman had raised a number of issues and these were noted. Without a Grant Agreement in place there would not be commitment of money. The matter was discussed at length. It was felt that 18th October would need to be the cut off date for getting the Grant Agreement and promise of funds in place otherwise it was felt the project would need to pause. Regarding the solar panels, the Chairman provided an update from the preferred contractor. Having reflected on reputational and financial risks at the last meeting and again at this meeting, it was <u>agreed</u> by Cllr Coulling, Cllr Owens and Cllr Mrs Wheat that: 1) The Planning application be submitted over the weekend of 7th/8th October, having absorbed any input from MBC in the meantime; 2) The Grant Agreement be signed by the Chairman with a witness after the revised Agreement has been provided by MBC provided Cllrs and Clerk find the changes acceptable; 3) If by 18th October the revised Grant Agreement has been fully signed and there is at least

	email commitment from MBC to pay the grant into the Parish bank account the blocking up of the windows will be progressed, ideally during autumn half term; 3) If unable so to proceed by 18th October, the Chairman will draft a revised project plan for consideration by Cllrs and the Clerk; 4) Once the Grant Agreement has been fully signed and grant monies are committed by Maidstone Borough Council the Parish Council will consider by EDA whether a 20% deposit should be paid to the supplier of its choice so that it might commit panel and batteries installation in the early part of the Christmas holiday; 4) If the removal of windows proceeds (costed at £4750) the Parish Council will make a grant of that sum to the Village Hall Committee which will then commit the contract, manage, pay and provide a close-out report for the Parish Council. Cllr Douglass, having no dispensation, did not vote.
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Date of next meeting: 7.30pm on 28th November 2023 at Teston Village Hall