

Teston Parish Council

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

Minutes of Meeting on 26th September 2023
7.30pm in Teston Village Hall

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

Mrs Michelle Tatton (Clerk)
Maidstone Borough Cllr Mrs Fay Gooch
Kent County Cllr Simon Webb

Members of the public - 1

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.

23/080	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.
23/081	Apologies for Absence: These had been received from Cllr Levett and these were <u>accepted</u> .
23/082	Notice of Vacancy: Following the sad death of Cllr Miss Page, the steps taken with respect to the declaration of a vacancy on the Parish Council were noted. An article had been placed in Tapestry. If no election had been requested by 17 th October the Parish Council could proceed to co-option. In that event it was proposed that candidates be considered at the November meeting.
Meeting adjourned to receive comments and questions from members of the public	
A question was raised regarding the Livesey Street BOAT and Ketridge Lane byway applications and why Cllr Gooch voted in favour of the extension to Hermitage Quarry. These matters would be considered under the relevant Agenda items.	
23/083	Minutes of previous meetings: The minutes of the meeting on 25 th July 2023 were <u>approved</u> as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.
23/084	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> .
23/085	Ordering of the Agenda: 23/101 Livesey Street BOAT and 23/093 Kent Minerals Plan were taken at this point in the meeting but would be minuted in the order in which they appeared on the Agenda.
Administration and Finance	
23/086	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 £46,326.03 had been circulated prior to the meeting from which the following payments were <u>authorised</u> :

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Cheque</i>	<i>Payee</i>	Including VAT
	26.09.2023	3406	Replacement cheque M Tatton Clerk's Salary August	400.70
	26.09.2023	3407	P Coulling - Total £40.49 - i) Allotments Padlock	12.99
			ii) Expenses from Chairman's Allowance	27.50
	30.09.2023	3408	M Tatton - Total £579.82 - i) Clerk's Salary September	400.70
			ii) Office Allowance 2nd quarter	150.00
			iii) Expenses July - September	29.12
	30.09.2023	3409	Teston Village Hall - Hall Hire April - September (5 meetings)	100.00
			TOTAL	£1121.01
	ii) General position regarding the Parish Services Scheme: It was noted that funds were already fully allocated.			
23/087	Annual Return for the Year ending 31st March 2023: The Clerk had spoken with the external auditor who had noted that an extra day had been included for the exercise of electors' rights and this would be noted on the Return. This was <u>noted</u> . Formal confirmation of the conclusion of audit was awaited. Once formal notice had been received the Clerk would take the necessary action with regard to placement of notices on the notice board and website. It was <u>agreed</u> that April Skies should be re-appointed to complete the internal audit for 2023/24.			
23/088	Grants to Village Organisations for 2023-24: Cllrs considered the level of grant to Barming with Teston PCC for assistance with churchyard maintenance. It was <u>agreed</u> that but a grant of £350 be made for 2023/24 against evidence. The Clerk was asked to contact the PCC's Treasurer and Churchwarden. Cllr Ms Burgon did not vote on the matter.			
23/089	Friends of Teston Church: The Chairman confirmed that the Charity had been established. The Chairman and Cllrs Douglass and Mrs Wheat had been confirmed as Trustees, with the Trust Deed's other First Trustees resigning. Steps were being taken to set up a bank account. The Chairman reported upon a possible grant through the Friends for hatchments. A report from a conservator to assess what work needs to be done was being obtained.			
23/090	Rural England Prosperity Fund - Village Hall Solar Panels and Associated Works: Maidstone Borough Council had confirmed by email that the full sum of £45,000 had been awarded. The Grant Agreement was awaited and would need to be considered carefully. The Chairman had been chasing the Borough Council since August regarding planning. A letter had now been received indicating that work to the windows and to install heat pumps would require planning permission while the solar panels would require a Certificate of Lawful Development. It had been hoped that work could take place during the October half-term as the windows could not be taken nor solar panels installed while the preschool was on site. Even if applications were submitted immediately permission would not be in place by half term. Consideration was given to whether the work should be delayed until the next suitable window which could be Easter in the event of poor weather during earlier holiday periods. Proceeding without planning permission could invite enforcement action and could carry reputational and financial risks. Following lengthy discussion it was <u>agreed</u> that before agreeing next steps the Terms and Conditions of the Grant would be reviewed, and meanwhile a planning application should be prepared. A special meeting would be arranged for Tuesday 3 rd October at 7.30pm by which time the Terms and Conditions should have been received and a decision would then be taken on whether and how to proceed.			

	Planning
	Pending Decisions a) 23/503834/LBC Walled Garden Barham Court Tonbridge Road Teston Maidstone Kent ME18 5BZ Listed Building Consent for repairs to damaged section of boundary walling including the installation of a section of steel railings – Decision awaited 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) TM/22/00907/FL Land North Of 351 Hermitage Lane Maidstone Kent Erection of 42No. residential dwellings including affordable housing. Enhancement of existing access from Hermitage Lane and provision of associated hardstanding, landscaping, open spaces and infrastructure including drainage and earthworks - Decision awaited d) 22/502027/FULL Land North Of 351 Hermitage Lane Maidstone Consultation by Maidstone Borough Council - Erection of 42 no. residential dwellings including affordable housing. Enhancement of existing access from Hermitage Lane and provision of associated hardstanding, landscaping, open spaces and infrastructure including drainage and earthworks – Decision awaited e) KCC/MA/0141/2022 Teston Bridge Country Park Car Park, Teston Lane Retrospective planning permission for engineering works related to the resurfacing of the overflow car park – Decision awaited – deferred at Planning Committee f) 23/502687/COUNTY Teston Country Park Teston Lane Teston Kent ME18 5BX Retrospective planning application for an accessible to all path around Teston Bridge Country Park, including resurfacing and widening of an existing path linking the river path to the carpark and play 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 g) 23/502037/FULL 8 Readers Court Teston Maidstone Kent ME18 5EY Erection of a garden room with associated works – Permitted 11.08.2023
23/091	
23/092	Maidstone Local Plan Review: This item was deferred.
23/093	Kent Minerals Plan – Possible Extension of Hermitage Quarry: The Chairman provided some detail regarding the meeting with the Chief Executive of the quarry when proximity to Teston properties and impact of sound above thresholds that cause medical risk had been discussed. The Chairman had subsequently contacted the relevant Maidstone Borough Council Cabinet Member who had said he would ensure any further comments from MBC would pick up the issue of air overpressure. Cllr Webb noted that the Borough Council is a consultee in the process and recommended that residents object to their County Councillor. The matter will have to go to the Planning Committee at KCC at some point. Teston Parish Council will wish to speak. It was noted that a further Call for Sites was underway.
	Environment
23/094	Teston Bridge Country Park: a) Update upon Environment Agency work and FOI request: This item was deferred. b) Any other Country Park matters and to note forthcoming Liaison Meeting on 3rd October: The Chairman would be attending KCC's Planning Committee tomorrow when the overflow car park and accessible-to-all path applications would be determined. The date of the Liaison Meeting was <u>noted</u>.

23/095	Tree, Hedge Work and routine maintenance: a) TPO on Village Green Silver Birch: The outcome of the application was awaited. b) Update upon permission for other works to other trees on the Village Green: To be progressed. c) Update from Clerk upon work authorised under delegated authority: The Chairman would let the Clerk know whether the Village Green hedge required a trim. The Allotments hedge did not need attention. However, TLCT's hedge did need a trim. It was agreed that this should be organised. The verge at the corner of the B2163 would be checked to see whether a second cut was required.
23/096	Allotments Report: Cllr Douglass provided an update. a) Action to be taken in respect of any current breaches: It was noted that one plot had become available. Cllr Douglass had shown it to a prospective tenant. b) Proposal for increase in rent for the allotment year commencing 1st November 2023: It was agreed that rent should be increased from £20 to £25 for Teston residents and from £30 to £35 for non-Teston residents, and the amount of the deposit for new tenants would be increased to £35. c) Renewal of contract for water supply: It was agreed that the Clerk have delegated authority in consultation with the Chairman to enter into a new contract on appropriate terms. c) Any other issues including updated Agreement: The Agreement had been revised with changes incorporated to ease the administrative burden at future renewal. The Clerk was given delegated authority to action.
23/097	War Memorial: The contractor had confirmed that the War Memorial would be cleaned ahead of Remembrance Sunday. It was agreed that the Clerk order a wreath from RBLI for a donation of £50. The Churchwarden had been in touch regarding arrangements for the gathering at the War Memorial.
23/098	Train Horns: An update had been received from Network Rail as follows, which was noted. <i>The liabilities team have not progressed the closure of this crossing due to regulatory and financing constraints. At this stage it is due to be revisited within the next financial control period, but this does not give us any indication on time line. In an ideal world Network Rail would be looking to close all pedestrian footpath crossings, but where public rights of way exist, it is very difficult. It may be that in the next control period we consider a safety upgrade for this crossing rather than closure.</i>
23/099	Play Area: a) Report upon any issues including from the annual inspection and to agree action: Some work was required. Deferred for consideration at the next meeting. b) To note position regarding the set up of a shareable online play inspection record sheet: The Clerk had attempted to set up a shareable sheet but a trial with the Chairman had highlighted some difficulties. The matter would be considered further. c) Inspection rota: September – Cllr Levett; October – Cllr Douglass; November – Cllr Owens; December – Cllr Mrs Wheat
	Highways
23/100	Highway Improvement Plan and Highway Spreadsheet of Routine Items: A spreadsheet of routine items had been circulated and was noted.
23/101	Livesey Street BOAT: The Parish Council had reminded KCC that it objects to the application so as to ensure the Parish Council is fully consulted. It was noted that heavy tractors had caused significant damage to the upper part of the track. It was noted that Ketridge Lane is also subject to a BOAT application. The Clerk and Chairman would liaise and, as necessary, contact Watlington Parish Council.
	Other
23/102	Possible Film Club at Teston Village Hall: Deferred to the next meeting.
23/103	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 side gate would be considered at the November Meeting. The Chairman recommended a chicane. A self-closing gate was likely to cost more than £1000.
23/104	Arrangements for D Day 80 – 24th June 2024: Deferred to the November meeting.

23/105	Clerk's Report: This was <u>noted</u> .
23/106	Exceptional Delegated Authority: It was <u>agreed</u> that EDA should continue until the next meeting.
Meeting Adjourned	
Teston Land Conservation Trust matters - It was recorded that Paul Oldham had stepped down as Chairman. - Grazing of Boathouse Meadow: The Young Farmers were still interested but there needed to be clarification of the cost of strengthening the fencing before an agreement could be considered. - Permissive access & path at Ripton Wood: Deferred Teston Village Stores CIC matters - Roof leak: The current situation was noted - Finances: The current position was noted	
Confidential Items	
23/107	It was <u>resolved</u> that the press and public to be excluded from item 23/108 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
23/108	Planning and Enforcement issues: The position regarding a current matter was <u>noted</u> .

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.55pm

Date of next meeting: 7.30pm on 28th November 2023 at Teston Village Hall

**Decisions Taken by Clerk Since 25th July 2023
Under Scheme of Delegation
For ratification under Agenda item 23/084**

Planning application	23/503475/SUB 2 Hillside Cottage Malling Road - Submission of details pursuant to condition 3 (External Lighting Details) of applications 22/501778/LBC Details were shared with Cllrs and comments sought, following which the Clerk submitted a response objecting to the submitted details and seeking an opportunity for the Parish Council to represent its views at Planning Committee.	09.08.2023
Planning application	23/503834/LBC Walled Garden Barham Court Listed Building Consent for repairs to damaged section of boundary walling including the installation of a section of steel railings Details were shared with Cllrs and comments sought, following which the Clerk submitted a response objecting to the proposal and seeking an opportunity for the Parish Council to represent its views at Planning Committee.	21.09.2023