

# TESTON PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of Meeting of Teston Parish Council held on 25 March 2025 at 7.30pm in Teston Village Hall

**Councillors Present:** Peter Couling (Chairman)  
Christopher Douglass  
Robert Ayling  
Ben Merchant  
Robin Owens  
Nina Wheat  
Tina Burgon

**Also:** Melissa Babington, Parish Clerk  
Borough Cllr Fay Gooch  
Borough Cllr Allison Sweetman

**Members of the Public Present:**

**The meeting was Chaired by Cllr Peter Couling.**

The Chairman of the meeting drew attention to the Parish Council's Standing Orders on photographing, recording or broadcasting of Teston Parish Council Meetings.  
No intention to record the meeting was declared.

**1. Declarations of Interest**

Declarations were noted as per the agenda, including Cllr Couling's interest regarding the planning application - 25/500726/LAWPRO Ronda Church Street Teston Kent ME18 5AG and Cllr Douglass's interest regarding planning application 25/500776/FULL – Little Court Lodge Farm, Tonbridge Road, Teston.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Simon Webb and accepted by the Council.

**Public Participation Session**

No public present.

**3. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2025**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025 were agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

**4. Ratification of Decisions**

There were no decisions taken by the Clerk under Exceptional Delegated Authority (EDA) since the last meeting to be ratified.

**5. Ordering of the Agenda**

No requests were made for items to be taken earlier in the meeting.

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## 6. Finance Report

The Council considered the report of the Clerk and received the spreadsheet, including Bank Reconciliation, on which the accounts were being collated and had the opportunity to examine and ask questions.

The Council was informed of the payments scheduled to be made and it was agreed that the following payments be approved; -

### Expenditure For Approval and Cheques for Signing:

| Name                                | Cheque No | Reason for Invoice                                                | Net     | VAT     | Gross    |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| Teston Village Stores CIC           | 3489      | NYD 2025 event – Drinks - Paid                                    | £138.31 | 0.00    | £138.31  |
| Water Plus                          | 3490      | Water – Allotments – January - Paid                               | £33.79  | 0.00    | £33.79   |
| Gary Landscapes                     | 3491      | To refill 5 salt bins around the village - Paid                   | £70.00  | 0.00    | £70.00   |
| Melissa Babington                   | 3492      | Working hours in January & expenses - Paid                        | ██████  | ████    | ██████   |
| Forvis Mazars LLP                   | 3493      | Work carried out on the Limited Assurance Review - Paid           | 315.00  | 63.00   | 378.00   |
| Water Plus                          | 3494      | Water – Allotments – February - Paid                              | £16.44  | 0.00    | £16.44   |
| Commercial Services Trading Limited | 3495      | Quarterly Ground Maintenance (July, August & September 24) - Paid | £853.78 | £170.76 | £1024.54 |
| Melissa Babington                   | 3496      | Working hours in February & Stationery - Paid                     | ██████  | ████    | ██████   |
| Commercial Services Trading Limited | 3497      | Quarterly Ground Maintenance - Paid                               | £136.24 | £27.25  | £163.49  |
| Three Counties Contracting          | 3498      | Hedge cutting - Paid                                              | £150    | £30     | £180     |
| TMBC                                | 3499      | Costs for printing Tapestry – March - Paid                        | 156.97  | 0.00    | 156.97   |

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|                    |      |                                                    |         |        |         |
|--------------------|------|----------------------------------------------------|---------|--------|---------|
| Cloud Next         | 3500 | Payment for the .gov.uk Domain. - Paid             | £60.00  | 0.00   | £60.00  |
| Gary Landscapes    | 3501 | Manning Street Corner & Court Land - Hedge Cutting | £540.00 | 0.00   | £540.00 |
| Water Plus         | 3502 | Water – Allotments – March                         | £20.72  | 0.00   | £20.72  |
| BT                 | DD   | Teston VH Broadband January - Direct Debit - Paid  | £70.77  | £14.15 | £84.92  |
| BT                 | DD   | Teston VH Broadband February – Direct Debit – Paid | £70.77  | £14.15 | £84.92  |
| BT                 | DD   | Teston VH Broadband March – Direct Debit – Paid    | £70.77  | £14.15 | £84.92  |
| Gary Landscapes    | 3503 | Teston Village Green – Hend Cutting                | £285.00 | 0.00   | £285.00 |
| Melissa Babington  | 3504 | Working hours in March & expenses                  | £577.21 | 0.00   | £577.21 |
| Melissa Babington  | 3505 | Working hours in April                             | £360.12 | 0.00   | £360.12 |
| Eyelid Productions | 3506 | Annual Website Support                             | £100    | 0.00   | £100    |
| KALC               | 3507 | Annual subscription                                | £326.71 | £65.34 | £392.05 |

## 7. Grant to Church

The Council considered a £260 grant to the Friends of Teston Church towards a £510 conservation report on the Coat of Arms. All councillors agreed to approve the grant.

## 8. Parish auditing arrangements

An update was received on the Parish's auditing arrangements.

## 9. Bank mandates

The Council received an update on the progress of the bank mandate changes.

## 10. Parish email addresses

The Chairman provided an update on the Parish Council's email addresses, confirming that all members now have gov.uk email addresses.

## 11. Planning

The Clerk presented a report outlining the position on new and current planning applications, which the Council considered.

### **24/504629/FULL The Orchards North Pole Road Teston Kent**

**Comment:** The Parish Council was asked whether to continue with the objection and has agreed to proceed with the call-in request and continue with their objection at the planning meeting.

### **25/500726/LAWPRO Ronda Church Street Teston Kent ME18 5AG**

Councillors reviewed the application and raised no objections.

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## **25/500776/FULL Little Court Lodge Farm, Tonbridge Road, Teston, Kent, ME18 5BY**

Councillors supported the application in principle, noting the need for improved entrance width, clear lane markings, safe pedestrian access, and proper drainage.

## **25/500829/SUB Knole Farm, Unit 3 Malling Road Teston Kent ME18 5BH and 25/500830/SUB Unit 1 Knole Farm Malling Road Teston Kent ME18 5BH**

Teston Parish Council welcomes both applications but notes that the fencing diagrams provided are incorrect. The use of acoustic fencing is supported, with the expectation that the wooden structure be properly maintained and replaced as needed. Additionally, the current lighting should be documented to ensure all aspects are considered for both applications.

## **25/501100/LBC 1 Hillside Cottage Malling Road Teston Kent ME18 5AN**

The new application for Hillside Cottage needs to be looked into properly and brought back for discussion at a future meeting.

### **12. Teston Bridge Country Park**

The Chairman updated the Councillors on developments at Teston Bridge Country Park.

Concerns were raised about the two-storey office development and the regular parking of 20-30 cars, with people working on site, which has been ongoing for some time.

### **13. Tree, Hedge Work, and routine maintenance**

The maintenance schedule was reviewed, and all planned work was confirmed by all.

### **14. Allotments Report**

Cllr Douglass reported the allotments are in good condition, with minor issues: the tap on Plot 11 needs repair, Plot 18 may require new chestnut posts, and a skip for rubbish removal is being considered for early April, with Councillors **agreeing** to support £300 for the tap repair, £20 for chestnut stakes, and asking allotment holders to pile up rubbish in the corner of the car park for review of the need for a skip at the next meeting.

### **15. Play Area**

The play area equipment was discussed, and it was agreed to follow up with the contractor to visit and provide a quote. All councillors supported this. Additionally, the Council will find locations to visit to see some of the contractor's previous work.

### **16. Telephone Kiosk**

The Chairman updated the Councillors on the telephone kiosk, noting that Teston Club agrees it will remain where it is.

### **17. Highways**

The Chairman showed the Highways improvement/action plan to the Councillors and updated them. He will circulate the plan, and it will be brought back to the next Parish Council meeting once updated.

### **18. Annual Parish Meeting**

The Annual Parish Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> April.

### **19. VE Day**

VE Day was discussed, and it was confirmed that entertainment would include a bugler, trumpeter or bagpiper. All Councillors agreed to a £600 budget to cover the cost of refreshments and entertainment.

### **20. Exceptional Delegated Authority**

It was agreed that EDA should continue until the next meeting.

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## **Adjournment of the Meeting**

It was **agreed** that the meeting adjourn to enable consideration to be given to the following: -

### **- Teston Land Conservation Trust**

- Status – operating finances are sound.
- NatWest plc continues to raise administrative issues with respect to opening a deposit account.
- Ripton Wood – arrangements have commenced to open this to Permissive Access.
- Fishing – the agreement with Royal Tunbridge Wells Angling Club has been renewed and the fee for 2025 received.

### **- Teston Village Stores CIC**

- Current finances – very tight, with increase in National Minimum Wage imminent.

### **- Friends of Teston Church**

- Hatchments - re-installation has commenced and the results look stunning. A conservation report on the Coat of Arms will be commissioned, once funding is available.

## **Meeting reconvened**

## **Confidential Items**

There were no confidential items.

***Next Parish Council meeting: 7.30pm, Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2025 Annual Meeting, Teston Village Hall.***