

TESTON PARISH COUNCIL

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

Councillors Present: Peter Coulling (Chairman)
Chris Douglass
Robert Ayling
Ben Merchant
Robin Owens
Nina Wheat

Also: Melissa Babington, Parish Clerk
Borough Cllr Fay Gooch

Members of the Public Present: 0

The meeting was Chaired by Cllr Peter Coulling.

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

None noted.

2. To receive and agree Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Tina Burgon and Borough Cllr Allison Sweetman.

Public Participation Session

No participation.

3. To agree Minutes of previous meetings:

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30th September 2025 were unanimously approved 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.

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.

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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
Peter Coulling	3539	Brookside Garden Centre – Bulbs – Paid	£56.95	0.00	£56.95
TMBC	74	Costs for printing Tapestry – October – Paid	£162.42	0.00	£162.42
WaterPlus	3541	Water – Allotments – September – Paid	£714.00	0.00	£714.00
Mr R G C Rathbone	3542	Re-painting telephone box and goal post – Paid	£480.00	0.00	£480.00
Outdoor Play Devon Ltd	3543	Play Area Equipment – Paid	29,625.00	5,925.00	£35,550.00
Gary Landscapes	3545	Manning Corner Street – Hedge Cut – Paid	£150.00	0.00	£150.00
TMBC	75	Costs for printing Tapestry – November – Paid	£162.42	0.00	£162.42
WaterPlus	3546	Water – Allotments – October – Paid	£66.63	0.00	£66.63
Three Counties Contracting	3547	Hedge cutting – Paid	£150.00	0.00	£150.00
Chris Douglass	3548	Paint for Litter Bin – Paid	£66.98	0.00	£66.98
Commercial Services Trading Limited	3549	Quarterly Grounds Maintenance for July, August & September 2025 – Paid	£1,180.17	£236.03	£1,416.20
Melissa Babington	3550	Expenses (stamps)	£95.98	0.00	£95.98
Peter Coulling	3551	RBLI Sign	£62.34	£12.47	£74.81
Mr R G C Rathbone	3552	Painting the Litter Bin	£180.00	0.00	£180.00

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Peter Coulling	3553	New goal net for Village Green	£34.15	£6.83	£40.98
Peter Coulling	3554	Palmstead planting order	£462.57	0.00	£462.57

Budget: 2026/27

Cllr Coulling went through the budget spreadsheet with all Councillors. It was agreed that the initial view for next year's precept is £34,250.00, to be confirmed in January 2026.

Bankline:

The Parish Council intend for their Clerk to access to Bankline and set up the transactions. The Chairman will send an email to all Councillors requesting suggestions for who should be appointed as the signatories/authorisers on Bankline.

7. Planning

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

25/504731/FULL - Amber 67 Tonbridge Road Teston Kent ME18 5BT

Erection of front porch, a part single, part two-storey rear and side extension with changes to fenestration. Removal of existing conservatory and garage. – Deadline 16th December 2025

Councillors raised no objections in principle but expressed concerns about overlooking of neighbour from the proposed patio. Cllr Merchant to review the matter in more detail and circulate a recommendation to all councillors before the deadline.

8. Teston Bridge Country Park

The Chairman provided an update to Councillors regarding the erstwhile mobile crane access track at Teston Bridge Country Park.

9. Play Area

The Chairman discussed installing high-quality benches at the rear of the Village Shop to benefit those minding children on the new play equipment and encourage their use of the shop.. Councillors agreed to consider the proposal further and liaise with Outdoor Play Equipment, noting that, without a grant (from MBC), the project would require use of reserves to proceed. Installation would be targeted for April/early May 2026 if all goes well.

10. Tree, Hedge Work, and routine maintenance

The hedge at the Village Hall is to be trimmed as it has become significantly overgrown. Aside from this, the maintenance spreadsheet was reviewed, and all entries were confirmed as accurate.

Grounds Maintenance Contract 2026/27:

The contract for 2026/27 was discussed with Councillors. All agreed that the 20% increase is acceptable, and it was confirmed to proceed with the contract.

11. Village Green

The Chairman to distribute the document regarding the Village Green trees to all Councillors for approval. Once approved, the planning application will be re-submitted.

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Cllr Coulling discussed a suggestion to plant daffodils along the edge of the Village Green. All Councillors agreed to proceed, with a budget of £150.00 for bulbs, which was approved by all.

12. Allotment Report

Cllr Douglass reported that allotment renewals are generally satisfactory, with four plot holders yet to confirm. The matter of water provision will be addressed at a later date, and the allotments are in good condition.

It was agreed that tenants who have not responded or paid by 31st December will be deemed to have relinquished their plots, which will then revert to the Parish Council.

Allotment water:

The water supply at the allotments was discussed with all Councillors, including the possibility of installing new pipework and standing pipes through the plots, with the aim of completion by March next year. All Councillors agreed on the importance of taking action and were comfortable with proceeding.

13. Christmas Period Lights

The Council agreed that the lights will be switched on from 1st December and turned off on New Year's Day.

14. New Year's Day event

The event is listed in Tapestry for the public to view. The Village Hall has been booked for the event. A budget of £250.00, to cover drinks and nibbles provided by the Parish Council, was agreed by all Councillors.

15. War Memorial wreaths

All arrangements were completed successfully. Wreaths to be removed at the end of January.

16. Exceptional Delegated Authority

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

Adjournment of the Meeting

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

- Teston Land Conservation Trust matters

- RTWAS maintenance proposals - Update noted; further discussion scheduled, and any works will require the approval of Trustees.
- Fencing matters - Noted; to be checked.
- Ripton Wood usage - Current arrangements may not be effective; pricing for regular maintenance will be obtained and referred to Trustees.

- Teston Village Stores CIC matters

- Staffing situation - Stable, with some pressures over the Christmas period.
- Christmas arrangements – opening hours, sales items - Proposed to remain as in previous years.
- Finances – Indications suggest the shop has slightly improved financially.

- Friends of Teston Church

- Accounts submitted - Completed.
- Tapestry article - An update will be included in the new year.

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Meeting reconvened

Confidential Items

17. Enforcement updates

It was noted that the Planning Officer will be visiting the Crown City Chinese Restaurant site shortly and concerns previously raised by the Parish Council remain under review.

Updates were also provided on the waste site at the top of the village, where fencing and scaffolding matters are now stabilised. The Parish Council awaits further information from KCC.

Next Parish Council meeting: Tuesday 27th January 2026 at 7:30pm.