

TESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of Teston Parish Council held on 29 July 2025 at 7.30pm in Teston Village Hall

Councillors Present: Peter Couling (Chairman)

Robert Ayling

Ben Merchant

Robin Owens

Nina Wheat

Tina Burgon

Also: Melissa Babington, Parish Clerk

Borough Cllr Fay Gooch

Borough Cllr Allison Sweetman

Kent County Cllr Robert Ford

Members of the Public Present: 1

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

None noted.

2. To receive and agree Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Christopher Douglass.

Public Participation Session

No participation.

3. To agree Minutes of previous meetings:

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27th May 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
BT	DD	Teston VH Broadband May – Direct Debit – Paid	£75.30	£15.06	£90.36
Teston Village Store	3523	Grant to Teston Village Stores - Paid	£3000.00	0.00	£3000.00
TMBC	70	Costs for printing Tapestry – June - Paid	£239.72	0.00	£239.72
Chris Douglass	3524	Tate Fencing – Allotments	£106.56	£21.31	£127.87
BT	DD	Teston VH Broadband June – Direct Debit – Paid	£75.30	£15.06	£90.36
Teston Village Hall	3525	Teston Village Hall - Paid	£240.00	0.00	£240.00
Warford Computers	3527	Computer Repair - Paid	£150.00	0.00	£150.00
Andrew Tatton	3528	Website amendments - Paid	£12.21	0.00	£12.21
Outdoor Play Equipment	3531	Outdoor Play Equipment - Paid	£12,270.00	0.00	£12,270.00
Warford Computers	3530	IT work for Councillors - Paid	£90.00	0.00	£90.00
TMBC	71	Costs for printing Tapestry – July - Paid	£182.03	0.00	£182.03
BT	DD	Teston VH Broadband July – Direct Debit – Paid	£75.30	£15.06	£90.36
Gary Landscapes	3532	Teston Village Green Work	£280.00	0.00	£280.00
Playsafety Limited	3533	Play Area Inspection	£80.00	£16.00	£96.00

7. Bank Arrangements

The Chairman advised that the number of authorised signatories needed to be reduced from seven to four to prepare for use of NatWest Bankline, with Cllrs Ben Merchant, Robin Owens and Tina Burgon agreeing to be removed.

The Chairman will circulate the necessary resolutions for Councillor approval by Exceptional Delegated Authority; these will be noted at the next meeting.

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8. Planning

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

25/502800/FULL - 5-6 Church Street Teston Kent ME18 5AJ

Demolition of the existing rear extension and erection a two-storey rear extension including 2no. rooflights.

25/502801/LBC - 5-6 Church Street Teston Kent ME18 5AJ

Listed Building Consent for demolition of the existing rear extension and erection a two-storey rear extension including 2no. Rooflights. – **Deadline 31st July 2025.**

No objection for the above planning applications were raised, subject to the Conservation Officer being satisfied.

Approved:

25/501514/LBC - Woodlands Cottage Livesey Street Teston Kent ME18 5AY

Listed Building Consent for the installation of a 904 liner in customers chimney to connect to stove in current opening.

25/501561/FULL - Land North Of 351 Hermitage Lane Maidstone Kent

Section 73 - Application for variation of condition 8 (to amend the distance required for landscape buffering from the northeast boundary under part i) from 10m to 5m) pursuant to 22/502027/FULL for - 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.

Refused:

N/A

9. Teston Bridge Country Park

This matter is incorporated within item 16 (Country Park) for discussion.

10. Tree, Hedge Work, and routine maintenance

The updated maintenance schedule for 2025-26 was reviewed and agreed in principle. Several items were approved to proceed in the autumn, with quotes to be obtained where necessary.

11. Telephone kiosk

The refurbishment of the kiosk was approved at a cost of £350. The Chairman to remind the contractor to assess potential of existing lead-based paint.

12. Allotments Report

In the absence of Cllr Douglass, there was no formal report. It was noted that no complaints or issues have been received from allotment holders. Allotment rents will be considered at the September meeting.

13. Play Equipment Inspections

It was noted that the new play equipment will require regular inspections. The Chairman reminded Councillors that the defibrillator should be visually checked when carrying out the equipment inspections.

14. Play Equipment Replacement

An update was provided on the new play equipment, with £15,000 in grant funding secured from The William & Edith Oldham Charitable Trust, £5,000 from MBC and £1,000 for the Environment Agency's subcontractor for recent works at the Country Park.

Installation is expected to take place over two weeks, commencing on either 15 or 22 September 2025.

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A draft plaque wording will be circulated for approval, and a plan or image of the new play area will be displayed on the noticeboard.

15. Village Green Goal

The goalpost requires refurbishment and was flagged during the play inspection. It was agreed to repaint and reinforce it, including a tree guard around the foot of each vertical. Budget agreed: £150.

16. Country Park

Works are progressing in accordance with the Environment Agency's expectations. Photographs have been shared with Councillors to document the progress.

17. Tonbridge Road

Vegetation encroachment has been observed on the southern pavement. One quote has been received; however, it remains unclear whether traffic management will be necessary. The matter will be reviewed in September.

18. Ash Tree Corner

The litter bin was reported as in need of refurbishment. Borough Cllr Allison Sweetman to confirm if MBC is responsible for its replacement or cleaning only. A quote for £350 was received but not accepted at this time; further quote to be sought.

19. Corner of B2163 & Tonbridge Road

Already addressed in the maintenance schedule.

20. Highways Improvement Plan

The Chairman suggested adding pavement repair works to the HIP. Clerk to submit updated HIP and draw attention to item No.1.

21. 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**

- Finances and deposit accounts discussed
- Trustees agreed to consider a small sign and notice in Tapestry to indicate the annual closure date for the kissing gate.

- **Teston Village Stores CIC matters**

- Staffing and safety concerns noted and considered.
- Pricing review undertaken.
- It was agreed to hold a meeting of the Trust and TLCT on the same evening. Chairman to arrange

- **Friends of Teston Church**

- Event to mark the return of the Hatchments to be held on 2nd August at 4:30pm.

Meeting reconvened

Confidential Items

22. No confidential items raised.

Next Parish Council meeting: Tuesday 30th September 2025 at 7:30pm.