

Teston Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting on 31st March 2026

Cllr Peter Coulling – Chairman & Interim Clerk
 Cllr Christopher Douglass – Vice-Chairman
 Cllr Nina Wheat – Interim RFO
 Cllr Bob Ayling
 Cllr Tina Burgon
 Cllr Ben Merchant

No members of the public

Before the meeting commenced the Chairman drew attention to the Council's policy on photographing and broadcasting of Parish Council meetings. No intention to film, photograph or broadcast was declared.

Agenda Item No.	
1.	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; and (d) Teston Village Stores CIC as they are Directors of the CIC. Cllrs Douglass, Wheat, and Ayling have an interest as members of Teston Village Hall Management Committee.
2.	To receive and agree Apologies for Absence: received & agreed - Cllr Robin Owens and Cllr Fay Gooch..
MEETING ADJOURNED FOR COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC	
No members of the public present.	
MEETING RECONVENED	
3.	Minutes of previous meeting: Minutes of 27 th January 2026 agreed.
4.	Ratification of decisions: no decisions taken since the last meeting.
5.	Ordering of the Agenda: items taken as per Agenda.
6.	NatWest Bankline: currently placed on platform that attracts charges; transfer to free Communities Bankline in-hand.
7.	Finance: Finance Report & Bank Reconciliation approved. Bankline transactions noted. Updated estimate for 2026-27 to be provided in preparation for Internal Audit.
8.	Audit: arrangements confirmed for 30 th April.
9.	Teston Village Stores CIC: recognizing the value of the shop to the village and in view of its current financial situation, grant of £3,000 approved.
10.	Ramsay & Nestor Tablets: Councillors discussed the possibility of making a grant to Friends of Teston Church towards better presentation of these tablets in the Churchyard, subject to a Faculty from Diocese. Friends has already received offers of donations from two villagers.
11.	Planning: Planning Report was reviewed and it was agreed that comment should be submitted on 26/500765.
12.	Play Area: it was agreed to commit £10,515+VAT for installation of two picnic tables plus wet-pour alongside the new play equipment – materials to match that play area. Noted that offer of a grant of £5,000 had been received from The William & Edith Oldham Charitable Trust and that VAT would be reclaimable in due course.
13.	Play Area, Goalposts & Defibrillator Inspection: it was agreed that, at each meeting, a Councillor would be nominated to carry out all inspections until the next Parish Council meeting. Cllr Coulling would inspect up to the next meeting. Method of recording inspections to be reviewed and confirmed (currently by circulation of an Inspection Book).
14.	Tree, Hedge & Grass routine maintenance: agreed to book: an Autumn trim for the Village Green perimeter hedge; lift the Lime Tree in Courtlands (subject to confirmation of existing permission); and lift the Catalpa on the Village Green (subject to permission). Cllr Burgon to inspect and report back on the physical state of benches around the village (subject to receiving a location map).
15.	Highways: Highways Issues List revived and reviewed. The very noisy drain cover on Tonbridge Road opposite Crown City has been reported to Highways. Noted that works were taking place to

Signed..... Chairman

Teston Parish Council

	address the water leak in Malling Road.
16.	Allotments Report: Cllr Douglass provided a report on current status. An email list is being constructed to assist communications with all allotment holders. When completed, a day will be scheduled with an invitation to allotment holders to join a working party to clear rubbish into a skip that will be provided for that event.
17.	Annual Parish Meeting 28th April 2026: Mr Dennis Astridge was confirmed as speaker (subject: Hatchments in Teston's Church). A flyer has been delivered with Tapestry inviting village organisations to present a report. Tea, Coffee and biscuits confirmed, organized by Cllr Wheat.
18.	Recruitment of Clerk / RFO: Councillors discussed the situation and will review a job specification.
19.	Standing Orders: Exceptional Delegated Authority and banking / payment aspects to be reviewed.

Meeting Adjourned	
Teston Land Conservation Trust matters - RTWAS riverbank maintenance – noted that their proposed works have been agreed with Trustees. - Mown path through Ripton Wood – a path is starting to be formed by walkers. Occasional professional mowing (£150+VAT budget per possible bi-monthly cut) and strimming to be investigated. Teston Village Stores CIC matters - Finances & request for grant – noted that the Parish Council had just approved a £3,000 grant. - Staffing matters – noted that paid staff are working very well as a team and that more volunteers would be helpful to cover the 11am to 1pm weekday sessions. Friends of Teston Church - Ramsay & Nestor tablets – noted that the Parish Council discussed the possibility of a grant towards giving these tablets greater prominence, subject to Diocesan Faculty.	
Meeting Reconvenes	
20.	Confidential Items: there were none.
21.	Enforcement updates: there were none

Annual Parish Meeting: Tuesday, 28th April at 7.30pm at Teston Village Hall

Date of next Parish Council meeting: Tuesday 26th May 2026 at 7.30pm at Teston Village Hall

Clerk: Cllr Peter Coulling, Telephone: 01622 813143, email: clerk@testonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Signed..... Chairman