

Teston Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting on 27th January 2026

Cllr Peter Coulling – Chairman & Interim Clerk Cllr Tina Burgon Cllr Christopher Douglass Cllr Ben Merchant Cllr Robin Owens Cllr Nina Wheat – Interim RFO	Maidstone Borough Cllr Fay Gooch Maidstone Borough Cllr Allison Sweetman No members of the public
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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: Cllr Bob Ayling and KCC Cllr Robert Ford– <u>agreed</u> .

MEETING ADJOURNED FOR COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were none.

MEETING RECONVENED

3.	Minutes of previous meeting: the Minutes of the meeting on 25 th November 2025 were <u>agreed</u> as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.
4.	Ratification of decisions: there were no Clerk's decisions taken via EDA since the last meeting.
5.	Ordering of the Agenda: order left as in the Agenda.
6.	Parish Council administration: for an interim period, Cllr Peter Coulling has assumed the role of Clerk and Cllr Nina Wheat the role of RFO. In a short while, candidates will be sought, with a view to one person being selected to assume both roles.
7,	Meeting Dates: the following dates were <u>agreed</u> : • Parish Council 26th May 2026 • Parish Council 28th July 2026 • Parish Council 29th September • Parish Council 24th November • Parish Council 26th January 2027 • Parish Council 30th March 2027 • Annual Parish Meeting 27th April 2027 • New Year's Day event 1st January 2027
8.	NatWest Bankline: now in operation for use, whenever possible, instead of cheques.
9.	Finance: the Finance Report laid out at the end of these Minutes was reviewed and it was <u>agreed</u> to pay those payments marked "to pay". The Bank Reconciliation was reviewed and <u>agreed</u> for filing by the Clerk.
10.	Budget 2026-27 & Precept: the budget was reviewed and Precept of £34,250 <u>agreed</u> . It was noted that, while reserves would diminish significantly, there is scope to finance probable projects between now and end 2026-27 (allotments water system and Village Green sitting area in particular).

Signed.....Chairman

Teston Parish Council

11.	Audit: RFO will make contact with the Internal Auditor re audit scheduled for 30 th April. For external audit, it was noted that Teston would be assigned an auditor (it was Mazar for 2024-25).
12.	Planning: live applications were noted and the need for submissions in certain instance was <u>agreed</u> .
13.	Tapestry: it was <u>agreed</u> to increase overall advertising rates by about 5% for 2026-27, but probably leaving the rate for whole pages the same, balanced by greater increases for smaller advertisements.
14.	Play Area: a scheme and quote for a proposed sitting area on the Village Green to the south-west of the new play equipment was discussed and it was <u>agreed</u> to seek some clarifications, but with a view to placing a contract for installation in early Spring.
15.	Tree, Hedge & Grass routine maintenance: 2026 maintenance requirements were reviewed and <u>agreed</u> , with the Clerk to confirm engagement with contractors.
16.	Annual Grounds Maintenance Contract: it was noted that the contract for 2026-27 is in position.
17.	Village Green: remedial work on trees is to be commissioned, once current or necessary permissions are confirmed. That work would encompass the Lime Tree in Courtlands.
18.	Allotments Report: Cllr Douglass outlined the status of take-up and, with Cllr Wheat, is checking the completeness of documentation relating to agreements. It was agreed to contract for replacement pipework, meter and standpipes with a view to completion by 31 st March. It was noted that, of total quote of £6150+VAT, VAT would be recoverable in due course and a grant offer of £5000 has been received from The William & Edith Oldham Charitable Trust
19.	War Memorial: it was <u>agreed</u> that wreaths would be removed at end-January to avoid discolouration of the stonework. It was <u>agreed</u> that the Clerk should research sources for cleaning the stonework.
20.	New Year's Day Event: it was viewed as a success, with the Village Hall full. It was agreed to repeat on New Year's Day 2027.
21.	Annual Parish Meeting 28th April 2026: it was <u>agreed</u> that the Clerk should seek a presentation on the historical background to the hatchments in the Church. Refreshments to be provided.
22.	Exceptional Delegated Authority: it was <u>agreed</u> that EDA should continue until the next meeting.

MEETING ADJOURNED FOR MATTERS RELATING TO VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS

Teston Land Conservation Trust matters

- RTWAS maintenance proposals: Trustees Douglass and Coulling will meet with RTWAS to hear their ideas for improvements to fishing facilities; no decision will be taken.
- Angling fees: Trustees agreed to increase fees by about 3%.

Teston Village Stores CIC matters

- Staffing matters: the staffing situation, paid and volunteers, is stable and very effective.
- Finances: Trustees may request a grant from the Parish Council over the next few months.

Friends of Teston Church matters

- The recent Tapestry article was noted, with one offer of donation already received. The Churchwarden to be asked to consult Diocese about potential works related to the Ramsay and Nestor tablets.

MEETING RECONVENED

23.	Confidential Items: the press and public were excluded on the basis that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.
24.	Enforcement updates: there was no update on any enforcements.

Signed.....Chairman

Teston Parish Council

Next regular meeting of the Council – 7.30pm 31st March 2026 at Teston Village Hall
Date of Annual Parish Meeting – 7.00pm Tuesday, 28th April 2026 at Teston Village Hall

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

Finance Report - 27th January 2026

	Name	Cheque No or Bank Ref	Reason for Invoice	Net	VAT	Gross	Paid? To Pay?	Comments
1	Melissa Dabblington	3550	Expenses (stamps)	£95.60	£0.00	£95.60	Paid	presented 25/1/25
2	Peter Coulling	3551	KBL Sign	£12.34	£12.47	£24.81	Paid	presented 25/1/25
3	Mr R & C Bullock	9709	Painting for 10th Dec	£180.00	£0.00	£180.00	Paid	presented 25/1/25
4	Peter Coulling	3553	New goal net for Village Green	£34.15	£0.83	£34.98	Paid	presented 25/1/25
5	Peter Coulling	3551	Patrol car/planning order	£102.07	£0.00	£102.07	Paid	presented 25/1/25
6	Peter Coulling	3555	Tire guards	£16.00	£0.00	£16.00	Paid	paid & banked since 25/1/25
7	Melissa Dabblington	3555	Wages	£361.42	£0.00	£361.42	Paid	paid & banked since 25/1/25
8	Melissa Dabblington	3557	Wages	£545.80	£0.00	£545.80	Paid	paid & banked since 25/1/25
9	Water Plus Ltd - November	3559	Water for allotments	£89.87	£0.00	£89.87	Paid	paid & banked since 25/1/25
10	Andrew Talbot	3559	Land ownership map	£32.10	£0.00	£32.10	Paid	paid, but not banked since 25/1/25
11	Peter Coulling	9709	Refurb. for Village Green	£143.70	£0.00	£143.70	Paid	paid & banked since 25/1/25
12	Miriam		Audit	£210.00	£42.00	£252.00	To pay	
13	Waterplus		Water - December & January	£187.94	£0.00	£187.94	To pay	
14	Peter Coulling		Club Next - details renewal	£18.88	£18.88	£37.76	To pay	
15	Watford Computers		Support for Clerk email handover	£210.00	£0.00	£210.00	To pay	
16	Kelly Marsden		Refurbment Deposit	£30.00	£0.00	£30.00	To pay	
17	Melissa Dabblington		Contract termination	Refund: £1300.00, less tax			To pay	
18	Teston Village Stores Ltd		New Years Day	£105.21	£0.00	£105.21	To pay	

Signed.....Chairman