



Maplestead Magna Carta

Award-Winning Newsletter of Great Maplestead Parish Council

Taking Community Responsibility for Our Environment...

Making a Positive Contribution...

The Parish Council is backing an initiative to encourage parishioners to take personal responsibility for helping to maintain and improve our local environment.

The aim of this initiative is to demonstrate how small individual actions – ones that anyone can undertake with only a little amount of effort – can have a significant impact on improving the environment in which we live.

The following are just a few examples of the sort of things which can make a real difference:

• Picking up Litter:

The **Task Force** undertakes regular Litter Picks during the course of each year. However, the sadly inevitable accumulation of rubbish in between times is both unsightly and a hazard to wildlife.



This could be reduced considerably if everyone walking the local footpaths or roads **regularly picked up and bagged any odd pieces of litter** they saw and put them in their recycling bins. Taking responsibility for such actions would help minimise the worst effects of littering.

Information about larger amounts of fly-tipped rubbish should, of course, be e-mailed to the **Parish Clerk** for further action.

• Cleaning/Painting Road Signs:

Over time the condition of the various road signs in and around the parish tends to deteriorate, either from peeling paint or becoming coated in a green algae-like substance. This has an adverse effect on both their effectiveness and on visitors' first impressions.



The **Council** is therefore looking for candidates to take responsibility for the upkeep of a road sign near them. If you'd like to volunteer for our **Adopt-a-Sign** programme, please e-mail the **Parish Clerk** with details.

• Improving our Surroundings:

Late last year the three road-junction triangles in the village were 'adopted' by volunteers who offered to keep these essentially public spaces tidy and prevent them becoming neglected.

This has already seen positive benefits for the village – **Brian Chambers** has planted the Church Street triangle with crocuses and tidied, cleaned and varnished the various items of furniture there, whilst **Simon Last** has tidied up the Barretts Hall triangle.



Meanwhile, **Ian Johnson** has volunteered to take over the Purls' Hill triangle from Howard Davis in the spring.

Elsewhere, volunteers will shortly be planting flowers around the **Children's Play Area**, to create a more environmentally-friendly border and soften the visual impact of the metal fence.

The Council wishes to encourage people to act as Community Custodians and take pride in participating in initiatives such as those outlined above to benefit the local environment – please share your ideas for similar initiatives with the Parish Clerk.

--ooOoo--

Village Information Board



The Village Information Board has now been installed in the Playing Field car park.

The oak-framed main panel is formed from glass reinforced plastic, which is low maintenance, durable, graffiti and water resistant, colour-fast and stands up well against scratching.

The Board provides visitors and residents with a detailed **map of the Parish**, information about **village sights, features** and **footpaths**, and has suggestions for **3 walks** of varying lengths to enable people to enjoy the local countryside.

Back on the Rails...

Last April the roadside railings on the bend below Chelmshoe Farm were damaged and left in a dangerous state.



Requests made to **Essex Highways** to get the damage fixed were met with what appears to be their standard response: "...this does not meet our criteria for immediate repair".

Nevertheless, the **Council** continued to pursue **Essex Highways** for a satisfactory resolution and in November a new set of railings was installed (right).



--ooOoo--

Budgeting for the Future

At its January meeting the **Parish Council** discussed its proposed **2018/19 Budget and Precept options**.

Reductions in the **Council's Local Support Grant** – from £1365 in 2014/15 to just £322 for the coming financial year (the final time this will be paid) means that the Precept (the proportion of **Council Tax** received by the Parish) needs to be increased to cover planned expenditure.

In order to keep the **Council's** books balanced a Precept rise of **£2.45** per Band D household – or roughly the cost of one extra glass of wine a year – was agreed.

--ooOoo--

Watching the Web

Great Maplestead's website has recently received a major make-over as part of a change to make it more viewer-friendly for visitors using smartphones or tablets.

The new 'theme' (how it looks) allows dynamic resizing of the content when accessed on different media, which makes it compatible for viewing on many different devices.

The revised content, presented in a refreshed, more logical and easier-to-read format, can now be found under just five main headings:

Council Matters	Village Life	Community Services	General Information	News
-----------------	--------------	--------------------	---------------------	------

Since this **Council** took office, improvements to the quality, range and currency of the site's information has seen annual unique **visits more than quadruple** (from 1481 in 2015 to 6924 in 2017), whilst **pages viewed** have **tripled** (from 28840 to 78312), with each page being perused for an average of 3 minutes.

Latest Planning News

The **Parish Council** considered the following applications at its meeting on 10th January:

Applications Received:

- ✚ **17/02148/LBC** St Giles Cottage, Lucking Street. Removal of rear lean-to part glazed, part corrugated cement based sheet roof covering and provision of natural grey slate and two conservation roof lights, red clay terracotta chimney pot and cowl and removal of plaster beneath existing opening.
- ✚ **17/02226/FUL** Monks Haven, Gestingthorpe Road. Erection of single storey rear extension

It was agreed that the response to both these should be "No objections raised, no comment".

See other responses & comments by clicking on: http://www.braintree.gov.uk/info/200225/search_and_track_planning_applications, then clicking on 'View Current Applications', typing in the relevant **planning reference** and opening the files.

--ooOoo--

Forthcoming Events

During the next few months there are a number of events at the Village Hall* that you may wish to note for your diary:

- ✚ **Wednesday Mornings* Keep Fit** – new 10-week term **started 10th January**. From **9.30-10.30am**. Contact Judy Cowell (01376 561 757) for more details.
- ✚ **Thursday Mornings* Pilates** – new weekly sessions for men/women of all ages/fitness levels. **9.30-10.30am & 10.45-11.45am**. Cost **£40 for 5 classes** (or **£5** for the first one). Call Catherine Pawsey (07814 459 683) for details.
- ✚ **Thurs 1st Feb* Maplesteads' WI Open Meeting** - starts **7.30pm**. The talk: **Looking After VIPs and Protection. Men/Guests†** welcome (†**£4** including refreshments).
- ✚ **Sat 17th Feb* Cards & Curry Evening** – doors open **7.00pm**; games start at **7.30pm**. **Everybody welcome** – bring your own drinks, glasses and snacks. Tickets **£8/person** from Philippa Mills (01787 460 578)

Much more information can be found on the 'Events' page of the Parish Council website.

--ooOoo--

Contacting the Council

Any comments, requests or correspondence should initially be made to the Parish Clerk:

**Ann Crisp, New House, St Giles Close
Great Maplestead, CO9 2RW**

Tel: 01787 460 216 (4-6pm Mon-Thurs)

E-mail: anncrisp@greatmaplesteadpc.co.uk

Website: <https://greatmaplesteadpc.co.uk>