



Maplestead Magna Carta

The Official Newsletter of Great Maplestead Parish Council

Neighbourhood Watch – Keeping the Community Safe...

Better Watch Out...



The Great Maplestead Neighbourhood Watch scheme is a partnership created to enable people in the village to join together to help make the community safer and more secure.

Partners in the scheme include the Police, the Community Safety department of Braintree District Council and parishioners who want to make **Great Maplestead** a better place to live.

Neighbourhood Watch allows villagers to protect themselves and their property against criminal activity. The scheme also helps to reduce the fear of crime by showing people how to improve their own, and their home's, security.

Its main objectives are:

- To improve village safety in general.
- To prevent crime by improving security, increasing vigilance and creating and maintaining a caring community.
- To reduce crime opportunities by increasing crime prevention awareness.
- To assist the police in detecting crime by promoting effective communication and the prompt reporting of suspicious and criminal activity.
- To reduce fear of crime, particularly amongst the more vulnerable people in the village, by providing accurate information about the risks and by promoting a sense of security and community spirit.

Ian Johnson, the Vice Chairman of Braintree District **Neighbourhood Watch**, is also the Local Co-Ordinator for **Great Maplestead**. He can be contacted on [01787 461 109](tel:01787461109).

You can find out more about crime-related activity in the local area by subscribing to the **Neighbourhood Watch** Newsletter – e-mail nwnewsletter@btinternet.com for details.

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Better Not Cry...

Winter, with its dark nights and increased consumer activity, is a particularly lucrative time for criminals.

There are, though, common-sense precautions that you can take to help mitigate the threat and occurrence of seasonal crime:

- Ensure your heating oil tank, which is usually fairly full during the winter, is properly secured and protected by fencing or spiky plants from opportunistic oil theft.
- Do not leave shopping on display in your car.
- Try not to leave Christmas gifts on show in the house – it's an invite to steal.
- Do not leave gift boxes on display when recycling after Christmas – don't show anyone you may now have potentially desirable items indoors.
- If you're going away, advise your neighbours and use timer switches on lights so that your house looks occupied.



Of course, there are scams and other criminal activity that are not just confined to winter:

- Calls reporting a 'problem at your bank', asking you to transfer money to a 'safe account'. Put the phone down, wait at least 5 minutes (the time for a BT line to disconnect) then call your bank to make a report. Better still – use another phone...
- Dog-napping – an increasingly common occurrence. Do not leave your dog alone in a car, tied up outside a shop or even running free in the garden for any length of time. Also, ensure your dog is microchipped – this will be a legal requirement from April 2016.
- Key/purse theft from open handbags or from places in easy reach of front or rear doors – ensure such items are securely out of sight.

Check http://www.essex.police.uk/be_safe.aspx or <http://www.essexinfo.net/essex-eye/> for the latest on keeping safe from scams and fraud.

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There May Be Trouble Ahead...

It would seem, from the Government's recent **Comprehensive Spending Review**, that Local Government spending could be hit hard in future years.

The reduction in the Revenue Support Grant will be in the order of **6½% per annum**, which equates to **£250m** over the next three years.

According to **Cllr. David Finch**: "The very significant reduction in **Essex CC's** grant funding will place considerable extra pressure on services across the board".



Apparently **ECC** was already considering a Council Tax increase of **2%** for next year but that will only provide half the money needed to pay the new National Living Wage.

Local Councils are being allowed to increase Council Tax by an **additional 2%** to fund social care but this puts the onus to bridge any funding gap firmly on the taxpayer.

ECC is therefore considering the impact of the proposed changes very carefully – we should hear more about the effects in the Spring.

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Season of the Switch



In 2016 **ECC** is continuing its backing for a collective energy switching scheme for residents and small businesses who want to economise by cutting their gas and electricity bills.

Essex Energy Switch is a completely free, easy, safe and secure way to cut your energy bills without the frustration of having to spend time comparing prices and tariffs on various energy comparison websites.

You have until **1st February 2016** to register, without any obligation, an interest in switching your energy supplier using this scheme.

In 2015 it delivered savings averaging more than **£262 per household**, giving Essex residents a much better deal on their gas and electricity bills.

Visit www.essex.gov.uk/energyswitch to find out more information about **Essex Energy Switch**, how it works and how you can benefit.

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Pilot's Certificate

Great Maplestead PC has been presented with another Local Council Certificate.

This was in recognition of the **Parish Council's** participation as a pilot in the **Essex Association of Local Councils'** Foundation Award Scheme.



The presentation was made to the **Parish Clerk** at the December **Parish Council** meeting by the **CEO** of the **EALC**, Joy Darby.

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Footpath Update

The bridge across the brook in the **Water Meadows (FP18)** is now repaired.



Details of a new arrangement with **ECC** to take local control of footpath maintenance will be in the next issue.

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Forthcoming Events

Some New Year events in the Village Hall* to note in your 2016 diary:

- 📅 **Weds 6th Jan* Keep Fit** – new 10-week term starts. **9.30-10.30am**. Contact Judy Cowell (01376 561 757) for more details.
- 📅 **Sat 30th Jan* Cards & Curry Evening** – opens **7.00pm** for **7.30pm** start. Cost **£8 per person**/60 places available. Bring your own drinks and glasses. Tickets available from Philippa Mills (01787 460 578)
- 📅 **Sat 20th Feb* Infusion Evening** – starts **7.30pm**. Is your **Sloe Gin** scrummy, or your **Blackberry Whisky** the nectar of the Gods? The challenge is on to find the Best Home-Made Infusion in the Village. **More details later.**
- 📅 **Sat 19th Mar* Maplestead Magic Night Dinner** – starts **7.00pm**. **More details later.**

Further details on these, and other events, can be found on the Parish Council website.

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Contacting the Council

Any enquiries, 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: www.essexinfo.net/gtmaplesteadpc/

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