



# Maplestead Magna Carta

Great Maplestead Parish Council's Award-Winning Newsletter

## Council finds new ways of working in a time of Covid...

### Dealing with the situation...

Due to emergency measures introduced by the Government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, normal Council proceedings were suspended from 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

To still allow business to be conducted, **Emergency Standing Orders\*** were adopted on 20<sup>th</sup> April and will remain in force for the foreseeable future.

These allow the Council to make decisions via e-mail, so providing an audit trail; minutes recording the decisions made are publically available here: <https://greatmaplesteadpc.co.uk/council-information/meeting-dates/previous-minutes-agenda/2020/>

The in-person meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> September was a one-off; currently virtual internet meetings are impractical due to limited broadband availability.

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### Securing the Playing Field

Following the illegal trespass by Travellers on 13<sup>th</sup> June, improving existing security on the Playing Field was a priority that demanded a quick and decisive response from the Council.

After taking advice from the police and security experts familiar with suitable deterrent measures – and also learning from the effective arrangements in place in neighbouring parishes – the **Task Force** installed new security measures on 19<sup>th</sup> June.

To reinforce the 'stockade', the new access gate and lockable security post, an earth 'bund' will be installed behind the wooden posts this autumn.

A call by some residents for a height barrier at the car park entrance was refused because it would put unacceptable restrictions on the legitimate use of the car park by a range of vehicles. Advice from the **Essex Police Traveller Liaison Unit**, which has seen and approved the new security measures, was that such barriers offer little deterrent value.

In making the security improvements, the Council was determined to ensure that unfettered use of the Playing Field could still be enjoyed by residents whilst keeping the car park free for use by visitors to the village, the school and the wider community.

Following the illegal trespass, the Council adopted an **Unauthorised Encampment Policy\*** as a central source of guidance, advice and information.

\* View: <https://greatmaplesteadpc.co.uk/council-information/policies-procedures/>

### Beebombs away...

In June the Council donated £77 to provide environmentally-friendly Beebomb prizes...

...for the best painted/decorated stones on display outside the Village Hall.

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### County Broadband Update

During the summer County Broadband's contractors have been working on bringing Hyper-fast broadband to the village.

This has involved either laying underground cables or putting up telecommunications poles for overhead fibre cables. Information about any necessary road closures is normally shown in advance on roadside boards.

An overview of planned future closures, or those that are currently in force, can be found by going to <https://one.network/> and dragging/zooming in on the map showing the village. Clicking the drop-down at the top right of the page and selecting 'Next Two Weeks' gives the imminent closure locations. Hovering the mouse pointer over each roadworks sign will give the actual closure dates.

After the current period of work, now planned for **completion by December**, the next stage will include a phased connection of customers to the network. This will involve quality testing of the fibre cables, booking appointments and installing the tools required to enable full-fibre connectivity directly into homes and may take up to **12 weeks**.

During this time residents who have signed up for the scheme will also be sent a Customer Connection document explaining how their home will be connected. Shortly after that, a **CBB** team will make contact to book an installation appointment.

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### Parish Council Announcement

**Councillors are continuing to undertake their specific responsibilities whilst trying to respect the ever-changing Government advice.**

**The next Council meeting, on 18<sup>th</sup> November, may well have to be postponed until the 'Rule of Six' is lifted.**

**The Council's website and Facebook page will carry updates on any changes to its schedule.**

## Road Safety Review

**MMC Issue 31** contained information about **Essex CC's** response with regard to measures needed to improve road safety in the parish.

Engineers have subsequently visited the village and agree that '**Pedestrian and Child**' signs need to be installed on the three approach roads to the school and that '**30mph roundels**' should be painted in the road on the approach to the speed limit signs in Church Street and Monks Lodge Road.

They also agreed that the current '**SLOW**' signs on the roads all need repainting and that the **Council's** proposal to designate one of the village's narrower roads as a **Quiet Lane**, essentially giving priority to non-vehicular traffic, will be given further consideration.



The cost of these actions will be added to the list of schemes awaiting funding; **Essex CC's Local Highways Project** budget is fully committed for the 2020/21 financial year but the budget is renewed, and new funding recommendations can be made, each March.

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## Footpath News

**Apart from normal routine maintenance of the footpath network...**

...two specific footpath defects were reported to **Essex CC**, via their website, in **early April**:

- A broken riser on the steps at the bottom of Church Field, which subsequently collapsed completely.
- A rotted, broken plank on the footbridge across the brook between the water meadow and Reyes Hill.



Inspections were carried out following these reports and **Essex CC** decided that neither defect was sufficiently serious to require immediate repair.

With no quick rectification in prospect, the collapsed riser was replaced and re-secured and the step infilled by the **Task Force**.



Later in the summer however the defective plank on the footbridge partially collapsed and one of the longitudinal support beams cracked.

These defects were re-reported to **Essex CC** on **31st August**, along with photos to show the extent of the deterioration since April. The response, on the **3rd September**, was to install a completely new bridge and railings!



**Any further footpath problems should be reported or notified, in the first instance, to the Parish Clerk.**

## Latest Planning News

The **Council** confirmed the following planning decisions, which had been discussed by e-mail during the suspension of physical meetings, at its one-off meeting on **9<sup>th</sup> September**:

### Application Decisions:

- ✚ **20/00206/FUL** Orchard House, Dynes Hall Road. Change of use to equestrian ménage and addition of new stable blocks. **Granted 3/4/2020**
- ✚ **20/00129/TPO** Hunterswood, Church Street. Notice of intent to carry out works to tree protected by TPO 6/88. **Refused 8/7/2020**
- ✚ **20/00868/HH** Hopgrounds, Church Street. Garage conversion – single storey rear extension & front elevation change. **Granted 27/7/2020**

### Application Received:

- ✚ **20/01016/HH** St Marys, Toldish Hall Road. Construction of part ground/first floor extension.

The agreed response was "No comments, no objections". For other comments/responses go to: [http://www.braintree.gov.uk/info/200225/search\\_and\\_track\\_planning\\_applications](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/info/200225/search_and_track_planning_applications), then go to 'View Current Applications', type in the **planning reference** and open the files.

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## Forthcoming Events

**The Government's ever changing COVID-19 guidance on mixing in groups and social distancing has affected most of the village events planned for the remainder of this year.**

Some of the regular activities, such as **Keep Fit**, the Church services, the **coffee mornings** and **WI Meetings** have restarted, but in different formats than before; **Pilates** now takes place on Zoom.

The following outdoor autumn event is the only one currently planned (although this may change...):

- ✚ **Sun 4<sup>th</sup> Oct: Map Reading/Orienteering Workshop (replacing Socially-Distanced Harvest Village Walk)** – more about this on Facebook and the website nearer the time.

Events regularly held during previous Christmas seasons are now under review.

**Any changes/updates to this information will be posted on Facebook and the 'Events' or 'Activities' pages of the Council website.**

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## Contacting the Council

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

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