



Maplestead Magna Carta

Great Maplestead Parish Council's Award-Winning Newsletter

The Mobile Phone Mast Question – What Was The Answer?

You've had your say...

During October parishioners were asked for their views on Telefónica's proposed mobile phone mast installation in the field opposite the junction of Mill Lane/Toldish Hall Road.

The **Council** acknowledges that, for many in this area, mobile phone coverage is poor to non-existent and that improvements may be welcome. The consultation was therefore very specific, asking only about the **location** of the proposed mast and for ideas about other, more suitable sites.

The results:

The **Council's** survey, hand-delivered to **148 households** in the parish, received a **45% response**, the highest ever seen for an informal parish poll. Of these, just **25% were in favour** of the proposed location, with **72% against** (the other 3% either abstained or were undecided).

There was a more equitable split as to whether another location would be acceptable, **50% voting in favour of an alternative site** and a further 5% indicating agreement if a more sympathetic site could be identified.

The concerns:

The majority of objections/concerns regarding the proposed location centred on the **visual intrusion** and **adverse impact** a 50ft high mast would have on the surrounding rural scene/countryside.

A significant objection, and one which is of particular concern to the **Council**, is the mast's **close proximity to people's homes**, which seems unnecessary given there are many open spaces within a 1-2 mile radius of the site that are sufficiently away from any habitation.

The next steps:

The **National Planning Policy Framework** (NPPF) (Section 10, 113) states: "Existing masts, buildings and other structures should be used, unless the need for a new site has been justified".

At this stage the **Council** does not understand the justification for the proposed site and has asked **Telefónica** to explain what its location criteria are.

The **Council** hopes that the decision of parishioners to reject a mast in the suggested location will be respected by **Telefónica**. It has also invited the company to engage in further dialogue.

The **Council's** response in full can be found at: <https://greatmaplesteadpc.co.uk/latest-news/>

Kofali Farm

The **Council** held a special planning meeting by Zoom on 2nd November to consider an application by Kofali Farm for a mobile home to be used as 'an agricultural worker's dwelling' on land to the north of Purls Hill.

Also discussed at the meeting was the polytunnel structure that has recently been erected in the field, in a location that was refused permission for an agricultural building by **BDC** in December last year.

What is being planned?

The applicant **Mr Kofali** joined the meeting, with his agent, to explain his plans for the land and the need for the proposed mobile home.

He said keeping sheep was a new venture for his family and advised that the mobile home would be only an interim requirement, as the sheep have a limited breeding period. After lambing, in 12-18 months' time, the flock will be sold, the polytunnel (which he confirmed was purely a temporary structure; it has no permanent ground fixings or base and therefore doesn't contravene the original planning refusal) will be dismantled and the field returned to agricultural land.

Mr Kofali stated that there are no plans for future development of the site; he suggested that he may from time to time stay in the mobile home with his children, but it was not intended as a holiday home and was just needed to house one farm worker.

He was also worried that the site is not safe because the on-site container has recently suffered three break-ins; so, as well as having 'landscaped' the field entrance, he has installed CCTV and is now suggesting that the mobile home is a necessity for housing someone who, in addition to overseeing the sheep, can act as security.



The Council's response:

The **Council** discussed a number of concerns it has about this planning application as submitted; some of its content is contradictory and there are a number of assertions in it that are at odds with assurances given at the meeting.

Kofali Farm (contd)

Examples of the Council's concerns:

The application is ambiguous as to whether the 'dwelling' will be for one or more workers, what their jobs will be and whether they will come from the local area or commute; the current shepherd lives within the village and, if someone local is to be employed, it raises the question as to the real need for a mobile home on site.

Also, the illustration in the application shows the 'worker's dwelling' is, in reality, a luxury holiday



park home (left), not a traditional shepherd's hut – there is therefore a concern about its true purpose. Purls Hill is a historic lane and a 'dwelling' of the type applied for would be

completely out of character with the location, significantly changing its nature and appearance.

The Council also had questions about the farm's sustainability and is worried by suggestions in the application of more permanent structures to be built on the site in future. The obvious concern is that, if this application is approved, it could set a precedent for future proposals for building outside the village's development boundary.

The Council agreed that more clarification was needed from the applicant before considering this further – its complete & detailed response to the application, plus other comments, can be found at: <https://publicaccess.braintree.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple&searchType=Application>. Put the reference **20/01605/FUL** in the 'Search' box and open the files.

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Other Planning News

The Council confirmed the following decision at its public Zoom meeting on 18th November:

Application Decision:

- ✚ **20/01016/HH** St Marys, Toldish Hall Road. Construction of part ground/first floor extension. **Granted 8/9/2020**

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Parish Council Announcement

Councillors are continuing to undertake their duties and specific responsibilities whilst trying to comply with the ever-changing Government and NALC advice with regard to holding meetings and household mixing.

To be certain of compliance, the next Council meeting, on **Wednesday 20th January 2021**, is scheduled to be held on Zoom.

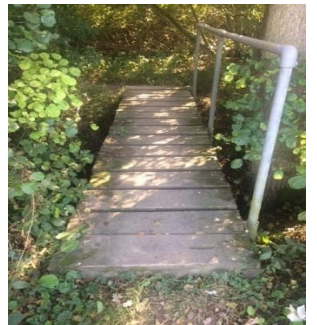
If you would like to attend/participate in the meeting, please e-mail the **Parish Clerk** to request an invitation, which will then be sent to you nearer the time.

Footpath News

Two specific access problems were attended to during September and October.



A fallen tree blocking **FP23** (Purls Hill to Hulls Mill) was removed and...



...a dislodged plank on the **FP26** footbridge in the Slype Copse was securely refitted.

Any footpath problems should be notified, in the first instance, to the Parish Clerk.

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Forthcoming Events

The ever changing COVID-19 guidance has meant many village events being put on hold.

However, an **Advent Windows/Garden Display Calendar** event is taking place during December, which you can enjoy without mixing inappropriately – lighting-up dates and a display location map have been posted on **Maplestead Mates**.

To take advantage of the recently announced **COVID** regulations 'relaxation' around Christmas, the following has also been organised:

- ✚ **Sun 27th Dec: Socially-Distanced Christmas Village Walk** – Meet in the **Village Hall Car Park** at **11.00am**. Half-way refreshments provided. Drinks and nibbles served at the end. Adults: **£2.50 each**; Children/dogs: **free**. To take part, e-mail: steve198harris@gmail.com and include contact phone numbers.

Any late changes/updates to this event will be posted on Facebook and the 'Events' page 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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Tel: 01787 460 216 (4-6pm Mon-Thurs)
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