



# Maplestead Magna Carta

Great Maplestead Parish Council's Award-Winning Newsletter

## Road Safety matters – signs of improvement in the village

### Slowing the traffic

Back in September 2019 the Parish Council asked Essex County Council for a review into what measures could be taken to improve road safety in the village and wider local area.

In response, ECC's then Assistant Highways Liaison Officer visited the village in January 2020 to discuss the Council's concerns and view the roads in question.

Although no local roads outside the village centre meet Essex Highway's current criteria for 40mph speed limits – one of the Council's suggestions – she saw our roads being used by dog walkers and horse riders and agreed there was a need for better protection for these vulnerable users.

As a result, earlier in January Essex Highways installed new pedestrian warning signs and extra 30mph repeater signs – as well as painting new '30', 'SCHOOL' and 'SLOW' road markings – in Church Street, Monks



Lodge Road and Lucking Street. These prominent reminders are intended to help reduce vehicle speeds and improve safety for all road users within the village centre.



### What's still to do?

As part of the original review it was suggested that one of the village's narrower local roads might be designated a Quiet Lane, which would essentially give priority to non-vehicular traffic. Usage of this road has already been assessed but the next stage is dependent on an Essex-based trial scheme proving successful.



Further news on this will be published as and when the Council has been notified.

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### Land at the Sudbury Road Triangle

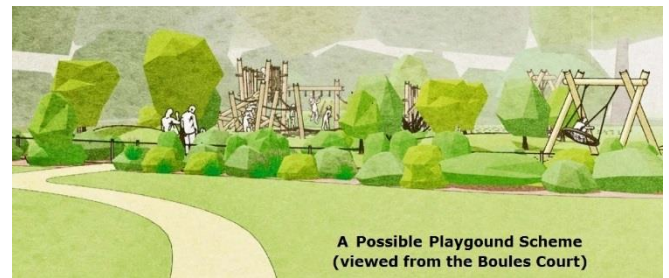
Some of the unauthorised development work on land at the junction of Monks Lodge Road and the Sudbury Road has now been removed.

This seems to be in an attempt to comply with BDC Planning Enforcement's High Court injunction, which gave the owners until the 12<sup>th</sup> January to restore the land to the condition it was in prior to their various breaches of planning control.

### Playing Field Development Project

The Playing Field Development Working Party is currently undertaking the legally-required tender process needed before the purchase of any equipment for the children's playground.

New natural play equipment is its preferred option, as it will both meet all current requirements for exciting and stimulating play and provide a modern and attractive village focal point. Implementing the playground scheme will be Phase 2 of a proposed programme that also includes also planting and landscaping for the area and its surroundings.



A Possible Playground Scheme (viewed from the Boules Court)

Phase 1 of the programme remains the installation of new field drainage in the area close to the car park. Because of the disruptive nature of this work it must take priority, so funding from the District Councillor Grant and the balance of S106 monies are being allocated to the £7,000 scheme, which will be undertaken during the spring.

The timing and implementation of Phase 3 of the planned work, the Mile-a-Day walking and disabled access path, which is considered essential to allow full access to the playing field, will depend on the progress and success of various fundraising efforts.

Phase 4, the creation of a Mindfulness Garden doubling as an open air classroom or relaxation space, is currently being assessed/evaluated for implementing as a practical, community-led project.



A Possible Scheme for the Mindfulness Garden

A CIF Grant application for £10,000 submitted to Essex CC at the end of last year has unfortunately been turned down, but the National Lottery Grant application for £40,000, made at the same time, has now been assigned to the South East region lottery team and is under consideration.

Details of a special crowd-funding initiative, and an update on the Development Project's current status, will be presented at the Parish Assembly on 13<sup>th</sup> April.

## Budgeting for a Better Future - 1

Essex County Council is set to increase its total 2022/23 Council Tax bill by just under 4.5% - or £60.21 per average household.

This **£1.16/week** increase is made up of a 2.99% tax uplift for the Council – which includes 1% for Adult Social Care – plus an additional 1.5% for the latter that was deferred from 2021.

The Council's agenda, as set out in *Everyone's Essex – the plan for Levelling Up the County*, is at the heart of its budget proposals, which also deal with the rising demand for key services, particularly social care, as a result of the pandemic.

Plans include investing £1.3 billion over the next four years on major infrastructure projects, such as new schools and large road improvements. Spend in 2022/23 is set to be £284m, money which will also support local contractors and workers.

Action is to be taken on climate change and carbon reduction in line with the **Essex Climate Action Commission's** recommendations; these include a £200 million spend towards Essex's net zero targets and commitment to a high-quality environment.

Support for business growth across the county will continue through the **Backing Essex Business** programme, promoting economic growth, creating jobs and continuing investment in skills.

Despite a strong financial management track record – and one of the lowest County Council tax rates in England – **ECC** is not immune to current inflation pressures and rises in utility prices.

Inflation has added £32m to the cost of services and interest rate rises have increased borrowing costs for the Council's capital spending programme.

**ECC's** Leader **Kevin Bentley** says: *"This budget will allow us to commit to **Everyone's Essex**, our plan to improve the economy, environment and life for children and families, promoting health, care and well-being for all ages."*



**Braintree District Council's** budget proposal is for a **2.65%** increase in Council Tax, an average of **10p/week**. **BDC** has improved efficiencies but it has a £1.6m budget deficit and the increases are necessary due to cost/inflation pressures.

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## Budgeting for a Better Future - 2

At its January meeting the Council reviewed its 2022/23 Budget & Precept options.

It was agreed that the Precept (the portion of **Council Tax** received by the Parish) needed to be increased to cover inflationary pressures on the **Council's** fixed operating costs while maintaining a viable level of contingency/emergency reserves.

After identifying areas where savings may be made in order to balance the books, an annual Precept increase of **£4.63** – less than **10p/week** – per Band D household was proposed and agreed. This proposal has subsequently been accepted by **BDC**.

## Platinum Planning

Planning is now underway for various village events to mark the **Queen's Platinum Jubilee** across the **2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> June Bank Holiday** weekend.

A **beacon lighting** ceremony on Thursday will set the scene for a **village party** Friday night, **picnics and games** on the playing field on Sunday, **floral displays** around the village and much, much more.

**Please keep that weekend free for celebrating!**

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## Latest Planning News

The following planning items were considered by the Council at its 12<sup>th</sup> January meeting:

### Applications Received

- ✚ **21/03469/HH & 21/03470/LBC** – Chelmsloe House Farm, Monks Lodge Road. Conversion of a garage for accommodation. Conversion back to ancillary accommodation of existing outbuilding and repair of fenestration. Demolition and rebuild of brick garden wall.
- ✚ **21/03606/HH** – 7 Stone Cottages, Church Street. Erection of two storey rear extension, demolition of existing single storey extension and its replacement with a single storey rear.

The **Council's** comments can be seen by going to: <https://publicaccess.braintree.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple&searchType=Application>. Click on 'View Current Applications', type in the **planning reference** and open the files.

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## Forthcoming Events

The following are some village events (\*these at the Village Hall) to note for your diary:

[**Please Note:** Due to continuing uncertainty about social mixing restrictions the traditional mid-March **Jumble Sale** has been **cancelled**. The next sale is scheduled for **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> September**]

- ✚ **Wed 13<sup>th</sup> Apr\* Annual Parish Assembly** – starts **7.30pm**. An opportunity for village organisations/groups to report/discuss past activities, future projects and local events.
- ✚ **Mon 18<sup>th</sup> Apr\* Easter Village Walk** – meet at **11.00am**. Cost: **£2.50**/person – dogs & children **free**. Half-way drinks + refreshments.

**More information about the Jubilee Weekend and other social events that are being planned for later in the year will be posted on the 'Events' page of the Parish Council website and on Maplestead Mates nearer the time.**

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## Contacting the Council

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

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