



Maplestead Magna Carta

Great Maplestead Parish Council's Award-Winning Newsletter

Working on your behalf – what this Council has done...

...to make a difference (Part 1)

The present **Parish Council** is nearing the end of its allotted term of office – an opportune time to review some of the projects that have been undertaken and accomplished since it was elected in 2019.

A programme for improving **Council**/parishioner dialogue was put in place by setting up a **Facebook** page, linked to the village's **Maplestead Mates** page, to help reach and involve the widest possible audience. The **Council's website** – a 'one-stop' information source not just for **Council** matters but for **all** village news, events and activities – was also moved to a new platform, which enabled it to function properly when accessed on mobile phones.

Some of the more visible projects that have been actioned during the last 4 years include:

Playing Field

- **Security:** After the successful negotiation and removal of travellers within 24 hours in June 2020, vertical wooden posts, a gate and lockable security post were installed immediately to prevent further unauthorised incursions. A wildflower earth bund was later added as an additional security measure.
- **Boules Court/Picnic Benches:** grant funded and installed to improve recreational amenities.
- **Development Project:** £100,000 scheme to install new drainage, replace ageing playground equipment and improve access for people of all abilities (completion due Spring 23 – see right).



Footpaths

- **Water Meadows:** delapidated footbridge replaced.
- **Slype:** steps & stepping stones across marshy ground replaced by a raised path.
- **Church Field Steps:** rotted risers replaced.
- **Dog Waste Bins:** additional bins installed at St Marys/Gestingthorpe Rd; Parish total now seven.



Highways

- **Lucking Street:** drainage project to alleviate flash flooding completed.
- **Road Safety Programme:** new road signs and painted speed markings installed. Toldishall **Quiet Lane** proposal under review by **ECC**.
- **Litter Picking:** volunteer zonal bi-monthly roadside clearance programme implemented.



Playing Field Project set to start...

Work on redeveloping and re-equipping the children's play area is now ready to go ahead, subject to any weather-related constraints.

All being well, work on removing the existing equipment will commence at the end of February, with the new equipment being installed by the end of March. Following a mandatory safety inspection, the new playground should be handed over to the **Council** at the beginning of April.



Access for construction traffic during the period of the work will be through the car park, which means that, from time to time, parts or all of it will need to be closed. Information and updates on closures, and on the work's overall progress, will be posted in timely fashion on the **Council's Facebook** page and the village's social media – it is hoped that any disruption can be kept to an absolute minimum.

Negotiations for the provision of the '**Access-for-All**' pathway are nearly finalised. This is a separate phase of the project which, because of the path's rubberised material construction, is planned to be actioned in the spring, once the risk of sub-zero temperatures has receded.



The **Working Party** will now be considering plans for further improvements to the playing field's leisure and recreational amenities – for example, installing 5-a-side football nets, a basketball hoop and additional benches – for which additional funding may be necessary.

If you would be interested in sponsoring any such additions to the playing field facilities, please contact the Parish Clerk.

More in the next issue...

The Warm Haven at St Giles'

As part of the Council-backed Community Cost of Living Liaison Group initiative, the Warm Haven in the Tower Room at St Giles' has been in regular use; it is therefore intended to keep this amenity open until the spring.

A leaflet reminding people of the Warm Haven's availability has been re-distributed to all village households but lighting and heating the room has contributed to the Church's electricity costs for Q4 2022 being £1000 higher than in Q4 2021. To ensure the room can continue to remain open the Council agreed at its last meeting to add £400 to an ECC grant to help cover running costs.

The room is open every Monday to Saturday, 9.30am - 4.00pm and members of the CCLLG are available from time to time to provide information, help and cost-of-living advice. They can be also be reached at gmcostoflivingcrisis@gmail.com.

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Celebrating the King's Coronation

A group of village volunteers is organising and planning celebration events for the May bank holiday weekend of the King's Coronation.

Activities planned include a village show, to include free 'fizz', canapes and a cash bar. Parishioners are being invited to volunteer acts for this 'Royal Variety Performance', which will be held in the Village Hall on Saturday 6th May. To apply to take part, please e-mail information about your 'act' and its timing to: acrisppc@btinternet.com by 26th February.

Other events planned include an afternoon 'Tea & Cake' party and a possible games event (weather permitting!) on the playing field. There will also be competitions for the 'Best Decorated House/Garden' and a 'Coronation Cake Fit for a King'.

The Council decided in principle to provide some funding for these celebrations, subject to a figure being agreed at its March meeting.

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Budgeting for Straited Times

At its January meeting the Council reviewed its 2023/24 Budget & Precept options.

Potential reductions in some of the regular County and District grants to the Council – for services such as street cleaning/verge cutting – together with inflationary increases to insurance, hall hire, staff/admin costs, support for community activities and the need to fund the May local election meant that the Precept (the proportion of Council Tax received by the Parish) needed to be increased.

In order to maintain a working budget, albeit one with a potential deficit that may have to be funded from reserves, the Council agreed an annual Precept increase of £9.33 – or 78p/month – per Band D household. This has subsequently been accepted by BDC.

Latest Planning News

The Council noted the following planning decisions at its meeting on 11th January:

Application Decisions:

- ✚ 22/02924/HH 2 Toldish Hall Cottages, Toldish Hall Road – Erection of two storey rear elevation. **Granted 9/12/22**
- ✚ 22/02780/T56 Land near to Little Lodge Farm, Church Road – Prior approval for the installation of a 25m high mobile phone mast. **Prior approval not given 8/12/22**

Application Received:

- ✚ 22/03436/FUL Foxes Crossing, Gestingthorpe Road – Change of use from agricultural land to residential garden.

The Council's qualified response can be found at: <https://publicaccess.braintree.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple&searchType=Aapplication>. Type or copy the **planning reference** into the 'Search' box and open the files.

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Forthcoming Events

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

- ✚ **Thurs 2nd Mar*: The Maple Leaves** present 'My Life in the Jewellery Trade', a talk by **Mary Waterfall**. Starts **7.00pm**. Members and Guests welcome. More details from Liz Newton (461 308)
- ✚ **Fri 10th Mar: Rural Crime Open Day** at **Layer Marney Tower** (CO5 9US) – **1.00pm-4.00pm**. Visit stalls & hear from police officers about their work in rural communities at this **free** event. Details at: <https://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/>
- ✚ **Sat 18th Mar*: Quiz Night** – doors open **7.00pm**. Starts at **7.30pm**. Entry **£5/person/maximum 10 teams of 6 people** each. *Bring your own drinks and nibbles*. Book your team by **11th March**. E-mail: avp28@btinternet.com.
- ✚ **Mon 10th Apr * Easter Village Walk** – meet at **11.00am**. Cost: **£2.50/person** – dogs & children **free**. Half-way drinks + refreshments.
- ✚ **Sat 6th May*: Royal Variety Performance Show** – to celebrate the **King's Coronation**. **Participants required!** E-mail your intention to take part/details of your act by **26th February** to: acrisppc@btinternet.com

Further information about these and many other village activities can be found on the 'Events' page of the Parish Council website.

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Contacting the Council

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

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

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