



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 2)

The current **Parish Council's** 4-year term of office is ending shortly; some of its more visible accomplishments during this period were reviewed in **Issue 48**.

However, in addition to the general routine of **Council** business, there have been a number of other actions, less visible but perhaps just as important for the community, that have been undertaken during the last four years.

Some of those that have been implemented are...

Regulatory Measures

- **Emergency Standing Orders:** to enable **Council** business to continue using Zoom during the various Covid lockdowns.
- **New Policies:** to provide clear guidance and define the actions to be taken when dealing with:
 - Unauthorised Encampments/Incursions
 - Maintenance of Financial Reserves
 - Safeguarding
 - Whistleblowing
 - Documentation Retention/Destruction
- **New Contract for the Clerk:** to bring it into line with current tasks/Local Government guidelines.

Community Projects

- **Village Support Groups:** help with setting up and financially backing Covid and Cost of Living Crisis community volunteer initiatives.
- **Health:** Two CPR/defibrillator courses run and stolen defibrillator replaced in secure cabinet.
- **Policing:** regular **PCSO** liaison and contact.

Financial Matters

- **Accounting/Budgeting:** a simplified and more automated proprietary system adopted to streamline processes & better control costs/expenditure.
- **Regulatory Audit of Processes/Procedures:** new internal auditor appointed to improve oversight and reduce audit costs.

Planning

- **Mobile Phone Mast:** Extensive consultation with residents, followed by success in countering 2 proposals for masts in unacceptable locations.

...while other actions, like those below, will need to be carried on by the incoming **Council**:

- **Local Development Plan:** involvement to continue to ensure parishioners' wishes, concerns & ideas are fully represented.
- **Local Council Award Scheme:** compliance with administrative & operational stipulations to ensure the **Council** retains **Foundation Level** accreditation.



The Council needs you...

If the next **Parish Council** is to evolve and help make **Great Maplestead** an even better place to live, it needs to comprise of people with enthusiasm and good ideas.

On **Thursday 4th May**, depending on the number of candidates standing, there may be an election for all seven **Council** positions. There are big challenges ahead – greater financial constraints, more devolved powers and so on.

If you have the time, and are able to make the commitment, then this offers a great opportunity to get involved in the village's future and become a part of its history.

How do you stand for election?

Download a **Nomination Pack** from **BDC's** website (www.braintree.gov.uk/elections) – this contains all the information and forms you need. Completing and submitting these statutory **Nomination Papers** is the **only** way to apply to be a candidate – **but be quick...**

The nomination period is **9.30am to 4.00pm** on **working days only** from **Tuesday 21st March** until the **close of nominations at 4.00pm** on **Tuesday 4th April**.

This deadline will not be extended – for any reason.

Completed **Nomination Papers** must be **hand-delivered*** to the Returning Officer at Causeway House, Bocking End, Braintree CM7 9HB.

***Neither electronic nor Royal Mail postal deliveries are permitted nomination submission methods.**

Voting in the election

The UK Government has made it a requirement for voters to show **photo ID** when voting – either in person at a polling station or using a proxy.



You may already have a form of photo ID that is acceptable, for example a passport, driving licence or concessionary travel card. A full list of acceptable ID can be found at: www.braintree.gov.uk/VoterID

If you don't have an acceptable form of photo ID, or you're not sure your photo still looks like you, you will need to apply for a free voter ID document, known as a **Voter Authority Certificate**.

To apply for a **VAC** please go to: voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk.

Getting it all together...

This year's **Parish Assembly** is being held in the **Village Hall** on **22nd March** at **7.30pm**.

Whether you are new to the village or long-standing residents, this is an ideal opportunity to socialise, meet fellow parishioners, find out what is going on in the village and hear about plans for the future. **Refreshments will be provided**, so why not come along and say hello?

The meeting will include contributions from village institutions and the organisers of various social activities and local events. The **Church** and the **School** will be reporting on what's been happening with them during the past year. Invitations to participate have also been extended to the **Village Hall** trustees and **WEA** organisers, along with the **Knitting Circle**, the **Carpet Bowls Club** and the **Autumn Show Society**.

The **Parish Council** will also be reporting on more local village aspects and its recent achievements, including an update on the current status of its ambitious **Playing Field Development Project**.

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Planting for Protection...

Rural crime is an ongoing concern and, often due to a lack of visible policing, opportunities for criminal behaviour are all too frequent.

Protecting a property with tall fences, razor wire topping, high walls and large gates is not always an option, either from a practical or aesthetic point of view. And, in today's litigious society, having such deterrents, unless accompanied by prominent warning signs, invites the risk of a legal complaint from the wrong-doer...

Spring, however, offers the chance to consider alternative, effective natural protection for vulnerable boundaries, exposed windows and other items that are likely to attract unwanted attention, such as heating oil tanks.



Most local garden centres stock an extensive range of attractive-looking but deceptively spiky plants and shrubs. Roses, for example, rambling over a carefully-positioned trellis can both look and smell nice while the thorns act as an effective discouragement against break-ins.

Plants like Berberis, Mahonia and Holly, planted close to fences, can also make attempts to climb over a boundary wall extremely painful!



Information on plants and shrubs environmentally suitable for protective purposes can be found at: <https://thecrimepreventionwebsite.com/garden-boundaries-fences-and-defensive-plants/618/defensive-plants-shrubs-and-trees-shrub-fences/> along with some useful advice on assessing, then addressing, the various security risks particular to your house and garden.

Latest Planning News

The following decisions were noted by the **Council** at its meeting on **15th March**:

Application Decisions

- ✚ **22/02946/FUL** *Bennetts Farm, Dynes Hall Road* – Application for erection of building for pig-breeding pens. **Granted 09/12/22**
- ✚ **22/03436/FUL** *Foxes Crossing, Gestingthorpe Road* – Change of use from agricultural land to residential garden. **Granted 20/02/23**
- ✚ **22/02922/FUL** *Chifneys, Lucking Street* – Conversion of existing barn to 3-bedroom residence. **Application withdrawn 20/02/23**

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Forthcoming Events

The following are some of the forthcoming village events (*those at the Village Hall) that you may wish to note in your diary:

- ✚ **Sat 25th Mar* The Maple Leaves** present their '**Big Breakfast**', from **10.00am-1.00pm**. Adults **£10**/children under 12 **£4** - everybody welcome. Raffle proceeds to the Foodbank. More details from Carol Brownlie (461 527)
- ✚ **Mon 10th Apr* Easter Village Walk** – meet at **11.00am**. Cost: **£2.50**/person – dogs & children free. Half-way drinks + refreshments
- ✚ **Thurs 4th May* Local Elections Day** – from **7.00am-10.00pm**. Please remember to take your **photo ID!**
- ❖ **King's Coronation Celebration Weekend**
 - ✚ **Sat 6th May*: Royal Variety Performance Show** – from **7.00pm**. Free fizz and canapes before an evening of fun and surprises...
 - ✚ **Sun 7th May: Tea & Cake Afternoon** – in **St Giles' Church** at **2.00pm**. Bake a '**Cake Fit For A King**' to win a competition prize!
 - ✚ **Mon 8th May: A Celebration of National Volunteers Day** on the **Playing Field**, from **2.00pm**. An afternoon of fun and games, including the **Official Opening** of the **New Children's Play Area** and **Pathway**.

An **Events Leaflet**, including a **Ticket Request** for the **Royal Variety Performance** and details about all the planned **Coronation** activities will be hand-delivered to all households in the village shortly.

Information about these events, 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 made 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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Website: <https://greatmaplesteadpc.co.uk>