



Maplestead Magna Carta

Great Maplestead Parish Council's Award-Winning Newsletter

Village bus service to be withdrawn? Have your say...

F315 bus service under threat

The local F315 bus service is an important link to the outside world for residents with little or no access to private transport and who need to travel out of the village for personal, social or work purposes.

Essex County Council is currently reviewing the future of its bus service provision, undertaking a **Public Consultation** into a strategy for 'Supported Local Bus Services 2024–2028'.

The **Consultation** covers **three service groups**, based on passenger volumes:

- **The vast majority of services**, where there will be no changes until at least 2028.
- **An 'At Risk' group**, which ECC will support until at least 2026 but where passenger numbers will need to increase.
- **A 'Low Use' group**, which appears not to be meeting local needs and therefore faces either major changes or a **complete withdrawal**.

The **F315** on-demand service between Halstead and Sudbury that serves many local villages, including **Great Maplestead**, is considered to be in the '**Low Use**' group and is being proposed for withdrawal. A possible alternative, Braintree's **Dart3** service, is also under threat – as can be seen from the Strategy Document extract below:

Service number	Origin	Destination	Days of operation	District	Current Operator	Proposed Changes
Dart 3	Braintree	Braintree	Monday to Saturday	Braintree	Essex and Suffolk Dart	Withdraw Service
F315	Sudbury	Halstead	Monday to Saturday	Braintree	Arrow Taxis	Withdraw Service

Our village is already designated as '**Tier 3**' in **BDC's Local Plan**, meaning it is in a '*deprived area*' of the rural district and is '*unsustainable through a lack of social infrastructure*'. Loss of the **F315** service will only make this situation worse – with a resulting adverse impact on many parishioners.

Contrary to the Government's '**Levelling-Up**' agenda, withdrawing the bus service will inevitably:

- restrict any future local demographic just to car owners
- be a disincentive for some families looking to move here
- increase the number and frequency of car journeys, substituting for those that would have been by bus
- have a more detrimental effect on local air quality and consequently our rural environment in general
- be a possible reason for not gritting local roads in winter

The **Public Consultation** is open until **5th October 2023**. **Have your say** by completing the survey at: <https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/iptu/2023>

Going the extra mile...

Pupils and teachers from St Giles' School gathered on the last day of the summer term to 'officially' open the village playing field's **Coronation Path**, which will now double as a track for the children's 'Daily Mile' exercise.



After 'cutting' the ceremonial ribbon, the entire school streamed onto the **0.2 mile** path that winds around the field for their inaugural 5-lap mile.



Completed in June as part of the playing field's **Development Project**, the new path's cushioned rubber mulch surface reduces stress on joints when walking or running and is already in regular use by villagers as a convenient adult exercise facility.

By providing level, unobstructed access to all areas of the field, the path also enables everyone, of any ability – children, adults, walkers, runners, joggers, people with pushchairs or those using mobility aids, wheelchairs and mobility scooters – to fully enjoy this unique village amenity.

"We're delighted that St Giles' agreed to sponsor the playing field's **Coronation Path**, allowing the children to use it for their **Daily Mile** exercise" said **Project Leader Simon Last**. "We also understand that use of the new play equipment, will in future, be integrated into the school's curriculum – its innovative design features enabling the children to improve their balance and co-ordination and also help develop their muscle tone and core strength in a safe, supervised and controlled environment".



'Levelling-up' locally...

The Rural Community Council of Essex is setting up a Community Reference Group to enable residents of rural Braintree district, which includes Great Maplestead, to have an input to the district's 'Levelling-Up' project.

The CRG will discuss ideas and possible solutions to overcoming the social barriers of living in rural villages and the impacts these have on accessing services, schools and employment opportunities.

The aim is to ensure the Government's 'Levelling-Up' funding is appropriately distributed and used to support local services and initiatives.

If you would like to participate in the CRG, please contact the Parish Clerk.

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Walking the walk...

Some parish footpaths were recently reported as having become unseasonably overgrown.



FP 11, between Lucking and Little Lodge Farms (above) and the section of FP 26 through the Slype Copse were attended to by members of the Task Force, while the landowners complied with a request to deal with FP15 (from the Village Hall).

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Doggy doo-doo: Just Don't!

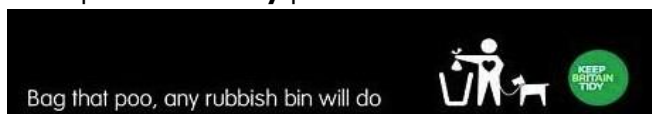
Complaints of dog faeces being deposited on the village playing field continue to be made to the Council and reported on social media by concerned parishioners.

Failing to scoop and bag dog waste is illegal, with fines of up to £1000. It is also flagrantly anti-social and, as the field is used for some school lessons, it potentially exposes children to a toxic health risk.

The village is well-supplied with 7 dog waste bins, one of which is in the field's car park, so there's absolutely no excuse not to use it.



Even if that's full, suitably bagged dog waste can be disposed of in any public waste or litter bins...



If you witness any dog fouling, particularly on the playing field, you can report the offender to BDC; click here: <https://www.braintree.gov.uk/advice-environment/dogs/2?documentId=371&categoryId=20001>

Latest Planning News

The Council noted the following planning decision at its meeting on 26th July:

Application Decision:

- ✚ 23/00978/FUL Hopwells Farm, Hedingham Road – Creation of 3 ponds to provide new habitats for Great Crested newts.

Granted 12/07/23

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Meet the new Councillor...

Three residents applied to be considered for the advertised Parish Councillor vacancy.

After a vote in accordance with its Standing Orders, Dorothy Weight was duly co-opted on to the Council at its meeting on 26th July.



Dorothy has lived in the village for almost 40 years and, having retired, now feels she has sufficient time and energy to commit to a role that helps support the local community.

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Forthcoming Events

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

- ✚ **Fridays 4th to 25th Aug: Social Boules Evenings** – on the **Playing Field Boules Court**. From **5.00–7.00pm** (weather permitting). **All welcome**, whether to play or just socialise. **BYO chairs/nibbles/drinks**.
- ✚ **Thurs 7th Sep*: Maple Leaves** present – **'Doreen's Road Show'** – at **7.15pm** for a **7.30pm** start. Bring along an interesting item for Doreen Faulks to select and talk about. Members (**free**): non-members (**£3**) welcome.
- ✚ **Sat 9th Sep*: Autumn Show** – full details at: <https://greatmaplesteadpc.co.uk/parish-information/activities/autumn-show/>.
- ✚ **Sat 23rd Sep*: Jumble Sale** – starts **3.00pm** Admission **30p**. Raffle and Refreshments. More details from Diane Smith (473 300), Doreen Faulks (460 727) or Liz Newton (461 308).
- ✚ **Thurs 5th Oct*: Maple Leaves** present – **'Local Heroes and Villains'** – at **7.15pm** for a **7.30pm** start. Author and historian **Ashley Cooper** has some fascinating tales to tell. Members (**Free**): non-members (**£3**) welcome.

Information about all village activities is 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:

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