



# Maplestead Magna Carta

Great Maplestead Parish Council's Award-Winning Newsletter

## Farewell to our Parish Clerk – welcome to our next.

### One era ends...



**The Parish Council's long-serving Clerk, Ann Crisp, retires at the end of May.**

**In recognition of her invaluable contribution to the Council over many years, a bouquet, card and inscribed commemorative vase was presented to her during her final Council meeting as Clerk.**

Having taken over the role from Karin Richards back in 2010, Ann has decided that, after 15 years in the hot seat, she wants to spend more time enjoying life away from **Council** matters.

During her time as **Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer**, Ann has been instrumental in helping the **Council** to become more financially viable and secure, enabling it to obtain funding to deliver infrastructure improvements to footpaths, roads and, most recently, the major redevelopment of the village Playing Field's facilities, improving its amenity value to parishioners and visitors alike.

Ann's work, particularly in relation to transparency and governance, has not only helped in establishing better lines of parishioner communications but also in achieving the Essex Association of Local Council's **Foundation Award** status in 2015, which the **Council** has since maintained.

Of the 307 Parish and Town Councils in Essex, only 29 have reached **Foundation Award** level, so it is a noteworthy achievement.

With her extensive knowledge of the Clerk's bible, the 'Yellow Book', Ann has helped a succession of Chairmen negotiate the potential pitfalls of the position – and, in many instances, gone above and beyond the requirements of the job to ensure the **Council** achieved its aims; a prime example was her compilation of the application that won **Great Maplestead 2024 Essex Village of the Year**.

The **Council** will obviously miss the benefit of Ann's extensive experience, knowledge, guidance and general helpfulness but we are sure that, having relinquished the Clerk's role – and especially after recently delivering the village's memorable **VE80** party – she will now be in serious demand as **Great Maplestead's** go-to social events organiser...

### ...while another begins

**The Council's new Clerk/RFO is Denise Ellison, who will be in post from mid-June.**

After a successful recruitment process, Denise was considered the candidate best able to bring her relevant experience and record of financial management to the role that it demands.



The **Council** is very much looking forward to working with her.

**Denise's appointment was formally confirmed at the Council's AGM on 14<sup>th</sup> May.**

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### Mindfulness Garden update

**Work on the Playing Field's Mindfulness Garden project continues apace.**

Shrubs/fruit trees planted to provide for pollinators and fruit for parishioners to enjoy, are growing strongly and the previously planted **Willow Dome** is already sprouting and leafing-up well!



Six planters and a bench are now installed – all funded by a **Braintree District Council** grant.

Recently volunteers were helped by three groups of Year 5 pupils from **St Giles' School Gardening Club** to put in some beautiful plants, all going towards achieving their RHS Level 4 certificates.

Perrywood's Garden Centre very kindly donated a **£250** voucher towards the project and provided plants that are drought tolerant, attractive to pollinators, but less attractive to deer and rabbits!

It is hoped that as many people as possible will be able to enjoy this garden for many years to come.

## VE80 Anniversary Celebration

**On the evening of the 8<sup>th</sup> May bunting across the entrance of the Village Hall fluttered and...**

...from 7.00pm the revellers, who had nearly all made a tremendous effort to dress in period, began to arrive. Fish and chips came in from the **Hook of Halstead**, bar queues formed and microphone stands stood ready, awaiting the talented vocalists.

Suddenly the wait was over and **Fox, Wiggle & Sass** took to the stage – a vintage vocal harmony trio who wowed everyone with their repertoire of 1940's classics and some more modern songs. Union flags were waved, people sang and danced, and the first set concluded to thunderous applause.



The village then joined with the nation: Pam Wheaton lit the beacon at 9.30pm and Keith Brownlie and Angela Purdy read beautifully delivered tributes, their poignant words, detailing the sacrifices made, drifting on the evening air. Following the singing of 'I Vow To Thee My Country' it was back into the Village Hall for the trio's second set. Everybody took to the dance floor, the party went into full swing, and the 1940's were re-lived.



As the curtain came down on an outstanding evening, party poppers exploded, flags waved one last time, **Fox, Wiggle & Sass** took a group selfie and were presented with gifts in appreciation of their outstanding entertainment.

Many thanks to Martin Watson, Konrad Purdy and Joe Newton for setting up the beacon and also to the organising committee, led by Ann Crisp – all their hard work ensured that the evening was a tremendous success.

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## A Troubled Bridge No More...

**The bridge railings and parapet over the culvert on the road past Chelmshoe House going out towards Castle Hedingham have now been repaired.**



The railings were destroyed and the parapet damaged by a vehicle failing to make the bend back in the winter.

The damage was flagged by the **Council** in mid-December, using the on-line reporting facility on Essex Highways' website, and the repairs were completed by mid-May.



## Latest Planning News

**The following applications were discussed by the Council at its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May:**

### Decisions Noted:

- ✚ **24/02402/TPO** – *Laundry Cottage, Monks Lodge Rd.* Notice of intent to carry out works to trees protected by TPO – 1/98.  
**Part refused/part granted. Decision 7/3/25**
- ✚ **25/00141/ELD** – *Monks Lodge Farm House, Gestingthorpe Rd.* Application for Cert. of Lawfulness for an existing use. Change of use of land to residential garden.  
**Granted. Decision 21/3/25**
- ✚ **25/00302/HH** – *Easedale, Lucking Street.* Proposed two storey rear extension and single storey extension to outbuilding.  
**Granted. Decision 11/4/25**
- ✚ **25/00341/FUL** – *1 Langthorne Cottages, Gestingthorpe Rd.* Change of use of land to form an extension to domestic garden.  
**Application withdrawn**

### Applications Received:

- ✚ **25/00831/HH** – *1 Toldish Hall Cottages.* Proposed single-storey front and rear extension with roof terrace to rear elevation.
- ✚ **25/00969/FUL** – *6 Toldish Hall Road.* Construction of 1 dwelling with associated private amenity and off-street parking.

The **Council's** responses to these applications are 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 upcoming events you may wish to note for your diary:**

- ✚ **Fridays 6<sup>th</sup> Jun to 22<sup>nd</sup> 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**.
- ✚ **Friday 27<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> Jul: Halstead Music Festival** – at **St Andrew's Church, Halstead**. Tickets: Each Concert - **£15**. Festival (Five Concerts) - **£50**. Under 16s – **Free entry**. Booking at: [www.halsteadmusicfestival.co.uk](http://www.halsteadmusicfestival.co.uk)

**More details will be on Maplestead Mates, in Parish News and 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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