



Maplestead Magna Carta

Great Maplestead Parish Council's Award-Winning Newsletter

Bus Service Consultation: more changes planned...

Support for services under review

Essex County Council (ECC) is reviewing its support for local bus services, focussing on those that are currently taxpayer-subsidised.

These are services that mainly operate either in rural areas or on evenings and Sundays – times when buses are less commercially viable.

Residents are being asked to share their views, via a **Public Consultation** that runs until **Monday 27th October**, on options that include:

- Continuing services as they are now
- Redesigning services to reflect how they are used
- Returning some services to commercial operation

There are two proposals for changes that will affect **Great Maplestead**:

Proposal 1

To replace the current **DaRT3** on-demand service with a timetabled service that will provide links to community hospitals in Sudbury and Halstead.

- **One return journey one day a week**, covering the areas:
Alphamstone, Ashen, Belchamp Otten, Belchamp St Paul, Belchamp Walter, Birdbrook, Borley, Foxearth, Gestingthorpe, Great Henny, **Great Maplestead**, Lamarsh, Little Maplestead, Little Yeldham, Middleton, Pentlow, Stambourne, Tilbury Juxta Clare, Toppesfield, Twinstead, Wickham St Paul

Proposal 2

To replace **DaRT3** with a **Digital Demand Responsive Transport (D-DRT)** flexible service operating in real-time, responding to booking requests by passengers, within a defined area and time window per day (e.g. 7.00am–10.00pm).

Vehicles would go to pick-up and drop-off locations confirmed as part of each booking request, enabling journeys to be shared by multiple passengers who are travelling to similar locations at similar times.

D-DRT is primarily booked via an app, which enables passengers to:

- Plan, book and pay for journeys via their smartphone
- Receive real-time updates on vehicle arrival and drop-off times
- Share trips dynamically with other passengers to optimise journeys
- Seamlessly connect with commercial bus and train services via transport interchanges or urban areas

A phone line would still be available for those without smartphone access or unable to use an app.

So why the changes?

D-DRT is supposedly best suited to rural areas where fixed route services are neither sustainable nor able to meet diverse travel needs efficiently.

However, the methods of accessing such a service may not be geared to the demographics of its main users. Your views will be important in deciding the future of the bus services. The consultation link is: <https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/iptu/braintree/>

An announcement of the consultation outcome will be made later this year.

--ooOoo--

Cost of Living – Residents' Survey

The rising cost of living continues to affect many people across the district, in many different ways – how is it affecting you?

Whether it's the price of food, energy bills, housing costs or access to essential services, these pressures can have a real impact on everyday life.

Braintree District Council wants to hear directly from its residents - your experiences matter and, by completing a short survey, you'll help **BDC** to:

- Understand how the rising cost of living is continuing to affect people locally
- Identify where support is most needed
- Shape future services and initiatives to better meet community needs

The survey is completely anonymous and should take around 15 minutes to complete. The responses will help **BDC** build a clearer picture of the challenges residents are facing and how it can respond more effectively.



To complete the survey, simply scan the QR code or visit: www.braintree.gov.uk/xfp/form/727

--ooOoo--

Playing Field Footpath Repairs

The Parish Council has trialled an economic method of repairing the footpath subsidence.

The trial, using an injected expanding foam product, was successful and is sustainable, so the remaining areas of subsidence will be attended to this autumn.

Braintree District Council's Future



On Monday 15th September Braintree District Council debated all four proposals for the reorganisation of local government in Essex.

Under **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)**, all 15 existing local authorities across Greater Essex are due to be abolished by 2028, to create fewer, larger Unitary Councils.

While every Council in Essex is united in recognising **LGR** as the right direction for the future, there were four alternative proposals put forward about how best to deliver it.

The Leader of **BDC** will have looked at the four possible options as they affect Braintree District and carefully reviewed the evidence base for each proposal before deciding on his Council's choice for the future governance of Essex.

What happens next?

All four proposals developed by Greater Essex Councils had to be submitted to the Government by **26th September**. A public consultation will follow in the autumn when residents and communities can have their say. Central Government's final decision is due to be announced in **March 2026**.

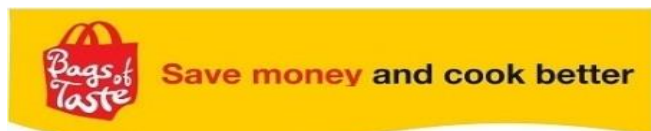
How to find out more

The **Greater Essex LGR website** will be carrying all the latest information and updates.

--ooOoo--

Bags of Taste

Bags of Taste, a programme funded by BDC's Cost of Living initiative, helps people save money, eat better and build confidence in their ability to prepare nutritious meals.



The programme has been designed especially for residents facing challenges such as poor health, isolation or financial hardship.

It provides **FREE** ingredients to residents who are financially vulnerable, giving them the means to cook three low-cost, healthy meals. It also offers a mentoring service to help support longer-term changes in eating habits.



All the necessary ingredients are home-delivered so residents can make the recipes in their own kitchens and include their families in the process. To register, scan the QR code, phone/WhatsApp 07751 890 912 or e-mail Braintree@bagsoftaste.org.



Latest Planning News

The following applications were discussed by the **Council** at its meeting on 17th September:

Decisions Noted:

- ✚ **25/00831/HH** – 1 Toldish Hall Cottages. Revised plans for a proposed single-storey front and rear extension, with the addition of a privacy screen for roof terrace to rear elevation. **Granted 8/8/25**
- ✚ **25/01224/TPO** – St Giles Church, Church Street. Notice of intent to carry out works to trees protected by TPO 6/2000. **Still Pending Consideration**

Applications Received:

- ✚ **25/01797/TPO** – Linden Grove Monks Lodge Road. Notice of intent to carry out works to trees protected by TPO
- ✚ **25/01600/TPO** – Laundry Cottage Monks Lodge Road. Notice of intent to carry out works to trees protected by TPO

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.

--ooOoo--

Forthcoming Events

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

- ✚ **Thurs 2nd Oct*: Maple Leaves** present – '**A Tasting Evening**' – doors open at **7.00pm** for a **7.30pm** start. The **Guest Speaker** is **Martin Crisp** from the **English Spirit Company**. Members (**Free**): non-members (**£5**). To book phone Liz Newton (461 308) or (07432 647 644).
- ✚ **Sun 12th Oct*: Harvest Village Walk** – meet at **11.00am**. Cost: **£2.50/person** – dogs & children **free**. Half-way drinks + refreshments
- ✚ **Sat 15th Nov*: Quiz Night** – Doors open at **7.00pm** for a **7.30pm** start. Entry **£5** per person. Maximum **10 teams, 6 people per team**. Bring your own drinks, glasses and nibbles. Book your entry by **5th November**: phone Julie Last (462 957).

More details will be on Maplestead Mates, in Parish News and on the 'Events' page of the Parish Council website nearer the time.

--ooOoo--

Contacting the Council

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

Denise Ellison, 25 Monks Road, Earls Colne, Essex CO6 2RY
Tel: 07566 265 447 (4.30-6.30pm Mon/Tue/Thu)
E-mail: clerkgreatmaplesteadpc@gmail.com
Website: <https://greatmaplesteadpc.co.uk>