



Maplestead Magna Carta

Great Maplestead Parish Council's Award-Winning Newsletter

Essex Local Government Reorganisation Plans Withdrawn

Proposed changes quashed...

Central Government's decision last January that, from 1st April 2028, the fifteen existing County, Unitary, City, District and Borough Councils in Greater Essex would be replaced by five Unitary Councils has been withdrawn by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

The planned changes would have meant an end to local Councils that were established 140 years ago, based on areas dating back to mediæval times.

Why have things changed?

The withdrawal, prompted by 'updated and privileged legal advice', follows a judicial challenge to central Government's local government reorganisation (LGR) model. This challenge was launched by the Reform UK-led **Essex County Council** in July and was supported by several other English County Councils.

ECC has argued that, along with concerns over the electoral effects of some of the new area boundary changes, replacing all the existing councils with five **Unitary Councils** would have cost more than **£100m**, money that would have needed to be spent on the:

- Unitary Council elections, which were due to take place in May 2027
- Setting up of a 'Shadow Council' – a temporary body of newly elected Councillors – operating alongside existing authorities until April 2028
- Preparations for the amalgamation and launch of the new Councils:
 - agreeing budgets, policies, and governance arrangements
 - aligning administrative practices, reorganising/standardising and linking IT systems, agreeing reporting paths and so on.

Impact on Services

Contrary to assurances given by proponents of the proposed new regional structure, **ECC** suggested that there would have been disruption to adult and children's social care services and that some of the reorganisation costs could be better spent.

There were also concerns voiced that, with fewer authorities covering much larger administrative regions, residents would not enjoy their current level of access to local decision-makers or the ability to hold those in charge to account.

What happens now?

The Government has confirmed that the local elections, already planned for **May 2027**, will go ahead **based on existing Council boundaries**, saying it remains committed to effective and sustainable local government.

It has also been asked to publish the updated legal advice it has now received, along with the financial impact LGR has had on ECC.

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Meet the new Councillor

At the 16th September Parish Council meeting Charles Tindall was, following due process, co-opted as a Councillor.

Charles and his wife Claire have lived in Great Maplestead since 2008 and he is keen to put something back into a community of which he has long enjoyed being a part.



Having spent eleven years as an army officer with responsibilities for people and organisation, since leaving the army Charles has worked in commercial insurance in the City as both a broker and an underwriter. He is currently a Board Director and Head of Compliance for an international insurer with experience of governance and dealing with government regulators.

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Remembering Peter Haylock

On the 6th September a Sundial/Birdbath memorial for Peter Haylock, a valued and long-serving Council member, was unveiled in the Playing Field's Mindfulness Garden.

Peter was also on the Autumn Show Committee, who funded the memorial, as well as being a Past President of Halstead's Rotary Club.



Carol Brownlie from the Autumn Show and Cllr. Joe Newton both paid tribute to his extensive community service before his wife Lyn unveiled the Sundial/Birdbath and thanked the large crowd who had gathered to raise a glass to his memory.

Hed-TEC Stage Rally – 11th July 2027

Chelmsford Motor Club is proposing to run a Stage Rally based in Castle Hedingham, on closed public roads around Great Maplestead.

This event would use a seven-mile route encircling the village, with the roads closed from 7.00am to 6.00pm. 60-odd cars, starting at 30-sec. intervals, would each complete eight timed runs, four clockwise and four anti-clockwise. The Stage would be 'live' for about 3 hours from 9.00am, then 1.00pm.

Rally HQ and the Service Area are planned to be at Hedingham Castle, with Stage starts and finishes in Monks Lodge Road and Sheepcot Road.

At the recent **Council** meeting residents expressed a concern that the sole access to the village during the event, avoiding closed roads, would be the single-track Castle Hedingham Road, which has limited passing places. To reach the Monks Lodge start/finish, rally cars would also have to use this road – albeit non-competitively – preventing its unrestricted use for residents, visitors and deliveries.

The **Council** has therefore asked that **CMC** shorten the Stage and relocate the Monks Lodge start/finish to Gestingthorpe Road, just prior to the Sudbury Road, which could then remain open, allowing competition vehicle-free access to and from the village along both Castle Hedingham and Monks Lodge Roads. This would also eliminate the need for a long diversion to Sudbury from all local villages.

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Waste/Recycling Q&A

In answer to the **Council's** questions put to **BDC** in **Issue 69**, about residents' **Waste/Recycling** concerns, **Cllr. Schwier** responded:

- o "[**BDC**] does not accept the assertion that the service is failing to deliver its intended outcomes" and that "**the service design meets, and in several areas exceeds, expectations** in relation to waste minimisation and increased recycling".
- o However, contradicting this, he then stated that **BDC** is going to "**explore options for providing additional recycling capacity where needed**" and "**applications for additional or reduced recycling capacity are expected to open in the autumn**". No indication was given as to the cost of these extra bins or a distribution timetable.
- o Further: "**There is no intention to change the frequency of collections**" due to undisclosed "**operational and financial considerations**".

Concerns have now been raised regarding the suitability of the sacks **BDC** provides for Absorbent Hygiene Product (AHP) collections. AHPs are officially deemed '**offensive biological waste**'.

When these plastic sacks are left outside overnight for collection, they become vulnerable to animal predation and damage, potentially compromising their integrity, causing environmental pollution.

The **Council** has therefore queried whether these sacks are appropriate, secure and hygienic storage for the collection of biological waste products.

New Litter Bins

Two new closed top litter bins, to replace the ones...

...on the Church St. triangle and in the children's play area were installed by **BDC's** Street Scene on 8th September.

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Latest Planning News

The following were discussed by the **Council** at its meeting on 16th September:

Applications Received:

- ✚ **26/02017/DAC** – Monks Lodge Farm Barns, Gestingthorpe Road Great Maplestead CO9 2RN. Discharge of Condition 4 (Contamination) of **25/02454/FUL**
- ✚ **26/01873/DAC** – Monks Lodge Farm Barns, Gestingthorpe Road Great Maplestead CO9 2RN.. Discharge of conditions 3 (Materials), 5 (WSI), 6 (Tree Protection), 7 (Construction Management Plan), 8 (Fencing) & 9 (BNG) of **25/02454/FUL**

The **Council's** responses to the applications are at: <https://publicaccess.braintree.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple&searchType=Application>. Type or copy the **planning reference** into the 'Search' box and open the files.

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Forthcoming Events

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

- ✚ **Sun 4th Oct*: Harvest Village Walk** – meet at **11.00am**. Cost: **£2.50/person** – dogs & children **free**. Half-way drinks + refreshments
- ✚ **Sat 10th Oct: Litter Pick** – meet at **10.00am**. in the **Playing Field Car Park**. All equipment and collection bags supplied. Participant coffee and cakes in **St Giles'** afterwards.
- ✚ **Sat 14th 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 **6th November**: phone Liz Newton (461 308)

Further information can also be found 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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Tel: **07566 265 447** (4.30-6.30pm Mon/Tue/Thu)

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