

## **GREAT MAPLESTEAD PARISH ASSEMBLY**

**Meeting held at the Village Hall on Wednesday 10th April 2019**

**ATTENDEES:** Cllr. D.Turner - Chair. Mrs A Crisp, Parish Clerk. Cty.Cllr. D.Finch. Dist.Cllr. J.O'Reilly-Cicconi. PCWheeler & 2 Community Officers. 9 Village organisation representatives and 24 members of the public.

**1.APOLOGIES** – None

**2. MINUTES** – Meeting minutes from the Annual Parish Assembly 18<sup>th</sup> April 2019 were signed as a true record by Cllr. D.Turner, Chair.

**3. GUEST SPEAKERS** – Introduction to PC Craig Wheeler and members of his community policing team, who are responsible for Halstead & Rural Areas. PC Wheeler directed to parishioners to regular local policing updates on Twitter. The team will conduct regular drive-thru patrols and for any areas of regular concern, not of an urgent nature, he suggested contact be made with the team via the Clerk.

*Questions were invited*

Q. Concerns regarding street parking during school drop off/pick up hours.

A. PC Wheeler advised that the school and council should send a joint communication to parents & visitors to the school. He would then arrange ad-hoc visits following this communication to assist with ensuring safer parking.

**4. UPDATE FROM ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL** – Cllr.David Finch provided an annual update from ECC.

**5. UPDATE FROM DISTRICT COUNCIL** – No report but Dist.Cllr.O'Reilly-Cicconi advised he was stepping down from BDC.

Cllr.Turner extended thanks to both Cty.Cllr.Finch & Dist.Cllr.O'Reilly-Cicconi for their support and help within the parish.

**6. GREAT MAPLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL** – Report from Cllr.D.Turner.

a) Annual Parish Council Report. Reductions in funding from central government place continued pressure on council resources but the council continue to pursue any additional funds available. In past 12 months the District Councillor grant scheme has been utilised to purchase new litter picking equipment and provide a top up of plantings for surface of the village playing field car park.

b) The council has been engaged in lengthy communications regarding the location of the village bottle bank recycling facilities and appropriate use of the village playing field.

c) Projects agreed include the installation of new picnic tables/benches and a boules court on the village playing field - all subject to acquiring some form of grant funding; environmental initiatives.

d) The council were pleased to be able to support the WWI "There but not there" initiative with the purchase of commemorative plaques for the Great Maplestead fallen. The plaques were donated to St Giles church for future generations to appreciate.

e) The council has successfully been re-assessed for the quality council Foundation Award, thanks to the efforts and work of the Clerk.

f) A refresher CPR/Defibrillator training course is scheduled for Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2019.

*Reports were provided by the following organisations and lodged with the Parish Clerk*

**7. MAPLESTEAD GARDENING CLUB**– Report by Mrs C Brownlie

**8. SOCIAL COMMITTEE** – Report from Miss J Ingram.

**9. VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE** – Report from Mr J Newton.

**10. ST GILES CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL** –Report from Mrs J Nichols, Headteacher, read by Mrs P Doe, Chair of Governors.

**11. YOUTH CLUB** – Report from Mrs M Jeggo.

**12. ST GILES PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL** – Report from Rev G Ellis.

**13. KNITTING CIRCLE** –Report by Mrs C Brownlie.

**14. CARPET BOWLS CLUB** – Report from Mrs J Chaplin

**15. GREAT MAPLESTEAD W.I.** – Report by Mrs C Brownlie, President. Read by Mrs J Chaplin

**16. GREAT MAPLESTEAD WEA** – Report from Mrs G Newton

**17. RCCE VILLAGE OF THE YEAR COMPETITION 2018** – Report from Mrs A Crisp.

**18. CLOSING REMARKS** – Cllr. D. Turner thanked all representatives and organisations for their attendance and continued contribution to the village.

**Signed**..... **Dated** 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020

## **REPORTS**

### **Essex County Council**

#### **1. Essex County Council is the most efficient/effective Council of its size in the country and ranks seventh overall**

Consultancy iMPower surveyed 150 upper-tier councils, with ECC 7<sup>th</sup> for spending money effectively and getting the best results for residents

- a) The results are drawn from an analysis of performance in six key areas: children’s social care, older people, disability, health and social care, housing and homelessness, waste and recycling
- b) The council is passionate about delivering value for money and its performance has been nationally recognised through the IMPOWER report. But the council doesn’t sit back on its laurels, and is doing further work to develop ways of monitoring its productivity levels across all services to ensure it remains one of the best authorities in the country
- c) The organisational design programme has delivered £9.7m in savings for the financial year 18/19 with a further £8.4m in 2019/20 identified. Over 80% of all in scope people have been through org design to date.
- d) ECC have only increased Council tax in 4 out of the last 9 years (including 2019/20)

#### **2. Reports of potholes decreased by 45% in Essex between 2015-2017**

National figures released by the RAC in December 2018 showed Essex bucking national trends, where reports have been increasing

The figure reflects our hard work in tackling potholes, with extra funding/resources deployed to clear the backlog particularly following the “Beast from the East” cold snap at the beginning of 2018

#### **3. ECC is the best social work employer**

ECC places great emphasis on training and career progression for social workers through the Essex Social Care Academy

The Council has created a stable workforce with limited use of agency staff, which has been in part due to the introduction of a high-quality programme of support in employment  
We are committed to making our social workers feel valued and positive and achieve positive outcomes for vulnerable children, families and adults

#### **4. Broadband rollout (£1.4m investment)**

As of November 2018, 115,000 properties have been enabled (phase 2 of the rollout continues)

Delivery will reach its peak over the next nine months

Just 3% of Essex (26,000 properties) has no existing or planned superfast coverage

#### **5. Devolved funding to Parish Councils**

Parishes have been invited to take part in a pilot where they would undertake devolved highways functions, including grass cutting and special verge maintenance, weed control, tree and hedge cutting, minor footway repairs, installing/maintaining signs, winter salt bags, maintaining bus stops/shelters and maintaining Public Rights of Way

15 Parish Councils have expressed an interest in taking part in the pilot

#### **6. Essex's Youth Offending team does "Outstanding" work with young offenders**

HM Inspectorate of Probation announced in December that the service was "outstanding", its highest category

Many aspects of its work to prevent reoffending were found to be "impressive" and the service was praised for its consistent approach despite covering one of the largest areas in the country  
Dame Glenys Stacey, HM Chief Inspector of Probation said "The arrangements for youth offending work and the focus given to it by strategic leaders are clear and well understood. The work is led well by both strategic leaders and operational managers"

#### **7. Schools and skills success**

94% of ECC schools are rated as good or outstanding

We are supporting the training of young people in Essex through apprenticeships and academic study, working in conjunction with further education providers and universities, to ensure we are producing people with the right skills to help grow the Essex economy

#### **8. Reducing unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller encampments**

Working with the Police and Crime Commissioner, we have seen a 40% reduction in unauthorised Gypsy and traveller encampments

#### **9. Children's Services**

In January we were given an overall grading of "Outstanding" by Ofsted following an inspection in November

ECC has been recognised in Parliament and by the Children's Minister, Nadhim Zahawi MP, as being the leading light in children's services

Mr Zahawi has visited Essex to look at how we provide services and achieve excellent outcomes for costs which are below national averages

We anticipate we will shortly be offering advice to the MHCLG Parliamentary Select Committee on Children's Services funding

### **10. New Young Carers Service**

Essex Young Carers Service was launched last September, which sees us invest an extra £1.5 million pounds in support for young carers over the next 5 years. The new team, who work as part of the Youth Service, provide a Key worker scheme linked to level of need and led by quadrant based Senior Practitioners and are supported by Key workers to offer statutory assessment and personalised support relating to the needs, aspirations, attainment and health of the young carer.

### **11. New SEND schools**

Three new special schools are to be built in Essex.

This project will provide 209 new places in the county for children with autism and social and emotional mental health needs, 30 of which will be residential. Two schools will be built on the old St Peter's College site in Fox Crescent, Chelmsford, and one will be built on a site close to the New Rickstones Academy in Conrad Road, Witham.

These projects all reuse existing education land. No land has had to be purchased for this project and the schools will all be centrally funded by £23m in grants from the DfE.

### **12. Essex Local Delivery Pilot funding**

ECC being awarded over £10m by Sport England (with Tendring, Colchester and Basildon) for piloting ideas to increase sport and physical activity

- The Essex Local Delivery Pilot (LDP) which is tackling population levels of physical inactivity across the county secured the maximum grant of £10.68m from the funder Sport England.
- The LDP is governed by the Health and Wellbeing Board, and one of the seven priority projects for the Essex Partners and Essex Assembly.
- The LDP is using whole system change to hardwire the value of physical activity into key agendas including health, planning, transport, social care, and the built environment.
- Initial testing will mainly take place in Basildon, Colchester and Tendring, and the learning from the pilot will be shared across Essex through replication and scaling.
- The LDP lifespan is currently until 2025.

### **13. Flying our Green Flags**

In 2018, ECC successfully received 6 Green Flags for our Country Park sites at Thorndon North and South, Great Notley, Danbury, Weald, Cudmore and Belhus.

This year, we have applied for 7 Green Flags, including the six from last year, as well as Hadleigh Country Park and the London 2012 mountain biking facility in Castle Point.

### **14. Award Winning Flood Alleviation Project in Harlow**

ECC won Small Project of the Year at the British Construction Industry Awards 2018 for the Kingsmoor Flood Alleviation Scheme in Harlow:

The scheme was delivered as part of the Flood Teams' 5 Year Capital Flood Alleviation Programme and protects 43 properties.

It involved the construction of 8 leaky dams (woody barriers placed across watercourse channels to slow flows and capture silt), the de-silting of 2 ponds and the construction of a large earth bund to capture and store larger volumes of water.

The works were undertaken within areas of ancient woodland using traditional methods, which included moving the logs into position using heavy horses and the dams being constructed by hand.

## **15. Successes in HR**

The organisational design programme has delivered £9.7m in savings for the financial year 18/19 with a further £8.4m in 2019/20 identified. Over 80% of all in scope people have been through org design to date.

We have now transitioned over 4000 employees onto Essex Pay terms and conditions, with over 99% of people opting in. We have already started to see the impact of this work, which is a fairer, more transparent way of paying our people.

## **16. Future Libraries Strategy**

A draft Future Libraries Strategy has been developed, which proposes an ambitious 5 year vision for the service.

On 22 November, Cabinet agreed to formally consult on the Strategy and a 12 week public consultation was undertaken from the 29 November 2018 to the 21 February 2019. The consultation received over 21,000 responses. The responses are now being analysed to understand the public's view on the proposals and a report will be presented to Cabinet in Summer 2019.

## **17. Footways**

Administration is investing additional money in footway repair, recognising the concerns of residents in this area. £700k of additional funding and using £1m from the DfT grant we received in November.

## **18. Housing Infrastructure Bids**

This week will see submission of more than £500m of infrastructure funding bids to support infrastructure improvements in Essex linked to our growth aspirations. We strive through this process to win funding for key infrastructure upgrades ahead of new development being built.

## **19. Supported Bus Services**

The recent consultation has allowed us to identify resident priorities for the bus network and will enable us to focus our resources on supporting the most amount of people to travel sustainably in Essex.

## **20. Gang related crime prevention**

£500k has been allocated to the Police and Crime Commissioner to support multi-agency work on gang related crime prevention. Discussions are ongoing between ECC and the Police as to how this fund is to be used.

## **21. Mental Health**

£1m has been allocated to mental health. Cabinet Members are currently in conversation on how best to use this additional funding

## **22. Digital Community Engagement**

ECC is working with community leaders in social media to bring together Facebook Administrators of Community Pages from across Essex. We are supporting locally devised and delivered projects led by local community based Facebook groups with small grants of a few hundred pounds that can be very quickly accessed. We are working with the Essex Association of Local Councils to help them to also work in this way.

While we are keen to help to address issues locally identified by Facebook groups, we have been delighted that most of the projects align well with our own priorities including around mental health, loneliness, physical activity and domestic violence.

A lot of work has been done but we see this as the start of a journey and want to expand this approach across the whole of the county. We are very keen to work with all local communities in this way and would be keen to see groups led by Facebook administrators or similar social media leads covering all of Essex.

## **23. Trading Standards - Allergens**

Serious illness and fatalities linked to the consumption of allergens in food has received significant media attention over the past few months. The TS team continues its ongoing work with Essex food manufacturers and retailers to ensure that food is properly labelled, and consumers can make informed choices. Several allergens training courses have been run at cost to upskill caterers in their responsibilities. A programme of intelligence led test purchasing activity has also been very successful in educating food businesses and tackling more formally non-compliant businesses that chose not to improve their processes after being given advice.

## **24. Spatial Planning**

The Essex Design Guide has been recognised and shortlisted in the category of Excellence in Planning for Health and Wellbeing. The RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence are the most established and respected awards in the UK planning industry. Running for over 40 years, they celebrate exceptional examples of planning and the contribution planners make to society.

## **25. Essex Housing update**

Essex Housing has undertaken an ambitious programme to build affordable housing that supports the provision of specialist accommodation for people with learning difficulties across the county. The team also works on projects to construct public buildings such as schools, and have achieved recognition from industry experts; winning the 'Community Benefit' award for the eastern region from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

## **26. Green Essex Strategy**

ECC has developed a to take a positive approach to enhance, protect and create an inclusive and integrated network of high-quality green spaces and green infrastructure in Greater Essex.

ECC are in the process of removing all single use plastics from the ECC estate. This is expected to be achieved soon.

## **27. Resource and Waste Strategy for England**

The government recently launched the new strategy. To deliver against these ambitions and associated targets the Government is proposing a number of interventions. Some of these are already subject to early consultation, which ECC is actively engaging in. These include:

- Consultation on Plastic Packaging Tax: intended to stimulate demand for recycled plastic and encourage alternative material use by taxing plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content.
- Consultation on Consistency in Household and Business Recycling Collections: Proposals to introduce a minimum standard for local authority recycling collections to maximise the capture of waste for recovery, recycling or reuse.
- Consultation on Deposit Return Scheme: Requiring retailers to place a refundable deposit on bottles (including plastic bottles) to encourage recycling and reuse.
- Consultation on Reforming Packaging Producer Responsibility: Proposing those placing packaging on the market are responsible for meeting the full net cost of its collection and disposal.

## **28. Homelessness**

As a sign of ECC's commitment to tackling homelessness and its causes across the county, an additional £250,000 has been allocated to pay for mentors to help support up to 50 people at risk of rough sleeping and 150 people at risk of losing their homes.

This will allow us to build additional capacity into the existing programmes working with targeted groups in clearly identified areas of need, with the flexibility built in to respond dynamically to changes in demand. The programmes are:

- Horizon who work with some of the county's most chaotic individuals providing a highly intensive and focused intervention services. It works with the customer to support them in making the life changes needed to break negative cycles of: rough sleeping, poor mental wellness, substance use dependency, offending behaviour and unemployment. This has been shown to be extremely successful in turning around the lives of the most entrenched individuals.
- Essex Floating Support which is a county wide homeless prevention service working with families and individuals assisting them to live independently and to prevent episodes of homelessness.

### **GREAT MAPLESTEAD CARPET BOWLS CLUB 2018-19**

Carpet Bowls has had another successful year. We have kept our membership and most members attend on a regular basis. Subs. remain at £2.00 for the two hour afternoon session. We are not interested in making a profit, so long as we can cover the cost of hiring the hall and the heat and have some money towards our Christmas lunch. We would, however, love to welcome new members, although any prospective members should realise that although we all enjoy our carpet bowls, the main purpose

is still the social side. There is always a great deal of chatting going on!

We have a rota so that each week a different member provides the tea and biscuits for everyone and there are usually many willing hands to help with the washing up. Our Christmas lunch last year was held in The Locomotive in Halstead and once again Carpet Bowls contributed to the cost. We also had a 'secret santa' present again, where each member bought a present and wrapped it and we all chose a present from the large pile on the table. A good time was had by all.

Carpet Bowls usually takes a break for the summer sometime in May, dates tend to be flexible around the start of member's holidays and we resume in September. Once again during last summer some of our members went for a cream tea at a garden centre or similar on a Monday afternoon, and I would especially like to thank Carol Brownlie for providing the transport each week. We are a really friendly bunch, with a very varied age range, so if anyone fancies a couple of hours of fun, friendship and chatting on a Monday afternoon, we would love to welcome new members.

### **The MAPLESTEADS Knitting Group.**

The knitting group meet on the last Wednesday of the month at my home, [REDACTED] at 2pm, I think we spend more time chatting than knitting, but we always enjoy a good laugh. There are about 9 in the group and we knit hats, mittens, puppets and baby blankets. The hats mittens and puppets are made for the Samaritans Purse an organisation that sends shoe boxes out to Eastern European countries. The baby blankets this year went to Colchester Special Baby Care Unit.

This year we also knitted hats for the Innocence Smoothie bottles, with a percentage of the proceeds from the sale of these drinks going to Essex Age UK.

This year we sent 252 hats, 135 hats and mittens and 19 puppets to the Samaritans purse and 7 baby blankets went to Colchester Special Care baby unit.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has given us wool to enable us to knit these items. I would also like to make an appeal for wool as we do use a lot over the year.

Anyone interested in joining the knitting group will be very welcome, you can find my contact details in the parish magazine.

### **Great Maplestead Parish Assembly 2019**

#### **Social Committee Report**

The social committee continues to organise events to enable people to get together and be sociable. There are a number of events which are firm favourites throughout the year, including the popular village walks. These are organised by Steve and Ann Harris and last a couple of hours ending back at the village hall for sandwiches and other refreshments.

The Beer Festival is now entering its seventh year and has grown in success over the years. We will be offering beer, cider, wine and gin this year and entertainment will be provided by Ricardo and his flamenco guitar, half a whopper and Hells Bells, Belchamp Morris and the Maldon Green Jacket Morris groups.

The boule season started with a family event on in June and then regular tournaments on a Friday evening right through the summer. We will be starting this year's season on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June with a family event on the village playing field.

New for 2018 was the Navigational Scatter event, organised by Steve Harris. Teams of up to four people were given maps and plotted their routes over croissants and coffee. We then



set off to drive around the countryside solving clues and gathering evidence. The team who completed the course in with the lowest mileage were the winners. We all gathered back at the village hall for a BBQ, whilst we waited for Lyn and Liz who managed to travel round the whole of North Essex but were still speaking to one another (just) by the time they returned.

The autumn calendar of events included the Harvest Walk, and quiz night and culminated with the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ending of World War 1. A fabulous evening of entertainment organised by Martin Elms and Liz Newton with help from many in and around the village. It is amazing how much talent we have living in the village and it was wonderful seeing our friends performing and enjoying themselves.

Christmas is always thoroughly celebrated in Great Maplestead. We started with the Christmas Fayre organised by Liz Newton and Lyn Haylock and December saw the Christmas Tree Advent, starting with our village tree at the top of Church Street. We also had Carol Singing around the village and all events involved mulled wine, mince pies and sausage rolls! Our First Winter Beer Festival provided a refreshing break from the mulled wine and sausage rolls and was well attended and enjoyed by all. More relaxed than the spring festival people were able to drink beer and listen to Ann's Wheels of Steel.

During the autumn and winter months we trialled a Friday night Pub Night, with informal gatherings bringing your own drinks and nibbles. Janice and Bob came along and showed us how to play carpet bowls, which was great fun. We also had indoor curling with the ladies from Wickham St. Paul which was quite competitive but hugely enjoyed by all. There will be another Curling event on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April, good value at just £3 per person.

Our year of events culminated in the popular Curry and Cards evening with delicious curries and hilarious card games leaving us wanting more.

The social committee are always looking for fresh ideas and new ways of bringing the community together. If you are interested in joining us please let me know.

### **Report to the Great Maplestead Annual Parish Meeting by the Church of St Giles.**

2018/19 has been a busy year.

The web-site of the Church of England defines it's roles as being "A Christian presence in every community" and St Giles church congregation seek to live that aim out.

Firstly, we still maintain an act of worship every Sunday in Gt Maplestead (the only exceptions being when a major event is taking place elsewhere in the Halstead Team, or on the Sundays after Christmas and Easter). We also hold special services at other times of the year such as Christmas and Easter. We continue to hold special services like the Pets Service and services to mark the various stages of the farming year, this is in addition to the traditional Harvest service and lunch. We continue to have a very able team to lead the monthly family service and their work is much appreciated.

Each year the church is available for baptisms, weddings and funerals. Sadly, this year we have lost some more friends who have been linked to the village for many years.

Our Wednesday morning coffee session continue to be very popular with between 20 and 30 people regularly attending.

Our churchyard is looking very well cared for and as next months magazine will show, because last Saturday we had 25 people from the village who came to the working party and give their time and effort to keep the church in such good order and this is much appreciated by all of our visitors, as well as the Churchwardens, the PCC members and myself.

The parish magazine is now a real church and community magazine and is delivered free of charge to every house in the four parishes. We also have links to the websites.

We have a new sound system in the church and some very interesting lights which will enhance the Church not only for regular services, weddings, baptisms and funerals but for other events, like concerts or if the school wish to use the church.

We are delighted that the school still likes to come to church for its special services, sadly we were unable to host their Ash Wednesday Service this year as some of us were in the Holy Land on Pilgrimage, but Revd Rose, who is one of the Team went into the school and took the service there.

*Revd Gay Ellis and the Churchwardens.*

## Village Hall Report 2019

The hall has had an easy year. Bookings are holding their own and we have a healthy reserve. The bookings do not quite meet expenses so some fund raising goes towards our running costs.

The jumble sales were a roaring success. Thanks to everyone who helped and indeed to all our helpers in whatever way they contribute without help the committee could not function.

The social events have been a great success, I won't try to list them in case I leave something out. The commemoration for the end of WW1 was well supported on and off the stage.

We still have the ceiling to look at in the annexe as well as the overhead cupboard at the back. We are looking to replace the stage with stage sections which will be safer and easier to use. There are mixed feelings about this so we might have to have a referendum to decide (only joking).

As ever please use the hall whenever possible it is the bookings that keep it going.

Joe

### **VILLAGE OF THE YEAR REPORT 2019**

Once again, the village submitted an entry into the Village of the Year competition in 2018. I managed to write the same words as before, but not necessarily in the same order!

We were again successful in reaching the second round of judging, which involves a visit by judges together with an interview. My thanks to Steve & Ann Harris for being willing hosts and giving their time so generously. Unbelievably, we did not win or even get a Merit award!

The winner in our category was Messing.

However, despite this bitter disappointment we still feel it is worth fighting for the £150 prize, so we have again entered the 2019 competition. This year we have tried

an alternative approach with Steve Harris completing the nomination form. So far so good, we are into the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of judging! We have a dream team lined up to host the judges on May 10<sup>th</sup>, so we are ever hopeful of success. My thanks to St Giles PCC and the use of the Tower room for the judging interview.

Fingers crossed!

Ann Crisp  
Clerk

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# The Federation of St. Giles' and St Andrew's C of E Primary Schools



## Parish Assembly Report 2019

Good evening, thank you for the invitation to come tonight to report on the work of the school. Mrs Nichols gives her apologies for not being able to be here and I am very pleased to be able to be here on her behalf.

Last year, she reported to you the progress of The Federation of St Giles and St Andrew's. I am pleased to say that the good work has continued and the schools are moving forward together in a very productive and successful way. By federating, we are able to make financial savings and renegotiate contracts and services to secure best value. This means for St Giles' that we are securing the future of the school and protecting

This time last year, St Andrew's had just had its crucial Ofsted inspection but the result could not be made public at the time Mrs Nichols reported to you. It therefore seems only right to acknowledge the Good Ofsted judgement now. This was achieved in a very short time and is a credit to the skills and expertise that St Giles' was able to share with St Andrew's to make such a dramatic difference. The focus is now to spread the good news about the quality of education at St Andrew's so that more and more families are considering the school rather than dismissing it because of its previous reputation.

St Giles' has had a hugely successful year in its own right and I am proud to say, achieved about the national performance figures in all statutory assessment tests. This included 91% of 11 year olds achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and Maths.

We have sustained our high numbers and have very few spaces. Parents continue to be attracted to the school because of the quality of our curriculum and the care we offer to families. These include; high quality Forest school sessions, musical tuition for all, specialist sports coaching- our latest session planned for this next year is a BMX session as school. We also employ directly a family support worker who offers bespoke and individual sessions to support children with a wide range of issues. In a society where the mental health of our young people is an everyday concern, St

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Giles' is being proactive to ensure we offer the best possible support to our children and families.

Over the year, we have been involved in a variety of events and visits to enhance our curriculum. These include visits to Hollow Trees Farm, Daws Hall Nature Reserve, The Royal Observatory in London and Colchester Zoo. Children always say they never forget the school trips!

During the summer term 2018, we organised an art project that culminated in a school wide exhibition at the end of term. Every child had artwork on display- a range of paint, drawing, sculpture and print work. The subject was 'botanical art' that linked beautifully with the science topic of growing plants. School was buzzing with families coming to admire the lovely pieces and the children were very keen to show what they had been doing. There was also an element of competition to the work with prizes awarded for the most interesting and skilful exhibits.

This year we are planning to turn the school in to a museum and focus on developing historical skills and are hoping to work with Braintree museum as well as visiting Layer Marney and Duxford.

With the better weather, we will be out and about on the village field again for sports and lunchtime play. We are grateful for the continued use of the field and are glad to contribute back to the village with grass cutting services. We always try to be good neighbours and promote good parking habits with our families although we acknowledge that this will probably always be a challenge!

St Giles' is leading the way in Essex by making such a success of the federation. Mrs Nichols and I were asked to speak at a conference of headteachers and Governors on this subject where our bravery to break new ground was being held up as 'the model'. To manage so well in such a financially challenging climate is cause to hold our heads high. I hope that you feel proud of your school too!

## **Report of The Maplesteads' WEA for the Annual Parish Assembly April 2019**

The Workers' Educational Association is an off-putting title for an excellent organization, founded in 1903 & one of the largest voluntary sector providers of adult education B one of Britain's biggest charities.

In Maplestead, we hold 2 courses each year, 1 in the Spring & the other in the Autumn. In Autumn 2018 we welcomed back a popular lecturer, Simon Doney, who called his course on the British Civil Wars [1642-1649], 'The World Turned Upside Down'. We learned about the terrible battles, profound religious changes & the causes, consequences & common experiences of the wars, why parliament won & why the King was brought to trial & executed.

This Spring we had a most enjoyable course with Susan Pownall on 'Art Inspired by East Anglia'. This was covered thematically from clouds to sea. Churches to fields & much, much more. Susan examined how many artists have responded to our beautiful region during the C19 & C20th centuries & we had a regular attendance of most of our 30 signed-up members.

We are grateful to all our committee members who work for the continuing success & enjoyment of our group & we all send our best wishes for a speedy recovery from illness, to Jean Bowers, our hard-working Secretary.

Next Autumn, we are going to look at Italian History & Culture & in Spring 2020 we have a course on 7 Great Britons.

Do come & join us on Monday evenings.

You will be most welcome.  
Jill Newton.

### **The Maplestead WI**

It has been another exciting year with a variety of speakers and activities. The members party in the summer had the Hells Belles Morris dancing group which was very entertaining and the presidents party was all the fun of the fair. We have had a great variety of speakers thanks to Jane Stone who has the difficult job of finding the speakers for us.

We have circumnavigated the world, learnt about pottery and laughed with the short songs and tall stories as told by Chris Bishop. We have been entertained with poetry from the Dopplegangers. Last year was a time of joining up with the Church and Halstead Rotary in providing refreshments for the music concert held at the village church. It was a great evening and well supported by not only village people but by the wider community.

We have a monthly lunch organised by Mary Crawley. The Christmas coffee morning was a great fund raiser for us and profits were up from last year. My thanks go to everyone who made cakes and food for our stall and for their help in serving refreshments.

This year is the centenary of The MAPLESTEADS WI and we are having a lunch to celebrate this achievement.

We are a great group of ladies of different ages and we offer a warm welcome to new members'

We meet the first Thursday of the month at 7.30pm in the village hall.

Contact details can be found in the Parish magazine.

## **Maplestead Youth Club Annual Report 2019**

With youth club reaching an amazing attendance each month the activities we provided needed to be well planned, in order to keep all the youths busy, so we once again held activities on the playing field through the summer and when we returned indoors in September, we held our annual Masterchef competition, another evening of fun, laughter and something that resembled food!

It was after this event that I made the decision to give up running the youth club, when we held our next meeting Sue and Becky both decided that after 10 years, they too wished to pass the youth club over to fresh minds. It was not an easy decision for any of us, but we decided as our 10th anniversary was in November, and our Christmas celebrations due in December, that we would go out partying.

To celebrate our 10th anniversary we took the youths to Halstead Leisure Centre for a swimming party, followed by cake and drinks. Then in December we held a fun packed Christmas party, a very happy event tinged with sadness.

We have advertised for volunteers to take over the running of the club, and we have had interest, but one lady cannot run it on her own! If anyone is interested in helping to bring this very rewarding club back to life, I would love to hear from you.

### **The MAPLESTEADS Autumn Show**

It was another good year for the Autumn Show. The number of entries was up from last year and the auction proved to be successful. We had a lot of entries from the children and this year they were presented with trophies to keep as well as a certificate. I would like to thank the committee for their support and hard work who without them the show would not take place.

It was an interesting year with Ben and Sonia from BBC Essex coming to meet some of the committee and looking round at our lovely village. Jean and Bill Bowers kindly hosted us all with coffee and cake in their garden and a couple of us were interviewed for the Benson radio programme, which was aired the following day.

I hope the Autumn Show will be supported this year by both Little and Great Maplestead because it is part of village life and one we would not like to lose.

The new schedule is being written and will be dropping through your letterbox soon and we hope there will be something there for everyone to have a go at, because as they say, you have to be in it to win it.