

MINUTES

GREAT MAPLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Meeting held at the Village Hall on Wednesday 28th August 2019

Present Cllr.M.Elms.Cllr.S.Harris.Cllr.P.Haylock.Cllr.S.Last.Cllr.I.Johnson.Cllr.J.Newton.
Mrs.A.Crisp – Clerk. Members of the Public – 5.

1. **Apologies and reasons for absence**– Cllr.P.Maile.
2. **Minutes of previous meeting** –The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 3rd July 2019, were accepted as a true and accurate account of proceedings of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr.Harris, seconded Cllr.Haylock.
3. **Declarations of Interest** - None
4. **County and District Matters** – Dist.Cllr.P.Schwier – **BDC Local Plan** – every household has received information leaflets on the current consultation.The Planning Inspectorate’s public inquiry may be held before Christmas 2019 or Spring 2020.
Horizon 120 – BDC have now secured the freehold for the site of the proposed new business park beside the A120 at Notley. **Corporate Customer Survey** – Resident feedback captured on satisfaction of council communications & key services such as recreation, waste collections. BDC results may now be viewed on the council’s website.
5. **Officers Reports & Information Exchange** – *No business decisions may be made.*
Cllr.Haylock – Planning – See Agenda item 10.
Cllr.Harris – As per report. See Appendix 1.
Cllr.Johnson – Neighbourhood Watch – The village defibrillator appears to have been stolen and has been reported to the police. Other defibrillators in neighbouring parishes of Little Maplestead & Castle Hedingham are still in place. Warnings received regarding usual Summer thefts via open windows of houses and cars.
Cllr.Last – Neighbourhood Plan – Attended a high-level briefing at RCCE. Consider appropriate that the council invites Jan Stobart (RCCE subject expert) to a future meeting to speak in more detail to inform the whole council and parishioners.
Cllr.Elms – Drainage – an additional verge gulley has been dug in Lucking Street to help alleviate flooding. The anticipated drainage work by ECC has been postponed as the original contractor withdrew. The council awaits a further update regarding a new contractor and when work may now be scheduled.
Cllr.Newton arrived at this time
Highways – A new road sign has been erected in Dynes Hall Road. Further correspondence has been sent to Beagrie Developments regarding replacement of the salt bin in its original place by Buttercups. If no response, consider next steps at the October meeting. In the recent high winds a large tree fell in Toldishall Road blocking the road. Thanks extended to Cllr.Harris who contacted ECC Highways who visited and cleared the tree within just a few hours of the original contact. **Task Force** – Have invited new volunteers via social media, and have a number of response from volunteers who are able to offer new skills. Thanks extended. **Planned Power Outage** – Advice received from UK Power Networks of scheduled work on 11th September, properties affected have been notified individually
Cllr. Newton – No report.

6. **Public question time** MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WERE INVITED TO ASK QUESTIONS.

Question: Concern raised regarding the safety of the road corner at the junction of Monks Lodge Road/Gestingthorpe Road, particularly poor visibility during Summer months. Could a mirror be installed to help? JN to contact landowner to ask if, as an initial resolve, the vegetation may be cut back. Cllr.Elms will also make enquiries via ECC regarding roadside mirrors and/or the possibility of changing the road priority at said junction.

Question: Will the power cut on the 11th September affect the village hall, as there is a scheduled activity due to take place? Cllr.Newton advised the village hall would not be affected.

Question: Has the council ascertained if the black bollards, erected on the verge outside Buttercups, are legal? Cllr.Schwieber advised the verge was land adopted by ECC and it is therefore the responsibility of ECC to take action if appropriate.

Question: Note the council's objective within its Action Plan to attempt to lower the speed to 40mph limit along Toldishall Road to Barretts Hall. Would it not be better to aim for 20mph, particularly along the single track section? Cllr.Elms to investigate and consider a future proposal.

Question: Does the council publish Officer Reports on its website alongside the minutes? The Clerk confirmed any Officer Reports formed the Appendices to minutes and could be found on the website.

7. **Progress Updates** – Clerk provided an update on action points from 3rd July 2019 Meeting.

- A balance of £34 remains outstanding, to be spent, from the District Councillor Grant Scheme from 2018/19. It was agreed this would be spent on some additional litter picking equipment – in line with authorisation from BDC.
- The Clerk reminded Councillors of the opportunity to attend the EALC AGM on 19th September.

8. **Business Items**

8.1 **Notification of Withdrawal of Parish Council Website Platform essexinfo.net** –

Cllr.Harris expressed concern that existing content may be lost, in addition to work and cost involved to create/source a replacement platform. Cllr.Harris proposed the council should explore services of IT consultant, sourced via Sturmer PC, in the current absence of any central support from EALC/NALC in this regard. Details of costs and proposal to be considered at a future meeting. Seconded Cllr.Johnson. Vote in favour – Unanimous.

8.2 **Proposal for Replacement Waste Bin on Village Playing Field** – Cllr.Elms propose

the need to obtain a replacement bin for the far side of the playing field, BDC have confirmed they will ensure regular emptying. Cllr.Newton advised he has a suitable bin that could be installed. Seconded Cllr.Harris. Vote in favour – Unanimous.

8.3 **Village Emergency Telephone Service (VETS)** – Cllr.Haylock proposed that the parish

set up the scheme, which requires 10 volunteers on the telephone cascade list. The service provides back up assistance, specifically should the defibrillator be required in an emergency. Volunteers may be asked to fetch the defibrillator for use or sit with a person waiting for emergency services to arrive. No first aid requirements are necessary, the phone system is administered and set up by the British Heart Foundation at a cost of £50. Cllr.Elms counter proposed that Cllr.Haylock canvass and recruit 10 parishioners before proceeding further. Seconded Cllr.Harris. Vote in favour - Unanimous

- 8.4 Replacement Village Defibrillator** – The council agreed that the defibrillator should be replaced at a cost of £985.00 + VAT (source British Heart Foundation). It was further agreed that the cabinet should be made more secure. Cllr.Harris to explore lock and alarm mechanisms/alternative cabinets. Cllr.Newton advised that the Village Hall committee have confirmed funds would be offered from jumble sale proceeds to purchase replacement defibrillator, if required. Cllr.Elms proposed that the council pursue a claim via the council’s insurers with any required additional funding to be applied for via the District Councillor’s Grant Scheme. Dist.Cllr.Schwier confirmed he would support use of grant to help. Seconded Cllr.Johnson. Vote in favour - Unanimous.
- 8.5 Braintree District Council Local Plan** – Cllr.Last produced a summary of the latest Consultation which will be placed on the council’s website for parishioner reference. He proposed that as the consultation was at a strategic level for the entire North Essex area it was not appropriate for the parish council to comment at this stage. Seconded Cllr.Haylock. Vote in favour – Unanimous.
- 8.6 Maintenance/Repair for Village Playing Field Playground Equipment** – Cllr.Last proposed the council employ Playdale Playgrounds Ltd to undertake repair/maintenance work identified within the 2019 ROSPA report, as original providers of the majority of play equipment on site. Quote received for £915.48 + VAT. Source of funds to be explored. Seconded Cllr. Johnson. Vote in favour - Unanimous
- 8.7 Request for Hire of Village Playing Field for Junior Football Training** – Request received from Halstead Town Under11’s Football Team to use village playing field for training sessions on a Saturday morning 9am-10am. No further information or formal application has been received following initial enquiry so business item did not proceed.

9. Financial Report

9.1 Current bank balances:-

Current account:	£62.61	Reserve account:	£5670.39
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9.2 Noting of sums received:-

NWB Interest Paid July 2019			£1.16
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9.3 Ratification of payments made:-

DD E-ON Electricity – Quarterly Street Lighting			£28.30
SO - Mrs A Crisp – Clerks Salary Apr-Jun 2019			£1270.10
OB - RCCE – Annual Subscription			£52.80
CQ - Braintree District Council – Election Expenses			£586.87

Transfers

TF From Reserve Account to Current Account			£650.00
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Payment(s) to be made requiring approval:-

OB - Mrs A Crisp – Reimbursement of Purchase of Litter Picking Equipment from Vivantage			£94.90
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OB – RCCE – Neighbourhood Planning Training Seminar – Cllr.S.Last			£20.00
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Cllr.Elms proposed payments made, seconded by Cllr.Harris. Vote in favour – Unanimous.

9.4 Other Financial

The council resolved to approve the authorised signatories in the current bank account, for the parish council’s current and reserve accounts, be changed to include Mr Simon Last and remove Mr David Turner. The mandate will continue as amended.

10. Planning

10.1 Application Decisions

19/000707/HH Es Cana, Lucking Street. Single storey extension and detached cart lodge. Granted 12/7/19.

19/00938/LBC September Cottage, Church Street. Repair/replacement of wall plate to sitting room & re-render of south gable wall. Granted 18/7/19

10.2 Applications Received

10.2.2 19/00198/TPO The Rectory, Church Street. Works to be carried out on a tree covered by a Tree Preservation Order. Cllr. Haylock proposed the council submit a "No comment, no objection" response. Seconded Cllr.Harris. Vote in favour – Unanimous.

11. Correspondence – For notification

Parishioner Correspondence regarding Overgrowth on Footpath 11 – Complaint received regarding overgrowth, reported to contractor as path missed during spring cut. Contractor unwilling to revisit without further charge so path will not be cut properly until scheduled Autumn cut.

Parishioner Correspondence regarding Possible Drug Abuse in Village – Information passed to local Police who have increased patrols in village. No evidence found or further reports received by police.

12. Content for E-newsletter

Footpath Update; Facebook page; The Maplesteads on BBC Essex; Possible Drug Misuse in Village; BDC Local Plan consultation

13. Items for the Next Agenda

- VETS Update
- Funding for repairs to playground equipment

14. Date of next meeting: Parish Council Meeting 2nd October 2019 at 7.30pm

MEETING CLOSED AT 9.11pm

Signed.....TRUE COPY.....

Dated 2nd October 2019

APPENDIX 1 – OFFICER REPORTS

Cllr.Harris Communications

1. Website

❖ Report:

- **EssexInfo.net**, which is the platform we (and most other Town & Parish Councils, schools and community groups across the county) use for our website, is planning to **close on 31st March 2020**.
- The announcement, and suggestions about what to do, can be read by clicking on the links below:
<https://www.essexinfo.net/closure/>
<https://www.essexinfo.net/closure/new-host/>
- Apart from the fact that their suggestions about what to do effectively amount to "sort it out for yourselves", the real concern is the bit which glibly says:
*EssexInfo, like most similar systems of its size, does not have the facility to export sites in a format that can be imported into other services. This means that you will need to **manually transfer any content** to a new host.*
- Our website has 60-odd pages, with links to some 400 images and 420 documents; setting it up with a new host, manually transferring all the content and re-installing existing links to other sites will involve (based on the time for setting up our recent 'Community Agents' page) getting on for a couple of hundred hours of work.
- In addition, since the originals of many of the images/documents that have been uploaded to the website may well not now be accessible, there is a high risk of some information being lost forever...
- Since **EssexInfo.net** was an **Essex CC initiative** to encourage wider use of websites by Councils and community groups for better communication, one which was also supported by the **EALC**, our Clerk has expressed to them our concern about this situation being forced on Councils with less than a year's notice.
- The EALC has responded thus:
"The termination has been orchestrated by Cambridge Open Systems (the operators of EssexInfo.net) and they will no longer be running this service after March 31st 2020. Therefore we think our energies need to be put into sorting out an offer for the future. The matter was discussed at the last EALC Executive Meeting and Kirsty O'Callaghan (ECC) agreed to work with us to achieve a good result. We have already had dialogue from 2 companies who are keen to look at this and both have experience of the parish sector. We are waiting for more details on this. One of our Executive Members will be assisting the office to be able to achieve a positive outcome, so that the web sites can effect an easy changeover well before the end of March 2020. As soon as more information comes to light it will be forwarded to Parish/Town Councils."
- In the meantime, Ann and I have been looking for alternative advice/help as to how to deal with this situation.
- As part of this, I have been in touch with the Clerk of Sturmer Parish Council, who is an IT Consultant and is investigating what he believes could be a reasonably seamless solution to the problem, which he would like to put out for consideration by other Parish Councils.
- This solution would apparently be affordable for Councils of limited means and one which would keep us in control of, and easily able to manage, our site. He would be prepared to produce some explanatory videos to help with the process.
- He has been doing some time and material costings but, before making any commitment, would like to know how many Councils would be interested in principle and may like to take advantage of such an offer.

❖ Action Plan:

- With approval, to explore further the Sturmer Council initiative and find out potential costs while a further response from EALC is awaited.

2. Facebook

❖ Report:

- The Council's **Facebook** page, which can be viewed [here](#), has now been linked to Maplestead Mates and the posts are starting to get responses of varying utility.
- The Administrators are the Chairman and Vice-Chairman; the Clerk is a currently a pending Administrator.

❖ Action Plan:

- Adding Cllrs Johnson & Last as Administrators, when their respective existing Facebook accounts can be properly identified.

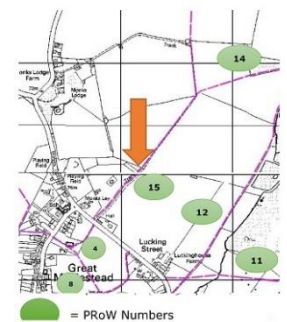


3. Mobile Phone Reception Provision/Improvement

❖ Report:

- As agreed at the last meeting, **Great Maplestead PC** is now represented on the Mobile Phone Masts joint working group, along with **Pebmarsh** and **Little Maplestead PCs**
- The driver for the erection of the masts appears to be primarily to facilitate the roll-out of Smart Meters, which require access to a good signal in order to operate properly – one of the reasons the Government has missed targets on this is the paucity of good operating reception in many parts of the country.
- Two local areas of land are currently being proposed for compulsory purchase for masts which will allow the widest spread of good reception, one at **Oak Farm in Pebmarsh** and the other at the end of the first section of **Footpath 15 in Great Maplestead**, shown right.
- An originally suggested site in **Little Maplestead** has now been abandoned, as apparently masts in **Pebmarsh** and **Great Maplestead** will provide sufficient coverage for all the local area.
- The proposed **Pebmarsh** location however is being objected to by the landowner, because of the access requirement across his land, and is also contentious due to its proximity to houses and ecological and conservation concerns; it may also be a site of scientific interest, due to its wildlife and meadow habitats. Seven alternative sites, more acceptable to landowners and residents, have been proposed to Galliford Try, the handling agents, but have been dismissed out of hand.
- Apart from above objections to the location, there are also concerns about the visual aspects of the **size and height of the proposed mast structure** which, depending on operating requirements, may be between **17.5m and 25m high**, on a **25m² base**, with various large reception dishes mounted on it.
- A joint working group meeting was held at the Oak Farm site on **9th August**, attended by **Cllr David Finch**, at which the various concerns about this location were discussed, along with various methods of objecting to the plans.
- **Cllr. Finch** suggested that he may contact Galliford Try and invite them to a meeting at his office to get a better understanding of the 5/10/15 year plans for the proposed phone mast sites in the local area and ask them to put into writing what was prohibitive about each of the alternative 7 locations that Pebmarsh had put forward for consideration.
- Galliford Try are to be invited to the **next Pebmarsh Council meeting** to discuss their plans and proposals with the community, so that a further understanding of the situation can be gained; the **Great & Little Maplestead** representatives, along someone from **Gestingthorpe Parish Council**, which has had recent experience of such a situation, are also to be invited.

Great Maplestead - Surveyed Mobile Phone Mast Location



4. E-newsletter (Maplestead Magna Carta)

❖ **Action Plan:**

- **Issue 28** is scheduled for publication on **w/c 9th September 2019** (tbc).
- Editorial content for this issue is suggested to include:
 - Lucking St drainage project
 - Footpath update
 - Facebook launch
 - Maplesteads on BBC Essex
 - Possible drug abuse action
 - Any District/County news (?)
 - Planning updates
 - Forthcoming events

Footpaths

❖ Report:

- Since the last meeting, the ground conditions at the **Slype** on **FP26** have been improved by re-profiling and raising the path to create a 'causeway', eliminating the steps, bridge and the need for stepping stones across the boggy section. Thanks to Cllr Newton for his work on this, which has elicited some very positive Facebook responses from walkers.



- The copse to the north of the 'causeway' on **FP26** has also been cleared of the nettles and overgrowth, which was restricting the path through the wood.

- The defective planks on the **FP16** footbridge near the water meadows have been replaced and branches of the fallen bat-willow, which were blocking this path at its junction with **FP7**, have also been cut back and removed to re-open the path (right).
- The overgrowth on the **FP7** steps at the bottom of **Church Field** has also been cut back, so they are usable again. Similarly, the steps on **FP8**, behind Buttercup Cottage on Church Street, have had the nettles removed and the path from these towards Lucking St. along the top of the bank has been widened and mowed.



- A parishioner reported that the copse on **FP23** from Dynes Hall Road to Hulls Mill was overgrown with brambles – these have now been cut back so the path is walkable once more, although shorts not advised!
- Another parishioner advised that part of **FP11** over Link Hills was impassable due to overgrowth (right). This is a section of path that Mortimers is contracted to cut as part of the SLA agreement that we have with **Essex CC** and appears to have been missed during their Spring cut – they will be (have been?) asked to rectify the situation during the Autumn cut.

