

MINUTES

GREAT MAPLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Meeting held at the Village Hall on Wednesday 22ND January 2020

Present Cllr.M.Elms.Cllr.S.Harris.Cllr.P.Haylock.Cllr.I.Johnson.Cllr.J.Newton.

Cllr.S.Last. Mrs.A.Crisp – Clerk. Members of the Public – 1.

1. **Apologies and reasons for absence**– Cllr.P.Maile
2. **Minutes of previous meeting** –The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 27th November 2019, were accepted as a true and accurate account of proceedings of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr.Haylock, seconded Cllr.Harris.
3. **Declarations of Interest** - None
4. **County and District Matters** – Cty.Cllr.D.Finch extended apologies and pre-circulated the ECC parish update, which will feature in the next edition of the Maplestead Magna Carta. Dist.Cllr.Schwieb extended apologies and provided a brief update on recent meetings attended on behalf of BDC including the Local Plan hearing on infrastructure; traffic/public transport & parking in BDC during work on Manor Street project; Rivenhall incinerator; and rural infrastructure and policy.
5. **Officers Reports & Information Exchange** – *No business decisions may be made.*
Cllr.Newton – Village Playing Field – More pea shingle has been added to the car park surface and more will be topped up over coming weeks. Far side hedge of the playing field will be cut by G B Newton farm contractor.
Cllr.Harris – See Appendix 1 for report
Cllr.Elms – Drainage – ECC will now put in a further gully on the south side of Lucking St to eradicate the remaining surface water issues. ECC have acknowledged phase 1 of the project was not good enough and they will make good on roadside verges in the Spring. **Road Safety Review** – ECC have rejected the council’s request to consider reduction of speed limit on roads through village, as it does not comply with highways policies. They have proposed enhancements to road signage and markings and a possible “Quiet Lane” exercise. Discussions are ongoing. **Potholes** – the hole on the corner of Monks Lodge Road/Gestingthorpe Rd has now been filled. **Village Playing Field Car Park** – Thanks extended to Cllr.Newton and the team of volunteers who helped with improving surface of the car park in December.
Toldishall Road – Volunteer project to clear mud from road has been postponed until end of February to allow for improved weather conditions.
Personnel Committee – The committee is currently undertaking a review of the Clerks role profile, contract and salary as it has identified that the Great Maplestead role and scale of pay is disparate to neighbouring parishes.
Cllr.Haylock – See Agenda item 10 Planning.
Cllr.Johnson – Neighbourhood Watch – There have been some thefts from sheds in Little Maplestead. No incidents reported in Great Maplestead.
Cllr.Last – Playdale Ltd has now completed repair work to playground equipment in line with ROSPA recommendations.
6. **Public question time** MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WERE INVITED TO ASK QUESTIONS.
None raised
7. **Progress Updates** – The Clerk advised that Little Maplestead PC have suggested a meeting to discuss the possible benefits of VETS X2. Cllr.Haylock to arrange meeting.
8. **Business Items**
 - 8.1 **Precept Proposals for Tax year 2020/2021** – The council reviewed proposals

for the 2020/21 budget. Financial resources remain reliant on the amount raised via Precept each year, with specific projects dependant on grant funding. Reserves are being maintained at around £5-6k. There will be an increase in expenditure for the forthcoming year to cover further improvements to the surface of playing field car park; increased admin costs for purchase of new minute book; anticipated increase in Clerks salary. It is hoped that savings may be made on verge cutting, annual audit fees; and extra-ordinary expenses. Five Precept options were considered ranging from an increase of £1 per year, per Band D household to an increase of £12.87 per year, per Band D household. The higher increase being sufficient to cover budgeted expenditure and breakeven by 70p. The Great Maplestead tax Base for 2020/21 is £170.39 (as advised by BDC).

Cllr.Haylock proposed an increase of £10pa, per Band D household. Not carried.

Cllr.Johnson proposed an increase of £12.87pa, per Band D household, equivalent to £1.07per month. Seconded Cllr.Last. Vote in favour – 5, Against -1. Motion carried.

9. Financial Report

9.1 **Current bank balances:-**

Current account:	£6.63	Reserve account:	£5956.81
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9.2 **Noting of sums received:-**

NWB Interest Paid November to December 2019	£2.18
BACS – Essex County Council – Footpath Grant (Autumn Cut)	£146.80
BACS – Essex County Council – Verge Cutting Grant (Autumn Cut)	£899.64

9.3 **Ratification of payments made:-**

SO – Mrs A Crisp – Clerk Salary Sep – Dec 2019	£1270.10
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Transfers

TF From Reserve Account to Current Account	£1270.00
TF From Reserve Account to Current Account	£150.00

Payment(s) to be made requiring approval:-

9.4 **Other Financial**

Budget & Precept 2020/2021 as per agenda item 8.1

10. Planning

10.1 **Application Decisions**

19/01829/FUL Land north of Purls Hill Farm, Purls Hill. Erection of agricultural building. Refused 2 12 2019.

19/01683/HH & 19/01684/LBC Walnut Tree Cottage Church Street. Retrospective application for the retention of 2 x garden sheds & erection of a replacement garden workshop following demolition of third shed. Granted 6 12 19.

10.2 **Applications Received**

19/02252/HH & 19/02253/LBC Chelmshoe House Farm, Monks Lodge Road. Reconstruction of brick wall including two gates. Council response "No comments, no objections."

11. Correspondence – None

12. Content for E-newsletter – Road safety review; Lucking St drainage; Summer Fete; Light pollution; ECC parish update; Planning

13. Items for the Next Agenda

Please note that no decisions can lawfully be made under this item, LGA 1972 section 12

10(2)(b) states that business must be specified, therefore the Council cannot lawfully raise matters for decision.

14. Date of next meeting: Parish Council Meeting 11th March 2020 at 7.30pm

MEETING CLOSED 8.20pm

Signed.....

Dated 11th March 2020

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APPENDIX 1 – OFFICER REPORTS

Communications

1. Website

❖ Background:

- **EssexInfo.net**, which is the platform we (and most other Town & Parish Councils, schools and community groups across the county) use for our website and was an **Essex CC** initiative, supported by the **EALC**, is **closing on 31st March 2020** due to the withdrawal of funding by **ECC**.
- A companion platform, **Voice.org** (a national version of EssexInfo.net), has secured funding to continue beyond March 2020 and has confirmed that it is able to provide a free website for any organisation currently using EssexInfo.net.
- **Voice** is free to use and operates using the same software as our current site, which will obviate any need for operator retraining.
- Help is available to transfer our site from one platform to the other and, once this is carried out, we can continue to use our current domain name.
- Hopefully, once set up on its new platform, our website will continue to attract increasing interest, as it has done since its revamp in 2017 (see **Appendix 1**).

❖ Action to date:

- Ann has now registered '**Great Maplestead Parish Council**' with **Voice** to secure a place on the platform and enable the transfer of content to be made.

❖ Further Actions:

- It is planned to effect the transfer of content in early February, once a 'spring clean' of any old/unused/redundant documents and pictures has been carried out. This is to help simplify the transfer process by reducing the amount of content that needs to be moved.
- The transfer is an automatic process so, once completed, it will be necessary to re-establish some of the external links, the site 'theme' (look and feel), members and admins (users and permissions) and site settings such as name, description and domain name. This can all be done while the current site remains active, so there should be no loss of web presence during the process.
- Having the new site running in parallel with the current one for a time will also allow us to effectively 'road-test' the new site before going 'live'.
- Once the new site is ready a re-direct will be set up from the old site.
- LCN, the company who we pay for our domain name and e-mail re-directs, will then need to update its settings to point to the new site.

2. E-newsletter (Maplestead Magna Carta)

❖ Action Plan:

- **Issue 31** is scheduled for publication on **w/c 10th February 2020** (tbc).
- Editorial content for this issue is suggested to include:
 - Road Safety Review update
 - Lucking St drainage project update
 - VETS news
 - Summer Fete Preview
 - Light Pollution
 - Any interesting District news (?)
 - Cllr. Finch Parish update
 - Planning updates
 - Forthcoming events

Footpaths

❖ Action Plan:

- Interim assessment and maintenance will continue to be carried out on an *ad hoc* basis to monitor path conditions/rectify problems.
- A new contract to extend the Service Level Agreement to maintain our footpaths in the 2020/21 financial year needs to be requested by the end of **February**.
- The request claim needs to be presented on PC headed paper, with details of what we are claiming for. Receipts for last year's expenses have been presented and the claims paid by the **ECC PRow and Localism Officer**.

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