

MINUTES

GREAT MAPLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Meeting held via Zoom video conference on Wednesday 17th March 2021

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

Mrs.A.Crisp – Clerk. Members of the Public – 2.

1. **Apologies and reasons for absence**–Cllr.S.Last – personal commitment
2. **Minutes of previous meeting** –The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 20th January 2021 were accepted as a true and accurate account of proceedings of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr.Johnson, seconded Cllr.Haylock.
3. **Declarations of Interest** - None
4. **County and District Matters** – Apologies received from District Cllr.P. Schwier who provided a brief update from BDC –
Covid 19 – Currently 5 hospital vaccination centres, 34 GP led vaccination services, 3 community pharmacies and 11 large scale vaccination centres in Essex.
Local Plan – For Braintree the Section1 Plan includes a minimum housing requirement of 14,320 new homes for the period 2013-2033, an annual average of 716 new homes. In addition a requirement of between 20.9 - 43.3 hectares of employment land.
Council Tax – BDC voted not to increase council tax for 2021/22 due to the difficult past year. Collection of tax is 85.6% (down slightly) but best in the county.
Affordable Housing – 177 homes built in past year, above the target of 150.
Getting Grants Out Initiative – 35 initiatives – since 2020 £35m given to 2,600 district businesses.
Climate Change & Cycling Policy – Draft strategy approved by BDC and will now go to public consultation.
Local Highways Panel – ECC has approved and extra £200k per year for the next 3 years to enable more approved projects within the district
5. **Officers Reports & Information Exchange** –
Cllr.Harris – As per report
Cllr.Haylock – Covered within Agenda item 10 Planning
Cllr.Johnson – Nothing to report
Cllr.Newton – Nothing to report
Cllr.Maile – Has explored different verge cutting regimes which can help promote wild flower growth. Opinions vary but 2 cuts per year are still favoured although timing may be slightly earlier in the Spring. The key to any success is the removal of cut grass immediately following a cut. Cllr.Maile suggested it would require a team of volunteers to rake off pre-determined areas. See Agenda item 8.1 also.
Cllr.Elms – **Litter Picking** – A number of parishioners have adopted specific areas to clear on a 4/6 weekly rota during the course of pandemic restrictions. It is hoped once all restrictions are lifted a community litter picking will be able to take place. **Dog Waste Bins** – BDC have not been emptying as often as they should and have had to be chased on more than 1 occasion. Clerk is monitoring. **Highways** – speeding concerns in Dynes Hall Rd have been raised with ECC but residents have been advised that concerns may not meet ECC criteria for taking action. Drains at bottom of Hosdens Lane onto Dynes Hall Rd have been jetted by ECC following recent severe flooding issues. The visiting engineer advised there were infrastructure problems and “discussions would need to be had”. The school wig-wag lights in Church St are still timed incorrectly, Solagen did visit but made an incorrect repair. Solagen are based in Bristol which makes it difficult for a quick response. Cllr.Elms continues to chase ECC.
6. **Public question time**
No questions raised.

7. Progress Updates – The Clerk confirmed that the council’s 2021/22 Precept application had been actioned by BDC. The council’s update to the Open Spaces Plan has been submitted to BDC and an updated OAP will be published in due course

8. Business Items

8.1 Review of verge and footpath cutting arrangements and appointment of contractor(s) for 2021 – Cllr.Elms proposed that Cllr.Maile set up a Working Party to finalise plans for encouraging some wild flower verges, with Mortimer Contracts Limited appointed as the council’s contractor for verge cutting. At this stage only the Spring cut will be sanctioned while the Working Party decides what level and frequency of cutting will be required going forward. Seconded Cllr.Harris. Vote in favour- Unanimous. The Chairman requested that the Working Party delivers its proposals at the May meeting. Cllr.Harris proposed a change of contractor for the mowing of footpaths. An alternative quote had been obtained from MD Landscapes who provide a similar service to a neighbouring parish and were recommended to the council. The change of contractor will also see a saving of £30pa. Seconded Cllr.Haylock. Vote in favour- Unanimous.

8.2 Approval of quotation for new boules court – Up to date quotes have been obtained, following receipt of the CIF grant money of £2978. The boules court will be built by a team of village volunteers at a cost of £1642. Purchase of the 2 Calder benches/picnic tables = £1366.00 leaving a balance of £30 to pay from council reserves. Cllr.Harris proposed the council approve the purchase of items as listed with immediate purchase of the benches which can be put to use upon arrival. Seconded Cllr.Maile. Vote in favour – Unanimous. It was further agreed that work on the boules pitch would coincide with work on the earth bund.

8.3 Village playing field play equipment – Cllr.Elms proposed that a Working Party is created to investigate options for refurbishment of the children’s play area. The ideal would be to replace all current equipment with brand new facilities to provide longevity and move away from the increasing need for regular repairs to ensure continued safety and usability. An initial estimate of the level of funding required for such a project is £40-50k. In addition new drainage at the playing field to avoid the saturated ground witnessed this winter is should be included at £6k. Cllr.Last will lead the Working Party with Cllr.Harris and the Clerk also included, and other members appointed from the community if/as appropriate. Seconded Cllr.Harris. Vote in favour – Unanimous.

9. Financial Report

9.1 Current bank balances:-

Current account:	£191.57	Reserve account:	£11052.69
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9.2 Noting of sums received:-

NWB Interest Paid January – February 2021	17p
EALC – Reimbursement of training fee for cancelled course in April 2020	£114.00

9.3 Ratification of payments made:-

Zoom Virtual Meeting Platform – monthly subscription Jan-Feb	£28.78
Trustees of Great Maplestead Village Hall – hall hire fee September 2020	£13.00

Other

VAT - The Clerk advised of difficulties processing the council’s usual VAT claim via the HMR&C website. HMR&C have been contacted but are currently unable to resolve. A manual claim has been submitted and it is hoped this will be paid before the council’s year end.

Internal Audit - The Clerk requested the council’s approval to appoint the service of Mike Letch of Letchwood Consultants for the council’s internal audit for 2021, Proposed by Cllr.Harris, seconded by Cllr.Elms. Vote in favour - Unanimous

10. Planning

10.1 Application Decisions

20/02070/LBC St Giles School Church Street. Proposed removal of wall between existing oil storage tank enclosure and plant room. Permitted 10/3/21

20/02021/HH Purls Hill Farm House, Purls Hill. Demolition of existing and proposed two-storey side and rear extension incorporating a balcony. Granted 21/1/21

10.2 Applications

21/00714/AGR Chelmshoe House Farm, Monks Lodge Road. Application for prior notification of agricultural or forestry development – proposed crop store. For notification only.

21/00779/DAC Highview, Church Street. Application for approved details as reserved by condition(s) 3 (external materials) and 4 (boundary treatments) of approved application 15/00914/FUL. The council noted that as this is a discharge of conditions, comments would only be considered if there were material inconsistencies with the original conditions of the planning application. The council did not propose to make any comments but advised parishioners they could make representations to BDC if they wished.

11. Correspondence – For notification

Application to host weekly Pilates/Yoga class on village playing field on Tuesday mornings approved.

Ad-hoc use of village playing field for 1:1 fitness classes approved.

Notification received of the Braintree District Local Plan 2013-2033: North Essex Authorities' Shared Strategic Section 1 Plan which was adopted by the Council Meeting held on 22nd February 2021.

Notification from Essex CC advising closure of Lucking Street from 29th March 2021 for 4 days to allow for carriageway patching.

Census 2021 - 21st March. The Office of National Statistics is hosting virtual support events for communities providing guidance regarding on-line and paper versions of the questionnaire.

12. Content for E-newsletter

Local Plan Update; County Broadband Update; Planning News; Road Safety Review; Reminder Regarding Cleaning up after Dogs; Scam Calls.

13. Items for the Next Agenda

Verge Cutting Working Party Proposals

Update from Village Playing Field Working Party

14. Date of next meeting:

Annual Meeting 12th May 2021 - via Zoom at 6pm

MEETING CLOSED 7.24pm

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

Dated 5th May 2021