

MINUTES

GREAT MAPLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 16th March 2022 Present Cllr.M.Elms (Chairman). Cllr.S.Last.Cllr.P.Haylock.Cllr.I.Johnson.Cllr.J.Newton. Cllr.S.Harris Mrs.A.Crisp – Clerk. Members of the Public – 1.

1. Apologies and reasons for absence – Cllr.Maile.

2. Minutes of previous meeting – The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 12th January 2022 were accepted as a true and accurate account of proceedings of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr.Harris, seconded by Cllr.Newton. Vote in favour-Unanimous.

3. Declarations of Interest – Cllr.Newton –Non-Pecuniary Interest Agenda item 10.1 Chelmshoe House Farm, own neighbouring land. Agenda item 10 – Appeal notification Kofali Farm- Non-Pecuniary Interest, own neighbouring land.
Cllr.Johnson – Agenda Item 10 – Appeal notification Kofali Farm – Non-Pecuniary Interest – near neighbour.

4. County and District Matters –

Cllr.P.Schwier sent apologies due to commitments at a district council Licensing Committee meeting.

District – BDC taking next steps to improve Halstead Town Centre, recently approved by Cabinet. The Keep Britain Tidy campaign runs 28 March –10 April. 7 new large, brightly coloured bins placed on A12, A120 & A131. BDC supporting Food Waste Action week to raise awareness and share practical advice. Covid Additional Relief Fund is still open to hospitality, leisure and accommodation sectors until 18 March.

County – Updates as per regular notifications, shared on parish council website and Facebook page.

5. Officers Reports & Information Exchange –

Cllr.Elms – Highways – Issues with the quality of the newly painted road signs, remain outstanding. Cty.Cllr.Schwier has also followed up with Highways but still awaiting a response. The drain in Church St has still not been cleared and the damaged kerb in Lucking St has still not been addressed. Will refer both items to Cty.Cllr.Schwier to request further assistance. Cllr.Newton advised that drain outside Lucking Cottage needs clearing, Cllr.Elms to raise as a separate job. **Planning Development - Treeways Church St** – Issues regarding commercial deliveries via the driveway access in Church St. Large double trailer lorries have blocked road, on 16th March the road was blocked for in excess of 2 hours and part of this was during the afternoon school pick up time. Request made to Site Manager asking that delivery drivers are advised of the restricted access and arrangements made to take deliveries on site or dealt with asap. Site Manager offered apologies and left details of direct mobile number with the parish council should there be any future difficulties. Advised the development would be complete within 6 weeks.

Cllr.Last – Refer Agenda item 8.1

Cllr.Harris – See Officer Reports. New Footpath SLA proposal submitted, new contract awaited. Footpath mowing to continue in 2022 with M D Landscapes.

Cllr.Newton- Third quote for playing field drainage still being pursued, new details forwarded to Clerk to follow up.

Cllr.Haylock – refer Agenda item 10

Cllr.Johnson – Neighbourhood Watch -Advisory warnings regarding potential increase in heating oil thefts due to current cost of fuel.

6. Public question time

Q. Can the council explain what the financial gains are to the parish with regards to the proposed investment in new accounting software? The Clerk explained that the current Excel spreadsheets used by council are now outdated and are regularly questioned by the Internal

Auditor as they are not a recognised sector standard. The proposed Rialtas Business Software (agenda item 8.3) allows for a one entry only system, that then produces all the financial information reports required by the council, including the production of the relevant paperwork for VAT reclaims & the annual audit. Cllr.Elms added that currently the Clerk has to produce a number of different spreadsheets to meet all the financial requirements of the council. With the new one entry system, the Clerks time can be used more effectively elsewhere.

Comment regarding the parish council increase of 9.8% in precept (council tax) which did not reflect positively for the council. The council acknowledged the current cost of living pressures but explained that without the increase council costs would not be covered.

- 7. Progress Updates** – Confirmed all planning consultations had been submitted on time. Has attended two EALC training courses via Zoom, Council Finance for Clerks (refresher) & Facebook for Parish Councils. 75% of course costs (£120) will be reimbursed from EALC under the Clerks Bursary scheme.

8. Business Items

8.1 Village Playing Field – Cllr.Last advised that the National Lottery application has now progressed to stage 2 of the application process with more detail now required. The process will be protracted but a National Lottery representative has been assigned to help the working party/council with their application going forward. It is anticipated that the project budget will need to be increased to allow for funding to provide an access pathway around the field (which appears to be pivotal to the funding request). Current budget estimates allowing for increased costs are Playground £55-60k; Pathway £25-30k. A public presentation on the project will be delivered at the Annual Parish Assembly. A crowdfunding exercise will also be launched at that time.

8.1.1 To Review & Approve Tender Document for Phases 3,4 & 5 of the Village Playing Field (Community Field) Project. - The document was pre-circulated. Cllr.Elms proposed the council approve the document as presented, seconded Cllr.Haylock. Vote in favour – Unanimous. The contract will be released on the government Contracts Finder website following the Parish Assembly.

8.1.2 Application for District Councillor Community Grant Scheme – Application for funding towards village playing field drainage, supported by Dist.Cllr.Schwier at £400. Application has been approved by BDC.

8.1.3 Registration of Village Playing Field land at HM Land Registry – voluntary registration. The playing field is currently unregistered land as there was no requirement to register the land when the council was originally gifted the playing field. Cllr.Elms proposed the council seek to register land at HM Land registry for future protection, seconded Cllr.Harris. Vote in favour – Unanimous. Clerk to investigate costs and process.

8.2 Footpath Maps – Cllr.Harris proposed to investigate the possibility of creating & producing a footpath map leaflet (similar to those distributed in the Heddinghams) jointly with Little Maplestead, seconded Cllr.Elms. Vote in favour – Unanimous. Full proposal together with detailed costings to be approved at a future meeting.

8.3 Rialtas Business Solutions, Alpha Accounting Software – Cllr.Elms proposed the council switch from its own self-created manual accounting system, to new industry recognised on-line platform (RIALTAS). Set up costs £298.75, plus annual subscription of £124.00. Seconded Cllr.Harris. Vote in favour – Unanimous.

8.4 Queens Platinum Jubilee –

8.4.1 To agree site and location of free commemorative tree, to be acquired by village Platinum Jubilee Committee. Free tree scheme on offer from Perrywood no longer available. Woodlands trust will launch a new free tree scheme in April, once Clerk has details the council will then decide what type of tree and where to be planted.

8.4.2 To consider request for financial contribution from parish council towards village Celebrations. The Clerk reported on planned activities from the Village Jubilee Celebration organisers and explained that many of the planned activities were currently being funded by organisers in particular free celebratory refreshment at Beacon Lighting, decorations for various events and games for Sunday picnic. In addition ornamental plaques to mark the new Queens Platinum Jubilee hedge at village playing field car park and a jubilee tree (as and when required). Quotes obtained for stainless steel plaques £75+VAT & £5 shipping each.

Cllr.Elms proposed the council re-allocate budget saved on Clerks training of £120, towards the cost of celebratory fizz at the Beacon Lighting. Seconded Cllr.Johnson. Vote in favour Unanimous. Clerk to organise & explore alternative plaques & costs.

8.4.3 To grant permission for beacon lighting event on village playing field, waiver of playing field terms of reference "Event Organisation – Section 12". Business item withdrawn. Cllr.Newton advised that the beacon lighting would be taking place on land at the village hall.

8.5 Internal Auditor 2022 – The Clerk recommended the council continue with the audit service of Letchwood Consultants as they are familiar with the workings of the parish council and continue to offer good value for money. Cllr.Elms proposed the council appoint Mike Letch of Letchwood Consultants for the council's annual internal audit for year end 2021/22, seconded Cllr.Harris. Vote in favour – Unanimous.

8.6 Verge Cutting 2022 – Quote for annual verge cutting received from Mortimer Contracts of £540 + VAT per cut. Cllr.Elms proposed the council re-appoints Mortimer Contracts for verge cutting in Spring & Autumn 2022, seconded Cllr. Harris. Vote in favour -Unanimous.

8.7 Poo bins – Cllr.Elms to investigate costs and service issues of providing an additional poo bin within the parish, with a proposed potential location being at the junction of FP 19 & Toldish Hall Rd. Proposal to be brought to next meeting.

9. Financial Report

9.1 Current bank balances:-

Current account: £45.14 Fundraising account:£16299.30 Reserve account:£8333.68

9.2 Noting of sums received:-

NWB Interest Paid – Jan-Feb 2022	.41p
Essex County Council – Verge cutting grant 2 nd instalment	£899.64
Donation – Great Maplestead Beer Festival towards playing field	£100.00
Donation – Great Maplestead WI towards playing field	£250.00

9.3 Ratification of payments made:-

DD E-ON Street Lighting Dec 2021	£17.25
OB EALC – Training, Clerks Finance Course	£84.00
OB EALC – Training, Facebook for Parish Councils	£108.00
CQ Sudbury Office Supplies – New Printer/Scanner	£199.98

9.4 Bank Transfers made:

From Reserve Account to Current Account	£100.00
From Reserve Account to Current Account	£400.00

9.5 Other:

A list of regular payments via Direct Debit, Standing Order, On-Line Banking for 2022/2023 were approved in accordance with Financial Regulations. Proposed and signed by Cllr.Elms, seconded by Cllr.Harris.

10. Planning

10.1 Application Decisions

21/03469/HH & 21/03470/LBC – Chelmsloe House Farm, Monks Lodge Road – Conversion of garage to habitable accommodation. Conversion back to ancillary accommodation of existing outbuilding and repair of fenestration. Demolition and rebuild of brick garden wall. Granted 2 2 2022

10.2 Applications -

22/00168/TPO -St Giles Church, Church Street – Notice of intent to carry out works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Order 6/00 – Fell felling (T1) Beech (T2) (T3) (T4) Remove lowest circle of limbs on each tree to raise crown to give clearance to neighbouring property and balance. Cllr.Elms proposed the council respond “no comment, no objection”, seconded Cllr.Harris. Vote in favour- Unanimous.

22/00219/HH & 22/00220/LBC – The Old Vicarage, Church Street – Installation of 37no. ground-mounted solar panel. Cllr.Elms proposed the council is broadly supportive of application subject to the comments raised by Rafter, Church St namely:-the soakaway to Rafter should not be compromised and the terms of the existing covenant should be honoured with regards to the boundary fence. Seconded Cllr.Newton. Vote in favour – Unanimous.

For Information – Notification received regarding Planning Appeal 21/01009/FUL Kofali Farm. Appeal reference. APP/Z1510/W/21/3284131.

11. Correspondence – **For notification**

Consultation - Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026 (JHWS) consultation open for resident’s views until Friday 25th March 2022.

Consultation – Bramford to Twinstead Tee open for response until 21st March 2022

12. Content for E-newsletter

Update on village playing field; Fundraising event cycle; Parish Assembly; Jubilee Plans

13. Items for the Next Agenda

Poo bins

Footpath Map

14. Date of next meeting:

Annual Parish Meeting Wednesday 13th April 7.30pm

Annual Meeting Wednesday 4th May 2022 at 7.30pm

MEETING CLOSED at 9.21pm

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

Dated 4th May 2022