

MINUTES

GREAT MAPLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Meeting held via Zoom video conference on Wednesday 20th January 2021 Present Cllr.M.Elms (Chairman).Cllr.S.Harris.Cllr.P.Haylock.Cllr.I.Johnson.Cllr.J.Newton.Cllr.S.Last. Mrs.A.Crisp – Clerk. Members of the Public – 4.

1. **Apologies and reasons for absence**–None
2. **Minutes of previous meeting** –The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 18th November 2020 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** – Apologies received from District Cllr.P. Schwier who provided a brief update from BDC –
Covid 19 – Lateral Flow Testing has been available to residents without Covid symptoms, at Witham Town football club since 18th Jan. Parish/Town council newsletter provides national lockdown guidance and Braintree district information. Guidance on various business grant related schemes may be found at the BDC website; quick help and support available via Braintree District Business social media.
Awards – BDC awarded Councillor Development Charter Plus status for its strategic approach to effective Councillor Development.
Horizon120 – Plans approved for new enterprise centre with potentially upto 150 jobs. South East Local Enterprise Partnership has allocated £7m towards the scheme from the governments Getting Building Fund.
5. **Officers Reports & Information Exchange – Cllr.Elms** – Reported all highways flooding surface water/drainage issues to ECC Highways but no action taken to date. Dist Cllr.Finch is looking into problems with significant flooding on Dynes Hall Road at the corner meeting Hosdens Lane. WigWag lights in Church Street should be repaired prior to the schools return after February half-term. Additional road safety signage has been approved by ECC Highways Committee, at a cost of £7500, but is awaiting allocation of budget.
Cllr.Harris – See Appendix 1
Cllr.Johnson – Nothing to report.
Cllr.Last – Nothing to report
Cllr.Newton joined the meeting at this time
Cllr.Haylock – Covered under Agenda item 10 Planning
Cllr.Newton – The village playing field requires additional drainage, should funds allow, the ground is saturated from the ditch-line towards the children’s play area.
6. **Public question time**
Q. Do the council have any further information regarding the mobile phone mast?
A. The Chairman advised that nothing further had been heard since the council submitted it’s response after consulting with parishioners.
Q. Did the council put forward a preferred site for the mast?
A. The Chairman advised that the alternative sites listed in the council’s response were those put forward by parishioners, none of which have been endorsed by the council.
Comment. Note broadband activity in Church St in recent days, which may have been prompted by social media coverage.
7. **Progress Updates** –

- Litter picking currently being supported within the village by one of the villages younger parishioners, who is undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. She will conduct a weekly litter pick throughout January to the end of March. Work is monitored by the Clerk and alongside the litter already collected a number of fly-tipping incidents have been identified and reported to BDC.
- Offers from the council's bank NatWest to switch bank accounts for a potential cash award has been investigated. Only a limited number of banks are participating in the scheme and it appears that the offer is more appropriate for sole trader, small business accounts and not the type of account maintained by the council. One bank – the Co-op looked a possibility but it has proved impossible to speak with anybody or get a response to communications. The accounts will remain at NatWest, free from transactions for the time being. The Clerk will continue to explore possible alternatives.

8. Business Items

- 8.1 **Budget & Precept 2021/22** – The Clerk circulated budget options ranging from a 0% increase in Precept to a 5.2% increase. Options had been calculated on minimal Precept increase to reflect the current economic pressures brought about by the impact of the Covid19 pandemic. The council had taken significant steps in recent years to produce a more realistic budget and Precept and there have been some shortfalls in spending in the past 12 months which has led to an increase in reserves. It was noted that to set a budget at the level proposed would result in a deficit budget and the need to draw on council reserves should all proposed expenditure be met. Cllr.Elms proposed the council retains the Precept level at 2020/21 levels of £8068. Seconded Cllr.Haylock Vote in Favour 5, Vote Against 1. It was recognised that due to a change in the parish Tax Base for 2021/22 there will be a small increase to actual Precept payments i.e. for Band D properties the increase = 8p per annum.
- 8.2 **Open Spaces Action Plan** – Cllr.Harris proposed that the parish entry is updated to include provision for drainage at the village playing field, seconded Cllr.Johnson. Vote in favour unanimous.

9. Financial Report

9.1 **Current bank balances:-**

Current account:	£233.35	Reserve account:	£10938.52
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9.2 **Noting of sums received:-**

NWB Interest Paid November – December 2020	17p
ECC – Verge Cutting & Footpaths Autumn Cut	£1073.64
ECC – Footpath SLA	£174.00
EALC – CIF Grant Funding	£2978.00

9.3 **Ratification of payments made:-**

DD E-On Electric – Quarterly Street Lighting	£28.60
SO – Clerk Quarterly Salary – Mrs A Crisp	£1624.80
Zoom Virtual Meeting Platform – monthly subscription Nov-Dec	£28.78
OB -Mortimer Contracts Ltd – Autumn Verge Cut	£624.00
OB – Mortimer Contracts Ltd – Autumn Footpath Mow	£174.00
OB – LexisNexis – Purchase of Arnold Baker Council Admin book(12 th edition)	£119.99

Transfers

TF From Reserve Account to Current Account	£500.00
TF From Reserve Account to Current Account	£2000.00

Payment(s) to be made requiring approval:-

10. Planning

10.1 **Application Decisions**

None

10.2 Applications

20/01984/AGR Land North of Purls Hill Farm, Purls Hill. Application for prior notification of agricultural or forestry development. Erection of general purpose agricultural building.

Council objection in line with application 20/01471/AGR & 19/01829/FUL.

20/02021/HH Purls Hill Farm House, Purls Hill. Demolition of existing and proposed two-storey side and rear extension incorporating a balcony. Council response "no comments, no objections". Cllr.Haylock advised that a detailed report from ECC Historic Buildings had been lodged but there is nothing to alter the council's response.

20/02070/LBC St Giles School Church Street. Proposed removal of wall between existing oil storage tank enclosure and plant room. Council response "no comments, no objections."

11. Correspondence – *For notification*

Request from parishioner to allow volunteering for litter picking From January – March 2021 as part of Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Risk assessed and sanctioned by Clerk. Work commenced 9th January.

12. Content for E-newsletter

Budget/Precept; Litter Picking; March Census; Various Road Closures

13. Items for the Next Agenda

None

14. Date of next meeting:

17th March 2021 at 6.00pm - via Zoom – *subject to review & government guidelines regarding Covid 19*

MEETING CLOSED 7.11pm

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

Dated 17th March 2021