



# Great Maplestead Parish Council

Mrs Ann Crisp (Parish Clerk)  
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## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF GREAT MAPLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL, HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 7.30PM AT GREAT MAPLESTEAD VILLAGE HALL

**Present:** Cllr.S.Harris; Cllr.J.Newton; Cllr.S.Last; Cllr.D.Weight; Cllr.R.Brudenell; Cllr.B.Vincent;  
Cllr.I.Johnson

**Chair:** Cllr.S.Harris

**Clerk:** Mrs A Crisp

**Also Present:** None

Before proceedings commenced the Chairman spoke of the recent sad passing of Peter Haylock, who served for almost 35 years as either Clerk, Councillor or Chairman of the Parish Council. *“A great friend to many, and for those who worked with him on the council, all have remarked on the kindness and support he extended. His commitment and care for the village was second to none and is a lasting legacy to those who follow.”*

### 1. APOLOGIES & REASONS FOR ABSENCE

None

### 2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024 were accepted as a true and accurate account of proceedings of the meeting.

**Proposed:** Cllr. Harris      **Seconded:** Cllr. Weight      Agreed unanimously

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr.J.Newton: Agenda Item 10.1 Monks Lodge Farm Barns. Disclosable Pecuniary Interest – family business.

### 4. COUNTY & DISTRICT MATTERS

Apologies received from County & District Cllr.P.Schwieber

### 5. OFFICER REPORTS & INFORMATION EXCHANGE

**5.1. Monthly Playground Inspection** – Cllr.Last circulated the completed inspection report, which was reviewed and accepted. Cllr. Harris will undertake the next playground inspection.

#### 5.2. Officer Reports

**Cllr.Newton** – Nothing to report

**Cllr.Last** – As per recent playground and field inspection, detailed in report. See also agenda item 9.4.

**Cllr.Weight – Mindfulness Garden** – See agenda item 9.1

**Cllr.Harris** – Please see Officer Reports

**Cllr.Brudenell. Bus Service** – Has successfully arranged over £150 in fare refunds, via Central Connect, for parishioners charged incorrectly during the free trial period. **Task Force** – Noted recent increase in litter on verges, particularly following Autumn cut. Clerk to email volunteers to request help in addressing individual areas of responsibility.

**Cllr.Johnson – Neighbourhood Watch** – Cautionary advice regarding safety of homes during darker winter months. Avoid leaving homes in darkness, ensure sheds and outbuildings are properly secured. Will investigate whether winter safety information leaflets are available from Braintree NW.

**Cllr.Vincent** – Thanks extended to Cllrs.Newton, Last, Brudenell & all Task Force volunteers who have helped with recent clearance and distribution of wood from the churchyard. Confirmed the warm room at the back of the church remains open each day.

### 6. CORRESPONDENCE

*For notification*

**Parishioner Communication** – Concern Regarding Dangerous Car Parking on Toldishall Road/Lucking St junction- Contact made with local PCSO to review on ad hoc basis, taking action where appropriate.

**Parishioner Communication** - Regarding Waste Bin in Children's Play Area at Village Playing Field – Bin unemptied for unacceptable period of weeks. Contact made with BDC Street Cleaning team to address.



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20's Plenty Campaign – Lobbying of council's to place pressure on ECC to reconsider future policy National Grid Bramford to Twinsted Tee – Notification of Secretary of State Order granting development consent.

Parishioner Communication – Confirmation received from landowner that over-hanging dead tree branches would be removed from rear boundary of village playing field. Clerk to chase for indication of when work will take place.

## 7. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None

## 8. PROGRESS UPDATES

Report pre-circulated. Focus on the half yearly budget review, in preparation for Precept/Budget setting in January. The council budget is currently forecast to make approx. £700 shortfall but it is envisaged there may be some small savings made which will help reduce this figure a little, with any remaining shortfall covered by reserves. However, with the proposed spend on the resurfacing of the car park, relying on surplus reserves council finances in 2025/26 will be extremely tight and will require cautious management.

## 9. BUSINESS ITEMS

### 9.1. Mindfulness Garden

A proposal for the spend of the earmarked reserves of £3500 was pre-circulated. The principle feature will be a willow dome kit, providing a community project to create a permanent naturally shaded seating area for future enjoyment. The area will be enhanced by wooden planters, trellis and a robust bench seat sympathetic to natural surroundings.

Where possible 3 alternative suppliers have been researched for all products. The final proposed costs are:-

Willow Dome Kit - £234.99 (inc VAT)	Supplied by Yorkshire Willows
Deluxe Redwood pre-assembled planters x 6 - £1185.80 (inc VAT)	Supplied by Ruby Group
Wooden Trellis panels x 2 - £201.88 (inc VAT)	Supplied by Ruby Group
Compost 1200 litres x 1 - £179.94	Supplied by CPA Horticultural
Wooden bench seat & fittings - £900.00 + VAT	Supplied by Branson Leisure
Plants, low maintenance, drought tolerant £700.00	
<b>Total spend £3425.61</b>	

**Proposed by:** Cllr.Weight

**Seconded by:** Cllr.Last

**Vote in favour:** Unanimous

**9.2. Biodiversity** - The council agreed to adopt the NALC model template Biodiversity policy in accordance with Section 40 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 & Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021.

**Proposed by:** Cllr.Harris

**Seconded by:** Cllr.Vincent

**Vote in favour:** Unanimous

**9.3. Parish Council e-mail & Web Page Address** – The Clerk pre-circulated a summary of industry recommendations for all government organisations, including parish councils, to adopt the use of a .gov.uk address and domain name. Costs involved may range from £10pa to £600pa (depending on requirement). It was agreed that, for ease of management and to keep costs low, the council would prefer to continue to use its existing website, delivered via the e-voice platform, and maintain the existing domain name. With the intention that all emails would use a .gov.uk address. Clerk & Cllr.Harris to explore options available and report back at the next meeting.

**Proposed by:** Cllr.Harris

**Seconded by:** Cllr.Last

**Vote in Favour:** Unanimous

**9.4. Village Playing Field Pathway Repairs** – Further discussions with Premier Play Solutions have resulted in a further reduced proposal of £900.00. The council is currently fully committed, but it was agreed that as and when funds become available the repair as suggested should go ahead.

**Proposed by:** Cllr.Last

**Seconded by:** Cllr.Harris

**Vote in Favour:** Unanimous



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**9.5. Village Christmas Tree** – As in previous years a tree will be erected on the village triangle at the top of Church St. Tree Lighting to take place 6pm Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December. Spend has been budgeted for. Cllr. Newton to make enquiries regarding cost of tree from Maplestead Barns.

**9.6. Potential Open Space Improvements** – Annual review of parish entry on district register. It is noted that updates provided by the parish council in previous 2 years have still yet to be recorded. Clerk to contact BDC to ensure updates are registered. There is currently no S106 monies afforded to the parish and unlikely to be any additional S106 monies in near future.

## 10. PLANNING

### 10.1. Decisions

*24/01780/COUPA Monks Lodge Farm Barns, Gestingthorpe Rd – Prior approval for the change of use of agricultural building to a dwellinghouse, and for associated operational development – Change of use to 3 no. residential dwellings. Prior approval required and granted 17 10 2024.*

## 11. FINANCE

### 11.1. Current Bank Balances

### 11.2. Reconciled Receipts & Payments

### 11.3. Payments & Receipts For Authorisation Signed by Cllr. Weight & Cllr. Brudenell

### 11.4. Bank Transfers Made

**12. CONTENT FOR e-NEWSLETTER** – Peter Haylock tribute; Dart3; Winter Financial Help; Christmas Crime Prevention; Slype Bridge repair

## 13. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Budget & Precept 2025/26; Village Playing Field Car Park; .gov.uk Domain & email Address; Village Parking

## 14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Ordinary Council Meeting Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 7.30pm

## CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

*In accordance with Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 subsection 2 & Local Government Act 1972 subsection 100A&B, & schedule 12A, the following item was discussed in a private meeting of the council as advised in the meeting agenda*

**15. VILLAGE PLAYING FIELD CAR PARK** (separate Confidential minutes refer)

Signed.....

Dated 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025