

**GREAT MAPLESTEAD PARISH ASSEMBLY**  
**Meeting held on Wednesday 22nd March 2023**

**ATTENDEES:** Cllr.M.Elms - Chair. Mrs A Crisp, Parish Clerk. 8. Village organisation representatives and 24 members of the public.

**1.APOLOGIES** – None

**2. MINUTES** – Meeting minutes from the Annual Parish Assembly 13<sup>th</sup> April 2022 were signed as a true record by Cllr. M.Elms. Chair.

**3. ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL** – Report from Dist.Cllr.P.Schwier.

**Essex County Council - Hedingham Division**

**Cllr Peter Schwier – 2022/23 Annual Report**

It is now almost two years since I was elected to Essex County Council; serving the residents of all the villages – and 33 parish councils - that make up the Hedingham division has been a real privilege. The year that has passed since your last annual meeting has gone very quickly but has proved extremely busy and filled with activity and achievement.

The passing of those two years also means we are half-way through the current four-year term, and we are starting to see many positive outcomes from the ambitious work the county council set in train back in May 2021.

The following is a small sample of the key numbers, landmarks and achievements from a busy year – many are necessarily Essex-wide but, where possible, I have tried to focus purely on issues relevant to our local communities.

**Budget / Council Tax 23/24**

In the toughest and most uncertain and inflationary financial climate the county has known for many years, ECC agreed a budget which prioritised support for adults' and children's social care, road maintenance, improving infrastructure and helping people with the cost of living.

Over the course of the next year, the county council will spend a total of £2,281m (gross) and £1,164m (net) through its revenue budget – 7% higher than had been planned last year, as a result of inflationary pressures

There will also be £275m of capital spending in 23/24.

Budget points of note include:

- £58m increase in the adult social care budget
- £7.5m extra to deliver 340 additional school places
- 9% increase in fees for foster carers
- Community supermarkets to be rolled-out – providing essential household goods at lower cost for hard-pressed families
- £200m spending on climate change remains in place, with new and existing cycle routes and active travel schemes are also being built and maintained to enable people to walk and cycle.

**Highways**

The council will be spending nearly £145m on highways maintenance and sustainable transport over the coming year and, as ever, will prioritise the areas by severity of need.

By way of context, the county looks after:

- 5,100 miles of carriageway;
- 4,000 miles of footways / cyclepaths;
- 130 miles of safety barriers;
- 131,000 street lights;
- 14,000 illuminated highway signs;
- 80,000 non-illuminated signs;

- 36,000 items of Public Rights of Way infrastructure.
- **7,002 – the number of potholes repaired in Essex over the course of 22/23 so far.**

Over the last year, in terms of calls to our contact centre around highways issues, we received the following numbers:

- 1,899 – average daily number of calls to the Contact Centre in January 2023;
- 432,711 - total calls to Contact Centre;
- 47,904 - total calls to Highways (new faults and general) service.

Meanwhile, the average answer waiting time for highways calls was 03:10.

### **Levelling Up**

In late 2021, ECC launched its own Levelling Up White Paper, aimed at raising living standards for people in particular cohorts and locations. One year on, a great deal has already been achieved. This includes:

- 12,000 more homes and businesses connect to Superfast Broadband
- Over 6,600 devices donated to schools across Essex, to support students with getting online and enhancing their learning.
- 250 new entry level jobs created through our social value scheme.
- The Essex Opportunities website launched to provide access to more flexible job roles. In its first year the website has had more than 90,000 visits and 6,500 clicks to apply for jobs
- The Essex Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Service supported creating 240 new apprenticeships across Essex Businesses. Expanded our completely free holiday activity and food programme, ActivAte, which over the last two years has provided over 500,000 free meals and supported over 30,000 young people
- An almost £2million boost provided to social care in Essex under our Nightingale Care Bursary, which will support people from the most deprived communities in Essex to achieve social care qualifications or support existing care workers to achieve further qualifications.
- Our working families programme has been in contact with 960 families to provide support to those seeking information on upskilling or retraining for a new career
- Parkplay has now been launched in 16 areas across Essex and had over 2,000 unique people attend, with 16,000 attendances in total so far! Parkplay will be launched in more areas throughout 2023.
- The physical and mental wellbeing of 130,000 school children and young people supported at Essex Outdoors sites, where they learn a range of skills through outdoor pursuits.
- 60,000 new library members have signed up since Jan 2022
- 150,000 new recyclable library cards distributed to every primary school child in the county as part of the 'Essex Year of Reading' celebration. 74 new literacy areas have been created across Essex (one in every library).
- Almost 24,000 children took part in this year's Summer Reading Challenge. This is an increase of 36.4% on 2021.
- 'Multiply' launched - a new initiative that will offer over 14,000 Essex residents free access to maths and finance training

### **The environment and climate action**

As the county council's Climate Czar, I've been front and centre with much of the work around our support for the environment and the drive towards net zero. I am delighted that it remains a central ambition of the council's work, despite the financial pressure. Progress has been made, along with our partners, over the last year, and key achievements include:

- 138,349 trees planted across Essex on our way to target of 375,000 by 2025. This amounts to 52.73 hectares of trees, and 16,492m of hedgerows
- 36,681 LED streetlamps now installed across the county.
- 1,222 fuel-poor households receiving support, helping them claim an additional £2.4 million in benefits via our Warm Homes Essex project

- £100,000 awarded in the last 12 months to local cycling groups and charities
- SuDS advice provided on 850 major planning applications a year
- 62,500 new properties receiving flood reduction expertise
- Green Flag award status retained across seven country parks welcoming one million visitors during the year
- £500,000 awarded from the Climate Action Challenge Fund to more than 30 local organisations and schools taking action on key climate change issues
- Several retrofit projects completed on the ECC estate
- £17.2m secured jointly with partners to provide fuel-poor households with grant funding of up to £10,000 to improve energy efficiency and heating systems in their homes
- A new North Essex Farming Cluster supported, which will help with information-sharing across the farming community, helping farmers move to more sustainable farming methods and protect sustainable agriculture
- Through Solar Together Essex, we have led a scheme enabling Essex residents to benefit from a significant discount on solar panels and battery storage from a reliable supplier. The scheme in Essex has now delivered over 1,300 installations and enabled over 1,100 tonnes of avoided carbon emissions annually. There have been 6,600 registrations over this year, more than any other year. The deadline to apply has been extended so people can register until 21/4/23.

## Waste and recycling

We continue to work closely with district councils to promote recycling and efficient waste management that minimises the harm to the environment:



**52% of household waste in Essex was recycled in 2020/21** – higher than the national average of 44%



The household **recycling rate varies from 40% - 58%** across the different district, borough and city areas



On average, each resident in Essex produces around 463kg of waste per year, that's **16% more waste than the national average.**



Approx 700,000 tonnes of household waste are generated in Essex per year – with a recycling rate of 52%, that means **circa 330,000 tonnes of general rubbish to landfill each year**



**Over £100m is spent each year** on the cost of collecting, treating and disposing of household waste in Essex



There are around **1.5 million visits to our 21 Recycling Centres each year**

## Locality Fund

Once again, it has been a pleasure to support local communities through my Locality Fund. The details of schemes supported are as follows:

Organisation	Amount
--------------	--------

The Birdbrook & District Community House	£310
Steeple Bumpstead Parish Council	£600
Mens Shed Great Yeldham	£1,000
Sturmer Parish Council	£700
Gestingtorpe Parish Council	£825
Birdbrook Bowls Club	£800
Helions Bumpstead Community Benefit Society	£803
Belchamp Otten & Belchamp St Paul Parish Council - Belchamp St Paul Community House	£300

I hope the above gives you an idea of the work that has gone in over the last year to develop our plans and deliver on them for the people of Essex.

Meanwhile, my work as Climate Czar has been extremely rewarding: meeting people across Essex and beyond; championing the work and achievements of people throughout our county; lobbying government on environmental causes – including the East Anglian Green proposals which I and colleagues across the region are steadfastly opposing.

On top of the above, I have also continued my busy work as a Braintree District Councillor, including membership of various bodies, such as the Planning Committee.

Most of all, it has been my pleasure and privilege to serve the residents of all the villages, both large and small, within the Heddingham division. I look forward to continuing to do so in the next year and beyond.

Best wishes,




**4. BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

(See separate document)

**5. GREAT MAPLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL**

As we move to the close of this parish council term and fresh elections, who in 2019 could have foreseen or even imagined the events we would live through in the next four years ... The Covid Pandemic destroying lives and disrupting many others ... The death of The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh in 2021 ... The celebration of our Queens platinum jubilee in 2022 - closely followed by

her death just months later ... The catastrophic war in Ukraine that has destroyed a country with the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives, together with an economic impact that reverberates around the world ... It actually feels trivial in the light of such trauma to celebrate the achievements of a village ... But life goes on, and over the last four years despite the difficulties, our institutions, our clubs, our societies and indeed the parish council have worked diligently to try and maintain a semblance of normality in spite of the difficulties imposed on them – and you will hear from them this evening ...

The parish council from the outset has been keen to engage more closely with the community and introduced a Parish Council Facebook page in May 2019 to keep the village more informed with its activities ... BBC Essex gave us an opportunity in August 2019 to raise the profile of our village when we were invited onto the Jodie Halford show to talk about our village and its vibrant community ... They gave us an opportunity again in the spring of 2021, just as plans were unfolding to regenerate our playing field, and that gave us a perfect launch platform on BBC Essex Quest to talk with Liana Bridges and Barry Lewis about our playing field plans ...

Covid created unprecedented problems for the parish council, as our normal processes and procedures were disrupted ... Work didn't stop – in fact it increased and our Clerk Ann was earning her corn organising our parish council meetings by Zoom, a tricky experience if your internet speed is 2.2 Mbps through Sky ... But it did work, and we did manage to get essential business done ...

The school had a seemingly insurmountable task to educate our children and grandchildren in lockdown, and you will hear more from the school in a moment, but their task wasn't made easier when in June 2020 during lock down, there was a traveller incursion onto our playing field that threatened to close the school entirely ... Luckily this was resolved within twenty four hours and they departed ... The Parish council immediately put in place new security measures to hopefully prevent any further incursions ...

It was very much the intention of the council to work through and come out of the pandemic in an optimistic and positive way – to reopen our community to refreshed amenities and enhance the quality of life for the people of our village ... During lockdown a couple of pizza van visits were organised at the village playing field car park, so people could order pizza's in advance, collect them and at the same time chat with each other from a safe distance ... Pilates was introduced on the field by a member of our community as well as coffee mornings arranged in the open air ... The parish council invested in a new Boules court and picnic tables to help people mix more comfortably outside, as restrictions eased ... Steve Harris, as always, worked tirelessly to keep our footpath network accessible to all, so that people could get out into the fresh air and countryside with ease during lockdown ... We had to install extra dog waste bins because more people bought dogs and the road and footpath network was being used by increasing numbers ...

Lockdown provided a precursor to the biggest capital project ever undertaken by the parish council – the complete refurbishment of our playing field, play area and field drainage which had been deteriorating for a number of years ... In March 2021, I asked Simon Last to head a working party to undertake a complete review of our 30 year old playing field facility and make whatever recommendations necessary to bring a 20<sup>th</sup> century facility into the 21<sup>st</sup> century ... The working party members were a natural fit, because not only did they know each other personally, they each had a broad range of skills to provide the mix of credentials to drive this project over the line ... Simon was key as lead - he had a successful track record sourcing funds for big projects – Ann Crisp had wide ranging experience in this area as well as offering essential strategic guidance – Steve Harris had the skill to micro analyse essential detail ... I also wanted Martin Crisp to join the group as he had a career history, scrutinising funding requests and he could approach the

application from a fund providers perspective ... But most importantly, we needed community engagement, with ideas, and money ...

The response was overwhelming, with private individuals and village institutions generously providing substantial funds to reinforce the integrity of the application to funding providers – in this case the National Lottery ... Then the work really started – deciding what was needed – the endless process of finding who was out there to provide it and how much would it all cost ... Then - to pick their way through a complicated application process to bring the process to a successful conclusion – which they did – and Steve will tell you more about that in a moment ... But many congratulations to them all, for their outstanding work .on behalf of our community ...

The war in Ukraine has had a huge impact on our lives, increasing living costs exponentially ... I asked Jacqui Mee to lead a working party to address the key issues affecting our community ... In conjunction with our vicar Beverley Vincent and the Church, a cost saving package of information and support was put together ... The church provided a warm haven in the Tower Room with comfortable chairs, a library, games and pastimes for those who felt they wished to use it during the cold winter months ... I should like to thank Jacqui and her working party and Beverley and the church community for its continued support ...

Over the last four years the Parish Council has considered 49 planning applications - 38 have been responded to ... After one particularly disappointing engagement with BDC planning, it was agreed to apply greater scrutiny to each application – paying attention to the minute detail in each and ensure BDC planning were fully aware of the impacts of any application on immediate neighbours and the village as a whole ... This change has already shown effective results ...

In 2019, the Parish Council was awarded the Foundation Award Certificate for the second time at the Essex Association of Local Councils AGM recognising the integrity of the council and acknowledging the maintenance of good working practice – Thank you to our clerk Ann for her diligent work making this possible ...

Many congratulations also go to Joe Newton who achieved 35 years of continuous service on our parish council last year ... This outstanding achievement was recognised with the presentation of a long service Certificate by Braintree District Council ... Joe is the latest in a long unbroken line of Newtons on our parish council that began way back in the 1890's ... Many congratulations Joe from us all ...

The village defibrillator was replaced and regular training has been maintained to ensure those interested are fully trained in its use ...

Our dealings with Essex County Council Highways is always hard work ... The process of getting things done and having the most basic repair services undertaken, like blocked drains and culverts, surface water flooding and even the repair of potholes is often difficult and frustrating ... Once a problem is reported on their website a reference number is issued, then you wait for an assessment, and if that assessment suggests there is no problem, when there clearly is – that is it - there is no process to appeal the decision – no individual to contact to even discuss it – it just gets lost in the system ... So then you have to try and bypass the system to get things done... We have done that by getting to know and building good working relationships with people behind the scenes at ECC who can kick start things via the back door ... Fortunately, just before lockdown, the Lucking Street drainage project was completed, which ended a three year cooperation with Essex County Council that was achieved by applying that very back door system ... We have another major project under investigation to resolve the serious flooding issues in Alderford Street – and fingers crossed that will be dealt with in the coming year ... However - Highways did agree the introduction of new speed calming measures with ECC to make our roads safer for walkers,

cyclists, horse riders and motorists alike ... We are still awaiting the outcome of a Quiet Lane proposal that has been in the process of validation for several years ...

Finally, I would like to thank the many members of our village who have enabled us to maintain an element of normality in the last few years, volunteering their services for the benefit of the community, helping with litter picking, resurfacing car parks, digging out drains and all other random tasks that needed attending to – I would like to thank all my colleagues on the council for the incredible work they have put in, and all the support offered in testing times ...

And last, but not least – thanks must go to our Clerk Ann ... We all love Ann ... She is the one who kicks my ankle or touches my left arm if it looks like I'm about to overstep the mark at a PC meeting ... She makes sure we don't stray off the straight and narrow and I thank her personally and on behalf of my colleagues and the village community for her tireless efforts on our behalf and long may it continue – Thank you Ann ...

Cllr.Martin Elms - Chairman

*Reports were provided by the following organisations and lodged with the Parish Clerk*

### **St Giles CofE Primary School**

(See separate report from The Chorus Schools Federation)

### **Carpet Bowls Club**

The carpet bowls group meet every Monday at Great Maplestead Village Hall at 2pm. The club has welcomed some new members this year and although there is a bit of competition between the group it is a fun social afternoon. We usually have between 8 to 10 people and play in two teams. New members are always welcome, even if you have not played before why not come along and have a go, you will be made most welcome.

We meet on Monday from 2pm to 4pm and we pay £3 for the afternoon which includes a cup of tea and cake or a biscuit.

### **St Giles PCC**

It has been a good year, with less disruption to our services during 2022 than the previous 2 years. Whilst we learn to live with the effects of Coronavirus in our village, we are not finding it as disruptive, apart from the vicar having to miss the Carol Service!

The service pattern has been two Holy Communion services each month. Last March we held our first ever monthly Café Church, my thanks to the Team who lead this, my thanks also go to all the cake makers in the village! It has proved popular, and people find it a welcoming space, especially those who prefer something more informal than a traditional service. It has been wonderful to welcome new people and children into Café church, if you haven't been do come along. It's usually on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month.

Our festival choir lifted the worship with their voices at the Harvest and Carol services and we look forward to hearing them again on Easter Sunday.

A Lent course was held at The Rectory last year and we have started another this year based on the film the Greatest Showman.

The schoolchildren from St Giles School, decorated our churchyard footpath with wooden crosses and visited the war memorial in church for Remembrance and attend seasonal services.

With the energy crisis the church, in collaboration with the Parish Council, have transformed the Tower Room into a Warm Haven, it is open during daylight hours, it is warm and cosy with plenty of activities and refreshments available.

We had a wedding for a local family, and we look forward to a wedding this October. It has also been a privilege to officiate at the funerals of much-loved members of the community.

Coffee mornings have flourished and have continued to be very popular. Thanks to our churchwardens for organising them.

It has been a year of celebration with Queen Elizabeth's platinum jubilee but also one of great sadness at her passing. A book of condolence was available in the church and services were held across the Benefice. A service of Prayer was held at St Giles on the day of her passing.

We look forward the Coronation celebration and service.

We always welcome new and returning members of our community, we hope you will come and join us.

*Rev'd Beverley*

### **Autumn Show**

The Autumn Show is an annual Village event and encourages people from both Great and Little Maplestead to show their growing, cooking and handicraft skills.

2022 saw an increase in the number of entries and it is always lovely to see so many entries from the children.

The sunflower competition was again supported by many people in the villages and has become a permanent event. Thank you to Jo Green for running this and sponsoring the trophy.

I would like to thank the committee for their support and hard work who without them the show would not take place. It was a sad year as Bill and Jean Bowers stepped down from the committee after many years and they will be sadly missed.

This year the Autumn Show will take place on Saturday September 9th and the committee and I look forward to another successful year.

The new schedule is being written and will be arriving with your Parish magazine soon. There will be something for everyone to have a go at and as the saying goes, you have to be in it to win it.

### **Great Maplestead Village Hall**

The Great Maplestead Village Hall has had an easy year with no major concerns.

Bookings are doing well, with the Hall used by most of our village organisations; The Mapleleaves WEA, Carpet Bowls, The Autumn Show, , Yoga and Leg Bums Tums, Pilates, Mums & Toddlers and Colne Valley Car club

The Hall has been used by residents of Great and Little Maplestead, and parents of children at the school for a variety of parties, receptions and celebrations.

We have also used the hall for a variety of fundraising events including; Jumble Sales. We are looking forward to the Coronation Celebrations at the beginning of May and the popular Beer Festival which is on May27/28. Additional events are always being planned. Well done to all those who organize any social event. The Big Breakfast takes place this Saturday please come along.

Although the Village Hall is used regularly, lettings do not always cover the running costs, and fundraising is essential to the success of the Village Hall.

Please keep using it.



## **The Maplesteads Knitting Group**

The knitting Group meets on the last Wednesday of every month at 2pm, at Godsalve, Church Street Great Maplestead. We have now got about 10 ladies who meet up and knit, crochet or bring along embroidery to sit for a couple of hours and enjoy each other's company while knitting various items for charity. We have also welcomed ladies who just come along for a chat and bring their own handicraft projects to work on. We are now making items for Felsted Aid who send container loads of goods to the Ukraine to help people in the war-torn country. So far we have sent around 200 hats and mittens along with knitted blankets, knitted toys and childrens cardigans.

I would like to thank everyone who has given us wool or knitted squares to be made into blankets.

I would like to make an appeal for wool as we do use a lot over the year.

Anyone interested in joining the group will be very welcome, you can find my contact details in the parish magazine.

## **The Maple Leaves**

The Maple Leaves is a ladies group which has been formed from The Maplesteads WI. After the WI closed the members wanted to continue meeting and enjoying lunches out and going on visits to local places and hence the Maple leaves was formed.

Since forming in 2022, we have enjoyed a variety of speakers and demonstrators, we had a Christmas lunch at Gosfield Golf Club and in April we are going to the brickworks at Bulmer.

During the year we have a number of open meetings when members can invite friends and partners to come along.

On Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March we are holding a Big Breakfast and on April 22<sup>nd</sup> we are providing refreshments for the concert which is being held in St Giles church.

Anyone wishing to join our group would be made most welcome. If you are interested in joining please come along to our next meeting, which is on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> May in the village hall at 7pm, when we will be having a talk by Charles Soule on Summer Gardens & Hanging Baskets.

## **Maplesteads WEA Report –**

For reasons beyond our control - Covid and the last minute unavailability of tutors - the Maplesteads WEA met in Autumn '22 after a break of two and a half years.

We were delighted to welcome back local artist, Susan Pownall who gave us a series of 7 lectures on Women War Artists. This proved to be a fascinating and diverse subject which was much enjoyed by the group.

Susan was prepared to return this Spring ('23) to give a course on The Role of On-Location Drawing in Art, but sadly, too few people enrolled to make the course viable and it had to be cancelled. The committee had realised that 2 art courses back-to-back was not ideal, but at the time, no other lecturers were prepared to come to Great Maplestead on a Monday evening. Many of them had become used to running courses on Zoom and now prefer to work that way. We feel that Maplestead members want to meet as a group, and we hope that the WEA federation will find enough tutors willing to travel, to enable us to run face-to-face courses.

We are dependent, of course, on the support of members old and new to keep the WEA alive in Maplestead. We have been running 2 courses per year since 1982 and would very much like to continue, so please join us.

Jill Newton - Chairman

### **Village Social Events**

It is fair to say 2022 saw village life back to normal with various social events taking place as planned throughout the year.

The big event of the year was the Queen's Jubilee celebrations back in June. In the run up to the main celebrations, the village was adorned with various red, white & blue floral displays with thanks to Patsy Maile and her willing band of volunteers, together with the Knitting Circle who created lovely garlands of flowers and a fabulous feature display for the hall. We also saw our first ever scarecrow trail, which included some very imaginative displays. Everybody had the chance to view a 70 year photographic history of Maplestead in the Tower Room at St Giles church, it's amazing just what photographs and stories are recorded. And the village was able to host its first ever beacon lighting event - with thanks to Martin Watson & Joe Newton - a truly magnificent evening kicking off the weekend of reflection, fun and games. The usual mix of village party and hog roast worked well on the Saturday, and Monday saw a slightly modified version of It's a Royal Knockout due to the damp conditions. Although spirits were definitely not dampened, especially with the performance of the Maplestead Mincers & a special appearance by Her Royal Highness complete in kilt and headscarve (thank you Keith Brownlie!).

Other events of the year, and my apologies if I have missed any, included:

- 10<sup>th</sup> Great Maplestead Beer Festival - a satellite event last year at the garden bar of the Bell Inn, Castle Hedingham. Good weather encouraged a number of villagers to stroll across the fields to enjoy a fun afternoon and drink the bar dry!
- Indoor Kurling - a great evening, if you haven't tried it - do look out for another. Our thanks to the ladies of Wickham St Paul who bring all the equipment and organise the evening for us.
- Summer Boules Tournament - held on Friday evenings at the playing field throughout July & August. A relaxed evening of gentle rivalry, with a trophy up for grabs!
- Indoor Greyhound Racing - a fabulous event, thanks to Jo & Martin Watson who work tirelessly to host this evening. A highly competitive evening and such a laugh, whether you are participating as a dog handler or a gambler. Last year saw a new champion - and a great success for his first competition - Shane Green. Bonios all round!
- Easter, Autumn & Christmas Village Walks continue to be popular with Steve Harris leading us around various parish paths to enjoy seasonal wonders. Once again a number

of volunteers help to provide half way tipples, post event sandwiches, cakes and refreshments.

- A new Festive Coffee Morning was held at St Giles Church at the end of November, with crafts, a raffle, christmas decorations and refreshments it was really well supported. It was lovely to see the church used in this way
- Advent windows & garden displays once again lit up the night during the run up to Christmas.
- Village Quiz Night held just last week

And so, to 2023, what should you be looking out for....

Easter Monday - Village Walk

### **6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> May - King's Coronation Celebrations**

As with the Platinum Jubilee celebrations last year, organisers have tried to create a range of events and activities which will hopefully appeal to all. Additionally, the group has been keen to utilise all the facilities within the village - village hall, church & playing field.

In the week running up to the Coronation weekend, parishioners are encouraged to decorate (or should I say adorn) their houses and gardens in patriotic colours to create a village-wide display of red, white and blue. There will be a prize awarded for the best display.

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May** - in the evening a Maplestead "Royal Variety" Performance styled village show at the village hall. An opportunity to explore the hidden (and maybe not so hidden) talents of the Maplesteads. Tickets are just £5ph and include canapes & a free glass of fizz on arrival. A cash bar will also be available. Guests are invited to dress in evening wear, as if attending a royal performance, to make this feel like a special occasion. A diverse range of acts, the like you have never seen, are currently rehearsing hard so do come along and make all their efforts worthwhile.

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May** - Tea & Cake Afternoon at St Giles church. Hopefully making use of the outside space, weather permitting. The afternoon will include A Cake Fit for a King competition, with prizes for the best cake in the Under 12 category & adult category. The only limit to the type and style of cake is your imagination.

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May** - Celebrate National Volunteers Day. In recognition of the work of village volunteers in the refurbishment and improvements to the village playing field and children's play area, an afternoon of games and BYO picnics on the village playing field. This event will include an official launch of the play area and pathway, with parishioners invited to walk the new Coronation Pathway. Everything is subject to good weather and the successful completion of the pathway, in time for the weekend, so arrangements may need to be a little flexible.

**27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> May - Great Maplestead Beer Festival** - including Belchamp Morris Dancers, Hells Belles Morris Dancers, Ricardo the Portuguese, Spanish Guitar player (?!) and of course beer!

Quiz Night

Autumn & Christmas Village Walks

Advent windows/displays

My continued thanks to those who have kindly volunteered to help with organising village celebrations for the Kings Coronation. With so much effort put into the Platinum Jubilee celebrations last year, it all feels a little too soon! I really am truly grateful to this team who come along with ideas, a can-do attitude and always a smile - they are a phenomenal bunch!

The village continues to benefit from the generosity of a handful of people, to create and arrange various events and social occasions in our village. To these people we are all extremely grateful. However, there is always room for new ideas and new people to step forward. There is no format, it is up to you. We always enjoy a "bit of a do" in this village, so if you have an idea, run with it !

Report delivered by Ann Crisp - Clerk, Member of Village Playing Field Working Party & Member of Coronation Organising Committee

Meeting Closed 9.40pm

**Signed.....TRUE COPY.....**      **Dated**      17<sup>th</sup> April 2024