**GREAT MAPLESTEAD PARISH ASSEMBLY**

 **Meeting held at the Village Hall on Wednesday 15th April 2015**

**ATTENDEES:** Mr. P. Haylock, Chair; Mrs A Crisp, Parish Clerk; Cty. Cllr. D. Finch; Dist. Cllr. J. Beavis; Mr. J. Cleverly, Conservative candidate for Braintree; James Salmon, County Broadband. 10 Village Organisation representatives and 34 members of the public.

**1. APOLOGIES** –Dist. Cllr. Scattergood; Mr. P. Knight

**2. MINUTES –** Meeting minutes from the Annual Parish Assembly 16th April 2014 were signed as a true record by Mr P Haylock, Chair.

**3. UPDATE FROM ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL** – Cllr. David Finch provided an annual update and invited questions from the audience.

**4. UPDATE FROM BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL** – Cllr. Jo Beavis provided an update and expressed her thanks to the Chairman and the Clerk for their help in her time working as District Councillor for Hedingham & The Maplesteads.

**5. PARISH COUNCIL REPORT** – Cllr. P. Haylock read out the Parish Council’s annual report.

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

**6. ANNUAL FLOWER SHOW**– Report by Mr I Johnson

**7. SOCIAL COMMITTEE** – Report from Miss J Ingram.

**8. VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE** – Report from Mr J Newton.

**9. ST GILES CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL** –Report from Mrs J Nichols, Head Teacher.

**10. YOUTH CLUB** – Report from Mrs M Jeggo, read by Mrs A Crisp.

**11. ST GILES PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL** – Report from Nick Ellis

**12. GREAT MAPLESTEAD W.I.** – Report from Mrs J Newton, President.

**13. GREAT MAPLESTEAD WEA –** Report from Mrs J Bowers

**14. BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION** – Report from Mrs A Crisp, for Mr P Knight.

**15. KNITTING CIRCLE** –Report from Mrs M Carder, read by Mrs S Knight.

**16. CARPET BOWLS CLUB** – Report from Mrs J Chaplin

**17. COUNTY BROADBAND** – Presentation from Mr James Salmon, announcing the successful implementation of County Broadband within the village.

**18. CLOSING REMARKS** – Mr P Haylock thanked all representatives and organisations for their attendance and continued contribution to the village.

**Signed…………………………...**  **Dated** April 2016

**GREAT MAPLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL – CHAIRMANS REPORT**

Although this meeting is arranged by the Parish Council, it is not a Parish Council meeting, but it provides an opportunity for the many village organisations to briefly report on their activities during the year. The Parish Councillors have again worked so hard to support the wishes of Parishioners, whenever possible. With such a long agenda I will make my report as short as possible.

It has been a very busy year.

I could have told you all about what we have discussed at every meeting.

We used to meet 6 times a year but we have had 9 meetings last year and agreed to at least 8 meetings for this coming year – with planning taking up a lot of our meeting time and pressure and involvement required by BDC and ECC – which is not a bad thing but time consuming for all Parish Councillors.

Achievements and ongoing projects:

* Triangles in village – now kerbed by ECC
* Runners Up in Essex Best Kept Village 2014 and also Village of the Year
* Playing Field storage container – plan now approved as amended, size and siting changes as villagers wished.
* Use of Section 106 money for play equipment – safety fencing to be installed shortly and 2 replacement spring rockers to be organised
* 20mph speed limit approved by ECC outside the school
* Quality Council Foundation level status achieved from EALC
* Footpaths shown on Parish Council website

The Parish Council reserves have been topped up a little, again this year – thanks to the watchful eye of the Clerk and the generosity of those from within and outside the parish who have helped and undertaken certain work for free.

There is now much more information about the work of the Parish Council on its website. I encourage parishioners to use this facility to stay in touch, where they internet capability.

The Parish Council has continued to place pressure on ECC Highways for various matters including potholes and drainage, with some successes (with the help of intervention by David Finch) and some frustration for matters that remain outstanding such as the drainage in Lucking Street. Flyers encouraging electors to stand for election as Parish Councillors achieved – we have 9 standing for 7 places. No apathy just enthusiasm in our Parish community.

I would like to thank all the organisations within the village, for their support, enthusiasm and hard work in making Great Maplestead a place of true community spirit, for us to enjoy and be proud of. New ideas for future projects or any concerns should be addressed in writing or via e-mail to the Clerk – slips are available here tonight. Thanks must go to fellow Parish, District and County Councillors for their support. Last but not least to our very much overworked Clerk, Ann Crisp, whose efficiency, diligence and hard work is much appreciated. Thank you, Ann.

**GREAT MAPLESTEAD FLOWER SHOW**

The Maplesteads Flower Show is always held on the first Saturday in September (5th September 2015). All are welcome.

It is friendly competitiveness including prizes for amateur flower arrangements, a men’s cooking competition and a children’s section.

Hope to see you in September.

**Ian Johnson.**

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**GREAT MAPLESTEAD SOCIAL COMMITTEE REPORT**

**To come**

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**TRUSTEES OF GREAT MAPLESTEAD VILLAGE HALL**

A quiet year, pantomime excluded!

The new water heater in the kitchen has made a big difference for tea and coffee, and perhaps mulled wine? (Not my taste!)

We are looking at re-surfacing the floor, “not before time” I hear you say! We don’t want to let it get any worse.

The outside is due for a lick of paint before next winter, we are getting quotes for this.

Thanks to all for any help in running or fundraising for the hall and to Denise for the stage curtains, with a bit of help from Martin Watson.

As ever a plea, to use the hall whenever possible. It makes all the hard work from the Committee worthwhile.

**Joe Newton**

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**ST GILES C of E SCHOOL**

Good evening, thank you for the invitation to attend tonight’s assembly to report on the work of the school.

I am very pleased to be able to tell you that the school continues to go from strength to strength. Last year I reported to you the success of our OFSTED inspection and on from there, far from resting on any laurels, we saw this as encouragement to continue to build and develop our work.

This improvement work has been on many fronts; fortunate in being able to secure £45,000 of funding from ECC for a new extension, this has given us a new room for groups to use during the day and I am delighted to say; a new cookery club that is starting this term. This reflects the importance of teaching children about our food.

Another success was in obtaining £18,000 of Lottery funding for the new play equipment installed this Easter in the back playground. The children had a wonderful surprise when they returned to school and are particularly enjoying being Spiderman on the climbing wall!

This enhances and builds on the sports provision provided by Olympic Legacy money and we continue to have top quality sports coaches and 2 after school clubs – one as a fun sports session and one with an eye on more competitive tournaments. Our PTA funded the cost of new rugby shirts for the team and I don’t think it’s biased to say they all really looked the part!

Our music continues to expand with one of the rooms in the middle of the school becoming a dedicated music room. Activities in the week now include the band, a singing club and a new lunch time club; named 1 o’clock Glock for children to learn and develop musical notation using glockenspiel sets.

In January we were thrilled to be joined by children’s author and artist – Nick Butterworth, who gave his time to all the children so generously.

March saw the annual World Book Day celebration, but no dressing up for St Giles, we introduced a new idea – the Great Bedtime Story. All the children came back to school in the early evening, dressed in their pyjamas, and we made a huge bed of duvets on the hall floor. Children enjoyed hot chocolate as they listened to a bedtime story. I am not sure they were quite ready for bed when they went home!

The school was inspected by Essex County Council just before Easter and again, the news is good. They were particularly impressed with the quality of education we are providing for our children; the learning environment and behaviour; the report said “Pupils demonstrate high levels of personal and learning behaviours with little need to remind them how to behave appropriately as they have a strong sense of self worth.”

The report goes on to say “Spiritual, moral and social development is a strong feature of the school including high quality assemblies which provide a collegiate and inclusive time for the whole school community.”

Part of this strength is our relationship with the church. We held our Christmas Crib service – always a favourite in church, and this year our Ashing service still went ahead, working round the redecoration of the church. I am always grateful to Gay, Gill and Jill for their ongoing support for the work of the school. We were very pleased to visit Chelmsford Cathedral for a drama/music day as part of the centenary celebrations for the Diocese.

However, within all of this good news, tragedy has also visited St.Giles’. In the Autumn we received the news that one of our parents had died and although anticipated, as the brain tumour was so severe, this hit the school hard. Our task was to rally, to support and hold safe seven year old Violet as she started the journey of coming to terms with her new reality.

I learned many things during this time but one of the most important is how the actions of the community can give comfort and support to the bereaved. So many of you here came to our Macmillan coffee morning and wore purple ribbon – violet for Violet – and so showed Violet that she wasn’t alone. We raised double the amount of money we normally achieve but most significantly, we came together as a community and I thank you most sincerely.

However, just as we came back in the New Year, another one of mum’s was told that her cancer was terminal. She lived for just 11 weeks and died just as we broke up for Easter and her funeral is on Friday. She leaves behind Taylor, aged 10. His mum, Belinda also attended St. Giles’ as a girl and held the school dear to her heart.

I am sure it’s because we are a small school community that this is so hard hitting and what I have admired so much about the children and staff of St Giles is how they have responded in the face of adversity. The strength of our team, the support for one another child or adult, we draw upon our courage and kindness to see us all through this challenging time. So I come to ask once again for your solidarity as we Race for Life this summer to how our support for Taylor and his family.

Although this year has had these obvious challenges we have a lot to celebrate too. I am really thrilled to be able to report that the school is oversubscribed for September – for our 15 spaces, we had twenty 1st choice applications. This news is a real milestone for St. Giles and is a real indicator that our journey of improvement is bearing fruit. The reputation of St. Giles in the wider community is truly one of a good school. So as we continue to thrive, I thank you wholeheartedly for your continued warmth and support. Thank you.

**Jinnie Nicholls [Head Teacher]**

**GREAT MAPLESTEAD YOUTH CLUB**

At the start of our 7th year a very lively group of young people joined us, integrating well with our original members and bringing a lot of excitement, enthusiasm and noise to the club.

In September Mary and Martin Elms kindly joined us and judged our annual Masterchef evening, we really appreciate their bravery and thank them for coming and making the event work well. The evening saw the youths cooking and decorating chocolate buns, once again we entered them all into the flower show the following Saturday and like last year the winners were different at each event.

The carpet bowls club spent another evening with us, there were a lot of confused and curious faces at the beginning of the evening, but after being shown how to play and having a few matches the enthusiasm and enjoyment shone through with the youths all up for a repeat event in the future. We must thank Janice, Bob, Connie and Ann for coming along to make this evening such a success.

Our evenings this year included a July Jolly, which is our annual leavers and new members party, Win, Lose or Draw which brought out the artists in us or not as the case may be, and What’s in the Box? Another popular but very excitable evening.

The games table we bought with the funding we received has been a big success, keeping everyone well occupied during the natural breaks in actual activities.

Next month we hope to move onto the playing field for the summer months with team games such as rounders and kwik cricket.

**Myra Jeggo**

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**Report to the Great Maplestead Annual Parish Meeting by the Church of St Giles**

Since April 2012 the church of England Parish of St Giles Great Maplestead, has been part of the wider Halstead Team, with the Vicar (Revd Gay Ellis) and the Reader (Mr Nick Ellis) working in the four parishes known as the Knights Hospitallers.

The web-site of the Church of England defines it’s roles as being “A Christian presence in every community” and St Giles church congregation seek to live that aim out.

Firstly we still maintain one act of worship every Sunday in Gt Maplestead (the only exceptions being when a major event is taking place elsewhere in the Knights Hospitallers or on the Sundays after Christmas and Easter). We also hold special services at other times of the year such as Christmas and Easter. Over the past few years we have also started holding services to mark the various stages of the farming year, this is in addition to the traditional Harvest service.

Each year the church holds a number of baptisms, weddings and funerals.

Being a “Christian presence in every community” also involves being part of the wider community ad both involving those who are not church members in activities and also being part of other activities in the community. We also seek to serve the community in many ways. The prime example of this being the support the church has given to the broadband service newly available in the village. The hosting of the service in the church being only one aspect of the work that has gone into providing this facility. We also continue to provide the Wednesday morning coffee session with between 20 and 30 people regularly attending.

Last year we also launched our WW1 Memorial Project which seeks to create a digital memorial to all those who played a part in the First World war. Ultimately this will allow visitors to the church to learn more about the names on the War Memorial in the church. The latest version of this will be on display in the Church as part of the Flower Festival and Open Gardens to be held on the weekend of 20/21st June.

We also seek to regularly communicate with the village through both the Parish Magazine and our web-site.

At the start of this report reference was made to the Halstead Team Ministry, and at Christmas 2014, John Blore - the Team Rector retired. This post is being advertised, with a closing date in mid-May, and as the Team Rector is nominally leads the Team, the parishes are fully involved in the appointment of a successor.

Lastly, at the time of this report, we are currently approaching the end of a total redecoration of the church, and after a break of over eight weeks, during which services have taken place in the tower room, we are looking forward to resuming worship in the main body of the church.

**Revd Gay Ellis**

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 **MAPLESTEADS W.I.**

This year is the centenary of the National Federation of WIs, founded in 1915 to revitalise rural communities & to encourage women to become more involved in producing food during the 1st World War. Past President, Mary Crawley, has won a ballot to represent The Maplesteads at a special, celebratory Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on June 2nd in the presence of the Duchess of Cornwall. Very posh but times have changed - hats are optional!

The Maplesteads WI continues to attract about 30 members who meet on the 1st Thursday each month. We usually have a speaker & this year have heard about gardening from the excellent Brian Thurlow, the history of Halstead from Malcolm Root, Essex witches, the work of Town Pastors, autism & costume design & accessories. Much as we enjoy hearing about such varied subjects, often the most successful evenings are 'in house' when we have play-readings, games evenings or a talk by one of our own members. This year, Sara Knight told us about her walking pilgrimage towards Santiago de Copostela in Northern Spain.

To the displeasure of a number of men in the village, the WI is, by definition, open to women only and as such will be an enduring mystery to half the population. We like it like that!

**Jill Newton [President]**

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**MAPLESTEADS WEA ANNUAL REPORT – APRIL 2015**

This is the Report of the Maplesteads’ branch of the ‘Workers’ Educational Association’. This is a National Organisation and we are privileged to have a Branch in our Village. 2014/15 has been another successful year with good attendances.

The Branch is supported by a loyal group of followers who regularly attend our courses and we are also lucky to have enough volunteers to stand on the Committee. These things should not be taken for granted as many branches in the region have been forced to close due to lack of support.

In the autumn term we were fortunate to welcome back John Parker who had presented a very successful art course two years ago. This time his theme was ‘**Art in East Anglia’**. His lectures covered many of the lesser known artists as well as those more familiar to us. 33 people signed up for the course which is an excellent number for our small branch.

This spring Ted Woodgate agreed to present his course **‘Conflict in the 19th Century Essex Countryside’.** Much of the material presented was local to our area. The aim of his course was to stimulate interest in local history and as a follow up a small group of us will be visiting the Essex Records Office for a guided tour to help direct people in their research and there will also be some local materials for us to view.

Last May as a follow up to our course last spring **‘Glorianna the Age of Elizabeth’** we visited Hatfield House. It was a very enjoyable day with a guided tour around the house on the estate where Elizabeth learned she would be queen. The day we had chosen also hosted a garden show and we were also able to view a large collection of sculptures and works of art displayed in the grounds.

As a follow up to our art course with John Parker in the autumn, in June we will be visiting Norwich Castle with special reference to the Norwich school of art. We will then go on to the Sainsbury Centre in the grounds of the University of East Anglia. If there is anybody interested in joining us please let me know tonight as I am about to book the required transport.

Our courses for the coming academic year have been allocated and we are particularly pleased to have a new speaker, Alex Bass who will be presenting an environmental course **‘The Flora and Fauna of East Anglia’**. In the spring we welcome back an old friend, Edward de Maunsell. We look forward to his subject – **‘The Mediterranean Classical World’**.

For those who are new to the WEA our courses run for 10 weeks and are held in the Village Hall on Monday evenings. They start at 7.45 and finish around 9.15 - 9.30 with a short mid-session break for tea and biscuits. The courses are usually preceded by a Social Evening where the lecturer gives an outline of the subject. Anybody interested in joining the course may attend the social evening and the first lecture on a trial basis without any further commitment. Please give me contact details if you would like me to keep you informed.

**Jean and Bill Bowers.**

**Secretaries, Maplesteads WEA.**

**Maple Cottage, Lucking Street, Great Maplestead. CO9 2RE**

**Tel: 01787 460181 Email: jeanbill.walking@tesco.net**

**RCCE BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION**

At last, after a few lean years, 2014 saw success for Great Maplestead – hurrah! We came 2nd in the Village of the Year 2014 winning a cash prize of £150.00. We were also Runner Up in the Best Kept Village (in our class), beaten to first place by Stisted.

A big thank you to Cllr.Paul Knight and all the volunteers within the parish who not only helped keep the village in good presentational order but to those who also gave time to speak to the judges, when we were interviewed as part of the process.

It was the strong Community spirit which turned heads, with the number of regular clubs/groups and social activities complimented.

Thanks to all parishioners who give time to litter picking, small scale repairs and maintenance as well as charming and entertaining the judges. On the back of such success we are of course entering the 2015 competition!

**Ann Crisp**

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**GREAT MAPLESTEAD KNITTING CIRCLE**

The knitting group was begun by Evelyn Newton in 1986 to make blankets for Oxfam. The group today knits as busily as before but not for Oxfam. Most of our efforts now go to children’s charities in different countries.

We sometimes have a break from hats and mittens and try our hands at teddies for the premature babies at Broomfield hospital.

We meet on the last Wednesday of the month either at Magpies, Church Street, or Four Seasons, also in Church Street from 2pm-4pm.

This year we have made 30 hats, 179 hats with mittens and 24 mittens with puppets. Also 2 blankets and 2 teddies. Considering we now average 6 knitters this is pretty good but we really do need more people. We are happy to collect anyone who has transport problems. Just phone Margaret Carder or Gill Peskett.

**Margaret Carder**

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**GREAT MAPLESTEAD CARPET BOWLS CLUB**

Carpet Bowls is doing well at the moment. We have a very faithful membership who regularly attend on a Monday afternoon. Subs. have remained at £2.00. We would, however, love to welcome new members, although any prospective members should realise that although we all enjoy our carpet bowls, the main purpose is still the social side. There is always a great deal of chatting going on!

Each week a different member provides tea and biscuits for everyone and there are usually many willing hands to help with the washing up.

Again, we went to the Bird in Hand in Halstead for our Christmas lunch which was enjoyed by all. This was part financed by Carpet Bowls again this year.

Carpet Bowls usually takes a break for the summer sometime in May, dates tend to be flexible around the start of member’s holidays and we resume in late September/early October. During the summer we sometimes meet in a member’s house for a cup and tea and a chat.

We are a really friendly bunch, with a very varied age range, so if anyone fancies a couple of hours of fun and friendship on a Monday afternoon, we would love to welcome new members. Oh, and it is good exercise too!!

**Janice Chaplin**