

**GREAT MAPLESTEAD PARISH ASSEMBLY**  
**Meeting held via Zoom on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

**ATTENDEES:** Cllr.M.Elms - Chair. Mrs A Crisp, Parish Clerk. Cty.Cllr. D.Finch. Dist.Cllr. P.Schwier. 4. Village organisation representatives and 24 members of the public.

**1.APOLOGIES** – None

**2. MINUTES** – Meeting minutes from the Annual Parish Assembly 19<sup>th</sup> April 2019 were signed as a true record by Cllr. M.Elms. Chair.

**3. GREAT MAPLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL** – Report from Cllr.M.Elms.

**Parish Council Chairman's Report**

It has been a hard year – I am not a fan of platitudes, but it has been hard for everyone who lives here in different ways – Our essential village institutions that contribute so much to the vitality of our community – the Church, the School, the village Hall, the many clubs and societies have been disrupted or put in a state of suspended animation for more than a year - but in moments of crisis the human spirit prevails – whatever difficulties confront the human condition, its ability to adjust to adversity and not dwell on its own misfortune is why it survives ... In a similar way, in the last year, our village has had to adjust, and has seen human qualities of, kindness, consideration and support for neighbours and community revealed in abundance, even when pandemic regulations have restricted much that we are able to do ... I am not going to talk about this endlessly as its not my bag, but my personal highlight for last year was the formation of the Community Volunteer Support Network set up on WhatsApp by Jacqui Mee ... It inspired so many to rally to the cause and help those who were not finding things easy during lockdown – many congratulations to her and all those involved ...

This year the parish council has also been restricted in its work by Covid and a number of normal activities have been put on hold, but it has continued to work hard on behalf of the village ... Litter picking in its usual form has been suspended, but a team of individuals have volunteered to adopt specific areas of the parish and keep it clear of litter for the duration of the pandemic ... The footpath network has been kept under close scrutiny and well maintained to ensure access is assured - especially with increased leisure time available - but these are just a couple of the day to day activities that councils undertake ... The council has endeavoured to keep the community fully informed of all developments and all other news via the social media platforms, the parish council website and the newsletter Maplestead Magna Carta – The whole media and communication process excellently managed by Councillor Steve Harris ...

In other areas of council activity, the parish council's biggest project was finally completed in conjunction with Essex County Council after a four year process – This, to install new drainage infrastructure in Lucking Street to alleviate excessive surface water at a cost of 80k ...

A Road Safety Review proposed by the parish council has been undertaken by Essex Highways to implement new speed signage in the parish together and in addition the provision of a 'Quiet Lane' in lower part of Toldishall Road, which it is hoped will make our roads safer for its many users – this is currently slow work in progress for Highways, but is partly approved ...

After proposals were disclosed by a telecommunications infrastructure build company to locate a mobile phone base station at the junction of Toldishall Road and Mill Lane, the council undertook a survey to establish a Parish wide view of the proposal - as a consequence of the survey, the proposal was soundly rejected by the parish ...

The parish council also encountered unplanned events ... Last June, having just come out of lockdown, a large group of travellers camped on the village playing field, but left after a day following energetic efforts by the parish council team and extensive work by our Clerk ... Within five days of their departure, a brand new security facility was installed at the playing field to hopefully prevent a recurrence ... Special mention and thanks go to Councillor Joe Newton and his team of waifs and strays for the speedy planning and implementation of these improvements ...

Most recently the council has embarked on a plan to restore the village playing field and play area to its former glory ... After many years of maintenance issues with the play area, ongoing playing field drainage problems that left it a water meadow in winter – a village working party led by Councillor Simon Last has been set up to undertake a full review of the playing field amenity and present its findings and proposals to the Parish Council to bring the entire facility into the 21<sup>st</sup> century ... The project progresses alongside the gradual reopening of our community following the pandemic – Don't underestimate the magnitude of this plan – It is AMBITIOUS, it is BOLD, it is CREATIVE and in parish terms – EXPENSIVE ... It is Parish Council lead - but most definitely community driven ... I shall say no more than this – I shall leave it to Simon and his working party to fully inform everyone of the exciting proposals as they evolve in due course ... It is undoubtedly the most exciting village project I have seen unfold in my 30 years here ... So watch this space!!

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 year, volunteering their services for the benefit of the community – also my colleagues on the parish council for their ongoing efforts - they have really had to step up this year to get things done ... and very finally and of course not least, our Clerk – Ann – for her relentless and creative efforts on behalf of the village and parish council.

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

## **7. ST GILES PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL** – Report from Rev B Vincent

### **St Giles Church, Great Maplestead**

*Following the retirement of Rev'd Gay Ellis in March 2020 I had the pleasure of supporting St Giles Church whilst a curate at St Andrew's Halstead. When the plan was put in place we hadn't expected to be experiencing a pandemic!*

*A group of faithful Great Maplestead parishioners began their own Sunday meeting on Zoom, it proved a great way of staying connected in the early days. Throughout that year we were able to offer a mix of on-line services as part of the Halstead Area team, and when it was possible for churches to open, we had limited, covid safe services in the church building.*

*Coffee morning weren't entirely cancelled, but were just relocated to the playing field during the summer months and a case of bring your own.*

*In January this year I was delighted to be appointed as team Vicar to the parish of Great Maplestead, as well as Little Maplestead, Gestingthorpe & Pebmarsh. Once again due to lockdown we have developed our own online (Zoom) Sunday service. This has been for all four parishes; these services have been particularly well attended and everyone has appreciated the opportunity to worship with people from their neighbouring parishes.*

*We were able to return to the church building at Easter, and now look forward to increasing the frequency of services as lockdown restrictions ease through May & June. We are so fortunate to have a willing band of volunteers to clean the church, provide flowers and to be creative in marking the seasons and festivals, even when we can't get into the building. Our Churchwardens Gill Peskett & Jill Newton have kept everything going during these difficult times and we are indebted to them. I would also like to thank Martin Elms who tolled the bell every minute for 99 minutes on the sad occasion of HRH Prince Philip's funeral.*

*My husband and I moved into the Rectory in January and look forward to getting to know more people as activities and groups begin to open up again. We are very grateful for the taskforce who worked in the garden and for the refurbishment of the Rectory.*

*We will be welcoming the children from St Giles School into church for services and visits and look forward to working with Mrs Nichols and her staff.*

*All future services and activities will be posted on the Knights Hospitaliers Parishes facebook page, Maplestead Mates and in the Parish News. All are very welcome.*

*Rev'd Beverley*

## **8. GREAT MAPLESTEAD WEA** – Report from Mrs J Bowers

### **Maplesteads WEA**

*Due to restrictions the Branch has not been able to hold any courses since our Spring course of 2020 where we enjoyed Edward de Maunsell, an old friend of the group, who attracted 25 participants. His topic was entitled 'Seven Britishers of Note'.*

*We had our Autumn 2020 and Spring 2021 courses planned but as time progressed it became obvious that these would not be able to take place and as with other things plans have been put on hold. The WEA have however run many online courses over the past year but the Committee decided that we did not want to run our courses in this way as one of the main attractions to our Monday evening classes is meeting up with friends and acquaintances. Individuals however can sign up for any WEA course offered online.*

*We are optimistic that we can run our Autumn 2021 and Spring 2022 courses. The tutors had agreed to defer the courses from the previous year so the plan at present is to welcome students back for 'face to face' classes in the autumn. Ted Woodgate was postponed from last autumn with 'Popular Music and Society in Britain and the USA after 1945' and in the spring the plan is to welcome back Simon Doney with the course 'The Victorian Mind'. We know that they are both excellent tutors and I know students and tutors alike look forward to a return to normality with classes resuming on a Monday evening.*

*All regular attendees will be informed of details as they emerge otherwise look out for posters around the village and information in the Parish Magazine.*

*Jean Bowers – Secretary.*

**Signed**..... **Dated** 13<sup>th</sup> April 2022.