**GREAT MAPLESTEAD PARISH ASSEMBLY**

 **Meeting held on Wednesday 17th April 2024**

**ATTENDEES:** Cllr.S.Harris - Chair.

Mrs A Crisp, Parish Clerk.

8 Village organisation representatives

14 members of the public

1. **APOLOGIES –** County & District Councillor P Schwier
2. **MINUTES –** Meeting minutes from the Annual Parish Assembly 22nd March 2023 were signed as a true record by Cllr.S Harris
3. **ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL** – Report pre-circulated by Cty.Cllr.P Schwier. Please read [here](file:///C%3A%5CParish%20Council%20Files%5CParish%20Assembly%5C2024%20Assembly%5CEssex%20County%20Council%20-%20Hedingham%20Division%20-%20Annual%20Report__%2023-24_.pdf)
4. **BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL** – Report pre-circulated by Dist.Cllr.P.Schwier. Please read [here](BDC%20Report%20Gosfield%20%26%20GG%20Annual%20Report%2023-24.pdf)
5. **GREAT MAPLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL** – Report delivered by the Chairman, Cllr.S Harris
6. **PRESENTATION FROM BELIEV EV CHARGE POINT NETWORK** – Believe representative Charlie Allen explained the governments EV charging agenda and how Believ can help deliver public charging points in rural locations
7. **SHEEP FARMING IN GREAT MAPLESTEAD –** William Beattie spoke about his sheep farming enterprise and the use of fields in and around the village for grazing
8. **ST GILES CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL** – Report delivered by Mrs J Nichols, Executive Head of the Chorus Federation of schools
9. **GREAT MAPLESTEAD VILLAGE HALL** – Report delivered by Joe Newton
10. **ST GILES PCC** - Report delivered by Rev.B.Vincent
11. **THE MAPLESTEAD AUTUMN SHOW** – Report delivered by Carol Brownlie
12. **KNITTING CIRCLE** – Report delivered by Carol Brownlie
13. **CARPET BOWLS CLUB** – Report delivered by Barry Vincent
14. **THE MAPLE LEAVES –** Report delivered by Gill Peskett
15. **W.E.A.** – Report delivered by Gill Newton
16. **VILLAGE SOCIAL EVENTS & VILLAGE OF THE YEAR AWARD –** Report delivered by Ann Crisp
17. **CLOSING REMARKS** – Cllr.S. Harris

Meeting Closed 9.15pm

**Signed………TRUE COPY………………… Date 16th April 2025**

**Great Maplestead Village Hall**

You’ve probably heard this al before. Until somebody takes you’ve as Chair you’ve got me!

We had an easy year except a sheet of tin came loose on the roof we had to fix and Bob installed extra heaters in the lobby to prevent frost damage.

The finances are looking good, very grateful to all who fundraise especially the jumble sale. Thanks to all the committee who hep to run the hall especially Doreen, Simon & Liz.

Lettings don’t cover running costs so if possible use the hall to help defray the deficit and less dependence on fund raising.

We are painting the outside this summer and the kitchen, which is looking a little tired.

Thanks to Martin Watson for fixing the kitchen door, the old one was rather rotten.

If I have forgotten anybody who helps with the hall my apologies, you know who you are – pat yourself on the back!

**MAPLE LEAVES - REPORT FOR PARISH ASSEMBLY APRIL 2024**

I’m pleased to be able to say that the group appears to be flourishing as we move through our second year. It was very much a learning process when the WI closed and the majority of the members decided they would like to form a new group.

We work on the basis that 2 or 3 members are responsible for arranging the monthly activities for 3 months, after which a new group takes over and this seems to work well. Quite a number of our meetings are Open Evenings, where friends, partners and husbands are welcome. When we were a WI, the fact that men were normally excluded seemed to be a sore point with some of the men in the village so we hope this is seen as an improvement!

From the many and varied speakers, too many to mention here, we have had talks on preparing a hanging basket, the life of a Firearms Officer in the Metropolitan Police, a trip to China and, most recently, Art in the Underground. We have been entertained at Angela and Howard’s Windmill, and have visited the site of Ashley Cooper’s Roman Villa.

Most months we manage a lunch out, with a special lunch at Christmas. We have raised money for the Food Bank, and provided the refreshments for a Rotary Charity Concert.

We are too new to have any traditions, but one thing we have begun to do is celebrate with a special lunch when a member reaches 80 – we have such a lunch next week!

We usually meet on the first Thursday evening of the month – though that can vary, but details are always in the Parish Magazine. We are always pleased to welcome new members – please come along and try us out!

**St Giles Church, Great Maplestead**

 **Parish Assembly report for 2024 meeting**

This past year has seen a significant change at St Giles, our two stalwart churchwardens, Gill Peskett and Jill Newton who have served St Giles faithfully for many years handed on the baton or rather the churchwardens stave to our incoming churchwardens Denise O’Connell and Paula Sillett.

The PCC and congregation owe a debt of gratitude to both Gill’s for all they’ve contributed to keeping the church in good order and being a welcoming presence to all who enter the church. We are also indebted to our new churchwardens who have been doing a fantastic job since taking over in June last year. I’m particularly grateful as it is incredibly difficult to fill the role of churchwarden because it carries a lot of responsibility, but both Paula and Denise willingly stepped up without any arms being twisted!

Our Church services have followed the pattern of two Holy Communion services each month, and a monthly Café church which is led by a fantastic lay team and has continued to be enormously popular. People find it a welcoming space, especially those who prefer something more informal than a traditional service. If you haven’t been do come along. It’s usually on the 2nd Sunday of the month.

A Lent course was held last year based on the film the Greatest Showman, we all enjoyed the discussion and needless to say the music. As a consequence of this course, we formed a Housegroup where a group of 15 meet twice a month in someone’s home, to study a topic of Christian faith, eat, drink and generally have fun. We are all at different stages of our faith journey and yet it has really been a blessing to each of us.

Weekly coffee mornings have flourished and have continued to be real community event Thanks to the 2 Gill’s for organising them.

The church registered with ‘Eco Church’, an initiative which encourages churches to demonstrate their commitment to looking after God’s creation, in their buildings, churchyards and community. There is an award scheme Bronze, Silver, and Gold, which assesses five key areas, and we were delighted to be awarded a Bronze. I particularly thank Denise O’Connell and Patsy Maile for all they’ve done to spearhead this, and we look forward to getting the silver in due course!

We enjoyed welcoming the school and parents into church for seasonal services.

We continued to offer the Tower Room as a Warm Haven during the winter months. Open during daylight hours, it is warm and cosy with plenty of activities and refreshments available.

Finally, we have a great community who unfailingly support our church, from baking cakes, flower arranging, cleaning, churchyard tidying and so much more. Thank you.

**The Maplestead 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.

2023 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 and sponsoring this 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 Peter Haylock stepped down from the committee after many years and he will be sadly missed.

For the first time The Autumn Show Committee held a Q and Q Gardening evening in February, which was well supported by local villagers and a big thank you goes to Charles Soule and Denise O’Connell for being on the panel.

This year the Autumn Show will take place on Saturday 7th September 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 a the saying goes, you have to be in it to win it.

**Knitting Report March 2024**

The Knitting group meets on the last Wednesday of every month at 2pm, at Godsalve, Church St, Great Maplestead. We have now got about 10 ladies who meet up and knit, or crochet, for a couple of hours and enjoy each other’s company while knitting various item for charity. We have also welcomed ladies who just come along for a chat and bring their own handicraft projects to work on.

E re now making items for Felsted Aid who send container loads of goods to 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 children’s cardigans and jumpers.

I would like to thank everyone who has given us wool or have knitted squares to 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.

**GREAT MAPLESTEAD SOCIAL REPORT FOR ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY 2024**

The past couple of years have been a right royal do in village social activities.

Last year in May, we saw the King’s Coronation, for many of us our first experience of the crowning of a monarch. The objective of celebrations was to make use of all our lovely village amenities – the village playing field, the village hall and St Giles church. The hall once again lent itself to the occasion, looking magnificent decorated with bunting and flags, together with the floral garlands produced by the Knitting Circle for the Platinum Jubilee.

On the evening of the actual King’s coronation Great Maplestead hosted it’s first ever Royal Variety Performance Show (and variety it certainly was!).

There was singing, acting, comedy, dancing, poetry and plenty of flag waving! What a great pool of talent this village has to offer. To all those who contributed, be it on stage or behind the scenes, you are all superstars! And to those who enjoyed the entertainment thank you for being so supportive and joining in with the spirit of the event.

The following day saw a slightly less raucous afternoon tea at St Giles church. The son shone and we were able to enjoy the beauty of the churchyard. The afternoon included a Cake Fit For A King baking competition. Some fantastic creativity and deliciousness on display – made judging very tough but the winning entry was the Kings Coronation Crown produced by Carol Brownlie. The winners of the best decorated house were also announced, with the prize shared between Oak House and…….

Monday the weather was a little inclement, but that did not dampen spirits. The afternoon saw the official opening of the newly refurbished children’s play area at the village playing field, with Lewis Green cutting the ribbon! It was a real treat to see the joy and excitement on the faces of the crowd of children as they rushed to try out the equipment for the first time. The afternoon continued with villagers enjoying leisurely garden games and boules on the playing field – reflecting on a celebratory weekend Fit For A King!

The 11th Great Maplestead Beer Festival was held on the end of May Bank Holiday weekend. A well supported event, enjoying entertainment from Belchamp Morris Dancers, Hells Belles, Ricardo the Portuguese, Spanish guitar player; with food and of course great beer!

November saw a new event, enjoyed by budding Piccaso’s - Paint & Plonk evening. As it says, painting while enjoying a glass of wine – what could go wrong?! Well actually nothing, the creativity again was outstanding and although everybody followed the same image the end result saw many different variations of the theme. Fabulous fun and thanks to Myra Jeggo for organising. Hopefully this may be repeated in the future.

Pre-Christmas we also enjoyed an evening of Christmas songs and carol singing, following the lighting of the Christmas Tree.This was an opportunity for the most successful group of village singers to make a re-appearance to entertain and lead us all with the singing. Thoroughly enjoyable, and a far more talented bunch than they would have you believe. There were also hot dogs, mince pies and mulled wine to help the evening along. It seemed to prove a hit with our local CPSO’s!

Other events throughout the past 12 months have included, Bingo in aid of Cystic Fibrosis – again thanks to Myra Jeggo for organising and making the evening such fun.

The annual quiz evening, testing our local and general knowledge, always a fun event and a good Autumn/Winter evening activity.

4 village walks – expertly organised by Steve Harris with catering and refreshments kindly organised by Ann Harris and her team of helpers. A great way to discover and find things out about the parish you may never have known.

**What’s Coming in 2024?**

D-Day 80 Beacons – A national commemoration of the anniversary of the D-Day landings. To take place on Thursday 6th June. GM is registered to participate in the Beacon Lighting and following national suggestions for hosting such an event, there will be a fish and chip supper and pay bar to accompany events. Please look out for details in the May Parish News & on social media – you will need to pre-order and pay for food if you wish to eat. But you are of course free to attend without eating.

More village walks – next one will be early Autumn.

Quiz Evening - Autumn

Advent/Carol singing – probably

Summer Boules Evenings – tba

Possible – Mega Melia – Steve’s local treasure hunt.

These social events are additional to all the many other organisations and group activities within the village. There is no formalised structure, we rely on the generosity of volunteers who are willing to create and arrange various events and social occasions in our village. To these people we are all extremely grateful. There is always room for new ideas and new people to step forward. Don’t be shy!

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

**W.E.A. April 2024**

It was with great pleasure that members of The Maplesteads WEA reconvened in January after a year’s break, due to reasons beyond our control. We were delighted to welcome a new tutor, Claire Parker, who gave us a 5 week course on ‘Happy, Healthy Holidays on the Essex Coast’.

The sessions took the form of tutor-led discussions into various aspects of the development and growth of resorts all along the Essex coast, from Victorian and Edwardian times, when bathing machines were the order of the day, to modern beach huts and much else besides. We discussed how people travelled to the coast, when and why they went and where they stayed when they got there. We considered the supposed health benefits of sea-bathing and talked about how people spent their time, particularly with the various entertainments to be had on the beach and on the pier.

We also looked at how fashions in beach-wear changed over time, from hats and long dresses, suits, ties, socks and shoes to the more glamorous, practical costumes and bikinis.

Thanks to Claire, it was a most enjoyable course, with members from Halstead boosting the weekly attendances to nearly 30.

We hope to be able to offer a course in the Autumn and are currently awaiting notification from headquarters about the availability of tutors.

We will advertise details in the Parish magazine and on posters and look forward to welcoming members old and new, to keep the WEA alive and well in The Maplesteads.