



LITTLE MAPLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

The Clerk, Mrs Claire Waters, 25 Bayley Street, Castle Hedingham, Essex CO9 3DG
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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL PUBLIC PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 11th May 2015 AT 8.00 P.M. ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH LITTLE MAPLESTEAD

Present: Cllr Cooper, Cllr Grocott, Cllr Smith,
County Councillor David Finch

Clerk: Claire Waters

Parishioners: Mrs Diane Smith, representative on Great Maplestead Village Hall committee

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Darkins, Cllr Smith for late arrival

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the annual parish meeting on 11th May 2015 were approved as a correct record

Proposed: Cllr Grocott Seconded: Cllr Cooper Signed by the Chairman

3. STATEMENT ON THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2015 – 2016

The clerk explained that due to the year on year reduction in the BDC Localism Fund, which is expected to be reduced to zero in 2019-2020, Councillors reluctantly voted to add a 3% increase on the precept for the coming financial year. This represents an increase on a Band D property from £23.24 to £23.95 per year and will amount to an increased income to the Parish Council of £82.00 for 2016-2017.

Grass cutting remains the major expense to the Parish Council, cutting the verges and the Church and Playing Field grass. Other large expenses have been the replacement of the chain link fence at the Playing Field.

A new "Transparency Code" has been introduced for smaller councils, which means that external audits will be replaced by "armchair auditing" by parishioners. A Transparency Fund grant was made available to finance the cost of making the necessary documents available on a Parish Council website for parishioners to access, and £3,732.32 awarded to Little Maplestead Parish Council under this fund. This will pay for the necessary website improvements and training, the clerk's time, broadband access and computer/scanner equipment. This is work in progress, so while documents are already available on the existing website at <http://www.essexinfo.net/littlemaplestead/> there will be a number of improvements made in the future to make the information more accessible to parishioners.

4. ANNUAL REPORT 2015 – 2016 BY THE CHAIRMAN

Despite the Annual Report being sent to the Parish Magazine before the publication deadline, it was noted with disappointment that this had not been included in the May issue.

90th BIRTHDAY OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II

We agreed to join with Great Maplestead for their celebrations of the Queen's Birthday on Saturday June 11th, and Diane Smith has been kindly working on behalf of Little Maplestead with the Great Maplestead organising team. The Parish Council is keen to stress that Little Maplestead parishioners are all welcome to join in the events at Great Maplestead, since this hasn't been made clear in the publicity so far. A children's event will take place in the afternoon on Great Maplestead Playing field with games and tea, and an evening event with music and a lamb roast at Great Maplestead Village Hall. There will be a small charge for attending these events and both Great and Little Maplestead Parish Councils have agreed to make a financial contribution. Further information will be delivered to residents nearer the date.

COUNCILLORS

We are delighted to welcome Mr Josh Gray to the vacant Councillor position. He has lived in Little Maplestead all his life and is keen to give something back to the community. Cllr John O'Reilly-Cicconi is

our new District Councillor since May 2015. He covers 4 parishes and has worked with Little Maplestead in the past. His main area of responsibility at Braintree District Council is planning. He can be contacted at cllr.jo'reilly-cicconi@braintree.gov.uk or on 01787 466030.

BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN

BDC Local Plan is due to be published for full public consultation in June/July 2016. The Parish Council has requested that no sites are approved for housing development in the parish, and continues to object to planning applications for land outside the development boundary. Although the Parish Council is consulted on planning matters, the final decision rests with BDC.

PLAYING FIELD

New dog fouling notices and an additional dog waste bin have been installed by BDC, so there is now a dog waste bin at both Playing Field entrances. The gates at School Road are there for the safety of children and it is appreciated if these can be kept closed. The playing field fence has been renewed and a new gate installed at a safer position on Oak Road. The next phase of work will be re-routing the playing field path to the new gate and we are applying for grant funding for this. An application has been submitted to Essex Highways for a footpath leading from the new gate to a safer place to cross on Oak Road/Gestingthorpe Road – we are now waiting to hear if this application has been successful.

A new grass cutting contractor, MD Landscapes, has been retained this year to cut the playing field and the churchyard grass.

HIGHWAYS

Pot holes have been a problem with some damage caused to cars. Residents are encouraged to report potholes themselves on <https://secureweb1.essexcc.gov.uk/Highways/Report-a-highway-problem.aspx>. After a long wait, a number of Highway repairs were completed in February throughout the village.

The hedge at Sudbury Road between School Road and Forge Cottages was cut by Highways at the end of 2015 following repeated requests since Spring 2015 about a section which had been missed. Verge markers have also been installed to improve safety on the Sudbury Road

After many delays and much chasing, Highways supplied planings to re-surface Bridleway 1, which was in a very poor state and had caused injury to horses.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Parishioners are always welcome to attend Parish Council meetings. The public forum gives an opportunity to speak for up to 3 minutes each on any matter that you wish to bring to the Parish Council's attention. Meetings will be held during the coming year at **Great Maplestead Village Hall** on the second Tuesday of July, September, November, January and March. The agenda is displayed on the village noticeboard at least 3 working days in advance of each meeting, and on the website at <http://www.essexinfo.net/littlemaplestead/>

5. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr David Finch reported on the following:

Council tax has been reducing over the past 10 years, and has had a 0% increase in the last 5 years. Services have been streamlined to achieve better value for money. Schools improvement has been a major focus in the County, and improvements to Highways infrastructure have been focused on A & B roads.

The ECC income is made up of Government Grant, Council Tax and Business Rates. From now until 2020 the Council has to save £1million per week, and still serve a population of 1.4 million people, 22% of whom are over 65. The number of 85 year olds in the County is set to double in the next 5 years.

Some savings have been made by reducing the number of ECC owned buildings from 54 to 9. Libraries are now being used as central hubs, for example in Colchester where the library has a number of uses.

The County Council is proud of its services, particularly regarding children in care where their senior staff are nationally regarded in the field.

In answer to a question from Cllr Cooper, Cllr Finch confirmed that Meals on Wheels deliveries have reduced from 2500 per day in 2003 to 690 per day in 2016. This is due to a number of factors, not least the availability of ready-meals. The County Council still supports this service with a subsidy of around 80p/day.

6. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr John O'Reilly-Cicconi sent his apologies due to a conflicting meeting of the BDC Local Plan Sub-Committee.

7. PUBLIC FORUM

None

Meeting Closed 8.45 p.m.