

## **Minutes of Bures Joint Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 30th March 2026 at Bures Community Centre at 7.30pm**

**Present:** BHPC: Cllrs J Chambers, J Child, M Elder, S Keeble-Fox, M Welch  
BSMPC: Cllrs S Jones, L Norton

Cllr D Holland (Braintree DC, Cllr I Reece (Babergh DC), Cllr J Finch (Suffolk CC),  
R Hamilton (Chair of Bures NHP Steering Group),  
PC B McKenna (Suffolk Police),  
plus 29 members of the public

**Also in attendance:** Mrs J Wright (Clerk to Bures Hamlet Parish Council),  
Cllr J Aries (Acting Clerk Bures St Mary Parish Council)

**In the Chair:** Cllr J McCrory (Bures St Mary Parish Council Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr R Shackell (Bures Hamlet Parish Council Chairman)

### **Welcome**

Cllr Shackell welcomed everyone to the Joint Annual Parish Meeting of Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary and explained the evening's agenda. Community groups had been invited to showcase their efforts via information stands around the main hall - Station Adopters, Transition Group, Open Gardens, Neighbourhood Plan, Parish Rights of Way, Cricket Club, St Mary's Church, Bures Stage Society, History Society, Pickle Ball Group, and Bures W.I. Refreshments were served prior to the start of the main meeting.

### **Apologies**

Apologies received from Cllr P Schwier (ECC), Police Sgt O Williams, Cllrs T Fairbairn, S Jones, G Jackson, S Manning, O Giles.

### **Minutes**

Minutes of the Joint Annual Parish Meeting of Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025 were confirmed and signed (previously circulated).

## **Bures Hamlet Parish Council Annual Report 2025/26**

### **Bures Hamlet Council**

There have been no changes to the Parish Council over the past 12 months and currently there are no councillor vacancies.

### **Speed Management**

The parish council is aware that speeding throughout the village is a concern to many residents and as such continues to monitor and look for potential mitigations. Despite representations from the parish council, Essex Highways considers current mitigations are satisfactory and have demonstrated that most vehicles are compliant within existing limits.

It is disappointing that the Community Speed Watch team has been disbanded but entirely understandable considering the policy adopted by Essex Police where notices will not be issued to non-Essex residents nor people driving company or leased vehicles.

At such time that the Local Highways Panel is in cessation, but when it resumes activity the Parish Council will further pursue current “on hold” initiatives such as a Colchester Road pedestrian crossing and extension of the 30mph limit up Lamarsh Hill.

### **Pedestrian Safety**

The Parish Council is ever mindful of the wide age demographic the village retains and the need for pedestrian safety. Where a need for mitigation is identified the Parish Council will look to present pragmatic and realistic solutions. One current example being concerns raised about lack of visibility when crossing Station Hill from Parsonage Hill.

### **Station Hill Gardens**

The Station Hill gardens project has matured throughout its first 12 months and has been well received by all residents. Bures Hamlet parish council expresses thanks to Jenny Wright, Ruth and Colin Lorking who continue to work hard to make the garden a prominent feature of the village.

### **Water Lane Flood Management**

Multiple flood mitigation projects along and around Water Lane have begun to show successes in flood management. The parish council continues to work with the environment agency and Essex Highways to implement further improvements.

### **Parking**

Parking remains an issue throughout the village and the parish council continues to work with North Essex Parking Partnership to develop initiatives to alleviate the situation. Currently we are awaiting approval of a submission to stop nuisance parking in and around the Water Lane area.

### **Lighting**

As the village grows and new developments are progressed, lighting infrastructure must be considered to ensure adequate lighting in public areas is provided. Currently, the dark area on Parsonage Hill is being reviewed and considered.

### **Planning**

The parish council continues to monitor and respond to all planning applications. We have no jurisdiction in the planning process but can and do provide consultee comments. We also lobby the Braintree District Council (BDC) planning department in all cases where it is considered there has been an infringement or contravention of planning rules. We also note the valued support we receive from both our local county and district councillors, Peter Schweir and David Holland.

There are currently two instances where planning rules have been broken both of which have been notified to the BDC planning enforcement team who are currently taking the appropriate action. Again, Councillor Holland is assisting in the pursuance of our applications.

### **Sports Ground**

Improvements to the skateboard park are now complete and it is pleasing to see that the facility is being used considerably more than the old facility. Remedial works to rectify installation issues have been completed at no extra cost.

The sportsground committee are currently investigating the installation of parcel drop/ collection facilities within the bounds of the community centre car park.

Richard Shackell

Chair, Bures Hamlet Parish Council

## **Bures St Mary Parish Council Annual Report 2025/26**

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The BSM Parish Council meets every two months on a Thursday evening, usually here in the Community Centre in the Garrad Room. Members of the public are always welcome; the agenda is typically very busy and some perennial issues require determined patience and quiet persistence. The Parish Council has two vacancies. We would welcome applications for anyone who has lived in the village for at least twelve months and who feels they would like to make a real contribution to village life. We are also in the process of advertising for a Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. Notices to this effect have been circulated on Facebook, in the village magazine and around the village.

### **Highways**

Highway matters have kept both the Clerk and the Council well-occupied over the past year. Road closures and persistent potholes continue to try everyone's patience and the Parish Council determinedly pursues some of these matters, working closely with our County Councillor, James Finch. The Parish Council has been pressing for a dropped kerb to be installed at the Nayland Road/Church Square junction to the pavement, providing access to the Doctor's surgery and beyond. Residents from Eves Orchard, Claypits and further afield who use mobility aids regularly experience difficulty in mounting this section of the pavement. The problem is exacerbated by access to both sides of Church Square routinely being blocked by parked vehicles. Our suggestions so far have been all been rejected by Highways but we are hopeful that a solution will be eventually be found.

We have been informed that the repair work to the B1508 road bridge has been postponed for a further year. It is indeed worrying to see the number and sheer size of HGVs using the B1508, and the bridge, as a through route between Colchester and Sudbury. It is an authorised lorry route and Highways are not able to apply restrictions without impacting on local legitimate HGV traffic. Plug-In Suffolk is making progress on the installation of EV charging units in and around the Tawneys Ride / Claypits area. The Strategic Development Division of Suffolk County Council have been in consultation with the residents of Tawneys Ride and Claypits Avenue. Unfortunately, there is currently no timeline to the completion of this initiative but the Parish Council and the District Councillor are applying gentle pressure to keep this project moving forward.

The B1508 between Cornard and Bures remains on the SCC rotational use of an ANPR to monitor motorists' speeds. The devices are in great demand and, as they are shared around the entire county, they can only be deployed in Bures about twice a year. Lee Norton, however, continues to manage our own Speed Indicator Device at three entry points to the village. We are very grateful to him for maintaining this since the withdrawal of the services of the Sudbury Town Council last March. As noted before, the SID does not influence serial speeders but acts as a very helpful prompt for generally compliant drivers who have just not noticed that they need to adjust their speed.

The Community SpeedWatch Teams have been disbanded on both sides of the village. In Bures St Mary lack of public support meant that we simply could not comply with the volunteer numbers required for approval. The Bures Hamlet team stood down on discovering the decision by the Essex Road Policing Unit to ignore all speeding motorists who were not registered to an Essex address. This meant that less than half of the registration numbers reported by the team were actually processed.

A councillor attends the Suffolk Enhanced Partnership which meets periodically to discuss all matters relating to public bus services across the area. If any resident has an issue regarding the bus services, please share these concerns with the Parish Council so that they may be addressed at

the next SEP meeting. There is also some funding available to improve or increase services if you have any suggestions.

The bus shelter on Bridge Street has been missed by many since its removal due to rot attacking its fixing timbers. An application was made to the Suffolk Enhanced Partnership, which supports the improvement of all local bus services operating in the Suffolk County Council (SCC) Local Transport Authority. Funding for the replacement of the bus shelter was approved with capital funding from central Government, made available specifically to improve infrastructure. The bespoke shelter is being constructed by a company in Leicestershire and will be installed hopefully in early April. It will be a wooden structure, very similar to its predecessor, but with half-width side panels to give more protection against the elements.

### **Community**

Parish Councillors regularly attend the Bures Market each month to engage with residents in a more accessible way, to make themselves known and to listen to concerns and suggestions. It was good to be back this March when the Market resumed after the winter break. Councillors are very happy to take any issues raised to the bi-monthly Parish Council meetings.

When available, the police officer assigned to Bures St Mary, PC Brendan McKenna, tries to also attend the monthly markets which provides a great opportunity to address any current issues in the village. Both Parish Councils will continue to work closely with their respective Constabularies, especially over the busy summer period when the village attracts more visitors. As well as our own Jenny Wright for Bures Hamlet, we also link closely with Mark Smith, the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator for Little Cornard, to keep up to date with any ongoing incidents or problems. Mark is always on the lookout for volunteers to join him in expanding this valuable network across our communities to keep us all safe and secure.

We have created two first aid stations in Bures St Mary and for those not aware of their location- a defibrillator and a bleed control kit can be found on the front of the Football Club building here on the Sportsground and the other first aid station is housed inside the 2 Bures St Mary Parish Council Chair's Report 2026 telephone kiosk next to the Post Office. The defibrillator here has been recently replaced as the previous unit had served its useful life of ten years. The Parish Councils are very grateful to the Bures Music Festival for kindly funding the new defibrillator. The two First Aid stations are an important emergency provision in the village.

You are all aware, I am sure, that the Post Office in Church Square will be finally closing tomorrow afternoon. Working with the County and District Councillors, we will endeavour to get some service reinstated as soon as possible. Suffolk County Council recognises the importance of a Post Office in a rural community and has pledged to try and help when a Post Office provision is under threat. We have arranged an informal gathering at the Three Horseshoes PH tomorrow from 5pm to show our appreciation to Robert and Madelyn and to wish them both well in their retirement. Everyone is very welcome.

### **Environment**

The Parish Councils continue to support wildflower schemes and tree planting around the village wherever the opportunity presents itself. In conjunction with the Babergh Diversity Officer, the Parish Council has identified small areas of grass around the village to be left unmown from May to September to provide habitat and a food source for bees and other insects. These are trial initiatives and can be reversed if the areas become troublesome. We hope, though, that residents will tolerate some small patches of grass being left unmown to support wildlife.

The Parish Council is consulted on any work involving trees in the village. There are just a few trees protected by a Tree Protection Order. We are grateful to Ken Jackson, our Tree Warden, for his advice and guidance when looking after all the trees in our public spaces.

We are especially grateful to our team of contractors, Grass Roots, JPB Landscapes and Nigel Norton who all work very hard throughout the year in all weathers to keep both sides of the village looking well-tended and cared for and, of course, to the band of volunteers who bring colour to the flower planters around the village through all the seasons.

Our Cemetery continues to bring pleasure and comfort to local families and visitors from further afield. It is always gratifying to hear how the Cemetery is much appreciated for its tranquillity and wholesome feeling of being well-cared for. We have to thank Jenny Wright for her special attention to detail in her management of all the affairs of the Cemetery and for the support she gives to those who have lost a loved one. This year's ongoing maintenance has included a new chestnut stake fence to the northern boundary, lots of levelling and turfing of graves and extensive tree management to ensure the longevity of some of our handsome but elderly specimens.

The Parish Council would like to thank District Councillor Reece for her contribution to another important community project. Isabelle has kindly donated £500 from her Locality Budget to the installation of grit bins on the Arger Fen Road once Highways have approved the locations.

### **Planning**

The proposal for the development of the former Chambers Bus Yard was submitted in March 2024. Full Planning permission was granted last year, Meanwhile the developers continue to 3 Bures St Mary Parish Council Chair's Report 2026 address a raft of planning conditions. Currently they are addressing their Biodiversity Net Gain obligation and will be erecting some scaffolding in mid/late April by Knowle House. The ecologist who is overseeing the biodiversity aspects of the site will check that there are no bats living in the roof of Knowle House itself. The roof tiles will be removed to ensure no bats will be disturbed when construction work starts properly later in the year.

### **Conclusion**

I would like to thank our respective team of councillors and Jenny Wright, as our Responsible Financial Officer, for their commitment to the community over the past year, and, as always, for their contribution, patience and good humour. We are also very appreciative of the advice, guidance and support given by our County Councillor, James Finch, and Isabelle Reece, the District Councillor. We envisage that the Parish Council will continue to play an important part in village life as Local Government Reorganisation gets underway.

Jennie McCrory (Acting Chair Bures St Mary Parish Council)

## **Bures Hamlet Parish Council Financial Report**

### **BURES HAMLET PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 30<sup>th</sup> March 2026 FINANCIAL REPORT**

Balance as at 30 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	14,372.10
Includes	
Retention Fund	5,000.00
Street Lighting reserve	2,000.00
Grants unspent	1,615.03

**Parish precept to Braintree District Council for financial year 2026/27: £35,317**

An increase of £2,500 – agreed to ease change over to Devolution and to cover the

Cemetery Authority shortfall.

**Parish Element of Band D Tax Rate 2026/27 £102.78 (2025/26: £98.04)**

<b>Allocation of Parish Budget:</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>
Cemetery Authority	£5,500	£6,500
Sportsground	£7,500	£7,500
Clerk's salary	£8,650	£8,800
Lighting	£500	£750
Insurance	£660	£500
Training	£500	£500
Hall hire	£200	£200
Auditors	£550	£450
Administration	£1,250	£1,200
Subscriptions	£500	£525
Elections	£1,000	£1,000
Donations/parish items S137	£500	£500
Repairs	£500	£500
Projects	£2,000	£2,000
Grounds Maintenance	£6,000	£6,000
Gritting/flooding	£500	£500
Jubilee Grove maintenance	£1,000	£1,500

The parish council received a BDC Street Cleansing grant £908.15, an Eastlight Community Housing grant £743.68 and ECC Rights of Way grant £435.73. These grants offset ground maintenance costs met by the parish council.

The Christmas Lights fund is held in Bures St Mary Parish Council accounts and currently stands at £1,704.23 when VAT claim received.

Administration figure includes changeover of HMRC finances from Clerk to outsourced, use of Dropbox for security of files, IT, website, data protection, stationery and bank charges.

£2,000 has been earmarked in 2025/26 for future lighting improvements at Parsonage Hill.

The Bures NHP fund is held in the Bures Hamlet Parish Council accounts. A preliminary grant of £3,942 was received during 2021/22. A further grant of £3,695 received in July 2022. A third and final grant of £10,000 received in 2023/24. All monies have now been spent.

Bures Hamlet Parish Council has received several grants this year for various projects. £700 for the Jubilee Grove clay pond from the District Councillor Award fund, £950 for the continuing work on the Station Hill Garden, £5,600 from BDC and £1,000 from Bures Common Land Trust for the installation of grid paths at Jubilee Grove.

The parish council also has a S137 budget to meet costs for parish projects or donations. It has used this budget for £50 towards the bleed kit demonstration event and £200 towards printing costs of the parish magazine. The parish council is also currently allocating further S137 funds towards the costs of Postmaster Robert Harrod's retirement do on the 31<sup>st</sup> of this month.

## **Bures St Mary Parish Council Financial Report**

### **BURES ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 30<sup>th</sup> March 2026 FINANCIAL REPORT**

Balance as at 30 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	24,264.29
Includes	
Retention Fund	7,000.00

Christmas Lights Fund	1,704.23
Election Reserves	250.00
Bus Shelter donations	515.00
Grants unspent	500.00
CIL Fund unspent	3,428.60

### **Parish precept to Braintree District Council for financial year 2026/27: £34,500**

An increase of £2,000 – agreed to ease change over to Devolution, to cover the Cemetery Authority shortfall and the loss of the Street Clean grant.

### **Parish Element of Band D Tax Rate 2026/27 £79.42 (2025/26: £79.98)**

<b>Allocation of Parish Budget:</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>
Cemetery Authority	£5,500	£6,500
Sportsground	£7,500	£7,500
Clerk's salary	£9,250	£10,000
Lighting	£600	£600
Insurance	£800	£795
Training	£250	£250
Hall hire	£180	£180
Auditors	£410	£450
Administration	£600	£600
Subscriptions	£500	£500
Donations/parish items	£250	£250
Repairs	£150	£150
Projects	£0	£0
Grounds Maintenance	£8,000	£8,000
Gritting/flooding	£200	£200

The parish council will no longer receive a Street Clean grant from BDC for year ending 2026/27 which is currently in the region of £1,900. This grant offset the grounds maintenance costs met by the parish council during the year.

The Christmas Lights fund is held in Bures St Mary Parish Council accounts and currently stands at £1,704.23 when VAT claim received.

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Bures St Mary Parish Council has received several grants this year for various projects. £400 for the installation of a bleed kit cabinet from the County Councillor Award fund £300 for a grit bin at Arger Fen from the District Councillor Award fund, £1,495 from Bures Music Festival for a new Church Square defibrillator, £1,000 from Bures Music Festival towards the running of the Christmas Lights Scheme and £300 from the 8 Bells Quiz Group also towards the running of the Christmas Lights Scheme.

The Parish Council also has a S137 budget to meet costs for parish projects or donations. It has used this budget for £50 towards the bleed kit demonstration event, £50 for the bleed kit installation and £200 towards printing costs of the parish magazine. The Parish Council is also

currently allocating further S137 funds towards the costs of Postmaster Robert Harrod's retirement do on the 31<sup>st</sup> of this month.

**Guest Speaker: Cllr James Finch 'Fostering in Suffolk'**

This was Cllr Finch's final APM in Bures after 27 years serving the community as County Councillor. He was invited by the Parish Council to give a talk about a subject very dear to his heart- Fostering in Suffolk. He has continued over the years to promote the recruitment of foster carers to look after some of the region's most vulnerable children. Fostering is a flexible role providing care from a weekend, to a month and for the long term. Cllr Finch explained that anyone over 21 years of age who has the right to work in the UK and has a spare room can apply to foster or adopt. He showed several powerful short videos illustrating the significant impact that foster families can have on the life chances of young people in the care of the local authority. Foster carers can also in some instances support both the parent and the young person where appropriate to keep families together. Foster parents also provide overnight support for those youngsters in police custody. We heard testimonials from foster parents about how their own lives had been enriched through the experience of caring for vulnerable young people in their home, stressing the ongoing 24/7 support provided by the local authority. Cllr Finch encouraged anyone who wanted further information to contact the Foster Team on 01473264800 or [fosterandadopt.suffolk.gov.uk](http://fosterandadopt.suffolk.gov.uk) Cllr Finch was presented with a small gift of thanks and a card on his retirement.

**Guest Speaker: Charlotte Ward 'Re-Cycle – Bikes for Africa'**

Charlotte is the CEO for Re-Cycle- Bikes for Africa, based at The Grove Estate, Colchester Road, Wormingford, Essex CO6 3AJ. She manages a large warehouse with a team of staff and volunteers. This is a huge workshop and depot for hundreds of donated bicycles which, once refurbished, are destined for Africa. Charlotte explained that the charity is sponsored by Halfords who provide not only bikes from across their nation-wide stores but important logistical support and promotion of the work of Re-cycle.

The charity provides affordable, reliable and eco-friendly bike transportation in Ghana, Zambia, the Gambia and Sierra Leone. Over the past 25 years the project has delivered 140,000 bikes and hundreds of thousands spare parts, thus improving the quality of life for families and enhancing their independence. Children can get to school more easily and employment opportunities are improved for the working adults. All surplus funds from the sale of the bicycles go towards community-based projects, such as health and education. This was an inspiring insight into a wonderful enterprise based just outside our village. Further information can be obtained at [info@re-cycle.org](mailto:info@re-cycle.org) and more can be seen about ongoing projects on their website <https://re-cycle.org>

**Public Questions/Comments**

**Concern was expressed about the speed and size of large HGVs travelling through the village on the B1508.**

The B1508 is a green route which is indicated on the SAT NAVs in commercial vehicles. Large HGVs should only use the B1508 if their end – destination is on the route. For onward journeys the lorries should be using the A134 but this is difficult to police and Highways do not have the means to enforce compliance.

Most large HGVs have speed restrictors implemented by GPS.

Essex Highways are consulting on their new Strategy – the public were encouraged to respond. Cllr Finch had altered the signage at the roundabout in Sudbury to redirect HGVs to the A134 which appeared to improve the situation although heavy traffic may increase with the ongoing National Grid works on both sides of the village.

It was noted that it is a very involved and costly exercise to implement 20mph limits on a busy 'B' road such as the B1508.

Essex Highways surveys conducted over one week have in the past shown 95% compliance with the 30mph speed limit and so no traffic calming measures have been deemed necessary by the Local Authority.

Recent traffic cables across the road on Bridge Street, Bures Hamlet were not thought to be speed surveys.

The Parish Councils continue follow up on residents' concerns with the respective County Councillors.

### **Concern was expressed about the imminent closure of the Post Office on 31<sup>st</sup> March**

The outgoing Postmaster had given a one -year notice of his plan to close the Post Office which is a private property, not owned by Post Office Ltd. The annual footfall was not sufficient for Post Office Ltd to invest in new premises and set-up costs. An alternative operator was being actively sought but there were no plans to provide any interim service. The Parish Council is in regular contact with the Customer Services Dept. Suffolk County Council had agreed a motion to support Post Office provision in rural communities and their input will be sought if the situation continues indefinitely. There is to be a farewell gathering in the Three Horseshoes PH on 31<sup>st</sup> March at 5pm – all are welcome to attend and express their gratitude to Robert and Madelyn.

### **Concern was expressed about the diminishing triangle of grass at the junction of Water Lane with Station Hill. The verge-side leylandii hedge was overgrown and caused motorists to drive over the edges of the triangle.**

Daffodils had been planted on the triangle to encourage motorists to avoid using it when entering or leaving Water Lane. This had not been successful. The Water Lane road sign is in need of repair.

This issue to be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

The public are encouraged to report Highways issues on the Essex Highway portal using what-3-words to aid an accurate location of a problem.

A thanks from the public was expressed to the Parish Councils and Clerks.

Both Chairs thanked all those present for attending the meeting.

Meeting closed at 9.30pm

Signed:

Date: