

Bures Hamlet Annual Report 2024/25

Bures Hamlet Councillors

After many years of as a member of BHPC Ken McAndrew has stepped down. The council wishes to extend thanks for his dedicated service and in particular wishes to recognise his recent participation and valued input during the development of the Bures Neighbourhood plan. This year council welcomed two new councillors, Maggie Elder and John Child. John is a relatively new resident to the village and very recent recruit to the council.

Both parish councils also wish to extend thanks to all residents who throughout the year have kindly volunteered to help with various projects such as general tidying up, bench and infrastructure upkeep and renovation, planting and weeding, etc. Money is always a constraint, so volunteering is key to keeping our village beautiful. If you can spare any time, please sign our volunteer register expressing your intent.

Station Hill Gardens

This year saw the fruition of the Station Hill Garden renewal project. The parish council wishes to extend its special thanks to our Parish Clerk, Jenny Wright who initiated and led the scheme and to Ruth and Colin Lorking who chose the plants, planted and maintain the garden.

Water Lane Flood Management

The ongoing issue of flooding in and around Water Lane continues to be monitored by the Essex County Council Watercourse Regulator. As many will have seen throughout the year there have been extensive works undertaken to repair/ upgrade the drainage system in and around Water Lane and the Station Hill Road junction. The regulator is also looking at mitigations to reduce the water at its source which is thought to be up Parsonage Hill, Lamarsh Hill and Ferriers Lane. These investigations are ongoing.

Speed Management

Speeding remains an issue with many residents. During the year the council commissioned a weeklong speed survey on Colchester Road, a key area of concern. The results demonstrated that most vehicles were compliant with the prescribed speed limit and the few, less than 5%, that weren't were still below national speed tolerance limits. Resultant is that Essex Highways have stated that no further mitigations are required.

Mindful of Essex Highways action the Parish Council are still looking to progress an application for a pedestrian crossing at the millennium gate. We require as much data to support any application so are looking to collect signatures of support from residents.

Parking

The parish council is continually looking at ways to alleviate parking issues particularly during village events such as the monthly market. The first market this year saw the introduction of signage directing the usage of the station car park and a subsequent refund of the parking fee. Uptake demonstrated this as being successful with a marked reduction in on street parking.

Station Hill/ Water Lane parking issues created through a reluctance to use the station car park during weekdays is currently being discussed with North Essex Parking Partnership with the consideration of introducing single yellow timed parking controls.

Occasionally we can be victims of our own success. The recent and gratefully appreciated resurfacing of Bridge Street resulted in the renewal of old faded parking lines. This appears to have had the negative effect of people seeking alternative places for on street parking.

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 our local district councillor, 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

Life expired and damaged fencing in the car park has been replaced. A village-based contractor was awarded the contract.

Due to cost and logistical constraints EV charging points at the car park will not be pursued.

Pothole patching has been completed, and it is hoped to increase the life of the current car park surface by an estimated 10 years. New "In and Out" signage has been installed.

Some pieces of life expired play equipment have been repaired/ upgraded.

Throughout the year consideration has been given to extending the current skateboard ramps to create two 1/4 pipes and a new fun box with grind rail situated centrally between the ramps. A design has been proposed and options for funding are currently being pursued.

The sports ground committee continue to work with the football club to alleviate parking problems on a Saturday. The committee wishes to note and acknowledge how proactive the club has been in trying to resolve the issue.

Richard Shackell

Chair, Bures Hamlet Parish Council