

Bures Parish Action Plan Annual Report for APM 2019

1. Countryside and village appearance

- i) When planning applications are received their impact on the countryside and village appearance will be assessed, mindful of local designations.

In order to extend and up date councillors' knowledge and understanding of planning matters a training session was provided with materials available for reference when considering applications.

This has been a particularly significant action in the face of applications from Gladman for the development of land off Colchester Road.

Since the Parish Plan was adopted, Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary Parish Councils have held Joint Planning meetings to consider the impact of proposed developments on the village as a whole. Both councils objected to two applications for 98 homes and one for sports facilities by Gladman. The application for 98 homes went to a Public Enquiry with a major point of opposition being the impact of such a development on the proposed extension to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We await the outcome.

The impact of the housing on Cuckoo Hill not being built to plan has been a significant issue for the village and again the councils have stood together in making their views known that this behaviour by developers is not to be tolerated. There have been appeals against the legal judgement that the development was unlawful on five of the six plots. Again, we await the outcome.

The derelict garage site, long hoped for as a site for a small supermarket, now has an application for development for two houses and a workshop. This will remove the worst eyesore in the village.

- ii) Hedge and tree planting schemes will be supported and areas for wildlife encouraged.

A laurel hedge was planted along the fence between the car park and the recreation ground. This will help to soften the hard landscape of the car park. A survey of the village with a view to identifying places for trees and hedges to be planted is planned and The Charter for Trees Woods and People will be considered for adoption.

The parish council agendas include reports from the Tree Wardens and the Bures St Mary Tree Warden takes part in the regional Forums. Bures Hamlet has appointed a new Tree Warden.

Building on the success of the Community Woodland and Orchard in Bures St Mary, Bures Transition Group is in the process of drawing up plans for the 4 acre field in Bures Hamlet.

- iii) Measures to protect the historic fabric and to enhance the appearance of the village to be taken when opportunities arise.

The war memorial was repaired and enhanced in preparation for the First World War Centenary Remembrance Day.

Objection was made to the proposed development of 98 homes on the basis that the increased traffic would damage the historic centre of the village.

The Parish Councils are in contact with the owners of empty properties in the village with a view to helping to bring about improvement to the appearance of these properties.

There is a current enforcement case in Bures St Mary where noise and other pollution issues are the focus. The Parish Council is working with the District Councillor and the residents to resolve the situation.

2. Community spirit and communication

- i) The Parish Councils believe that community spirit is important and where possible they will act to enhance this.

The Action Plan includes the proposal to hold Parish Council clinics in conjunction with the markets. This will start when the weather enables the teas to be served outside giving space in the barn for the clinic. The markets provide great opportunities to experience the strong community spirit in Bures.

- ii) Using a range of communication media, ensure all households have access to information about local community facilities and events.

The Parish Councils website has been updated and all parish council information can be found there. Please follow the link <http://bures.onesuffolk.net/>

The councils have made use of the village Facebook page, Beautiful Bures, to communicate with residents. A councillor and the clerk attended a Social Media training event with a view to making more use of social media to communicate.

The Parish Councils continue to support the publication of the Parish Magazine. No progress has been made with the suggestion that this should be available to all. An on-line version may be the answer to this.

3. Community assets and services

- i) To shape and maintain good transport links throughout the village.

The Parish Councils each have a councillor with responsibility for public transport. We are informed of and welcome improvements and will challenge any moves to reduce services. The service on the Chambers 754 service from Bury to Colchester via Sudbury and Bures was improved to run every 30min. from last Summer. There have been minor changes to the train timetable. The status of 'Request Stop' for Bures Station was challenged and this decision was reversed but is yet to be revoked.

The long standing Station Adopters have moved on and a new Station adopter group has been set up to keep the good work going. This is mainly funded by Greater Anglia with a contribution from Bures Hamlet Parish Council. The group are looking at sponsorship by a local garden centre. The proposal to close the crossing points on the railway has been challenged with the outcome still to be announced.

- ii) The School is a very valuable element of village life.

The Chairman of the Governors provides a report on the school for both parish councils. This report is also put on the website.

Bures St Mary Parish Council have held some of their meetings in the school hall over the past year.

- iii) The Doctors' surgery is valued by parishioners.

Bures Parish Council has a councillor with responsibility for Health matters. The Parish Councils will work with the Patient Group as and when the need arises.

- iv) Public Houses play an important role in village life and nationally they are considered worthy of listing as Assets of Community Value.

The Three Horseshoes is an asset of community value and the application has been made for the Eight to be given this status.

- v) The Recreation Ground, Common, and Community Woodland are important areas for recreation. The Parish Councils will continue to commit to the provision of high quality leisure, sports and play areas and support of other areas for recreation, including footpaths. The Parish Councils also maintain the cemetery.

The Joint Sportsground Committee has continued to work on maintaining and improving facilities on the Recreation Ground and at Pikes Marsh. The well-loved roundabout finally deteriorated too much to repair and a new Wicksteed model is on order. Some funding has been obtained through Essex Community Fund. Further equipment is planned and may be made possible through S106 money that is currently held by Babergh for Bures St Mary. Additional equipment for the under 7s has been provided at Pikes Marsh.

The tennis courts provided as part of the Millennium Project are in need of cleaning and repainting of lines. This will be done next month. Lines for Pickleball have been requested and these will be added when the courts are cleaned.

The Cemetery is a beautiful tranquil area. Members of the two Parish Councils, as with the Sportsground, manage it jointly. The Parish Clerk plays a valuable role in responding to the needs of bereaved villagers and supporting them with arrangements for burials and burials of ashes; this past year has seen an increase in this work. The Cemetery Authority has arranged for new paths being put in and is regularly monitoring the mature trees.

Bures Common continues to be a valuable village resource. The turning on of the Christmas lights included a successful event there and the monthly markets continue to provide opportunities for local businesses and for villagers to purchase meat, produce and gifts without travelling further afield.

The Footpath warden produces reports on the rights of way for Parish Council meetings and these reports are available on the website. The plan to provide a walks leaflet for resident is underway. Funding for this has been obtained through District and County councillor locality budgets.

- vi) It is important that residents feel safe and the provision of appropriate street lighting is important in this context.

We intend to review the lighting and to work to improve this in areas identified by the responses to the Parish Survey.

- vii) To ensure that the Parishes are well served with a fast and reliable Broadband service.

Broadband to the centre of the village has been improved. For outlying areas the problem is more difficult to solve. We were advised that sending details of groups of residents to Suffolk County Council would lead to action by Openreach. This has not happened. County Broadband secured funding to provide superfast broadband in rural areas and, again the suggestion was that groups of residents needed to send details of the demand in their area for action to be taken. The latest advice is for groups of residents in outlying areas to appoint one resident to register with Community Fibre and to collect similarly minded residents until the project is feasible. <https://communityfibre.openreach.co.uk/>

4. Retail Facilities

- i) The Parish Councils will seek out and support initiatives to improve the retail facilities in the village.

The Bures Deli, Bridge Stores and monthly markets provide some retail in the village. Colletts Farm in neighbouring Wormingford is developing as a farm shop selling milk, meat, pies, bread, honey etc.

A Working Party has been formed to explore possibilities for improving retail facilities. Contact has been made with the owners of empty shops. The garage site is no longer a possible site for the Co-op despite their attempts to negotiate with the owner to work with them. The owner of the former Central Stores has said that his plans are being revived. We have not had a response from the owner of Bank House despite having had interest from possible purchasers looking to open a café.

5. Housing

- i) The Parish Councils will seek to ensure that housing is appropriate for the needs of the whole village, whilst maintaining the essences of village life and community

Both Parish Councils have approved applications for bungalows in the village. This type of housing was shown as needed by the Parish Survey. We would welcome the opportunity to support sheltered accommodation or a care home but no such applications have been made. We would also support applications for housing for young families.

6. Traffic management – speeding and parking

- i) The Parish Councils are committed to improving traffic management throughout the Parishes.

The Essex Speed watch scheme is working well with six regular volunteers checking the speeds of vehicles on Colchester Road. Those exceeding the limit receive a warning letter with the possibility of prosecution for repeat offenders. Sites for Suffolk Speed watch have been identified and we are awaiting training and equipment. Vehicle activated speed signs have been investigated and may be considered again if the Suffolk Speed watch does not come into effect. The Suffolk police have carried out monthly speed traps on Sudbury Road for the past eleven months. 179 offenders have been prosecuted over this period.

- ii) The lack of availability of parking places and failure to comply with parking regulations were concerns expressed in the responses to the Parish Survey.

The Parish Councils are looking at possible sites for additional parking to ease the current difficulties. No decisions have been made but sites such as part of the Recreation Ground accessed by Wharf Lane have been discounted.