

Minutes of Bures Joint Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 18th March 2019 at The Garrad Room, Bures Community Centre, Nayland Road at 7.30pm

Present: BHPC: Cllrs D Lee, R Butler, M Randall, M Welch, M Baker
BSMPC: Cllrs G Jackson, J Aries, S Pentney, T Saer, T Waring,
S Pentney, T Fairbairn
Cllr J Finch (SCC), Cllr D Finch (ECC), Cllr L Parker (Babergh DC)
plus 12 members of the public

In attendance: Mrs J Wright (Clerk to Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary Parish Councils)

In the Chair: Cllr Gill Jackson (Bures St Mary Parish Council Chairman)
Cllr David Lee (Bures Hamlet Parish Council Chairman)

Welcome

Cllr Jackson welcomed everyone to the third Bures Joint Annual Parish Meeting.

Apologies

Apologies received from Cllr J McCrory (BSMPC), Cllr L Alston (BSMPC),
Cllr C Ellis (BHPC), Cllr A Crowe (BHPC), Cllr W Scattergood (Braintree D C).
Cllr Lee on behalf of all those present wished Cllr Crowe a speedy recovery from his recent illness.

Minutes

Minutes of the Joint Annual Parish Meeting of Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary held on 26th March 2018 were presented and distributed (previously signed 14th May 2018 and 17th May 2018 respectively). They were taken as read.

Cllr Jackson presented the following Bures Parish Action Plan Report to the meeting. Under Item 1 (ii) of the Report Cllr Jackson invited Ken Jackson, BSM Parish Tree Warden to inform the meeting of the forthcoming Bures Transition Group AGM to which all residents were invited to listen to an update from the AONB Manager, Simon on the benefits to the village of extending the AONB locally.

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 update 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, Bures Post Office, Bridge Stores and the 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.

Bures Hamlet Parish Council

Cllr David Lee

I don't intend to present a long report tonight, as all the items that I was going to mention have been covered in our Action Plan Annual Report. However, I do have a few comments to make.

During the past year, we have had six regular meetings and several other meetings to discuss planning applications, either meeting as a Parish or jointly with St. Mary's.

Although a great deal of the business conducted has been of a routine nature, as you would imagine, a great deal of time this year has been taken up with planning applications.

Due to vacancies occurring during the year we have welcomed Mo Baker and Carol Ellis onto the Council. Mo has recently taken on the role of Parish Tree Warden from John Evans. We thank John for fulfilling this task previously when both on and off the Council.

Thank you our Speedwatch Team who have endured bad weather and bad driver behaviour in carrying out their duties. Thank you to George Barnham, our previous co-ordinator and to Jan Aries who has taken over from him.

Also, thank you to Jan who is now looks after the public footpaths across both Parish Council areas.

Our Christmas lights are the envy of the surrounding villages, so thank you to Becky Warren and her team.

Also, thank you to members of the Transition Group for taking on the garden maintenance of the Station.

And, thank you to all those involved with the restoration of the Barn on the Common. Thank you to the two councillors who joined me to make our representations against the closure of the public footpath across the railway line at the Public Inquiry in November. We await the outcome.

And, thank you to those Parish Councillors and village residents who with me made our representations against the Colchester Road development at the Public Inquiry in February. Parishioners opposed to the application need to thank the Action Group which did so much research before the Inquiry and presented their findings. Again, we await the outcome.

Our Parish Councillors serve on the Cemetery Authority, Sportsground and Community Centre Committees and thanks to each one of them for all their commitment over the last four years.

Thanks, are also due to Wendy Scattergood our District Councillor and David Finch our County Councillor for all their help at various times.

At the Parish Council Meeting last Monday, I announced my intention to stand again for the Council at the May elections but if elected not to continue as chairman. After so many years I have decided that fresh ideas and new thinking are required at the top. So, thank you to all those of you who have served on Bures Hamlet Parish Council not only during the past four years but at any time while have been chairman.

Finally, many thanks to Jenny Wright our Parish Clerk for all her demanding work on behalf of the village and without whom this job would be virtually impossible.

Bures St Mary Parish Council

Cllr Gill Jackson thanked the community for being so actively keen to be involved with projects in the village. In particular she expressed her sincere thanks to Dennis Ambrose who had recently stepped down as a parish councillor owing to poor health after a service of 5 years and read out the following thank you from Bures St Mary Parish Council:

Dennis joined Bures St Mary Parish Council in July 2013. It seems extraordinary that he wasn't on the council before that as he has been such a presence in the village for so long. Dennis, born and bred, threw himself into Parish Council and Sportsground

issues. He was one of those rare councillors who made himself available for all sorts of meetings, major and minor, that make matters run more smoothly. He was keen to meet with young people who were considered a bit of a nuisance and to work with them. The youth shelter was moved to the position the young people requested, next to the skateboard ramp. He walked around the village with Suffolk Highways officers offering his lifetime's knowledge of springs, roads, drains and fields etc. He was keen to support parishioners and made good honest straight from the heart contributions to our meetings. I tried to encourage Dennis to stay on as a councillor as I valued the unique contribution he brought to the council. He continued to give his opinions by email but recently decided that, due to his health difficulties, he had to stand down. Thank you Dennis for all you have done for the village as a truly dedicated Parish Councillor.

Cllr Jackson then proceeded to present Mr Ambrose with a signed photograph collage. Cllr James Finch endorsed Cllr Jackson's words as he considered Mr Ambrose held a wealth of invaluable highway knowledge of the village and the surrounding area.

Cllr Jackson continued with thanks to Cllr Lee Parker for his highly esteemed service to the parish over his four year term as District Ward Councillor. There had been several taxing issues but he had always been available and supportive to the parish council. In return, Cllr Parker thanked the Chairman, Members and Clerk for all their hard work and dedication to the parish.

Cllr Jackson continued with her thanks to the Clerk and in return the Clerk expressed her thanks to both Chairman and in particular to Cllr Lee who was stepping down as Chairman for BHPC after 26 years of service to the parish. She remarked on this incredible achievement and for all his hard work and commitment over the years. There were no questions from the public to the County and District Councillors present and both were thanked for their support to the parish councils during the past year.

Financial Statements

The Clerk had provided the following reports which were made available to members of the public for scrutiny and comment at the meeting.

Bures Hamlet Parish Council

Balances as at 18th March 2019: £14,839.22

Parish precept to Braintree District Council for financial year 2019/20: £28,817.00

An increase of £1,925 on previous year to compensate on reduction of the Localism Grant which has now been phased out from BDC.

Additional one-off payment: BDC have agreed to make a one-off additional payment to parish and town councils again in 2019/20. The payment is an allocation of the estimated surplus on the Council Tax Collection Fund as at 31st March 2019.

Bures Hamlet Parish Council is allocated to receive £274.00.

Parish Element of Band D Tax Rate 2019/20: £88.47 (2018/19: £83.76)

Allocation of Parish Budget 2019/20:

Cemetery Authority	£6,500 (an increase of £1,000 on previous year for pending tree works and new pathways)
Bures Community Centre	£200 (telephone line rental)
Sportsground	£9,000 (an increase of £500 on previous year)
Clerk's salary	£5,725
Lighting	£500

Insurance	£550
Training	£500
Hall hire	£300
Auditors	£300
Administration	£550
Subscriptions	£500
Elections	£1,000
Data Protection	£1,000
Donations/parish items	£500
Repairs/projects	£1,000
Grounds Maintenance	£5,500
Gritting/flooding	£500
Christmas lights	£500
Earmarked Funds	Minimum Retention funds £6,250

We also receive a BDC Street Cleansing grant £827.64 (2018/19) and a Greenfields Housing Maintenance grant £259.49 (2018/19) to offset costs paid for by the parish council. Grants for 2019/20: £844.49 and £370.06.

New Government Data Protection legislation was introduced last May. The Parish Council has allocated £1,000 in its budget in line with EALC recommendations.

Bures St Mary Parish Council

Balances as at 18th March 2019: £18,239.66

Parish precept to Babergh District Council for financial year 2019/20:

£28,435.00 which is an increase of £2,000 on previous financial year 2018/19.

Parish Element of Band D Tax Rate: £70.51 for 2019/20 (£66.11 for 2018/19)

Allocation of Parish Budget 2019/20:

Cemetery Authority	£6,500 (an increase of £1,000 on previous year for pending tree works and new pathways)
Bures Community Centre	£200 (telephone line rental)
Sportsground	£9,000 (an increase of £500 on previous year)
Clerk's salary	£5,565
Lighting	£300
Lighting Loan	£1,749.92
Insurance	£375
Training	£300
Hall hire	£275
Auditors	£300
Administration	£475
Subscriptions	£550
Elections	£1,000
Data Protection	£1,000
Grounds Maintenance	£4,750
Gritting	£250
Donations/parish items	£500
Repairs/projects	£2,000
Christmas lights	£500
Minimum Retention Funds held	£6,608.75

Street lighting loan balance is £6,726.01 – final payment March 2023

We receive a Street Cleansing Grant from Babergh District Council (£1,280.76) to offset costs paid for the Parish Grounds Maintenance Contractor.

£5,000 still to be met from BDC S106 Contributions Fund for the Pikes Marsh play area improvements.

New Government Data Protection legislation was introduced last May. The Parish Council has allocated £1,000 in its budget in line with SALC recommendations.

Questions from Parishioners

Ken Jackson asked if there was any known funding or grants available for the Transition Group to investigate if its plans for the 4 acre field at Cambridge Way continued to be followed up. Cllr D Finch suggested applying to the ECC Community Initiative Fund.

Cllr J Finch suggested the Dedham Vale Sustainable Development Fund. Mr Jackson thanked both councillors for their input.

Cllr J Finch highlighted on the arranged drop-in sessions in Leavenheath and the surrounding villages providing information for those interested in fostering a child. He hoped to extend the initiative during the year to interested parishes.

At this point, Cllr Jackson closed the meeting and welcomed all to remain and enjoy the refreshments available.