

Minutes of Bures Joint Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 30th March 2017 at The Garrad Room, Bures Community Centre, Nayland Road at 7.30pm

Present: BHPC: Cllrs D Lee, C Barnham, M Welch, B Wilson, A Crowe
BSMPC: Cllrs G Jackson, D Ambrose, T Waring, R Kemball, J Aries
Cllr D Finch (ECC), Cllr W Scattergood (Braintree DC),
Cllr L Parker (Babergh DC),
MBPC: Cllrs M Graham and O'Neill
plus 15 members of the public (Attendance List attached)

In attendance: Mrs J Wright (BH and BSM Parish Clerk)

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

Welcome

Cllr Lee welcomed everyone to the Bures Joint Annual Parish Meeting. He noted that this was a new initiative bringing together representatives from the two parishes of Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary for a hopefully enjoyable evening.

Apologies

Apologies received from Cllr J McCrory (BSMPC), Cllr T Fairbairn and SCC Councillor James Finch.

Presentation

Cllr Jackson welcomed Simon Anstutz of the AONB.

Simon gave a short presentation on the workings of the AONB and an insight into the proposals for extending the boundaries of the AONB within the local area.

A brief question and answer time followed.

Would all house building cease until the Boundary Review was completed - no.

Costs asked to be qualified for the AONB extension – not considerable.

If a 60% decline in animal species then was this in specific species - no, decline was across all types of species although rabbits and magpies were increasing. But it was pleasing to note that the otter and water vole population was also increasing.

Predators were a problem but the AONB could not deal with this as a stand-alone issue.

Of the 342 responses to the AONB extension survey how many of these were from landowners? Simon advised that the survey did not show this but noted that when the Consultation commences then all Landowners would be consulted.

The National Grid pylon scheme appeared to not be on any agenda at the moment?

Simon agreed that this was on hold but noted that AONB were to bid into a scheme for funds to make a stand for pylons to be undergrounded.

Cllr Jackson duly thanked Simon Amstutz.

Minutes

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meetings of Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary held on 21st March and 26th May 2016 respectively were presented and distributed with no comments made (previously signed 16th May and 21st July 2016 respectively).

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Bures St Mary Parish Council Chairman's Report

For my report this year I would like to focus on people and achievements. There is the risk that I may leave something out and apologies at the outset should this occur. To begin on a sombre note on 16th June 2016 we were due to hold a Brexit event with our MPs James Cartlidge and James Cleverley. The tragic murder of Jo Cox, a shining example of commitment to public life, meant the event, which would have been a first for Bures, was cancelled. A truly major achievement this year has been the resurfacing of The Croft. One parishioner and erstwhile councillor, Tim 'Persistence' Underwood, had been working on making this happen for 35 years. When the work was carried out it had been 49 years since the whole length had last been surfaced. Tim's persistence needed to be heard and acted upon and our Suffolk County Councillor, James Finch, was the one who made it happen. Thanks to both of them for a tremendous achievement. James has also worked with Suffolk County Council and the Highways Authority to make a change to the B1508 from Bures to Sudbury. The catalogue of accidents showed no sign of tailing off but, as far as I am aware, since the introduction of the 40mph limit for the length of the road most drivers have been adhering to the limit and things have improved. It's been a difficult year for Babergh District Council with the messiness around the joint working with Mid-Suffolk and the loss of experienced staff to call on. In all this, our District Councillor, Lee Parker, has the qualities needed to make the Parish Council feel supported. He is committed, reliable and cheerful in the face of adversity. The issues around the Pikes Marsh Play area and related matters are requiring considerable patience and perseverance. Together we have made some tentative progress on both Bank House and Central Stores. On the positive side, the Babergh/Mid Suffolk Community Street Cleansing Scheme has been very successful in Bures. Gary Vaughn's work is really appreciated and our parish is looking more well cared for than for a long time. The Parish Council is benefiting hugely from all that Dennis Ambrose gives to the village. He has carried out all manner of practical tasks. He has also been present at additional meetings with parishioners, Babergh and SCC officers and the police. Behind any list of tasks achieved is the thinking time which is so important to making sure things, go well. This should not be underestimated when considering the input of our councillors. We have had new councillors join and give freely of their time both thinking about the village and actively making things happen. Our Rights of Way councillor, Jan Aries, has a detailed working knowledge of all our public footpaths. We are part way through the task of finding out from the people of the village where their priorities lie; Tim Fairbairn is chairing this. This work should help to ensure that the Parish Council is working towards achieving the targets which have the support of those we represent. A priority supported by those attending the Parish Plan launch meeting had been raised earlier in the year by Geoff Davies. This was the provision of sheltered housing and a home for the elderly. Sadly Geoff's plan is currently on hold but hopefully the idea will eventually come to fruition. Finally, a matter that has provoked strong feelings in the past has been that of dogs on the recreation ground. This year we successfully introduced the idea of an area for dog owners and dogs down near the river. It has become a real social hub for those involved with birthdays of both canines and humans being celebrated there! Thanks to all my fellow councillors who give their time to the village and thanks once again to Jenny Wright, the Parish Clerk whose work is invaluable.

Cllr Gill Jackson

Bures Hamlet Parish Council Chairman's Report

During the past year, the Council has met six times. Due to vacancies occurring, Ben Wilson and Duncan Kennett have been appointed to the Council and have already made valuable contributions. Once again most of the business conducted has been of a routine nature, including reporting necessary repairs to footpaths, roads and streetlights. A concerted effort has been made this year to solve some of the ongoing surface water drainage problems and to secure some additional lighting around the bungalows at Lamarsh Hill. We now await the promised resurfacing of the Bridge Street footpaths. A new maintenance contractor has been appointed following a tendering exercise and he is proving to be a real asset. Major works completed along the Colchester Road include the installation of the two bus shelters and the construction of the road traffic refuge. Motorists speeding through the village continue to be a particular concern to the Parish Council but it is to be hoped that the new refuge will have some effect in slowing the traffic approaching the Bridge Street corner. The Community Speedwatch Scheme has been operating throughout the year and has contributed to slowing the traffic along the Colchester Road. However, the organisers are in need of more help in order to keep this initiative going. Full training will be given to anyone interested. My thanks go to all those involved in giving up their time in running the scheme. Parking continues to be a problem in the village. Any particular obstructions should be reported to the Essex Parking Partnership for their action. The Demand Response Transport scheme is now growing in strength and is available for pre-booking for bus journeys where no other transport solutions are available. The Bells Garage continues to deteriorate. During the year, there has been some interest shown by a couple of businesses but so far these have come to nothing. Planning has been a major issue this year with the need to respond to the proposal to build over 100 dwellings on land off the Colchester Road. Whilst not opposing some development in principle, particularly if it were affordable housing for people with a local connection, we were unable to support this scheme on the grounds of unsustainability. The scheme was subsequently removed from the draft Braintree District Plan due to its potential detrimental effect on any extension of the area of outstanding natural beauty. The Parish Council remains concerned over the proposal to close pedestrian crossings over railway lines. We have made strong representations against the closure of our crossing but the final outcome remains unknown. Progress has been made on our proposed joint Neighbourhood Plan covering development criteria for the whole village and, to follow up the successful public meeting and to gather more information, there will soon be a survey form for completion delivered to every household. It is excellent to see that Bures Common is in regular active use by the public including the quoits competitions and the successful local produce markets. Progress on the barn restoration is also welcome, particularly after all the recent setbacks. In setting our budget for the forthcoming year we have again made the difficult decision to increase our parish precept to make up for the shortfall in the funding received from the District Council. Once again, the Parish Council would like to express our thanks to all those involved in erecting and maintaining the village Christmas Lights. We would also like to thank to David and Anne Taylor for maintaining the station surroundings in such excellent order, despite some unwelcomed vandalism and contractors unscheduled maintenance works. 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 twelve months. Thanks also to Hugh Turner our Parish Ranger and John Evans our Parish Tree Warden. Thanks, are also due to Wendy Scattergood our District Councillor and David Finch our County Councillor for all their help over the year.

I cannot end my report without paying tribute to Derek Matthews who has retired from the Parish Council after 48 years' continuous service. This is a remarkable record and has been duly recognised. Finally, many thanks to Jenny Wright our Parish Clerk for all her hard work on behalf of the village because without whom this job would be virtually impossible.

Cllr David Lee

Babergh District Councillor Report

Cllr Lee Parker introduced himself to all those present and gave a short verbal report with the following main points raised:

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils pending move to Endeavour House in Ipswich scheduled for August/September. Walk in access points to be set up in Sudbury Town Hall and Stowmarket for those requiring face to face service. Officers to make themselves available to constituents by appointment at any other places in the District as required. Babergh and Mid Suffolk to remain as two sovereign Councils but sharing a common set of working practices within one building.

The Local Government Boundary Commission is undertaking an electoral review of both Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils. There were 2 stages, first to determine the total number of Councillors and second to redraw the Ward boundary lines. Cllr Parker advised that the number of District Councillors may be reduced from 43 down to 31.

Babergh DC had resolved to change the Governance model of the Committee system to Leader and Cabinet hopefully resulting in a better decision process.

Following the East Bergholt Judicial Review, Babergh DC was currently reviewing its Planning Policies.

Cllr Parker thanked both parish councils for the recent successful Joint Parish Plan event held with over 100 residents attending. He had noted Cllr Fairbairn's comment that Babergh DC had been lacking in its support for the event and was currently following up on this.

No questions raised.

Braintree District Councillor Report

Cllr Wendy Scattergood introduced herself to all those present and gave a short verbal report with the following main points raised:

She currently had 10 parishes within her Ward but strived to attend as many parish council meetings as possible. Cllr Scattergood fully supported the Dedham Vale and AONB and was currently a Committee member. The proposed AONB designated boundary had been included within the Draft Local Plan to hopefully protect the local area. The BDC Draft Local Plan was to be put forward to full Council on the 15th June for approval. All responses to the recent consultations would then be submitted to the Inspector for a final decision. BDC currently had a 4.5 year housing supply but required a 5 year to meet the Government recommendations. The time scale for decision on the BDC Draft Local Plan was available on the website.

Cllr Scattergood reported on the District Councillor Community Grant Scheme. During 2016/17 financial year the Bures Scouts had benefitted from its funding towards the purchase of 2 kayaks. The grant scheme would recommence on the 4th April 2017 and she would re-assess those applications on the waiting list.

Suffolk County Councillor Report

Cllr James Finch had given his apologies for the meeting and his report had been circulated. Any questions for Cllr Finch to be submitted through the Clerk.

Essex County Councillor Report

Cllr David Finch introduced himself to all those present and gave a short verbal report with the following main points raised:

Cllr Finch noted on the finances of Essex County Council which were raised via Council Tax, Business Rates and Government grants. Business Rates currently being re-allocated by Government.

Essex was predominantly an elderly County with statistics above the National Average. Overall Essex is in the upper quarter for road quality but Cllr Finch continued to deal with local issues for his Wards. £600m was being invested into infrastructure for Essex roads. 95% of Essex schools were rated Good or Outstanding.

Cllr Finch noted on the Community Initiative Fund, a grant fund available for parish councils to apply to and to help offset parish council expenditures.

Essex County Council runs a Lottery Fund with a set cap of £5,000 for each Charity.

Cllr Finch noted on the pending County Council elections in May.

No questions raised.

Cllr Lee noted on the recent Joint Parish Plan initiative and the complexity of dealing with 2 District and County Councils. He also commented on the excellent work being undertaken by Jan Stobart RCCE Community Engagement Officer.

Financial Statements

The Clerk presented the following reports:

Bures Hamlet Parish Council

Balances as at 30th March 2017: Business Saver A/C balance: £14,049.92
Community A/C balance: £ 3,646.77

Parish precept to Braintree District Council for financial year 2017/2018: £25,968

Parish Council Budget: £27,817 as per previous year but precept to BDC increased by £924 being the shortfall on the Localism Fund receivable from BDC thus representing 3.05% increase on the parish element for 2017/2018.

Localism Grant: £1,849.00 grant for 2017/18 additional to the Parish Precept
Additional one-off payment: BDC have agreed to make a one-off additional payment to parish and town councils in 2017/18. The payment is an allocation of the estimated surplus on the Council Tax Collection Fund as at 31st March 2017.

Bures Hamlet Parish Council is allocated to receive £479.00.

Parish Element of Band D Tax Rate 2017/18: £81.49 (2016/17 £79.08)

Allocation of Parish Budget 2017/18:

Cemetery Authority	£4,500 (an increase of £1,000 on previous year)
Bures Community Centre	£200 (telephone line rental)
Sportsground	£8,000 (as per previous year)
Clerk's salary	£5,584 (Clerk's hours increased from 8 to 10)
Lighting	£800
Insurance	£535
Training	£300
Hall hire	£225
Auditors	£300
Administration	£500

Subscriptions	£400
Elections	£1,000
Parish Plan	£1,000
Donations/parish items	£500
Repairs/projects	£1,500
Grounds Maintenance	£4,500
Gritting/flooding	£500
Earmarked Funds	Minimum Retention funds £6,250
	Gateway signs £2,000
	Led for parish lights £2,000

We also receive a BDC Street Cleansing grant £778.26 (2016/17) and a Greenfields Housing Maintenance grant £259.49 (2016/17) to offset costs paid for by the parish council. These will be similar amounts for 2017/18.

Bures St Mary Parish Council

Balances as at 30th March 2017: Business Instant A/C balance: £16,927.90
Treasurers A/C balance: £ 5,163.2

Parish precept to Babergh District Council for financial year 2017/2018:
£26,435.00 as per previous year 2016/2017.

The Council Tax grant from Babergh District Council had been reduced to Nil for 2017/18 and would therefore no longer be an additional figure to the Parish Precept.

Previous year 2016/17: £503.75

Parish Element of Band D Tax Rate: £64.65 for 2017/18 (£65.11 for 2016/17)

Allocation of Parish Budget 2017/18:

Cemetery Authority	£4,500 (an increase of £1,000 on previous year)
Bures Community Centre	£250 (telephone line rental)
Sportsground	£8,000 (as per previous year)
Clerk's salary	£4,467
Lighting	£500
Lighting Loan	£1,749.92
Insurance	£500
Training	£500
Hall hire	£200
Auditors	£300
Administration	£450
Subscriptions	£500
Elections	£1,000
Parish Plan	£1,000
Grounds Maintenance	£3,500
Gritting	£250
Donations/parish items	£1,000
Repairs/projects	£6,532.60 (still to meet costs of equipment and installation for play equipment at Pikes Marsh)

Minimum Retention Funds held £6,608.75

Street lighting loan balance is £9,817.71 – final payment March 2023

We receive a Street Cleansing Grant from Babergh District Council (£1,224.60) 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.

Questions from Parishioners

Mr Ken Jackson asked when Bures Hamlet may change to LED lighting as Bures St Mary recently had. Cllr Lee noted that the parish council currently maintained 4 parish lights with the remainder under the remit of ECC. Bures Hamlet Parish Council had upgraded one light to date and would continue to upgrade as maintenance required. He was unable to comment as to when the ECC owned lights would be upgraded.

Mr Dale Rout requested more cigarette bins in the village. He also suggested that the two MPs should be invited for a Question and Answer session especially as both lived locally.

Mr Bill Snelling reported that a recycling bin for shoes was shortly to be installed in the Nayland Road carpark. All proceeds from the recycling centre supported Bures Scout Troop.

Cllr Jackson thanked all those in attendance for their input and support.

Cllr David Finch thanked both parish councils and the Clerk for presenting a most enjoyable first Joint Annual Parish Meeting.

This concluded the business.