

## **Minutes of Bures Joint Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 at Bures Community Centre at 7.30pm**

**Present:** BHPC: Cllrs M Baker, C Ellis, B Raymond, R Shackell, M Welch, D Monk  
BSMPC: Cllrs J Aries, T Fairbairn, G Jackson, J McCrory, L Norton,  
S Pentney, T Saer, S Sills  
Cllr J Finch (SCC), Cllr P Schwier (ECC), Cllr M Barrett (Babergh DC),  
plus 8 members of the public

**Also in attendance:** Mrs J Wright (Clerk to BH and BSM Parish Councils)

**In the Chair:** Cllr Gill Jackson (Bures St Mary Parish Council Chairman)  
Cllr Richard Shackell (Bures Hamlet Parish Council Chairman)

### **Welcome**

Cllr Jackson welcomed everyone to the Joint Annual Parish Meeting for Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary.

### **Apologies**

Apologies received from Cllr L Alston (BSMPC) and Cllr K McAndrew (BHPC).

### **Minutes**

Minutes of the Joint Annual Parish Meeting of Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021 were confirmed and signed (previously circulated).

### **Presentation:**

Cllr Peter Schwier, Essex County Councillor for the Hedingham Division introduced himself to those present and proceeded to give a short presentation on his role as Essex Climate Czar. ECC moving forward with its aim to be Climate Zero by 2050. Projects working towards achieving this goal - LED street lighting, reduction in tarmac temperature for resurfacing and potholes, more green open spaces, new school net zero buildings, net zero new homes, supporting businesses and residents with ideas and tips to achieve net zero, to consider waste as an asset, Solar Together schemes,

### **Bures Annual Parish Councils' Report**

Cllr Jackson and Cllr Shackell presented the following Bures Annual Parish Councils' Report to the meeting. The Parish Councils' Action Plan for 2021-2 had four main areas of focus: Community Spirit and Communication; Environment, Community Assets, Services and Enterprise and The Neighbourhood Plan.

#### **1. Community Spirit and Communication**

##### **i) Mental Health and Well-being**

Braintree Well-being Service organised a very successful Community Information Session recently. Help and advice on a range of topics was available. Several residents have asked for another such event to be held at a weekend when working people are able to attend. Our clerk receives emails from the district and county councils relating to support for mental health and well-being and forwards them to the village organisations best placed to link with those needing support.

We continue to encourage walking and cycling in the Bures area. Bures is on the Stour Valley Path and the board on Bures Common showing the route has now been added to by another at the station.

Our District Councillors Melanie Barrett and Wendy Scattergood have kindly given us grants from their Community funds to purchase planters with water reservoirs for the Bures in Bloom scheme. A keen group of residents has come forward to add colourful floral displays to our streets. Flowers are known to lift the spirits of both those working with them and those seeing them and appreciating their beauty.

Last year we applied for a grant to provide Welcome Packs for new residents. We had thought that a pack to encourage all residents to resume normal life in the village after the pandemic would be a boost to the mental health of residents but the process was rather slow and most aspects of village life are now back in swing. The grant was dependent on a Good Neighbour Scheme being set up. We are pleased to report that this has now happened and the constitution has been sent off. A bank account is in the process of being set up and contents for the Welcome Pack are being assembled.

We have continued to pursue the Quiet Lanes Suffolk initiative. QLS reminds drivers to 'Expect and Respect' more vulnerable road users and so allow non-motorised users to enjoy rural lanes in greater safety. We are looking to designate St Edmunds Lane, Hollow Lane, Smallbridge Entry and the first section of the road to Arger Fen. It is encouraging that Nayland with Wissington and Wormingford are looking to continue this designation for the road up through Wormingford past the church to the B1508. There are very few lanes within the Bures Hamlet parish boundary that satisfy the requirements for the Quiet Lanes initiative, so it was decided not to pursue in this instance.

#### **ii) Covid – 19**

The Parish Clerk continued to disseminate COVID-19 information from national, county and district sources whilst this information was being sent. We are now at a different stage where we rely on individual responsibility.

#### **iii) Parish Council Communication with residents**

Over the last year we have increased our communication with residents through the use of the Parish Councils' and Beautiful Bures Facebook pages. We have also increased our input to the Parish Magazine through the Snippets page and separate articles and item for information. We have not progressed with the idea of a bi-monthly newsletter as the focus has changed to communicating details of the Neighbourhood Plan, which has its own dedicated website. Please do let us know if you would find a newsletter useful.

## **2. Environment**

### **i) Hedge and tree planting schemes and areas for wildlife encouraged.**

#### **Link with Bures Transition Group (Climate Action Group)**

The major achievement in terms of tree planting this year has been the creation of the new mixed woodland, shrub and grass areas on the land off Cambridge Way. The ownership of the land has been transferred from Braintree District Council to Bures Hamlet Parish Council and the planting project was organised by Bures Transition Group in conjunction with The Woodland Trust. The Transition Group worked with children from Bures School and volunteers from the village and the Woodland Trust Essex volunteers to plant over 800 trees and shrubs. The children were very enthusiastic and it was great to see the younger generation so actively involved in a project for the future of Bures.

The survey to list significant trees in the village, with a view to obtaining Tree Preservation Orders, has yet to be completed.

The Suffolk Community Woodland continued to be a particularly popular spot for residents to sit and look over the valley during the pandemic.

The Essex Community Orchard on the Glebeland Allotments has had further donations of fruit trees and should be providing fruit this year.

## **ii) Rights of Way**

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 introduced a provision for a cut-off date of 1 January 2026 for the recording of historic rights of way. This was seen as an opportunity to bring more certainty for the public and landowners alike as to what and where the recorded Public Rights of Way are. The Bures Rights of Way officer has continued working with local landowners to have changes to routes agreed where appropriate. One route that has been successfully changed is FP5, the path from Ferriers Lane to Hornes Green.

## **iii) Speeding/ Road Safety**

Community Speed watch was suspended during the worst of the pandemic and resumed at this time last year. Despite initial enthusiasm the team dwindled over the winter months. CSW is recognised as one of the most successful ways to deter speeding drivers. If you are willing to join this important initiative please let us know.

Bures Hamlet has a Speed Indicator Device (SID) on Colchester Road. The moveable SID purchased by Bures St Mary Parish Council has been helpful in reminding drivers of the speed limit. We have the data collected by the equipment and when a vehicle repeatedly speeds along the same stretch of road we can ask the police to put in a check to apprehend the offender. Moveable signs are considered more effective as motorists become accustomed to the fixed signs and do not 'see' them. Bures Hamlet have considered changing from a SID to a movable Vehicle Activated Speed (VAS) device, but the cost is prohibitive in the current environment. In addition to the use of SIDs in the village we have the support of the police carrying out periodic speed checks.

The Bures Hamlet Parish Council is currently investigating the introduction of a pedestrian crossing at the millennium footpath gate onto Colchester Road. An initial footfall survey was undertaken in October with another scheduled for Spring 2022. Data gained will augment the crossing application. Road calming measures at the junction to Colchester Road/ Mount Bures junction have been detailed and requested. These continue to be delayed despite escalation at District Level. We are currently completing a Local Highway Panel application to extend the 30mph speed limit on Lamarsh Hill to the village sign. The parish council is grateful for all the letters of support received on this initiative.

## **iv) Parking**

It is proving exceedingly difficult to relieve the parking issues in the village. The car park at the recreation ground is under increasing pressure. It's really good to see the numbers of children involved in Bures Football Club but the car park is unable to cope with the number of cars this generates.

We are currently considering the application for the redevelopment of Chambers bus depot and whilst it is good to think that this brownfield site will be put to good use, the implications of loss of on street parking is a difficult issue.

Greater Anglia have granted free parking at the station on a few occasions but even for the Open Gardens event this year they are only granting this for the Sunday. Representations have been made to remove the current parking charges but as this activity is outsourced it is proving difficult to obtain a definitive response.

The wheels of progress grind exceedingly slowly when it comes to projects such as the request by residents in the Claypits estate to purchase the land in front of their houses to provide off-road parking. Babergh District Council currently owns the land and the proposal to transfer ownership has been taken forward by our Babergh District Councillor and is still with the estates dept. It was considered that the original parking enforcement along Bridge Street did not support businesses in that location. After consultation an application to introduce "*20 minutes waiting. No return within 40 minutes*" bays was made.

Unfortunately, the alternative proposal from North Essex Parking Partnership was wholly inappropriate and it was decided to continue with existing arrangements.

#### **v) Climate and Nature Emergency Actions**

Bures St Mary Parish Council joined the Green Suffolk initiative to encourage home owners to reduce their carbon footprint. We do not feel it was a particularly successful project. More successful has been the Essex initiative encouraging home owners to install solar panels. An application was made to Plug in Suffolk to provide two electric vehicle charging points in the car park. The scheme was inundated with applications. Although Bures was not successful in the first round, it is hoped that the second round may bring better news.

#### **vi) Empty property issues**

The planning application for the redevelopment of Chambers Bus Depot has been submitted to Babergh District Council. The application includes housing, retail and highways changes. This is the most significant Bures planning issue in recent times. The empty garages at Tawneys Ride and Claypits are being reviewed by Babergh. This may result in additional housing and possibly more space for the school. No decisions have been made at this point. There has been a planning application for Bank House and we are pleased to report that the new owners are planning a café. In the recent survey, a considerable number of residents were keen to see a café in the village.

Bures Hamlet has actively supported two planning applications relating to the derelict garage site. Both applications have been approved by Braintree District Council. Unfortunately, over a year on and the current owner has not progressed either application. The council raised concerns about the structural integrity of the garage canopy but upon inspection Braintree engineers considered it not to be an unsafe structure.

#### **vii) Support the plan to extend the Dedham Vale AONB to include Bures**

The parish councils continue to support the extension to the Dedham Vale AONB. Cycle routes have been identified and it is proposed to put cycle racks at the recreation ground and the common. In response to the National Grid Bramford to Twinstead proposals both parish councils have joined with neighbouring parishes to submit responses regarding routes and positions of cable sealing end compounds. This is a major engineering project that will affect the lives of all residents in the area.

#### **vii) Flooding issues**

Throughout the year there has been extensive works undertaken to alleviate flooding issues on Colchester Road/ Station Hill junction. These appear to have been successful although there are still further works to be completed. Particularly, in Bridge Street where localised flooding still occurs. It is proving very difficult to manage the water by Bevills on the Sudbury Road and by St Edmunds Lane. This is partly due to it being the result of springs and partly the lack of regular gully clearance by Suffolk CC Highways.

### **3. Community assets, services and enterprise**

#### **i) The Recreation Ground**

The Summer of 2021 saw similar, but not as serious, issues as the previous year with large numbers of young people visiting the recreation ground. The volunteer litter pickers were very helpful, not only in helping to keep the village looking good but also in providing an important adult presence on the rec.

We have successfully applied for a grant from the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner's Fund. It is intended that this funding will pay for youth workers to spend time engaging the young visitors in a positive way.

The skateboard ramp was renovated last Summer although, sadly, it was the target for graffiti soon afterwards. It is good to note that graffiti is not the problem it used to be and the desecration of the skateboard ramp was a rare occurrence.

New equipment has been ordered for the Under 7s play area. They will soon have an exciting 'Dinosaur domain' to explore and climb on. The in-ground trampoline was so successful that a second one will be installed for the younger children.

As always the Sportsground Committee is keen to encourage residents to take part in physical activities. There are clubs for tennis, cricket and football; all provide a friendly welcome to new members. Pickle ball also continues to prove popular.

## **ii) Cemetery**

The rededication service for war casualty Katherine Carr was held at the cemetery on Saturday 18th September. Members from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Royal British Legion, Bures St Mary Parish Council, Cemetery Authority and members of the family attended the short service with laying of wreaths.

The projects to amend the vehicular access to the cemetery and to plant bulbs have been completed.

## **iii) Facilities for Visitors**

We are pleased to announce that the Hobby Horse was once again successful in tendering for the contract to provide refreshments for residents and visitors using the recreation ground. The provision of a portable toilet last year was successful and the decision was made to keep the facility in place over the winter and for the coming year.

## **iv) Lighting and pavements**

An extra streetlight for Parsonage Hill has been put on temporary hold due to a change in environmental circumstances. Pavement maintenance is progressing all be it at a slower pace than normal due to pandemic restrictions. However, one of the raised tree roots on Station Hill has been rectified with the remaining one scheduled for later this year. Also, the uneven pavement outside the old police house on Station Hill has been extensively repaired. The councils continue to identify and report all pathway damage, potholes and drainage issues.

## **v) Retail facilities**

The parish councils have continued to support retail facilities in the village. Roses Stores has been a welcome addition to the very popular Bures Deli and the essential service provided by Bures Post Office. We would urge all residents to use the facilities we have in the village. The Neighbourhood Plan project has produced a £25 Bures voucher which can be used at any one of thirteen retail and service outlets in the village.

## **vi) Superfast Broadband**

Although the installation of County Broadband was not without its difficulties, residents of Bures Hamlet are benefiting from the speeds provided by this service.

There have been no further community groups in Bures St Mary applying to Openreach for superfast broadband however, two areas, Smallbridge and St Edmunds Lane are due to have the service this year.

## **4. Bures Neighbourhood Plan**

Neighbourhood Planning came from the Localism Act of 2011. A Neighbourhood Plan is an opportunity to shape the development and growth of the local area. It is a powerful set of tools for local people to plan for the types of development to meet their community's needs. In September 2021 an application was made for the joint parishes of Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary to be agreed as an area for a Neighbourhood Plan. Being on the

border of two counties made this more complicated than usual but permission was granted with Braintree being the lead Local Planning Authority for the project.

Two public meetings were held to enlist the support of residents who were willing to be part of the team for the NP. There is an active group of twenty people taking the project forward. The public meetings were followed by gathering of residents' views on what they valued most about Bures and how they would like Bures to be in 2035. These were to inform the "Vision Statement" that will underpin the policies of the final plan. With all public consultation for the NP we endeavour to gather views from across the age ranges. We have consulted again on the Vision Statement that was distilled from the 120 responses on views of Bures and having listened to your opinions this is the working version.

### **Our Vision for Bures....**

- The distinctly special qualities of our **beautiful village**, nestled as it is in the **historic and natural setting** of the **River Stour**, will be valued, protected and enhanced.
- Bures will continue to be a **working village** with **real vitality**.
- It will embrace **green technical innovation** and **social change** whilst **valuing its heritage and protecting its historic buildings and natural boundaries**.
- Bures will also remain **well connected** with the world beyond.
- The qualities highly valued by the community- including its **strong identity**, **community spirit** and **kindness and diversity** will be sustained.

The groups that make up the NP team are Housing and Community Assets and Services, Heritage and Landscape, Environment, Business and Commerce and Transport. All residents will be aware that the Housing Group has commissioned the Rural Community Council for Essex to carry out a Housing Needs Assessment. The Heritage and Landscape Group are working with AECOM on design codes and the Business group is preparing a questionnaire for business with the intention of identifying how best to support the needs of commerce in the village.

We will be reporting on progress at the April market on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> April and in the Community Centre on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup>. Please come along and contribute your views.

With many thanks to all parish councillors who work so hard for the village, to our District councillors, Melanie Barrett and Wendy Scattergood, our County Councillors Peter Schwier and James Finch and special thanks to our outstanding clerk, Jenny Wright who earlier this year celebrated 40 years as clerk to Bures Hamlet and the Cemetery Committee. Thanks also extend to all the volunteers who have responded to our appeals for help for Bures this year. From planting trees to cleaning bus shelters and picking litter to agreeing to organise Good neighbours and Bures in Bloom we are really fortunate to live in such a giving community.

## **James Finch – Suffolk County Councillor Report:**

- **More money to support children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) with an increase of £1.1m in the revenue budget.**

This follows a review carried out by a team from Lincolnshire, including Lincolnshire County Council and a parent carer network. The review made nine recommendations and they used these to draft an action plan, which can be read online. One of the recommendations made in the review was to work with a third-party organisation to deliver improvements. The council has since secured Impower as a strategic partner, who will bring capacity and extensive experience of working on SEND systems across the country.

There is an £45.1m capital programme agreed in 2020 to create an additional 870 specialist education places over a 5-year period to 2024. At the moment, more than 6,000 children in Suffolk currently have a health and care plan to identify what support they need to help with their special educational needs. The number has nearly doubled from 3,000 in 2014. A further 12,000 pupils have special educational needs and do not require a health and care plan. Currently, there are 2,000 places at either special schools or specialist units for those with more complex needs. We continue to increase the number of places. Children's education and welfare is fundamental.

- **Extra resources for adults in need of care launches the new Cassius service for an improved home care service.**

In early June 2021, it was announced that SCC are partnering with Alcove, Rethink Partners and Provide CIC to deliver their innovative care technology service to people in Suffolk over the next 3 years. From July 2021, the Cassius service gave our social work practitioners, occupational therapists and other front line professionals, new ways to support people to live better and independent lives. Initially the service launched with a high impact, targeted range of technology that will continue to grow into the full Cassius collection. This means that the technology can be customised to meet people's needs and to address individual challenges which will help them live independently at home for longer. More details on the Suffolk Website here.

- **Additional funds to prevent flooding and fix footpaths**

In December 2021, the Council committed an extra £20 million over the next three years into further improving Suffolk's highway drainage systems and footpaths.

In recognition of the increasing maintenance demand on these areas, councillors approved the use of £10 million to specifically deliver an increasing number of drainage schemes that deal with problems that affect larger numbers of people, and a further £10 million to improve footpath quality and access.

Under the proposals, the council's budget for 2022-23 would rise by 4.5% (from £598.2 to £625.4m). This additional money is generated by a 2.99% increase in Council Tax, and an increase in grants received from the Government. The proposals were presented for approval by councillors in February.

- **Another Year of COVID 19 but with restrictions easing – however still be aware !!**  
23rd March 2020 marks the 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the first lockdown. We have all learnt a lot to manage this prevalent virus and many of us learnt to avoid it. Last year I said "*my belief is that there is always good that comes out of bad*".

Here is some of the good we have learnt to overcome the unprecedented incident of Coronavirus throughout the year.

- The collection and dissemination of local data and advice to guide the local policy for best practice control.
- The organisation of Home Schooling with the local authority in maintained schools with
- The introduction of “Home but not Alone” free phone line for the lonely.
- The follow up to Test and Trace and now recently totally co-ordinated at the local level since March 2021.
- Local co-ordination of the Vaccination programme with Clinical Commissioning Groups via the Director of Public Health – Stuart Keeble.
- We have all learn to handle the technology to enable on line virtual meetings
- We have saved travelling time and as a result become more productive.
- We should all thank each other for the collaboration that has been achieved.

➤ **Leaders earmarked major investment on road to Covid recovery**

It was announced in late June 2021 that a significant investment of £6.238m was approved to support Suffolk’s long-term recovery beyond the Covid-19 pandemic.

Suffolk Public Sector Leaders (SPSL) approved a significant investment of £6.238m towards a range of strategic, community focussed projects and programmes that support efforts in Suffolk’s long-term recovery beyond the Covid-19 pandemic. This money will be used to increase the offer for young people and families, to improve access to housing, to help local businesses get back on track, to address the climate emergency commitment and to drive future public engagement plans. This includes - £2.6m to invest in future housing projects, improve literacy levels, identify families most in need of support and strengthen the local care offer for young people.

➤ **99% of pupils receive a preferred primary school on National Offer Day**

In April 2021, 99 % of children were offered a place at one of their parents’ three preferred schools and 95% were offered a place at their first preference school.

➤ **State-of-the-art vehicles join Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service’s fleet**

In May 2021, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service unveiled three new vehicles, packed with the latest technology, to support firefighters at emergency incidents. The Command Support Vehicles will typically be used as a hub at large, complex incidents, from which officers can manage operations and work with other emergency services.

Some of the new features on the vehicles include:

- Dedicated WiFi, enabling officers at the scene to quickly stream and share data, images, footage and plans with colleagues who are based remotely, for example at the Combined Fire Control Room
- LCD display built into the side of the vehicle, allowing officers to share content with other agencies attending an incident, such as live drone footage and plans
- Latest communications and computer technology with access to live information, weather reports, data on substances and chemicals, and direct contact with other agencies and services

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has invested £360,000 in the new units, which replace the three existing Command Support Vehicles. Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service have also unveiled state-of-the-art rescue vehicles and equipment to provide firefighters with the latest technology for rescues.



➤ **HRH The Duke of Gloucester officially opens The Hold**

On September 15th 2021, His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester officially opened The Hold, a new archives and heritage centre on Ipswich's Waterfront. The Duke was given a tour of the £20million building, a partnership between Suffolk County Council and the University of Suffolk, which is home to more than nine centuries of history safely preserved by Suffolk Archives. The Duke was shown treasures from the Suffolk Archives collections spanning 900 years of Suffolk's history, including the oldest document - a Charter of King Henry I granting churches and property to the monks of Eye Priory from around 1119.

**MPs from Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex and County Councillors, unite to protect the countryside and communities from the worst impacts of new pylons and cables**

In October 2021, the Offshore Electricity Grid Task Force (OffSET) was set up to review and respond to the Government's Offshore Network Transmission Review (OTNR).

A new group of MPs from across the region, under the chairmanship of Sir Bernard Jenkin, and including County Councillors from the region, has been set up to ensure that the emerging proposals of the Government's Offshore Network Transmission Review (OTNR), and proposals to change the Nationally Significant infrastructure Planning regime, are effectively scrutinised.

OffSET supports the government's commitment to meet the target of Net Zero by 2050, and the aspiration to deliver 40GW of Offshore Wind, by 2030. *However, this will result in a succession of electricity generation and connection projects in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, over the coming decades, which will have significant impacts on the environment and communities of the region.*

The group believes that these ambitions and targets cannot be met, on an "at any cost" basis. Therefore, the further development of the onshore transmission system, and the connection of offshore wind farms, and interconnectors, will require a new deal for communities and the environment. It remains a key priority that we speed up the Government's timetable to transition to the offshore transmission system, in order to protect our communities from the damaging effects of multiple cable corridors.

**National Grid informal and Statutory Consultation on the Bramford – Twinstead Reinforcement of the Cables and Pylon connection through South Suffolk and the AONB**

Much time has been spent by many in preparing for these important consultations during 2021 and early 2022. Enough has been said and written. Suffice to say my thanks go to all the work that individuals within the parishes have put into this important consultation for the area and my thanks also go for the support we have all received from the planning and technical team in Suffolk County Council. After much of a battle, I was pleased to have the opportunity of having face to face discussions with the National Grid Team which were most productive.

**Annual Public Health Report focuses on Mental Health impact of Covid-19**

Suffolk County Council, in December 2021, endorsed far-reaching recommendations to improve Suffolk people's mental health and wellbeing. This includes the creation of a dedicated fund of £2.5m and the development of a cross-system group to support community wellbeing in Suffolk.

The strains of the Covid-19 pandemic have meant that the issue of mental health has been in the public consciousness like never before. The unprecedented measures required to reduce the spread of the virus, have placed extraordinary pressures, and demands on the whole population, with around 1 in 5 adults in Britain experiencing some form of depression in the first three months of 2021.

## Melanie Barrett – Babergh District Councillor Report

- Council tax will increase this year by 2% which on a typical band D house is 7p per week or £3.48 per year. Q3 (Oct-Dec 21) shows a surplus of 744k so expecting a very positive outcome for year end. The gross expenditure of £33.7m and income was £23.3m to give a net service budget of £10.4, which is primarily funded from council tax, business rates and gov grants.
- The 22/23 budget was approved with a surplus of £527k predicted.
- A new fund was established under this year's budget of £200k from the GF Reserve which is set aside to cover unexpected costs. As this was not touched during the pandemic it will be released to supplement the communities grant programme leaving a healthy £1m in reserves.
- Under the Housing Revenue Account agreed at February meeting there was an increase 4.1% in Council house rents, equivalent to £3.72pm for social rent and £5.23pw for affordable rent. Sheltered housing service charges stayed the same (for the services of the Site Manager, alarm system and communal area). No increase in utility charges for sheltered housing for second year running even though gas and electricity prices have risen.
- Building repairs budget has been set at a more realistic level taking into account last years' increase in cost. It will be sent at £424k pa.
- The contract was Public Realm was bought back in house in November and feedback has been very positive on the standard of street cleansing, grass cutting is yet to start.
- The new Joint Local Plan (Town and County Planning) is not complete as the Inspector found serious problems with its compilation.
- The following information regarding Ukrainians refugees is on Suffolk CC website.

### [Supporting Afghan and Ukrainian refugees | Suffolk County Council](#)

- Central government has written to our council with information on funding arrangements to support Ukrainians refugees however we still don't have any settled individuals here. If you know of host families, please let me know.
- Parking charges proposed for council owned car parks have been postponed until further notice due to concerns about the effect this would have on our already struggling high street businesses.
- Net income in 21/22 is £300k from CIFCO Capital.
- Land at Belle Vue Park in Sudbury has been sold in a deal to develop the area of the old swimming pool and the house. Access will remain at the entrance from Newton Road. A new entrance will be made to open up the Cornard Road side and a new café and toilets will be proposed (all the above are subject to planning permission). Churchill, the developer wishes to build private retirement living accommodation and wants to retain the house and include it in future plans.
- Work is almost complete a £350k project to build solar carports at Kingfisher Leisure Centre in Sudbury. Government has match-funded with the aims of creating jobs, develop skills, provide infrastructure and tackle climate change. The panels will provide energy to the leisure centre and battery storage and EV charging as part of carbon reduction strategy.
- Work is nearing completion of the £9m extension to Gainsborough's House Museum. Its due to reopen this Spring.
- The Parking Review has been completed and is due to be shared with all Cllr's soon.

- The results of a review of all Babergh owned garage sites is due to identify sites suitable for redevelopment [ownership allowing].  
The housing team have worked hard to find temp accommodation for the homeless in the area during Covid. New accommodation has been purchased by Babergh that will offer temp places to homeless people.
- This is the second year that councillors have had an allocated budget of £2k to fund projects, items etc that will benefit the community, I spent some of my locality budget on planters in Bures. I'm waiting to hear if the balance can be carried forward to spend next year.
- Councillors voted against retaining some remote meetings in favour of 100% face to face for all formal meetings. Don't forget you can see how each councillor voted on each motion and check attendance rates on councillor's details page on Babergh site.

### **Peter Schwier Essex County Councillor Report:**

The last 12 months have been exceptionally busy and demanding. They have also been productive, and the new administration at Essex County Council has lost no time in setting out its clear aims and priorities for the four-year term.

While too many to list in full, below is a small sample of the landmarks and achievements of the last 12 months at the county council.

- **Launch of Everyone's Essex Strategy** – the council's ambitious plan for the four years ahead. It set out our levelling up plan for the county, and 20 commitments under the key areas of "economy", "environment", "health" and "family". The strategy set out how renewal, equality and ambition run through everything we do. Crucially, from my perspective, it established our aim to reach net-zero in Essex.
- **A budget for Essex** - In February this year, the council set its budget for the 2022/23 financial year. To help achieve ECC's vision of a county where everyone can thrive, it was announced that several areas would receive significant additional investment, including:
  - a £1.3 billion capital programme across the next four years
  - £200million over the next four years to support our climate action and net zero ambitions
  - an additional £10million in skills and economic growth
  - a further £2million for infrastructure and a new pothole fund
  - a £1.5million fund for the heritage and culture sector
  - an additional £1million for Levelling Up across Essex
  - continuation of the £750,000 localities fund to support district-based Levelling Up priorities
  - a continuation of the £500,000 investment in the work being done to protect Essex children from being targeted by gangs

A £20million investment has already been made available to help families. This includes directly supporting financial wellbeing and helping them with summer childcare. ECC will also commit an extra £700,000 to the Essential Living Fund to help families and individuals with food, fuel, clothing and furniture bills.

- **Council Tax** – At the same meeting, ECC took the difficult decision to increase its share of council tax by 4.49%. As an administration, we are very clear that the only

money the council has to spend is the money of our residents. It is therefore right that we raise taxes reluctantly and only once every alternative has been explored. In this instance, the main part of the increase was a 2.5% increase in the social care precept – money that goes towards supporting vulnerable residents, including frail, elderly, adults with disabilities, and vulnerable children in need. While we always seek to avoid council tax increases, the pressures on the social care market are such that an increase this year was deemed the only way to stave off serious problems in provision of social care, with providers struggling to stay in business.

- **Highways** - The council will be spending £135m on highways maintenance over the coming year and, as ever, will prioritise the areas by severity of need. In the Braintree district council area, over the last six months, this spending has led to repairs to 184 county-grade roads, 160 local roads, 187 pavements, 3,711 drains cleared and 2,240 street lights fixed.
- **Climate Action** - In November, ECC's cabinet approved a Climate Action Plan which agreed a £200m commitment to help address all areas of climate-related activity in Essex. The county council's ambition is to ensure we are building a coalition of support across the county for the move to net-zero carbon emissions in our county by 2050. Detailing how we will implement the recommendations of the Essex Climate Action Commission's report *Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral*, it included plans across areas such as housing, infrastructure, transport, waste and the natural environment.
- **Within the first 100 days** - the following was achieved
  - repairing over one million square metres of roads and 40,000 square metres of footpaths and cycleways
  - creating over 600 new roles for unemployed young people aged 18-24 as part of the Government's Kickstart scheme
  - delivering four BT broadband contracts under Superfast Essex programme for a further 12,000 premises
  - starting construction of the West Mersea temporary defence barrier scheme
  - launching a new £500,000 fund to support community action on climate change
  - working with the Essex Climate Action Commission (ECAC) to develop and publish the 'Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral' report
  - launching the Active Essex 'Find your Active' campaign, supported by a £1.25 million fund
  - launching Essex Pedal Power, a £2.7million community-based project being piloted in Clacton and Jaywick Sands
  - launching the new Essex Care Technology Service to support people with care needs access and use the latest technology to help them to live as independently as possible
  - announcing the Essex Education Task Force which will invest £1million in reading over the next 18 months, to support children and young people affected by the loss of learning during the Covid-19 pandemic
  - piloting construction methods designed to deliver net-zero, future proof, inclusive school buildings

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

**Balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022                    £15,011.38**

**Parish precept to Babergh District Council for financial year 2021/22: £30,435**

Parish precept remains as per previous financial year

**Parish Element of Band D Tax Rate: £74.85 for 2022/23    (£76.11 for 2021/22)**

### **Allocation of Parish Budget:**

Cemetery Authority	£6,500
Bures Community Centre	£200 (telephone line rental)
Sportsground	£9,321.43
Clerk's salary	£6,400
Lighting	£350
Lighting Loan	£1,749.92
Insurance	£615
Training	£300
Hall hire	£150
Auditors	£300
Administration	£480
Subscriptions	£500
Elections	£1,000
Grounds Maintenance	£5,000
Gritting	£250
Donations/parish items	£500
Repairs	£200
Speed Indicator (SID)	£300
Minimum Retention Funds held	£5,000

Street lighting loan balance is £2,548.00 – final payment year ending 2023/2024

The parish council receives a Street Cleansing Grant from Babergh District Council (£1,360.32) to offset costs paid for the Parish Street Cleansing Contractor.

The parish council received £7,826.93 from BDC CIL funding for parish amenities. £250 has been spent to meet 50% costs of the Queen's Jubilee bench. Remaining balance £7,576.93 currently held in the parish council reserves pending a decision on its use.

The Christmas Lights Fund currently stands at £3,007.72 which is administered by Bures St Mary Parish Council. The Bures NHP fund is administered by Bures Hamlet Parish Council with grants applied for to cover ongoing costs.

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

**Balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022    £12,551.55**

**Parish precept to Braintree District Council for financial year 2022/23: £30,817.00**

An increase of £1,000 on the previous financial year.

**Council Tax Collection Fund:** Braintree District Council has ceased the Collection Fund distribution to the parishes and therefore the parish council will no longer receive an allocated sum.

**Parish Element of Band D Tax Rate 2022/23: £95.08    (2021/22: (£93.04))**

### **Allocation of Parish Budget:**

Cemetery Authority	£6,500
Bures Community Centre	£200 (telephone line rental)
Sportsground	£9,321.48

Clerk's salary	£6,400
Lighting	£500
Insurance	£560
Training	£500
Hall hire	£220
Auditors	£300
Administration	£550
Subscriptions	£500
Elections	£1,000
Donations/parish items	£500
Repairs	£500
Projects	£1,000
Grounds Maintenance	£5,000
Gritting/flooding	£500
Earmarked Funds	Minimum Retention funds £5,000

The parish council receives a BDC Street Cleansing grant £881.70, an Eastlight Community Housing grant £152.48 and ECC Highways Devolution grant £1,000. These grants are to offset costs met by the parish council.

A VAT claim of £1,272.80 scheduled to be submitted early April.

The Christmas Lights fund is held in Bures St Mary Parish Council accounts and currently stands at £3,007.72.

The Bures NHP fund is held in the Bures Hamlet Parish Council accounts. A preliminary grant of £3,942 was received during 2021/22. Further grants to be received in 2022/23 to cover ongoing costs.

### **Public Questions**

Are there initiatives to improve recycling in the County – ECC looking at multi-use and for waste to be a recycling asset.

Solar panels should be for all new builds – cannot force developers to include but ECC does encourage.

What initiatives for education and skills – Springfield to be a base for training and reskill and apprenticeships. However more Assessors needed.

Cllr Barrett raised the question of empty homes and noted on the launch of an initiative by Babergh DC to bring empty homes back to use.

A concern was raised that the village had dwellings held under 7 different housing associations and asked if the district council had a policy on allocation. MB to discuss with the resident following the meeting.

Cllr Jackson informed those present of her immediate resignation as Chair to Bures St Mary Parish Council. On behalf of those present and parish council members, the Clerk thanked Cllr Jackson for her dedication and commitment to the parish during her long term of Office.

Both Chairman proceeded to thank all those present for attending the meeting.

Meeting ended at 9.15pm