

## **Minutes of Bures Joint Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 26 March 2018 at The Garrad Room, Bures Community Centre, Nayland Road at 7.30pm**

**Present:** BHPC: Cllrs D Lee, R Butler, A Crowe, D Kennett, M Randall, M Welch, M.Whiter  
BSMPC: Cllrs G Jackson, L Alston, D Ambrose, J Aries, J McCrory, S Pentney, T Saer, T Waring  
Cllr J Finch (Suffolk County Council)  
plus 33 members of the public (Attendance List attached)

**In attendance:** Mrs C Holbrook (To take minutes in the absence of the Clerk)

**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 second Bures Joint Annual Parish Meeting. She informed the meeting that Carolyn Holbrook would minute the meeting in the absence of the BH and BSM Clerk, Jenny Wright, who was recuperating from an illness.

### **Apologies**

Apologies received from Cllr T Fairbairn (BSMPC), Braintree DC Councillor Wendy Scattergood, Babergh DC Cllr Lee Parker

### **Police Report**

Cllr Jackson welcomed PC Simon Bourne to the meeting and invited him to present his report. He is part of the Sudbury Safe Neighbourhood Team which also covers the Haverhill area. He said that although money and time are both tight, he felt that it was important to keep in touch with the community and to attend meetings where possible. He invited questions from the meeting and the following were raised:

- Is the problem of young people coming into Bures on Friday evenings from the Sudbury area a result of the proliferation of CCTV cameras in Sudbury? Can the police put in a presence? Sgt Bourne said that there are no funds for community issues. It is very much a case of "Fire Brigade Policing"
- What is deemed to be illegal in terms of parking? This was raised in respect of Cuckoo Hill. Sgt Bourne said he is aware of frustration in many places over the issue of car parking but he suggested referring individual situations to the Highways Department. One resident on Cuckoo Hill said that she had witnessed 5 RTAs, including in the last week, but that there had been no response from either Highways or the County Council. Sgt Bourne's advice was to keep pushing Highways as it is their responsibility. However, if parking becomes dangerous then it is a police matter and he promised to come early one morning to observe the situation, including parking on pavements. If someone with a pram, for example, cannot get through on the pavement but has to go out into the road then this constitutes an unnecessary obstruction and is, therefore, an offence which can incur a penalty notice.

Cllr Jackson advised that parking will be looked at as part of the Village Action Plan.

## **Minutes**

Minutes of the Joint Annual Parish Meeting of Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary held on 30 March 2017 were presented and distributed (previously signed 15 May 2017 and 18 May 2017 respectively). They were taken as read with two matters arising:

- More cigarette bins had been requested but cigarette ends are no longer a major problem on the litter picks
- A question and answer session with the 2 MPs had not taken place but was no longer relevant as this had been a pre-Brexit requirement

## **Bures St Mary Parish Council Chairman's Report**

Cllr Jackson expressed her thanks to Lee Parker, Babergh District Council) and Jenny Wright for their hard work and wished them both a speedy recovery. She then presented the following report:

We are now into our second year of holding a joint Annual Parish Meeting. This feels all the more important when we are working on the Action Plan for the village. The Action Plan is a result of the Parish Plan survey which was circulated in June. The plan looks at the whole village and doesn't see it in terms of two separate council areas. Almost all of those responding to the questionnaire enjoy living in Bures and there were many positive comments made. These range from appreciating the community spirit and countryside to feeling that the village is well cared for by the Parish Councils and we are well provided for in terms of activities and clubs.

Housing was a very important area covered by the questionnaire and indeed it has proved a pressing matter in the village this year. The proposal for development on Colchester Road was turned down once but has returned, as we knew it would. The survey results supported small, manageable developments but, in the case of the Slaughterhouse development on Cuckoo Hill, we have seen that small developments can cause huge problems to residents. We are not 'nimbys' in Bures and have acknowledged that some small developments may be good for the village.

The Parish Plan survey highlighted the residents' desire for more shops and a café. It seems that we have gone through the era of most people wanting to shop infrequently at large supermarkets to people doing smaller shopping trips more frequently more locally; this links with something else that continues to be an issue for Bures residents - the state of empty retail properties in the village. It's good to see that a business is operating from the Chambers premises but other properties continue to cause concern. Last year there had been some tentative progress with Central Stores and Bank House but, although the owner of Central Stores kindly allows us to use the shop to advertise, a properly functioning business would be substantially better for the village. In response to the outcomes of the questionnaire we will be looking at what the Parish Councils can do about something which is important to the village but does not fall directly into our remit.

Traffic management issues - looking at ways of reducing speeding through the village and increasing the much needed parking came out as important to residents. Bures St Mary reported at last year's meeting that the B1508 to Sudbury had a

40mph speed limit for the whole stretch and we have been looking at ways of increasing the parking in the village. Further work on these matters will be part of the joint plan.

In addition to the Parish Plan meetings, the usual six full Bures St Mary Parish Council meetings and the meetings where Bures St Mary and Bures Hamlet work together to run the Sportsground and the Cemetery, have been held.

We have been frustrated with the lack of progress by the Babergh District Council Legal dept. concerning transfer of ground to the parish for the play area at Pykes Marsh. We have been operating our own street cleaning and maintenance work and there is a move to transfer more responsibility from District and County level to the parishes. We have successfully applied for The Three Horseshoes to be listed as an Asset of Community Value. This status helps to prevent the loss of assets in villages.

The Bures Joint Sportsground Committee has installed a new climbing wall and a new accessible swing. The climbing wall is due to have an App which users can download to their phones to give them challenge and competition. The suppliers have agreed that they will provide the App before the final payment is made. The swing is in use; please contact the clerk if you need the harness for your child to enjoy this facility. We are also planning to provide a new roundabout after the old one, a favourite with many children, finally succumbed to rust in the underframe.

We have had a number of changes of councillors this year. Thank you to those who have given their time voluntarily to help run and maintain the village. The current councillors are Jan Aries, Leigh Alston, Dennis Ambrose, Jennie McCrory, Tim Fairbairn, Tony Waring, Sharon Pentney and Tracy Saer – my thanks to them. Thanks also go to our Suffolk County Councillor, James Finch, to Lee Parker, our Babergh District Councillor and especially to our extremely hard working and dedicated clerk, Jenny Wright.

Cllr Gill Jackson

### **Bures Hamlet Parish Council Chairman's Report**

During the past year, the Council has met six times.

Due to vacancies occurring because of personal circumstances, Richard Butler and Mark Whiter have recently been appointed to the Council.

Once again, with two notable exceptions, a great deal of the business conducted has been of a routine nature, including reporting essential repairs to footpaths, roads and streetlights and dealing with the unfortunate graffiti incident last summer.

Our new maintenance contractor has now been in place for a year and is proving to be a real asset.

The Parish Council very much welcome a faster broadband service and I am therefore pleased to report that 'superfast broadband' is now available to a large part of the village. It is regretted though that the box at the bottom of Station Hill has been positioned without thought to its surroundings and despite our best efforts to get it relocated in a less obstructive location it appears that once a subcontractor has made their decision there is no way that this can be overturned.

Undergrounding of cables near New Cut has been undertaken but we still await the removal of the poles and the overhead wires.

Motorists speeding through the village continue to be of major concern to the Parish Council and our thanks go to George Barnham and his team for operating the Speedwatch Scheme during the past 12 months. More volunteers are urgently required. The Parish Council note the public concerns raised on this subject in the parish survey and, despite all our previous efforts, we will now use this data to again take this issue up with Essex County Council.

Car parking continues to be a problem in the village and again the Parish Council note the concerns raised in the parish survey. Any particular obstructions should be reported immediately to the Essex Parking Partnership for their action.

The Demand Response Transport scheme continues to expand slowly and is available for the pre-booking bus journeys where no other transport solutions are available.

The Parish Council remains opposed to the rail authority's proposal to close the pedestrian crossing over the railway line. Last year we made strong representations against the closure of our crossing and although the Public Inquiry was commenced it was adjourned because of legal reasons. It will recommence in September this year and we will take the opportunity to speak on behalf of the village against the closure.

The Bells Garage site unfortunately continues to deteriorate with vandalism occurring at times. Braintree District Council have attempted to secure the site on a short-term basis but its long-term development is in the hands of the owner, who shows no signs of doing anything.

The major planning issue during the past year is currently ongoing ie the revised outline planning application for a housing development on land off the Colchester Road. The Parish Council are not opposed to some development in the village, particularly if it is affordable housing for people with a local connection but we were unable to support the previous application because we considered that a development of that size would be unsustainable. The scheme was subsequently removed from the draft Braintree District Plan due to its potential detrimental effect on any extension to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Local Plan is now with the Government Inspector for approval. The Parish Council will be meeting this week to decide on its response to the latest application. We are aware of the public responses in the parish survey and also the current legislative requirements that appear to allow approval of similar developments where there is not an approved Local Plan in place.

It is excellent to see that Bures Common is in regular active use by the public, including last year's public picnic and the regular local produce markets. Progress on the barn restoration is also continuing and the thanks of the village go to all those involved in its restoration.

Once again, the Parish Council would like to express our thanks to all those involved in erecting and maintaining the village Christmas Lights which continue to improve year-on-year.

Jan Aries is now our Right of Way Officer. The Parish Council would like to thank Hugh Turner for all his work in this role over the years.

We would also like to thank to David and Anne Taylor, our Station Adopters for maintaining the station surroundings in such excellent order. We wish them well in their pending retirement. Bures Station is now officially designated a 'request stop'. We have expressed our concerns against this incomprehensible down-grading of our station.

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 our District Council.

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 are also due to Wendy Scattergood our District Councillor and David Finch our County Councillor for all their help during the year.

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.

Cllr David Lee

#### **Babergh District Councillor Report**

Cllr Lee Parker had not submitted a report

#### **Braintree District Councillor Report**

Cllr Wendy Scattergood had not submitted a report

#### **Suffolk County Councillor Report**

Cllr James Finch had previously submitted the following report:

In my last year's report I shared our Conservative manifesto setting out our 10 priorities for the next 4 years in Suffolk, focused on our careful management of the council, its services and its finances. We wrote about Conservative values and how we translated them into our vision of how to run a council and why we should for the next 4 years. We pointed to our delivery of 7 years of 0% basic council tax rises but were careful to say we would do all we can to keep council tax bills as low as we can for the next 4 years.

For the county council elections on 4th May, the opposition parties promoted a manifesto of "spend, spend, spend" which was soundly rejected across the area and throughout Suffolk. In all of Suffolk's 75 Divisions, we fought a vigorous campaign and won 52 Divisions pinning Labour back into Ipswich and just two seats outside.

Almost immediately we went into the surprise General Election and our county councillors put on hold their return to normal duties to take an active part in our Suffolk MP's election campaigns, and of course here in South Suffolk, James Cartlidge's re-election. Following that our Suffolk County Council (SCC) group published the corporate 'Our Priorities' document which makes the link between our manifesto and the organisation – ensuring these priorities were reflected in our officers' priorities and action plans.

A few weeks ago, alongside our budget 2018/19 proposals, we published, for the very first time, a business plan for the next year setting out the targets for the improvements we plan to implement, alongside the further budget savings we have to make. Since 2010 we have stripped £256 million out of our annual expenditure. Despite this we still need to save a further £56 million over the next 4 years. However, we will still spend about £500 million on vital services in our community from protecting vulnerable Children, to helping older people and balancing spending on these vital services against the very important function of maintaining our roads. This is over and above the £500 + million that central government allocates for our schools in the county.

This year the county element of the Council Tax (CT) will sadly rise as our SCC councillors reluctantly voted to increase the basic CT by 2.99% at the Council meeting on 9th February 2018. In addition they applied the National Adult Social Care Precept at 2%. This is sadly very necessary but the group is ever mindful that its residents who pay these bills with their own hard earned income. The plans going forward show that we need to save a further £56 million over the next 4 years and in order to do this there are no easy savings or efficiencies left and therefore difficult decisions are having to be discussed. But as Conservatives, our SCC Group will not duck these difficult decisions, determined as we are that delivering a sustainable budget is the cornerstone of providing vital front-line services to the most vulnerable people here in South Suffolk, and indeed throughout Suffolk.

On a personal note as many of you know, I have spent too much time under medical supervision during this last year. Regrettably, as a result of these circumstance, I have stepped back from my role as SCC Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport. However with your support I do intend to keep my role as your County Councillor for the Stour Valley division. I am pleased to report that at last that I am slowly returning to normal although I predict I will be under the guidance of the specialists at Charing Cross hospital – who are incredible - throughout the year.

**James Finch County Councillor Stour Valley Division**

### **Essex County Councillor Report**

Cllr David Finch had not submitted a report

### **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**

Balance as at 26<sup>th</sup> March 2018:

Business Saver A/C balance: £14,355.59

Community A/C balance: £ 1,945.02

Parish precept to Braintree District Council for financial year 2018/2019: £26,892, an increase of £925 on previous year to compensate on reduction in the Localism Grant.

**Localism Grant:** £925.00 grant for 2018/19 additional to the Parish Precept

This grant has gradually been phased out and this is the final payment from BDC.

**Additional one-off payment:** BDC have agreed to make a one-off additional payment to parish and town councils in 2018/19. The payment is an allocation of the estimated surplus on the Council Tax Collection Fund as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.

Bures Hamlet Parish Council is allocated to receive £441.00.

**Parish Element of Band D Tax Rate 2018/19: £83.76 (2017/18: £81.49)**

**Allocation of Parish Budget:**

Cemetery Authority	£5,500 (an increase of £1,000 on previous year for pending tree works)
Bures Community Centre	£200 (telephone line rental)
Sportsground	£8,500 (an increase of £500 on previous year)
Clerk's salary	£5,640
Lighting	£500
Insurance	£535
Training	£300
Hall hire	£200
Auditors	£300
Administration	£500
Subscriptions	£500
Elections	£1,000
Parish Plan	£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 Led for parish lights £2,000

We also receive a BDC Street Cleansing grant £813.68 (2017/18) and a Greenfields Housing Maintenance grant £259.49 (2017/18) to offset costs paid for by the parish council.

Grants for 2018/19: £827.64 and £259.49.

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

## **Bures St Mary Parish Council**

Balances as at 26<sup>th</sup> March 2018:

Business Instant A/C balance: £14,490.71

Treasurers A/C balance: £ 5,925.83

Parish precept to Babergh District Council for financial year 2018/2019: £26,435.00  
as per previous year 2017/2018.

Parish Element of Band D Tax Rate: £66.11 for 2018/19 (£64.65 for 2017/18)

Allocation of Parish Budget 2018/19:

Cemetery Authority £5,500 (an increase of £1,000 on previous year for  
pending tree works)

Bures Community Centre £200 (telephone line rental)

Sportsground £8,500 (an increase of £500 on previous year)

Clerk's salary £4,511.91

Lighting £500

Lighting Loan £1,749.92

Insurance £580

Training £500

Hall hire £175

Auditors £300

Administration £450

Subscriptions £450

Elections £1,000

Parish Plan £1,000

Data Protection £1,000

Grounds Maintenance £4,500

Gritting £250

Donations/parish items £1,000

Repairs/projects £2,000

Christmas lights £500

Minimum Retention Funds held £6,608.75

Street lighting loan balance is £8,333.91 – 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.

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

There were no questions on either of the Financial Reports

### **Questions from Parishioners**

- 1) Claire Frewin asked Cllr Finch about the reduction in expenditure on early intervention in child protection. Cllr Finch said that the decision had not been taken lightly. Where some of the children's centres closed were attracting some who were not needful of those services, the strategy was to move them into community centres
- 2) On the subject of potholes and the state of the roads, Hugh Turner asked about the principles of funding and why we don't have higher council and income taxes in order to mend the country. Cllr Finch said that the country is in deficit and the strategy over the last 10 years has been to be more careful about how money is spent. SCC has prioritised what it deems to be important. Roads are an impossible task because they are taking more and bigger traffic than they had been intended to.
- 3) Claire Frewin raised the subject of the Slaughterhouse Development. She praised Cllr Parker without whose support she believed nothing would have been obtained from Babergh DC. The enforcement case was opened on 6 October 2017 and there had been no action to date. An independent survey by Randalls had been commissioned by the residents and had shown the houses to be 2.64m higher than on plan. What steps can the residents now take? In Cllr Parker's absence, Cllr Finch undertook to speak to the BDC Enforcement department and to John Ward, Leader of BD Council

Other comments included that the proposed distance of the houses from the Frewin boundary were revised between the plans submitted in the Planning Application and those submitted for Public Consultation and therefore that members of the public should be aware that plans forming part of such a consultation can change before the planning decision is made.

Cllr Jackson said that BSM PC had always opposed development of this site and had initiated its own enforcement case. She had spoken to both the Planning Office and Enforcement Officer to make the council's views clear. She thanked all those present for attending this evening's meeting and for the hard work they have put in so far on this matter

- 4) Cllr Lee asked if there were any questions regarding the proposed Colchester Road development. Disappointment was expressed at Cllr Scattergood's absence from the meeting.

Cllr Lee said that BDC took this site out of the Local Plan because it was detrimental to the AONB and that they should still, therefore, hold this view. Cllr Jackson reported that BSM PC met last week and have submitted their objections to this development

Charlotte Scott expressed concern that the planning application contained inaccuracies about, for example, transport and school information and that the developer was putting forward misrepresentations.

Cllr Lee asked for a show of hands for and against the development. One person was in favour. He referred to certain information being circulated via social media and asked that if people respond on this application that they use the latest application (ie not including the piece of land owned by BDC)

Kate Buckle asked that, as the village questionnaire had identified a requirement for housing, what sort and size of development would the Parish Council support. Cllr Lee thought it was a question of Brownfield rather than Greenfield sites.

Cllr Jackson said that a figure of 20 houses had been discussed at the BSMPC meeting with a review of impact before any further development agreed.

The question of a lack of transparency and control was raised as evidenced by the whole Slaughterhouse issue.

Charlotte Scott pointed out that the Colchester Road number had already gone up to 98 from the 85 in the draft Local Plan.

At this point, Cllr Lee drew the evening to a close. He thanked Cllr Jackson for her 25 years' service as a councillor.

Mike Roche proposed a toast to all parish councillors for their hard work and commitment.