

**Minutes of the Bures Hamlet Parish Council Meeting
Monday 19th January 2026
held at Bures Community Centre at 7.30pm**

Present: Cllrs J Chambers, M Elder, S Keeble-Fox, S Manning, M Welch.
In the Chair: Cllr S Keeble-Fox (Vice-chair).
Also present: J Wright (Clerk), Cllr J Aries (BSMPC), Cllr D Holland (BDC).

01/01/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Cllr R Shackell (hols) Cllr J Child (illness).
Apologies accepted by all members present.
Apologies also received from Cllr P Schwier (ECC).

02/01/26 DECLARATION/REGISTER OF INTERESTS/DISPENSATIONS

To receive any 'pecuniary' or 'non-pecuniary' interests and dispensation requests.
None received.

03/01/26 MINUTES

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 18th November 2025 (previously circulated) were duly approved and signed as a correct record.

04/01/26 PUBLIC FORUM

15 minutes maximum public participation

3 minutes for individual contributions unless agreed by Chairman

There were no members of the public present.

County Councillor: Cllr Schwier not in attendance however all correspondence between meetings from Cllr Schwier has been circulated.

District Councillor: Cllr Holland was in attendance and agreed to remain to the end of the meeting business and offer his input to matters arising as and when required. He noted that there was no decision from Government regarding the Essex Local Government Reorganisation. The Leader of Braintree DC has written to the Government Minister requesting an early decision on whether elections across Greater Essex will proceed this coming May. Cllr Holland urged organisations to request funding for projects from the National Grid Community Benefits. Clerk noted that BHPC has not received details from National Grid however BSMPC has and also responded with its suggested projects. Clerk to follow up with National Grid as there maybe confusion with Bures having two parish councils.

Bures St Mary Parish Council: Cllr Aries reported on the following: BSMPC has submitted a list of projects to National Grid Community Benefits as mentioned earlier in the meeting Electric charging points being assessed for Tawneys Ride and Claypits Avenue under the EV Suffolk Plug-in initiative. A thermal imaging camera has been on loan for one week however a very poor uptake on the initiative. BSMPC will advertise again next year. Babergh DC has conducted a Call for Sites for the district. The Parish Council is unaware of any sites put forward. The new bus shelter is scheduled to be installed in April. Police Crime Commissioner Tim Passmore has requested an increase of £15 per household in the Police precept for 2026/27. The Parish Council is advertising for a Clerk/RFO. County Cllr James Finch has agreed to speak on Fostering at the Joint Annual Parish Meeting on Monday 30th March. Suffolk County Council voted to request the forthcoming elections in May to be postponed.

05/01/26 POLICE MATTERS

- a) Issues raised with Community Policing Teams:** No matters referred to the Community Policing Team since the November meeting.
- b) Police Forums** are currently being held bi-monthly via Teams. Parish representatives encouraged to attend. Next meeting 26th January at 6.30pm.
- c) SpeedWatch:** Cllr Aries advised that following notice of the policy by Essex Police of not sending out warning letters to keeper of vehicles registered outside Essex or to keepers of leased or finance company vehicles, the Essex Bures Speedwatch has been disbanded. Cllr Aries has written to the Essex Police Commissioner but was notified that there would be no exemption for borders. Following this notification Police CC Roger Hirst is to meet with the Head of Road Policing Unit to discuss the implications of this.

06/01/26 HIGHWAY MATTERS

- a) Flooding issues:** Lanes Drains have carried out the works to remove silt from the Water Lane brook. Chris Gant Highways Engineer, County Cllr Peter Schwier, Cllr Keeble-Fox and the Clerk all in attendance. Representatives from EA removed fish and invertebrates from the brook prior to the works commencing. Highways design team is also looking to compulsory purchase land and install a holding pond further upstream. This will slow the flow of water down as the current system under full load cannot cope.
- b) Millennium footpath repair:** The path has subsided once again. T5 Building Company has submitted a quotation for the work - £1,578 + VAT. Clerk has followed up with ECC Footpath Officer and Cllr Schwier as it is a priority route to school for parents and children plus motorised scooter users. Repair also reported on the Online Reporting tool, Reference 4009998. ECC Footpath Officers have responded and are following up.
- c) Village parking issues:** A resident has written in with their proposals to attempt to solve the parking issues on market and football days. Chair, Cllr Shackell responded to the resident and considered this matter needed full attention at the parish council meeting. Following lengthy discussions between members it was agreed Cllr Keeble-Fox should put forward the following proposals at the forthcoming BSMPC meeting for its members consideration also.
- a) Consider using Marshalls for future events.
 - b) Consider changing market days to Sundays.
 - c) Discuss options to use land for parking with local landowners.
- It was noted that the football club has staggered kick off times and the market organisers are reimbursing visitors who use the station carpark to alleviate the situation.
- d) NEEP application:** An application to hopefully improve parking issues at Water Lane, Station Hill and Normandie Way submitted to the North East Essex Parking Partnership has been approved. Waiting on delivery date expected this year.
- e) Station Hill trees:** The trees have been inspected by Highways and found to be in good condition with minor deadwood within the crown. Contractors crown lifted the two trees over the highway for clearance and works now completed. The tree root damage to the path is still awaiting repair.
- f) Parsonage Hill lighting:** The Chair has a suitable location in mind, however still to be agreed with residents. Costs being investigated, although the Local Highway Panel is not taking on any more projects for the foreseeable future and therefore the Parish Council will be required to meet those costs. Nothing further to report.

07/01/26 PLANNING

- a) All applications received and comments made to date as per attached list.
- b) **Applications requiring consideration at this meeting:** None for consideration
- c) **Enforcement matters:**
 - 1) Land south of Penlan – the Clerk has written to Enforcement relating to a possible breach of planning permission in the form of removal of hedgerow and mature trees. The Enforcement Officer has visited the site and is happy that no planning permission is required.
 - 2) No. 8 Parsonage Grove – the Clerk has written to Enforcement regarding the newly erected garden fence. As planning permission is required. A retrospective planning application is to be submitted by the resident.
- d) **Jubilee Grove:** The grid path has been installed with costs taken from the recent Rural England Prosperity grant. Thanks expressed to the Transition Group for preparing the application. Clay soil for the scrape pond has been sourced locally from Weavers Demolition free of charge. Thanks to Karl Weavers for this kind gesture. Works on the scrape pond to proceed when weather more suitable, Any costs to be taken from the District Councillor's Locality Award.
- e) **Chambers Bus Depot site:** Planning permission issued 31st July 2025. Discharge of Conditions 13,22,24,30,33 and 36 all approved. These relate to Construction Management Plan, paths and roads, surface water and bollards. Still no information on a start date.
- f) **Greenacres, Packards Lane, Wormingford Ref 25163:** Decision on the business hub application is due 27th February. Journey Transport Planning have assessed that the development will have very limited impact on the area or nearby settlements. Historic England has not made any recommendations.

08/01/26 FINANCE MATTERS

Commercial Instant A/C balance: £10,304.13 Community Account balance: £5,955.01

- a) Finance and Budget monitoring report - noted, circulated and attached.
- b) Bank reconciliation and verifying bank statements dated 10th January 2026 noted, circulated and duly signed by the Chairman and non-signatory member.
- c) Precept request forms to Braintree District Council were duly agreed and signed.
- d) The parish element of the Band D Tax Rate for 2026/27 is £102.76– an increase of 4.80% on the previous year.
- e) An increase from £8.50 to £10 monthly agreed to meet the costs of the HMRC payroll management currently run by K Sarley.
- f) Finance reports from the Joint Sportsground Committee and the Joint Cemetery Authority circulated and duly noted.

09/01/26 AUDIT MATTERS

- a) An Internal Audit Review was held on the 24th November 2025 at 6pm via Zoom. Cllr Keeble-Fox, Cllr Welch and the Clerk attended. Meeting notes circulated. Area for development – maintain awareness of the current Government Devolution process and to consider the parish council's future role in this.
- b) The 2025/26 Fee Schedule circulated from BB Business Associates was accepted by all members.
- c) Members agreed to confirm acceptance of BB Business Associates as Internal Auditors for financial year 2025/26. A Letter of Engagement to be duly signed by the Clerk on receipt.
- d) The gov.uk domain has been implemented – noted. All parish councillor email addresses were now compliant with the Assertion 10 Guidance with the exception of one councillor who was gaining assistance on the matter.

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e) Councillor's Statement of Assurance – Councillor's understanding of obligations – The Parish Council had previously signed the Civility and Respect Pledge. NALC has now recommended The Councillor's Statement of Assurance, although not a legal document nor a contractual obligation is a public affirmation of personal values and conduct. All members present duly signed the form. Clerk to hold on file.

10/01/26 MATTERS NOT ARISING ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

a) **Devolution response:** The Parish Council has forwarded its LGR consultation response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The 5 Unitary Council solution for Greater Essex Local Government Reorganisation is preferred. It was noted that ECC is not calling for a postponement of elections this May.

b) **Post Office closure:** Members discussed possible options for a recognition of service for Robert Harrod and his family following the notice of closure of Bures Post Office. Clerk to liaise with Robert for his preferences. Closure scheduled for Tuesday 31st March 2026. It was noted that the Sportsground Committee is investigating the possible installation of Royal Mail parcel lockers. A cash machine facility may be needed if there is no offer of take up to continue with a post office in the village.

c) **APM format:** Members agreed to continue with the same format as the previous year along with volunteer group display tables in the hall. Cllrs Chambers and Manning offered to do refreshments, Cllr Elder to welcome and sign in residents as they arrive. Set up scheduled for 6pm. Clerk to invite the groups. 2 speakers to be arranged for the evening. Clerk and Cllr Aries to liaise and co-ordinate.

d) **BDC Street Cleansing agreement:** Members agreed to continue with the agreement with Braintree DC for financial year 2026/27. Clerk to follow up on the paperwork required.

e) **Station Hill garden:** Following the successful BDC grant application the Clerk has ordered one new wooden planter to be installed in the spring. Soil improver to be bedded in next month. A further supply of winter bedding has been purchased.

f) **Christmas lights:** Donations from the BMF and the Eight Bells Quiz Group has allowed new Christmas lights to be purchased to replace ageing lights and extend the coverage next season. Robert Harrod had been asked to switch on the lights and the event early December was a huge success. Members expressed their grateful thanks to Tracy Saer and her team of volunteers.

g) **BDC waste service review:** The new Simpler Recycling legislation comes into effect across the Braintree District in June 2026. Households have received literature outlining the coming changes. The Clerk to ask a team member from the Waste and Minimisation Team to attend the March market to engage with residents.

h) **Retail trader update:** Following a number of complaints the Retail Trader has since ceased trading at Normandie Way on a Friday night as they did not hold the appropriate licence.

11/01/26 JOINT NHP AND JOINT PARISH PLAN

a) **Joint NHP:** Unfortunately there had been a delay with the Plan however it is now currently with the External Examiner Ann Skipper. The date of the referendum will be announced when residents will have the opportunity to vote on whether to adopt the Plan.

b) **Draft Joint Parish Plan 2025-2026:** No new action points added.

c) **Village magazine:** The Clerk continues to attend a magazine sub-committee chaired by the Reverend Daniel Whiffin with an aim to secure the future of the magazine and increase its distribution and value. The magazine is valued by the local community and articles and stories from groups and societies are encouraged. The Parish Council has contributed £200 to its printing costs.

12/01/26 CLERK'S REPORT PLUS ANY CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FOR ACTION

This had been previously circulated (attached and published on website)

For noting – 'Green' rating for Essex underlines Essex County Councils' record on road improvement. The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) will be inviting representatives from parish councils to a webinar series planned for early 2026. Sessions designed to help parish councils to engage fully with the NG examination process.

Potholes at Station Hill to be reported on Highways Online Reporting Tool and report to be forwarded for Cllr Schwier's attention.

13/01/26 REPORTS - All reports had been circulated prior to the meeting. Councillors acknowledged receipt and were able to present questions by exception.

Asset Report: Cllr Keeble-Fox had circulated her report prior to the meeting. Both bus shelters cleaned, weeded and left in respectable condition by Cllr Chambers and Cllr Keeble-Fox. Some signs also cleaned. All other assets in good order. Cllr Chambers had kindly litter picked Lamarsh Hill verges.

Cemetery Authority: Draft minutes of the meeting of 12th January 2026 circulated, published and available to view on the parish council website.

Sportsground Committee: Draft minutes of the meeting of 12th January 2026 circulated, published and available to view on the parish council website.

Community Centre: Minutes of meeting held on 19th November 2025 circulated to members. Next meeting - 21st January 2026.

Rights of Way: Owing to the wintry wet weather Cllr Shirley Keeble-Fox had not completed a report for this meeting. She would restart her reports for the March meeting

Primary School: The Primary School newsletter had been circulated prior to the meeting and is available to view on the school website.

Transport: No report for the meeting.

Station Adopters: Nothing to report. Reports to be submitted alternate meetings.

Tree Warden: See Planning applications and decisions.

Bures Common Land Trust: Markets to recommence again in March. Nothing further to report.

14/01/26 INFORMATION EXCHANGE/NEXT AGENDA ITEMS

No matters raised.

15/01/26 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday 16th March 2026 to be held at the Garrad Room, Bures Community Centre at 7.30pm.

Future dates agreed for 2026:

APM 30th March, AGM 18th May, 20th July, 21st September, 16th November

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date