

**Minutes of a Bures Hamlet Parish Council Meeting
Monday 21st September 2026
held at Bures Community Centre at 7.30pm**

Present: Cllrs J Child, S Manning, R Shackell, M Welch.
In the Chair: Cllr R Shackell.
Also present: J Wright (Clerk), Cllr J Aries (BSMPC).

01/09/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Cllr M Elder (on holiday).
Apologies accepted by all members present.
Apologies also received from Cllr N Robins (ECC) and Cllr D Holland (BDC).

02/09/26 DECLARATION/REGISTER OF INTERESTS/DISPENSATIONS

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

The Clerk noted that under Section 65 of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act and Section 32A of the Localism Act 2011 local councillors are no longer legally required to display their usual residential (home) addresses on the publicly accessible Register of Interests although land or property ownership within the local authority area must still be declared. She advised that home addresses had been removed from the parish council website.

03/09/26 CASUAL VACANCIES

Two vacancies had arisen following the recent resignations of Shirley Keeble-Fox and Jane Chambers. Both vacancies had been duly advertised and the Parish Council is now legally able to co-opt. No current interests to date however the Clerk and Cllr Child agreed to attend a NALC event entitled Next Generation Leadership: Building inclusive Parish and Town Councils in October.

04/09/26 MINUTES

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 20th July 2026 (previously circulated) were duly approved and signed as a correct record.

05/09/26 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 Robins not in attendance however all correspondence between meetings from Cllr Robins has been circulated. His comprehensive report is available to view on the parish council website.

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

Bures St Mary Parish Council: Cllr Aries reported on the following: County Councillor to organise a speed survey along Nayland Road at a cost of £400 to be funded via the BSMPC CIL fund with a view to upgrade to 20mph. Little Cornard SID sprayed with black paint. Both BSMPC SIDs have been deliberately turned facing the wrong way with fixing buckled. Peter Coltman has agreed to take on the role of Parish ROW Officer for both BHPC and BSMPC. He has been handed the parish council equipment from the previous officers. The damaged bus shelter is scheduled to be removed for repair on the 2nd October. Cllr Aries and Jenny Wright, BHPC Clerk are to attend a People's Climate Emergency Briefing at Earls Colne with a view to showcasing the briefing in Bures.

1 Bures Hamlet Parish Council meeting minutes 21.09.2026

06/09/26 POLICE MATTERS

a) Issues raised with Community Policing Teams: Fire at Bevills Windwhistle Ridge Barn remains under investigation as arson as does the Cricket Pavilion devastating fire. Station Hut damage reported and followed up by British Rail police. Reports of motorcycles on the sportsground reported. Lifebelt damage at Bures Common also reported.

07/09/26 HIGHWAY MATTERS

a) Millennium footpath repair: The path has subsided once again. T5 Building Company has submitted a quotation for the work - £1,578 + VAT. ECC ROW Officer has submitted a grant for the work on behalf of the parish council and has arranged for a footpath closure. T5 agreed for the work to be completed in October. Waiting on date.

b) Safety mirror at railway bridge: The Clerk had followed up on whether a safety mirror could be installed to improve pedestrian safety underneath the railway bridge. ECC has a policy against erecting convex safety mirrors on public highways. Authorities typically reject requests and therefore the matter will not be pursued.

c) Station Hill potholes: The reports had been escalated to Cllr Robins for his attention and action. Cllr Robins acknowledged and a date has been scheduled for the work – 5 and 9th November.

d) Refurbishment of Water Lane grassed triangle: The Clerk had liaised with Cllr Robins who advised that such a request would previously have been considered through the Local Highway Panel process however ECC is currently undertaking a review of its approach to Highway priorities and remains ongoing. Highways has painted yellow lines around the triangle as part of the work on Station Hill. Members suggested the Clerk should follow up with the parish contractor with a view to levelling off the triangle area. Clerk to follow up this matter.

e) NEEP application: The successful application to improve driver and pedestrian safety in Station Hill with yellow lines has been implemented. However members remained cautious that the yellow linage which now prevents parking on the hill may allow drivers to increase their speed. Agreed to monitor.

f) Parsonage Hill lighting: The Chair suggested a directional dusk until dawn sensor light could be sited behind his own property in Parsonage Grove which will illuminate the Parsonage Hill footpath. Chair continuing to investigate. Members agreed for him to proceed with his suggestion.

08/09/26 PLANNING

a) All applications received and comments made to date as per attached list.

b) Applications requiring consideration at this meeting:

26/01977/HH No. 29 The Paddocks CO8 5DF – no objections.

DC/26/03663 Cricket Club new rebuild pavilion – noted only as BSMPC application.

Street Trading Consents for Essex Knowle – all street traders required consent from Braintree DC to trade at the Essex Knowle. This is being followed up by all traders.

26/01924/FUL Ferriers Barns, Ferriers Farm – conversion of 3 no. agricultural barns to 3 no. residential dwellings with associated works. The parish council discussed the application and comments to be made with the parish council in favour in principle.. Chair to draft a response to be circulated to all members prior to submission to BDC.

c) Enforcement matters: A firepit and bench have been installed in the water meadows on one of the privately own sections of the meadow. The Clerk queried with Cllr Holland whether these should remain but no objections have been received from BDC.

d) National Grid: National Grid Community Fund now open for applications for up to £20,000 for suitable projects. The Local Fund is expected to be available throughout the construction phase so there is no closing date. NG expect to review applications and award grants on a quarterly basis. BHPC and BSMPC can put in separate applications. Clerk to follow up with Cllr Aries for any suitable projects to apply for. Road closures scheduled for the B1508. These can be found on the NG What's Happening Now online link.

e) Dedham Vale National Landscapes: Cllr Child and the Clerk attended a meeting with Dedham Vale and other parishes at Stoke by Nayland. The aim being to confirm an accord between parish councils and the Dedham Vale National Landscapes & Stour Valley Partnership. Appendix commitments for both parties had been drawn up. Members agreed the Clerk should sign the Accord on behalf of the parish council.

f) Chambers Bus Depot site: Some minor works underway. Once the roof works are completed then the scaffolding will be removed. The first main task will be demolition works. This is likely to commence in two months' time. The demolition works are fairly complex and will involve the careful removal of the asbestos roof sheets. The main depot doors will be temporarily removed.

g) Greenacres, Packards Lane, Wormingford Ref 25163: Place Services for Essex County Council is looking at Arborterra Ltd's Landscaping Management Plan for the site with provision of additional measures to strengthen landscape integration and reduce potential visual impact. 15 m wide buffer zone, ponds, wildflowers, trees, hedges, fruit orchard and woodland. Target date has been extended once more to 2nd October 2026.

09/09/26 FINANCE MATTERS

Commercial Access A/C balance: £10,340.75 Community Account balance: £3,988.55

a) Finance and Budget monitoring report - noted, circulated and attached.

b) Bank reconciliation and verifying bank statements dated 9th September 2026 noted, circulated and duly signed by the Chairman and non-signatory member.

c) Finance reports from the Joint Sportsground Committee and the Joint Cemetery Authority circulated and duly noted.

d) Sportsground CCTV: The quotation from West Suffolk Council was discussed as recommended by Suffolk Police - £21,780 to install and £6,784 annual running costs. It was noted that the Community Centre Management Committee is not supporting this quotation. It is suggested that Crowdfunding may be arranged for the CCTV pole costs of £14,946. A NG Community Benefit application has been submitted by BSMPC. Other applications to Enover and the Police Crime Fund have been unsuccessful. The estimated cost to rebuild the cricket pavilion is £417,000. £90,000 has been received from insurance cover along with several thousand pounds from donations. BHPC members are reluctant to commit to a spend on the WSC quotation. Cllr Aries agreed to ask for a revision of costs as the Community Centre Management Committee did not wish to house the cameras as shown in the WSC quotation.

e) CIL Bid for Cricket Pavilion: Following the Cricket Club's CIL bid to Babergh DC for £100,000 a Team's meeting has been held with representatives from the two parish councils and BDC. Cllr Aries was advised at the meeting that it will not be a requirement to have a fire service hardstanding as per the new rebuild planning application. BSMPC has also advised that users of the sportsground will be encouraged to use the Nayland Road carpark rather than Wharf Lane. The Cricket Club lease with the Sportsground Committee has been renewed as part of the CIL application.

- f) Councillor's Community Grant:** Members agreed that the Clerk could use the £700 grant for the Station Hill garden initiative instead of Jubilee Grove projects. The Clerk has contacted the BDC Grant Officer who is also happy for the grant to be moved to the Station Hill garden initiative.
- g) Asset Register:** The Clerk has updated the register showing all Gifted items as a £1 value as per the revised Practitioner's Guide.

10/09/26 AUDIT MATTERS

- a)** External Auditor's report for year ending 2025/26 received with no matters arising.
- b)** To note Internal Audit Review scheduled for 5th October at 2pm via Zoom.

11/09/26 POLICIES

The following policies were reviewed and agreed – Donations, Press & Media, Safeguarding, Recording at Meetings, Use of Social Media, Training, Biodiversity, Environment, Disciplinary, Privacy, Grievance and Information Technology.

12/09/26 MATTERS NOT ARISING ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

a) Jubilee Grove: The Transition Group minutes of 10th September have been circulated highlighting a report on Jubilee Grove. Emma Black (National Landscape Project Manager) has reservations about whether a scrape pond is going to be successful. Puddling clay requires some expertise. There were reservations from the members about the alternative suggestion of a pond liner. RCCE (Rural Community Council of Essex) is setting up an initiative for Community Led Environment Action/Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy and is offering to work with Parish Councils and communities to enhance, link and improve habitats. The RCCE Officer leading the initiative may be able to offer advice on the creation of a pond. Bures Hamlet Parish Council sets aside funds in its annual budget for the maintenance of the Jubilee Grove – currently this stands at £1400. Robert Chambers to be approached about mowing the Grove. It is suggested that he should only cut in piecemeal sections. Dean Manning has repaired the middle bench which had a cracked/warped seating plank. Working party with volunteers arranged for 4th November at 10am. Puddling a pond now cancelled so mulching, maintenance of the young hedges and wild oat pulling may be a better use of the volunteers' time. Depending on the list of tasks, members of the public may also be invited to join. To be decided at the next meeting. Refreshments tea/coffee and baguettes from the Deli to be provided. In the main, trees are doing well but the young hedges have not fared so well. It was noted that some members of the local community are unaware of the Jubilee Grove and perhaps its location should be better publicised. The Jubilee Grove has received a bad press this year following two dog attacks occurring within the Grove. The police have been involved. Keep Clear signs at the entrance gate now in place.

b) Wheelie bins: The Clerk had received a number of complaints of wheelie bins not being removed back from the roadside to properties following bin collections. This created a hazard for pedestrians and wheelchair users. All reported to BDC. No action to date.

c) Parish ROW Officer: Peter Coltman has offered to take up the voluntary role for both Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary parishes. All equipment held by previous Officers have been handed to Peter.

d) Devolution update: It was formally noted that the Government has withdrawn rather than paused the statutory decision to establish five unitary authorities across Essex. Consequently, the two-tier local government structure remains in place for the foreseeable future, and ordinary district elections for Braintree District Council will proceed on existing ward boundaries on 6th May 2027, running concurrently with the scheduled quadrennial Parish Council elections.

e) Footpaths 1,3 and 4: A further request to extinguish paths 1 and 4 and to extend path 3 has been received. This has been an ongoing matter for many years. The Clerk has forwarded to the Parish ROW Officer to discuss with the landowner, If an amicable arrangement can be found then the Clerk will approach the ECC Footpath Officer.

f) Community Led Environment Action: RCCE are offering parish councils and community groups support to deliver requirements for the Environment Act and in particular to identify opportunities for the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy to enhance, link and improve habitats in parishes. The Clerk agreed to submit an Expression of Interest on behalf of BHPC and BSMPC.

13/09/26 JOINT NHP AND JOINT PARISH PLAN

a) Joint NHP: Both District Councils have now signed off the Plan. Once amendments suggested by the External Examiner have been followed up the Plan will go to Referendum. No current timescale.

b) Joint Parish Action Plan 2026-2027: An amended plan has been circulated. As the NHP has still to be 'made' then the Action Plan remains a draft as the Community Action Points cannot be adopted until the NHP is accepted. With reference to the RCCE Community Led Environmental Action Plan, biodiversity initiatives could be added,

c) Village magazine: The Clerk continues to attend a magazine sub-committee chaired by Reverend Daniel Whiffin The magazine is valued by the local community and articles and stories from groups and societies are encouraged. Gillian Chapman current Editor has stepped down and a new Editor recently appointed.

14/09/26 CLERK'S REPORT PLUS CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FOR ACTION

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

The completed Street Cleaning Agreement Activity Report for the first half year has been forwarded to BDC. The Clerk is in receipt of a Tree Survey report from Blake Tree Care for the two trees on Bures Common. Members agreed that the Clerk should request a quotation from Blake Tree Care for recommended work.

15/09/26 REPORTS: All reports had been circulated prior to the meeting. Councillors acknowledged receipt and were able to present questions by exception.

Asset Report: Cllr Manning had circulated her report prior to the meeting. She had brushed both shelters and removed brambles. Benches awaiting a varnish. Mesh on Millennium footpath gate secured with cable ties. Fencing along the footpath still to be repaired. Grit bins to be replenished when the grit is received from ECC.

Cemetery Authority: Draft minutes of the meeting of 7th September 2026 circulated, published and available to view on the parish council website.

Sportsground Committee: Draft minutes of the meeting of 14th September 2026 circulated, published and available to view on the parish council website.

Community Centre: Minutes of meeting held in September circulated to members. Treasurer being sought. New Lettings Secretary now in place. The Clerk agreed to be the parish council representative on the Community Centre Management Committee.

Rights of Way: The role of Parish Rights of Way Officer is currently vacant following the recent resignation of Cllr Keeble-Fox. There has been one interest shown in the voluntary position.

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 this meeting.

Station Adopters: Reports to be submitted alternate meetings. Reports circulated, published and available to view on the parish council website.

Tree Warden: See Planning applications and decisions.

Bures Common Land Trust: The BCLT Annual Report and Financial Statement for year ending 31st May 2026 had been circulated. Cllr Manning agreed to be the parish council representative for the BCLT owing to Cllr Elder unable to attend the next AGM in September 2027.

16/09/26 INFORMATION EXCHANGE/NEXT AGENDA ITEMS - None

17/09/26 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday 16th November to be held at the Garrad Room, Bures Community Centre at 7.30pm.

Future dates agreed for 2027: 18th January, 15th March, APM 22nd March, AGM 17th May.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm.

Signed:

Chair

Date