

Minutes of the Bures Hamlet Parish Council Meeting
Monday 18th November 2025
held at Bures Community Centre at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr S Keeble-Fox, S Manning, R Shackell, M Welch
In the Chair: Cllr R Shackell
Also present: J Wright (Clerk), Cllr J Aries (BSMPC), Cllr O Giles (BSMPC)
plus 2 members of the public

01/11/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Cllr J Chambers (hols) Cllr J Child (illness) Cllr M Elder (illness).
Apologies accepted by all members present.
Apologies also received from Cllr D Holland (BDC) and Cllr P Schwier (ECC).

02/11/25 DECLARATION/REGISTER OF INTERESTS/DISPENSATIONS

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

03/11/25 MINUTES

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 15th September 2025 (previously circulated) were duly approved and signed as a correct record.

04/11/25 PUBLIC FORUM

15 minutes maximum public participation

3 minutes for individual contributions unless agreed by Chairman

2 members of the public present. No matters raised in the Public Forum.

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

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

Bures St Mary Parish Council: Cllr Giles reported on the following: 2 vacancies still remain on the parish council. National Grid has approached Suffolk Parish Councils for suggestions for ways in which communities can be compensated for the impact of the Bramford to Twinstead Reinforcement Project. BSMPC has asked if funds could be allocated to the Primary School, traffic calming measures and for the security equipment to deal with ASB issues. BMF has kindly funded a replacement defibrillator unit for Church Square as the existing is coming to the end of its useful life. Some new Christmas lights were purchased this year. Robert Harrod has been invited to switch on the lights. A replacement like-for-like bus shelter on Bridge Street has been agreed by the SuffolkBoard Passenger Partnership. The Parish Council to confirm choice of wood type and colour of treatment. A wreath was laid on behalf of the two parish councils at the Remembrance Service. Babergh District Council's Call for Sites closes on 9th January 2026. The Parish Council is unaware of any new sites being submitted for assessment. The Three Horseshoes PH application to build one dwelling in the beer garden has been granted, however ownership and access of the BT lane has not been clarified. BT no longer owns any real estate as all their exchanges and land have been sold to real estate management companies as BT moves over to the Fibre Network. The Parish Council is urging Babergh DC and Suffolk CC to confirm who owns the lane and to establish protected right of access for the public from Friends Field to Nayland Road. Suffolk CC has admitted to their responsibility for the alleyway.

05/11/25 POLICE MATTERS

a) Issues raised with Community Policing Teams: Several fire incidents have occurred in the village including sadly the cricket pavilion gutted by fire on the 9th September. The whole community has given its full support and encouragement to the Cricket Club. Police and Fire services involved and all fires being treated as arson. The Cricket Club has presented plans for a new pavilion at the recent Joint Sportsground Committee meeting with details recorded in those minutes. It is hoped that the project will be completed for the 2027 season. There have been two reports of homelessness and these have been referred.

Tammy Blest, Essex Fraud Officer to attend the November market. Police Forums are currently being held bi-monthly via Teams. Parish representatives encouraged to attend.

b) SpeedWatch: The Suffolk Speedwatch is currently disbanded owing to lack of volunteers. However there are still concerns raised regarding speeding along the Sudbury Road. 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 Speedwatch has also sadly agreed to disband. Cllr Aries has written to the Essex Police Commissioner but was notified that there would be no exemption for borders. Members agreed to send a letter of thanks to Cllr Aries and her team for all their past efforts with Speedwatch matters.

Cllr Aries left the meeting at this point.

06/11/25 HIGHWAY MATTERS

a) Flooding issues: Highways attempted to clear the Water Lane brook with a mechanical excavator but the risks were too high with various cables and pipes crossing the brook. Lanes Drains have now been hired by Highways to carry out the works. 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. Members agreed it would be prudent to arrange a further meeting with the Highways Officer to discuss the matter more fully.

b) Millennium footpath repair: The path has subsided once again. T5 Building Company has submitted a quotation for the work - £1,578 + VAT. Clerk to follow up with ECC Footpath Officer and Cllr Schwier as it is a priority route to school for parents and children plus motorised scooter users. She would also report the matter on the Highways Online Reporting Tool.

c) 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. Waiting on a decision which may take up to a year.

d) Station Hill trees: The trees have been inspected by Highways and found to be in good condition with minor deadwood within the crown. Works issued to contractors to crown lift the two trees over the highway for clearance. The tree root damage to the path is still awaiting repair.

e) 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.

f) Safer crossing point: On hold owing to Local Highway Panels no longer considering schemes for the time being. Clerk agreed to remove from the next agenda.

07/11/25 PLANNING

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

b) Applications requiring consideration at this meeting:

25/02347/HH Westwind, Bombose Lane – members approved application.

25/01941/HH No. 10 Water Lane – further Historic Buildings and Conservation Advice received. Application awaiting approval from the Planning Officer.

25/02472/FUL Parsonage Hall – this application was for change of use from agricultural land to accommodate 1 no. log cabin for holiday let purposes (C5). The Chair asked the applicant in attendance if power would be from the main building or a new stand-alone supply. The applicant was unable to commit at this stage in the process. A vote was taken and the application given approval by all members present.

c) BDC Call for Sites:

i) The Parish Council had previously submitted its comments to the Call for Sites supporting in principle the two sites submitted for Bures Hamlet those being BURE2070 and BURE2071. BDC Local Plan Subcommittee revisited the question of the allocation of some northern Braintree District sites owing to the housing demands of the Government. A development boundary for the Mount Bures site was adopted, however it was agreed not to include BURE 2071 Land adjacent Woolpit Downs

ii) Members had been asked to discuss a proposal put forward to investigate a footway link between Jubilee Grove and the Mount Bures level crossing. Members unanimously voted against this proposal on the grounds that multi unknown landowners would need to be involved and that any liaison with ECC PROW should come from the proposer.

d) It was noted that land at Penlan, Lamarsh Hill was currently on the market for agricultural use.

e) Colchester Road land sales:

i) Enforcement Case now closed. Application No. 24/02650/FUL for change of use of land from agriculture to equestrian use approved and the land was now up for sale. It was noted that only the equestrian paddock was for sale.

ii) Clerk had contacted Barney Estates regarding ownership of the riverbank and fishing rights. However no response received to date. Continuing to follow matter up. The bat willows still remained under contract with Fordham Tree Surgeons for a further 2 years.

iii) The fencing is in a reasonable state. It was noted that the fencing is the responsibility of the Parish Council.

f) Jubilee Grove: An application to Rural England Prosperity Fund for a £5,400 grant to install grass grids to ease access for disabled visitors to the Grove has been successful. Plans in hand to plant a boundary hedge with saplings supplied by the Woodland Trust. Hedgehog houses to be moved following the recent fire in the summer. Clay soil being arranged for the scrape pond, wild flower seeds can then be sprinkled around the area. Signage being prepared to be installed at the entrance to Jubilee Grove. The W.I. has planted a tree in commemoration of its 110 years celebration.

g) 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.

h) Greenacres, Packards Lane, Wormingford Ref 25163: Essex CC Highways asked for clearer plans regarding ditches and ponds. Also Highways has not given its approval on the grounds that most access to the site will be by private car as the area is not served directly by any public transport. Applicant has until the end of December to address Highways concerns.

08/11/25 DRAFT BUDGET

The 3 year draft budget 2026 – 2029 was unanimously approved by all members present. Members agreed to increase the precept request to BDC by £2,500 to £35,317 to ease changeover to Devolution and to cover the Cemetery Authority shortfall. Members agreed to increase the Jubilee Grove budget by £500 to £1,500. Members agreed to increase the Cemetery Authority precept from £5,500 to £6,500 for 2026/27. Sportsground Committee precept to remain as previous year.

09/11/25 FINANCE MATTERS

Commercial Instant A/C balance: £18,286.22 Community Account balance: £6,737.69

- a) Finance and Budget monitoring report - noted, circulated and attached.
- b) Bank reconciliation and verifying bank statements dated 5th November 2025 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) A request from St Mary PCC for a contribution towards the costs of publishing the monthly village magazine was considered by the members. A £200 contribution was agreed. To be paid this financial year from the Donations budget.
- e) The appeal by the PAYE Administrator to HMRC against not filing the return on time has been successful.
- f) Members agreed the purchase of a barrel planter for Lamarsh Hill – cost £260+ VAT. The Bures in Bloom team will bed out the planter and resident Sharon Redford has kindly agreed to tend the display of flowers.

10/11/25 AUDIT MATTERS

- a) External Auditor's report for year ending 2024/25 received with no matters arising – noted.
- b) Internal Audit Review scheduled for Monday 24th November at 6pm via Zoom. Clerk, Cllr Welch and Cllr Keeble-Fox to attend.
- c) The appointment of BB Business Associates for 2025/26 is confirmed. However no Letters of Engagement received to date but have been requested.
- 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.
- e) OneSuffolk has completed the accessibility and audit and fix service on the parish council website with the site now 'red' error free and the 'yellow alerts' removed. The website is now compliant (WCAG 2 – Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 update) as recommended. The Accessibility Statement has been updated.
- f) The parish council accepted the recommended NALC template IT Policy which the Clerk has adapted as suggested by NALC.

11/11/25 MATTERS ARISING

- a) Bures Post Office:** The Bures Post Office is scheduled to close at the end of March 2026. Thoughts on how to acknowledge Robert Harrod's 30 years as Post Master to be forwarded to the Chair of BSMPC.
- b) BDC Potential Open Spaces Review:** Clerk to inform BDC that the parish council considered there were no changes required for the parish review.
- c) Station Hill garden:** The ECC Micro-Grant application for £950 has been successful. This will allow the parish council to purchase a further planter, soil improver and extra bedding plants.
- d) Christmas lights event:** New lights ordered to replace and supplement existing. Switch on event scheduled for Friday 28th November organised once again by Tracy Saer and her team. Robert Harrod has been asked to turn on the lights in recognition of 30 years service to the village managing the Post Office.
- e) BDC Waste Service Review:** BDC has reviewed its waste service to be actioned in June 2026. All properties in the district have been assessed and all residents to receive a letter of notification of the review by post by the end of 2025. Further information can be found in the BDC Contact brochure. A member of the BDC Waste Team has been invited to attend the Bures Christmas Market.

12/11/25 JOINT NHP AND JOINT PARISH PLAN 2024-25

- a) Joint NHP:** Paul Bryant (Neighbourhood Planning Officer) has sent the responses to the Reg16 Consultation to the Bures NHP team for their response. 18 comments received from statutory consultees and members of the public.
- b) Draft Joint Parish Plan 2025-26:** No new action points added.
- c) Village magazine:** The Clerk is attending 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. First main change is to produce a jumbo Christmas celebratory issue in December including content for January and not produce a January issue. The magazine is valued by the local community and articles and stories from groups and societies are encouraged.

13/11/25 CLERK'S REPORT PLUS ANY CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FOR ACTION

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

For noting – Weavers Demolition had cut back the Colne Road hedges, Nigel Norton has cleared the tree debris along Station Hill.

Open Letter from the Chair of NALC referring to the future role of parish and town councils – Cllr Child suggested a discussion should be held with all members on its relevance to BHPC – members agreed to discuss this in 2026.

National Grid – Norwich to Tilbury submits Development Consent Order - plans to deliver community benefits. Works have been carried out to build a main construction compound off the A134 between Leavenheath and Assington.

The parish council currently has 4 parish lights which are on unmetered supply (UMS). UMS is changing its settlement based on annual estimates to real time usage. Members agreed to wait until the next Npower invoice to establish whether there is a need to revise lighting times.

Howe fish n chips have commenced trading at Normandie Way on a Friday evening without warning. Some local objections have been received and the Clerk to contact BDC Licencing Officer to discuss the matter.

At this point the Chair requested the meeting to continue after the 2 hours as per Parish Council Standing Orders. All members present agreed.

14/11/25 REPORTS - All reports had been circulated prior to the meeting. Councillors acknowledged receipt and were able to present questions by exception.

Asset Report: Cllr Welch had circulated his report prior to the meeting. Both bus shelters in need of a clean. Some signs also needed a clean. Clerk to follow up on items raised.

Cemetery Authority: Draft minutes of the meeting of 8th September 2025 circulated, published and available to view on the parish council website.

Sportsground Committee: Draft minutes of the meeting of 17th November 2025 circulated, published and available to view on the parish council website.

Community Centre: Minutes of meeting held on 24th September 2025 circulated to members. Next meeting - 19th November 2025.

Rights of Way: Cllr Shirley Keeble-Fox had circulated her report prior to the meeting and it is available to view on the parish council website.

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: Mary Turner, Lead Station Adopter had circulated her report prior to the meeting and it is available to view on the parish council website.

Tree Warden: See Planning applications and decisions.

Bures Common Land Trust: Changes to the kitchen in the barn are now complete. A new lean to shed has freed up space for a walk-in cupboard in the kitchen. PSA kindly served refreshments at the October market and were able to benefit from the takings. Hopefully children from the school will sing at the Christmas Market. Bures resident, Martin Ivatt will be bringing his railway organ to the market to play festive music. BCLT continues to support Bures in Bloom and has recently paid for new compost and plants for the barrels around the village.

15/11/25 INFORMATION EXCHANGE/NEXT AGENDA ITEMS

No matters raised.

16/11/25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday 19th January 2026 to be held at the Garrad Room, Bures Community Centre at 7.30pm.

Future dates agreed for 2026: 16th March, APM 30th March, AGM 18th May

The meeting closed at 9.35pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date

6 Bures Hamlet Parish Council meeting minutes 18.11.2025

