

Minutes of the Bures St Mary Parish Council Meeting

Thursday 22nd January 2026

held at Bures Community Centre at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr McCrory (in the chair), Cllrs Fairbairn, Giles, Jackson, Jones, Norton
Cllr Keeble-Fox (Bures Hamlet), Cllr Finch (Suffolk County Council).

Clerk: Cllr Aries

1. Apologies for Absence – No apologies received.

2. Declarations of Interests & Dispensation Requests -

The Parish Council declared that the Planning Application DC/25/05565 for the Old Manse had been submitted by a Parish Council employee.

3. Minutes - Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 27th November 2025 were approved and signed as a correct record (previously circulated).

4. Co-option of new members – No recent interest received.

5. Public Forum 15 minutes maximum public participation 3 minutes for individual contributions unless agreed by the Chair

No members of the public present.

County and District Councillors

Respective Councillor reports were circulated in advance and are available on the Parish Council website.

Cllr Finch invited any suggestions for additional services or improvements to the local bus service following an allocation of new Government funding between 2025-2029 for Suffolk's bus network. The problem of overhanging hedges along the Sudbury Road B1508 was raised. Cllr Finch to be provided with a list of the pinch points requiring attention along the route. An item in the village magazine to be considered for submission reminding landowners that they are responsible for keeping hedges clear of the public highway.

Bures Hamlet Parish Council– Cllr Keeble-Fox presented the Parish Council report.

- Water Lane flooding -the brook has been dug out and a holding tank may be installed at a higher point above the village to prevent further flooding.
- There is an issue on the Millennium footbridge where a drop has occurred at the transition between the structure and the land. This needs to be rectified as it is a trip hazard and creates a problem for those using mobility vehicles.
- The Parish Council has received concerns about congestion caused by roadside parking on market days and when there are football training sessions /matches. The football club has staggered kick-off times and the market organisers have reimbursed visitors who use the station car park to alleviate the situation.

6. Police

a) To report on matters raised with Suffolk and Essex Community Policing Teams

-No update on the Cricket Pavillion Fire. Police carried out local enquiries but no intelligence has led to any arrests to date.

-Some tools have been stolen from a vehicle in Nayland Road this week.

PCC Tim Passmore's request for an increase in the Police precept of £15 noted.

- A link to a survey attached in the notice has been previously circulated to members. Notice posted on the Parish Council website. Members invited to respond individually.

7. Highway Matters

- a) Joint Parishes Highways Working Party (Wormingford, Fordham etc) update**
No further meetings have been held
- b) ANPR for B1508 –**
Bures has been allocated one week for the ANPR to go up on the Sudbury Road B1508 in the Spring. Jon Shaw, who manages the ANPR for Suffolk, has informed the Clerk that Parish Councils and CSW teams in Suffolk are not allowed to use an ANPR themselves although some Parishes elsewhere do so. Cllr Finch intends to approach the Cabinet for more funding to buy additional devices as the ANPR scheme is so popular.
- c) Alleyway from Eves Orchard/Pikes Marsh to Nayland Road request for dropped kerb-**
Cllr Finch had visited the crossing point with Highways but the suggestion for a dropped kerb at the proposed point was still deemed unsafe. An alternative crossing point is to be considered.
- d) Grit bins for Arger Fen requested-**
During the recent cold spell, Church's Seeds had problems accessing their depot at Arger Fen. In 2019 Highways decided not to provide grit heaps at Arger Fen, Clicketts Hill or on the B1508 bend by the layby opposite Constable Cottages. The Parish Council has applied to Highways for permission to install grit bins on the Arger Fen Road but will be responsible for the cost of purchase and installation, and possibly, for the cost of the grit. The problem is exacerbated by water from the ford being taken up the hill by vehicles which then subsequently freezes. The Parish Council has received an email raising concern about HGVs using the Arger Fen Road. Cllr Finch to visit the Arger Fen Road with a Parish Councillor for further consideration.
There is a section on the Suffolk Reporting Tool where reports of excessively large HGVs travelling through the centre of Bures can be submitted with registration numbers, date and time and company details as evidence.
- e) St Edmunds Lane – potholes reported on Suffolk reporting tool-**
A number of reports about the general poor condition of St Edmunds Lane have been submitted on the Suffolk Reporting Tool. These have been listed as 'Added to inspection programme' and have now been closed but with no repairs undertaken. Cllr Finch has since arranged for these repairs to be reprioritised

8. Bramford to Twinstead Reinforcement

- a) The site on the A134 at Leavenheath is being closely monitored and Cllr Finch is going to visit the site to liaise with the site managers.**

Cllr Finch left the meeting at 8.40pm

9. Matters arising which do not appear elsewhere on the agenda

- a) Bus shelter –**
Littlethorpe, the company making the shelter, is installing new equipment at its premises so the shelter hasn't been built yet. It is estimated that the shelter will be installed in April.
- b) Parish Contractors works list - Circulated (BPAP 2iv)**
- Noticeboard update- the Parish contractor has this on his work schedule.
- c) EV Suffolk Plug-in application – Residents have received another letter to say that one of the sites**

has been relocated to access an energy supply. The sites are in Claypits Avenue and Tawneys Ride and are still being assessed

d) Issues raised by residents – a letter has been delivered regarding an overhanging hedge on Nayland Road

d) Joint Parish Council Magazine and bi-monthly snippets- February 10th deadline for March issue.

e) Local Government Reorganisation – The two proposals for Suffolk were submitted to the Government on 11th January.

f) Christmas Lights-

With the generous donation from the BMF, new stock has been purchased to replace aging lights and extend the coverage next Christmas, hopefully to include the Community Centre. Another donation was received from the Eight Bells Quiz Group of £300. Bures Hamlet Clerk wrote an email of thanks. The turning-on event (Robert Harrod officiated) was a brilliant evening with singing by the Happy Sounds Community Choir, stalls and refreshments. Our grateful thanks on behalf of the village goes to the fantastic team of volunteers who make this all possible.

g) Bures Post Office closure 2026-

The Sportsground Committee is investigating the possibility of installing Royal Mail parcel lockers (which need to be near a power source) and Inpost units (which run on solar) in the carpark on a 5-year contract when the recycling banks are dismantled. There would be no installation costs. It needs to be established if the community is in agreement and feels there would be a need. The recycling credits from Babergh DC are to be discontinued and the recycling banks presumably will be removed once the new household recycling system is operational across the district. Suggestions invited for the housing of a cash machine in the village.

h) Wind Whistle Ridge memorial bench-

The private memorial bench adjacent to the Jubilee Bench was partially removed from its base on 6th December. Unclear if this was deliberate vandalism or a failed attempt to steal it. Dean Manning has kindly re-secured the bench back in its position.

j) Community Thermal Imaging Project- Keep the Heat Webinar 2025/26 and Warm Homes Grant- Persistent wet weather and limited time meant very few properties were surveyed. The equipment was easy to use but required up to date phones to operate the camera. More publicity will be needed next year to generate community interest.

k) Defibrillator replacement – A completely new defibrillator has been ordered for the telephone kiosk in Church Square and should be installed within the next week or so. The Parish Council is very grateful to the Bures Music Festival Team who have made this possible.

l) Community First Aid Training – possible dates to be arranged

10. Planning

a) To report on applications received and any decisions made since the previous planning committee meeting – See Planning Appendix

DC/25/ 05565 The Old Manse, High Street Bures CO8 5JG – neutral comment submitted.

b) To note the response submitted to any applications received since the previous meeting:

See Planning Appendix

Responses noted

c) To report and follow up as required:

- Chambers Bus Depot/Knowle House Full Planning Committee 16/04/2025

No further news on when work may start. The Community Centre accepted the offer of a bat box from Roses Developers.

- Greenacres, Packards Lane, Wormingford Colchester Borough (Ref:251634)
Target date for a decision is 27/02/2026. Journey Transport Planning have assessed that the development will have **very limited impact** on the area or nearby settlements (the report mentions Bures). Historic England have not made any recommendations.
- Call for Sites – Babergh DC 9th January 2026 closing date No knowledge of any sites submitted.

11. Finance Matters

- a) Finance & Budget monitoring report – noted.
- b) Bank reconciliation report and verifying bank statements – noted and duly signed by the Chair and a non-signatory member.
- c) Babergh District Council precept forms confirmed and signed as per agreed budget
- d) Tax rate 2025/26 noted.
- e) Increase for HMRC management noted and agreed.
- f) Finance Reports from the Joint Sportsground Committee and Joint Cemetery Authority, previously circulated, were noted.
- g) Village magazine £200 contribution to publication costs noted.
- h) To discuss the recruitment of the Parish Clerk/RFO -
An advert for the position of Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and Clerk to the Parish Council and the Joint Sportsground Committee to be drawn up for circulation locally in the first instance. It was felt that, to attract more interest, the posts of RFO and Clerk could be two separate appointments.

12. Audit

- a) BB Business Associates Ltd increase of fees for 2025/26 internal audit was agreed.
It was noted that the fees have increased from £200 to £270.
- b) The report for Internal Audit Review held 24th November 2025, previously circulated, was noted.
- c) Assertion 10- Any remaining email addresses to be brought into line with the Assertion 10 guidance
- d) Councillor's Statement of Assurance – Councillor's understanding of obligations -
The Parish Council has already signed the Civility and Respect Pledge in 2022. NALC has also recommended The Councillor's Statement of Assurance which is not a legal document nor is it a contractual obligation. It is a public affirmation of personal values and conduct. Individual members signed the form and handed them to the Clerk to go on file.
- d) Press and Media Policy (previously circulated) - Reviewed and adopted.

13. Bures Neighbourhood Plan & Bures Parish Action Plan

- a) Update on Joint NHP progress-
The Bures Neighbourhood Plan is now with the external examiner, Ann Skipper.
There had been a delay to the processing of the Plan. The plan was with Braintree and Babergh for a year. Paul Bryant, Babergh D.C., has kindly carried out the Local Planning Authority stage and has passed the Plan to the external examiner. Next stage- 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 – Update if required and to follow up on items (previously circulated) No further projects put forward. A Community Infrastructure Levy of £3428.60 was allocated to the Parish Council in October 2023 and should be spent within 5 years. The CIL Guidance to be circulated to all members to help with suggestions for future projects.

14. Correspondence

All the following correspondence has been circulated for information or follow up:

Local Government Reorganisation updates
 Bures Primary School Newsletters
 NSIP and large-scale energy developments update
 All the latest from your National Landscape
 NALC/SALC News Bulletins

15. Reports: Cllrs to acknowledge receipt and present questions by exception

- a)** Asset report – all in good order **26th March: Cllr Jones 28th May: Cllr Giles**
b) Sportsground (BPAP 3 i) Meeting held 12th January
c) Community Centre- new caretaker required. Advert to go out.
d) Cemetery – Meeting held 12th January
e) Jubilee Grove/Transition Group Report (BPAP2ii)- gridded path installed for wheelchair access
f) Station Adopters – reports to be submitted alternate meetings
g) Rights of Way (BPAP 2 iv) no report
h) Tree Warden (BPAP 2 i) nil to report
i) Bures Common Land Trust- markets recommence 14th March

16. Brief information & exchange for next agenda items

- BSMPC representatives for BH meeting on 16th March: Cllr Jones 18th May: Cllr McCrory
- BH Representative for BSMPC meeting on 26th March: Cllr Manning 28th May: Cllr Welch

17. Date of next meeting: 26th March to be held at **Bures School**, Nayland Road at 7.30pm

Future meeting dates 2026: 28th May, 23rd July, 24th September, 26th November

APM 30th March 2026- 7pm for a 7.30pm start –

(6pm setup- Invitations for displays about community activities and groups to be arranged. Refreshments to be organised. Cllr Finch will be presenting a talk about fostering)

Meeting closed at 9.40pm

Mrs Jan Aries

Acting Clerk Bures St Mary Parish Council

27th January 2026