

**Minutes of a Bures Hamlet Parish Council Meeting
Monday 20th July 2026
held at Bures Community Centre at 7.30pm**

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

01/07/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Cllr S Manning (personal commitment).

Apologies accepted by all members present.

Apologies also received from Cllr N Robins (ECC) and Cllr D Holland (BDC).

02/07/26 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. It was agreed to remove home addresses from the parish council website.

03/07/26 CASUAL VACANCIES

Two vacancies had arisen following the recent resignations of Shirley Keeble-Fox and Jane Chambers. Both members have been duly thanked for their dedicated hard work during their terms of office. Both vacancies have been duly advertised. Cllr Elder offered to take up the vacant office of Vice-chair. Unanimously accepted by all those present.

04/07/26 MINUTES

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting of 18th May 2026 (previously circulated) were duly approved and signed as a correct record.

The minutes of the Joint Parish Council Meeting (Extended Public Forum) of 16th July 2026 (previously circulated) were also duly approved and signed as a correct record.

05/07/26 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 his report had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting. See below.

Highways

One of the first decisions at Essex County council was to declare a pothole emergency, following this Cllrs submitted 3 roads to be considered as a priority as part of phase 1, We also saw the increase in road repair gangs meaning every district now has its own repair crew, 7.5M investment scrapping the members buddy's system as this was just a duplicate of a system already in place at Essex County Council. This has allowed us to speed up repairs, the highways portfolio is currently being reviewed by the cabinet member and more changes will follow, I believe we will be demoing the JCB pothole pro.

However initial signs are showing an improvement. Pothole repairs are up 30% in the last 3 months than they were in 2025 with 5,000 defects repaired, and since the new administration took office over 8,200 defects have been repaired these included pavements drainage etc.

To ensure potholes are reported properly please report via this website

<https://www.essexhighways.org/tell-us>

Doing so ensures that they get logged correctly and I can then follow up more urgent defects with the reference number.

LGR – Local government reorganisation

This administration has taken a completely different view to the previous government around LGR, as it stands Essex will go to a unitary authority in May 2028, we believe this has been rushed and poorly thought out therefore we have taken action to launch a JR Judicial Review as we believe that the current plans will be catastrophic for Essex, especially those in adult social and children social care, currently in what would be called the North East Essex unitary authority. We have no officers experienced with dealing with these services, there is also great financial concerns around funding these services bearing in mind that no one actually knows the full cost of LGR and estimates are around £100m. More info on Essex County Councils view on LGR can be found online at

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/news/2026/local-government-reorganisation>

Net zero

Essex County Council new administration has decided to end spending on the ideological initiatives that were considered to be Net zero and did not represent the best use of tax payers money this has now saved £3 million over the next four years. Its important to note this does not mean Essex County Council is not for stepping back from its responsibilities to protect residence and maintain central services investment and practical measures such as flood prevention, drain drainage improvement, high maintenance resilience planning and protecting community from the impact of severe weather will continue where these form part of the council statutory duties and provide clear benefits. We believe that climate initiatives should have a clear and measurable benefit and targets that we set must be achievable.

Funding

Please also note that my Essex locality funding for 2026 to 2027 is available and that is a grant for Parish councils and the community to benefit from on initiatives that have a clear community benefit. For more information on this please do get in contact with me at cllr.nathan.robins@essex.gov.uk It is important to know that the minimum spend is £300 and the grant is only £10,000 so it will be given out by first come first serve basis

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

Bures St Mary Parish Council: Cllr McCrory reported on the following:

The last BSMPC meeting had been shortened following the extended Joint Parish Council ASB Forum. Bures Post Office to re-open on the 23rd July at Central Stores. All Highway matters had been forwarded to Cllr Philip Faircloth-Mutton for his attention prior to the meeting. However owing to holiday commitments these matters still remained unresolved.

Vehicle damage to Randall Surveys in the High Street had been reported to the police. Following damage to the newly installed bus shelter from a Konnect bus collision, the shelter would now need to be returned to Littlethorpe for repair. Insurance quotes being considered by all parties involved. The Speed Indicator Device at Sudbury Road and also at Little Cornard had both been turned away from motorists vision by persons unknown. Police notified.

06/07/26 POLICE MATTERS

a) Issues raised with Community Policing Teams: Fire at Bevills Windwhistle Ridge Barn remains under investigation as arson. 2 further fires along FP33 causing damage to several trees and fencing reported to both Essex and Suffolk Police. Damage to the cricket square reported. Damage to the Quoits area plus damage to the barn toilet both reported. Following the recent Joint ASB Forum with residents and police, a meeting with the CCTV manager for West Suffolk Council is to be held at the recreation ground this coming Thursday. Transport police increasing ticket checks at Marks Tey station to discourage the youngsters boarding the trains. Residents encouraged to report all crimes however minor. Cllr Aries asked if Cllr Robins be approached for a Councillor Community grant to pay towards security patrol costs over the summer period if ASB continues.

b) Police contact: It is noted that the Parish Liaison Officer PC James Draper has moved on and our contact for police matters is now Sgt. Kevin Mayle.

c) Colchester Road speed checks: The Clerk has written to Sgt Mayle regarding the continuing issue of speeding vehicles along Colchester Road. He agreed to factor in the request in his patrol plans.

d) ANPR for parishes: The Clerk has written to Cllr Robins asking him to look into adjoining parishes sharing an ANPR following the folding down of the Bures Speed Watch Team. Unfortunately neither ECC or Safer Essex Roads Partnership currently operate such devices. Cllr Robins agreed to continue exploring other options on behalf of the parish.

e) Policing reform: The PFCC invited all Essex residents to have their say on the future of county policing through a public survey. Circulated.

07/07/26 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 September.

b) Safety mirror at railway bridge: Following residents concerns of pedestrian safety, members agreed to investigate a suitable site for a mirror to assist pedestrians exiting Parsonage Hill. Item to be included in the Draft Joint Parish Plan 2026/27. Chair following up and an application needs to be submitted.

c) Station Hill potholes: The reports have been escalated to Cllr Robins for his attention and action. Cllr Robins acknowledged however we are still awaiting repairs.

d) Refurbishment of Water Lane grassed triangle: Clerk to check with Highways whether this area could be kerbed which will mitigate the ongoing erosion.

e) 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.

f) Parsonage Hill lighting: The Chair has suggested a directional sensor light could be sited behind his own property in Parsonage Grove which may illuminate the Parsonage Hill footpath. Chair continuing to investigate.

08/07/26 PLANNING

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

b) Applications requiring consideration at this meeting:

26/01505/TPOCON No.14 Colchester Road – Parish Tree Warden to forward his comments to the Clerk prior to the end submission date.

26/01606/TPOCON Victoria Cottage – Parish Tree Warden to forward his comments to the Clerk prior to the end submission date.

Reconsultation of Application No. 26/00835/VAR – members to forward their comments to the Clerk prior to the end submission date.

c) Enforcement matters: Non-consented highway access to the water meadows – the Clerk had submitted an Enforcement Notice to BDC regarding a concrete base installed prior to the submission of planning application No. 26/00470/FUL which has since been refused. An Inspector visited the site and noted that only clearance of the verge has taken place. However no further works to take place otherwise it may constitute a breach of planning control.

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, and it is hoped that the first awards will be decided at the end of July. BHPC and BSMPC can put in separate applications. Purchase of a water meadow plot was discussed however the Clerk has been notified that no plots remain unpurchased. Clerk to follow up with Cllr Aries for any other suitable projects to apply for.

e) Chambers Bus Depot site: Condition for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) refused owing to the BNG being short of mixed scrub by 0.01% units. To be resubmitted. Scaffolding is now erected by Knowle House. Bat survey underway. Developers have suggested 'Chambers Place' for the site name.

f) 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 to 4th September 2026.

09/07/26 FINANCE MATTERS

Commercial Access A/C balance: £15,329.03 Community Account balance: £2,405.36

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

b) Bank reconciliation and verifying bank statements dated 7th July 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) A letter from the Quay Theatre requesting a financial contribution was discussed. It was agreed not to offer a contribution but to reconsider when all financial requests are considered at the March 2027 meeting.

e) A new strimmer has been purchased as previously agreed for use on ROW activities. Cost £209.13 + VAT – noted.

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10/07/26 AUDIT MATTERS

- a) To note still waiting on External Auditor's report for year ending 2025/26.
- b) To note Internal Audit Review scheduled for 5th October at 6pm via Zoom.

11/07/26 MATTERS NOT ARISING ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

- a) **Post Office closure:** Bures Post Office to re-open on the 23rd July at Central Stores. SG Committee has arranged for parcel lockers to be installed in the carpark. There are also parcel lockers installed at the Eight Bells PH carpark. A resident has volunteered to apply for a Heritage Plaque for the Old Post Office. She is going to consult with Robert Harrod.
- b) **To enhance members visibility at markets:** The Clerk had circulated a market rota to members. An A board is stood near the parish council market table informing residents of meeting dates. Various NHW and community literature is placed on display on the table.
- c) **Jubilee Grove:** Contractor agreed to install 2 signs – 'please keep your dog under control' following a second dog attack in the Grove. The Clerk has circulated Parish Council Responsibilities and Liabilities information to members to ensure all responsibilities are being covered as Landowners. It has been agreed with the BDC Officer not to follow up on adequate fencing for the dog owner's property. The Rural England Prosperity grant plaque installed. Clay soil for the scrape pond has been sourced locally from Weavers Demolition free of charge and also puddle clay from a local company. Emma Black of AONB has advised preference would be for the Weavers clay. A DEFRA access grant from Dedham Vale to extend the access path in the grove being investigated. The Clerk has met with a Clarion Housing representative to discuss the issue of vehicles parking in front of the main gate in the Grove. Clarion Housing agreed the following - the Parish Council to arrange for the bay markings to be repainted and install signage on the gate stating – Keep Clear Access Required.
- d) **Landing stage repair:** Landing stage has been removed as agreed. Two steps in the bank are now being used to access the riverbank. Members voted not to replace the landing stage. Vote unanimous.
- e) **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. It was agreed that she should write to Cllr Robins and BDC for advice.
- f) **Display boards:** The Clerk had arranged for replacement riverbank display boards to be installed. Costs to be shared between the Sportsground Committee and the Parish Council. Display boards now ready for collection from Spingold Design and Print.
- g) **RCCE Essex Village of the Year:** An application had been submitted but Bures Hamlet has not been successful on this occasion.

12/07/26 JOINT NHP AND JOINT PARISH PLAN

- a) **Joint NHP:** Next steps – the two District Councils to come to a mutual decision on what action to take in response to each recommendation set out in the Exam Report and also any recommendations set out in the Addendum Report. Decision reached to then be published as soon as possible.
- b) **Joint Parish Action Plan for 2026-2027** – an amended plan has been circulated. As the NHP has still to be 'made', the Action Plan remains a draft as the Community Action Points cannot be adopted until the NHP is accepted.
- 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 to step down in the autumn. New Editor being sought.

13/07/26 CLERK'S REPORT PLUS CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FOR ACTION

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

Clerk to contact N Norton to repair the Millennium footpath fencing.

A First Responders CPR session being arranged.

14/07/26 REPORTS - All reports had been circulated prior to the meeting. Councillors acknowledged receipt and were able to present questions by exception.

Asset Report: Cllr Child had circulated his report prior to the meeting. Some rot showing in Millennium footpath fence posts and rails. One corner of the roof of the bus shelter on Normandie Way side of Colchester Road has warped away from its base. Bench in middle of Jubilee Grove is badly soiled. Metal mesh on the Millennium footpath gate requires fixing. All other assets in good order.

Cemetery Authority: Draft minutes of the meeting of 8th June 2026 circulated, published and available to view on the parish council website.

Sportsground Committee: Draft minutes of the meeting of 13th July 2026 circulated, published and available to view on the parish council website.

Community Centre: Minutes of meeting held in May circulated to members. Treasurer being sought. New Lettings Secretary now in place.

Rights of Way: Cllr Keeble-Fox had circulated her report. This is published and available to view on the parish council website. Following her recent resignation from the parish council and hence her role as Parish ROW Officer members discussed how to proceed. It was agreed the role should be advertised. Also for the moment members would group the footpaths into sections for each to monitor. Any found needing works then the Clerk to be notified to engage the contractor.

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

Transport: Cllr Welch had circulated his report prior to the meeting. Konnect Buses reported several delays and cancellations to the 44 route running through Bures. Essex County Council has announced that following the 'Local Bus Consultation 2025' the procurement of the subsidised local bus service contracts has now taken place. These are to commence from 26th July.

Station Adopters: Reports to be submitted alternate meetings. Reports circulated, published and available to view on the parish council website. For noting – National Car Parks (NCP) has gone into administration.

Tree Warden: See Planning applications and decisions.

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

15/07/26 INFORMATION EXCHANGE/NEXT AGENDA ITEMS - None

16/07/26 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday 21st September to be held at the Garrad Room, Bures Community Centre at 7.30pm.

Future dates agreed for 2026: 6th November

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

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Signed:

Chair

Date

