

Minutes of the Bures Hamlet Parish Council Meeting
Monday 23rd March 2026
held at Bures Community Centre at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs J Chambers, M Elder, S Keeble-Fox, S Manning, R Shackell
In the Chair: Cllr R Shackell
Also present: J Wright (Clerk), Cllr S Jones (BSMPC) and 2 Members of the Public

01/03/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

02/03/26 DECLARATION/REGISTER OF INTERESTS/DISPENSATIONS

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

03/03/26 MINUTES

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 19th January 2026 (previously circulated) were duly approved and signed as a correct record.

04/03/26 PUBLIC FORUM

15 minutes maximum public participation
3 minutes for individual contributions unless agreed by Chairman

There were 2 members of the public present.

Matters raised in the Public Forum: Concerns raised regarding the recent dog attack in Jubilee Grove. This was the second attack within the past year both by the same dog. Following the first attack the dog should have been muzzled when out but on the second occasion the dog had jumped its garden fence and entered the Grove without its owner. The matter has been referred to Essex Police and Braintree District Council. To be discussed further at Agenda Item 7e Jubilee Grove.

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 Jones reported on the following: Regarding the fire at the barn at Wind Whistle Ridge, a male had been arrested on suspicion of burglary and arson. A parent recently launched a campaign for a school crossing. A need has to be established. Parent to attend the next parish council meeting. Standing water outside the school reported and works scheduled. Evidence of HGV's travelling through the village recently reported on the Suffolk Reporting Tool under 'Obstruction'. Advice given was that the B1508 is an approved lorry route (green) described as 'roads or part roads serving as access to a specific location'. Cllr James Finch has been asked to clarify the matter. Still waiting on bridge repairs. New bus shelter to be installed early April via a Suffolk Board funding agreement. Tawneys Ride and Claypits Avenue to have some EV charging points installed as so many properties do not have drives or roadside access. Concerns raised regarding the full height advertising posters fitted at Central Stores. Matter referred to Enforcement.

Post Office due to close on 31st March. Post Office Customer Services have not indicated a way forward to date. Sportsground Committee investigating the installation of drop off parcel lockers. New defibrillator installed in Church Square telephone kiosk via funding from Bures Music Festival. An MP Constituency Surgery had been held in the village on 13th March. Cllr Aries attended. Chris Crace also attended to share the preliminary plans for the new cricket pavilion. Discharge Condition for Biodiversity Net Gain refused for the Chambers Bus Depot development. BNG short of mixed scrub by 0.01 units The development is buying its 10% BNG off-site. To be resubmitted. Greenacres, Packards Lane, Wormingford Application Ref 251634 has an extended Determination date of 24th April. Parish Clerk/RFO vacancy has been advertised locally with one expression of interest received to date.

05/03/26 POLICE MATTERS

- a) Issues raised with Community Policing Teams:** Fire at Bevills Windwhistle Ridge Barn under investigation as arson. BCLT had installed smoke detectors and alarms at the Dennis Ambrose barn. Recent burglaries at Normandie Way and Tenterfield reported. Access possibly via the railway line.
- b) Police Forums** are currently being held bi-monthly via Teams. Parish representatives encouraged to attend. Next meeting 30th March at 6.30pm.
- c) SpeedWatch:** No Team in operation at the moment owing to police policies.

06/03/26 HIGHWAY MATTERS

- a) Flooding issues:** Lanes Drains have carried out the works to remove silt from the Water Lane brook. 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. No severe flooding reported since silt removed from the brook.
- b) Millennium footpath repair:** The path has subsided once again. T5 Building Company has submitted a quotation for the work - £1,578 + VAT. This has been forwarded to FP Officers as grants maybe available to cover the costs. This 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 are following up with the Clerk as an urgent priority.
- c) Village parking issues:** Cllr Keeble-Fox had put forward the proposals to the St Mary Parish Council as agreed at the previous Bures Hamlet meeting. It had been 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. At the last market parking issues appeared to be improved and more visitors were using the Station carpark.
- d) 20mph:** The Clerk had forwarded the Essex Safer Speeds Strategy consultation to all members along with the Essex and Suffolk 20mph policies. Members agreed to individually complete the online consultation. Pedestrian safety along Bridge Street had been fully discussed with NEEP however no solution forthcoming. Pedestrian safety at the primary school was being addressed by BSMPC with Suffolk Highways.
- e) Safety under the railway bridge:** A resident has raised concerns regarding safety for pedestrians walking under the railway bridge. This has been a re-occurring agenda item. The Clerk has submitted the need for a mirror and speed reduction to the National Grid Community Benefit scheme. Clerk to check on installation and costs with Highways.
- f) Station Hill potholes:** Cllr Schwier had kindly escalated the potholes for repair to Highways. However only the one largest pothole has been repaired. Clerk to follow up with Cllr Schwier. It was noted that the damaged bollard at the refuge has been repaired.

g) 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.

h) Parsonage Hill lighting: The Chair has a suitable location in mind, however still to be agreed with resident. 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 the costs for either a directional street lamp or a solar powered light. Cllr Chambers offered to look at available grants.

07/03/26 PLANNING

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

b) Applications requiring consideration at this meeting:

26/00483/FUL Ravensfield Place, Ravensfield CO8 5DP – members did not object to the application however concerns were raised regarding the size of the dwelling in relation to the overall site. Clerk to report. 26/00604/TPOCON Oak Tree House, Parsonage Hill CO8 5DH – the Parish Tree Warden has no objections to make against this application.

c) Enforcement matters:

Concerns raised regarding possible tree works undertaken to the preserved Oak tree at the former Swan PH in Station Hill. Clerk to follow up. Concerns also raised regarding the height of a tree in Parsonage Grove. Chair to follow up.

1) 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 has been submitted by the resident.

2) Non-consented highways access to the water meadows – Enforcement considered that there was no evidence of unlawful development. The removal of shrubs, hedgerows and trees is not classed as development as the vegetation is not protected. Also a portable toilet is considered a small, temporary structure and does not require planning permission.

d) National Grid: National Grid confirmed it has received the Parish Council's wish list for inclusion in the NG Community Benefit Scheme. NG has made funding available for community schemes and BHPC has submitted 8 possible suggestions.

e) Jubilee Grove: The grid path has been installed with costs taken from the recent Rural England Prosperity grant. A plaque has been ordered to be installed. 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 for the clay soil and planting to be taken from the District Councillor's Locality Award. A second dog attack in the Grove involving another dog has been reported to Essex Police. Waiting on outcome. Members agreed to install signs – 'please keep your dog under control'.

f) 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 to be erected in April by Knowle House. Developers have suggested 'Chambers Place' for the site name. Alternative suggestions also being sought.

g) Greenacres, Packards Lane, Wormingford Ref 25163: Decision on the business hub application has been extended to 24th April. Journey Transport Planning have assessed that the development will have very limited impact on the area or nearby settlements.

h) NPPF Consultation: The draft National Planning Policy Framework circulated. BHPC made its response inline with RCCE's concern regarding Policy PM13.

i) Planning Appeals: The Government published its new procedural guide for how planning appeals will work from the 1st April. Details circulated to members.

08/03/26 FINANCE MATTERS

Commercial Instant A/C balance: £10,312.74 Community Account balance: £4,687.84

- a) Finance and Budget monitoring report - noted, circulated and attached.
- b) Bank reconciliation and verifying bank statements dated 10th March 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 Pre Renewal Insurance Questionnaire had been received from Gallagher Insurance for the parish council to review its pending insurance quotation prior to renewal on the 1st June 2026. Members were happy with the Pre Renewal and the Clerk to inform Gallagher accordingly.
- e) Members agreed not to offer a donation to any charity requests received during the year owing to ongoing financial restraints. Costs for the pending Post Master retirement celebration to be met from the S137 budget.
- f) NALC advised of the Government decision to formally exclude parish and town councils from referendum principles on excessive council tax increases.

09/03/26 AUDIT MATTERS

- a) Members confirmed acceptance of BB Business Associates as Internal Auditors for financial year 2025/26. A Letter of Engagement duly signed by the Clerk.
- b) All parish councillor email addresses were now compliant with the Assertion10 Guidance with the exception of one councillor who was gaining assistance on the matter.
- c) Councillor's Statement of Assurance – Councillor's understanding of obligations – all members have now signed the Statement of Assurance.

10/03/26 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. Members agreed to consider the implications of Devolution when further information received.
- b) **Post Office closure:** Clerk had liaised with Robert Harrod on his preferences for a celebration retirement do. Celebration to take place Tuesday 31st March at the Three Horseshoes PH at 5pm. Advertising had been circulated in the village. Post Office closure scheduled for Tuesday 31st March 2026. Post Office Customer Services are actively seeking a replacement service. It was noted that the Sportsground Committee is investigating the possible installation of Royal Mail drop off parcel lockers.
- c) **APM format:** Arrangements now in place for 30th March in main hall from 7pm. Tables to be set up for displays from 6pm. Two speakers booked – Cllr Finch on Fostering and Charlotte Ward on Bikes for Africa.
- d) **BDC Street Scene Agreement:** The 2026/27 Agreement had been signed and returned.
- 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 spring bedding to be purchased.
- f) **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. Concerns raised regarding the new bins being left out by residents on the pavements which creates a hazard for pedestrians. However it was suggested to wait until the new system was fully in place. Clerk to ask BDC to remove the mixed recycling boxes currently standing on the pavement outside No. 3 Colchester Road.

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g) Bures Station works: The parish council has been notified of pending works at Bures Station during 2026. These include concrete repairs to underside of the platform and brick work repair along with refurbishment painting. As a goodwill gesture for the disturbance to the Station Adopters work the Project Manager has offered a supply of new potting plants.

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

11/03/26 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 after the May elections when residents will have the opportunity to vote on whether to adopt the Plan.

b) Draft Joint Parish Plan 2025-2026: The proposal for a school crossing to be 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. Gillian Chapman current Editor to step down in the autumn. New Editor being sought.

12/03/26 CLERK'S REPORT PLUS ANY CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FOR ACTION

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

A letter from the Essex Safeguarding Adults Board offered free Safeguarding training. The Clerk noted that the Parish Council has a Safeguarding Policy.

13/03/26 REPORTS - All reports had been circulated prior to the meeting. Councillors acknowledged receipt and were able to present questions by exception.

Asset Report: Cllr Shackell had circulated his report prior to the meeting. It was agreed that a replacement Information Board at the riverbank should be investigated. All other assets in good order.

Cemetery Authority: Draft minutes of the meeting of 9th March 2026 circulated, published and available to view on the parish council website.

Sportsground Committee: Draft minutes of the meeting of 9th March 2026 circulated, published and available to view on the parish council website.

Community Centre: Minutes of meeting held on 21st January 2026 circulated to members. Treasurer and new caretaker needed. Posts being advertised.

Rights of Way: Cllr Keeble-Fox had circulated her report. FP14 style - this had been reported on several occasions for repair but now completely broken. Landowner to rectify. FP32 gate – voluntarily repaired by John Perk. Thanks expressed. Water Lane grass triangle diminishing by vehicles turning. Considered it not sensible to edge. Signs could be installed to prevent vehicles. Hedge encroaching into road. To be discussed at next meeting. Owner of the new bungalow at The Paddocks enquired if they were allowed to install a gate on to FP30. Planning permission is required.

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: 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.

14/03/26 INFORMATION EXCHANGE/NEXT AGENDA ITEMS

No matters raised.

15/03/26 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: AGM Monday 18th May 2026 to be held at the Garrad Room, Bures Community Centre at 7.30pm.

Future dates agreed for 2026: APM 30th March, 20th July, 21st September, 16th November

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

Clr Chambers gave her apologies for the AGM in May owing to a holiday commitment.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm.

Signed: _____

Chairman

Date

Draft