

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of Bures St Mary Parish Council on Saturday 6th April 2024 at Bures Community Centre at 11am

Present: Cllrs J Aries, T Fairbairn, G Jackson, S Koeck, G Taylor, E Ellerbeck

In the Chair: Cllr J Aries

Also Present: Cllr I Reece, Mrs J Wright (BH Clerk), 3 members of BHPC

Cllr Jan Aries gave a warm welcome to all in attendance and introduced herself as Chair Bures St Mary Parish Council. Hard copies of the proposed site layout were available.

1/04/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Cllr J McCrory - BSMPC (personal commitment), L Norton – BSMPC (work commitment), Cllr J Chambers - BHPC (personal reasons)

Apologies accepted by those present.

Apologies also received from Will Vote (Rose Builders), Henry Groundes-Pearce and Mary Turner.

2/04/24 REGISTER OF INTERESTS & DISPENSATION REQUESTS

To declare any 'Pecuniary' or 'Non-Pecuniary' interests and dispensation requests.

No Register of Interests declared and no Dispensation requests put forward.

The Chair proceeded to outline to those present the semi-formal structure for this Extraordinary Meeting.

- a) Names have been taken on arrival of those wishing to speak in the public forum which will follow shortly.
- b) There is a 15-minute session for members of the public to put forward their views especially if they have not submitted these online or by letter.
- c) There is 3-minute allowance for each speaker. This can be extended but we need to be mindful that the meeting should be concluded within 2 hours if possible.
- d) Residents who have not initially elected to speak but reconsider can ask, if there is time to extend the public forum.
- e) Please give the Parish in which you reside prior to speaking. No names will be recorded in the minutes but you will be identified as a resident of BSM, BH, Assington, Alphamstone etc.
- f) To make the most effective use of the allocated time, if a previous speaker has covered all the points that you wished to raise, please try not to repeat what has already been said but state your agreement with all the points previously made. If you wish to add additional considerations, then please do so.
- g) Try not to interrupt someone when they are speaking.

The Public Forum will then conclude and thereafter a member of the public may only speak at the discretion of the Chair.

The BSM Parish Council members will then give careful consideration to what has been said and discuss the issues. They may not be able to formulate a full response at this meeting - that may well require drafting and re-drafting and be approved over the following 24-48 hours before its submission on 10th April 2024. But, by the end of the meeting, members of Bures St

Mary Parish Council should have agreed to either support or to oppose the main elements of the application based on a provisional response.

3/04/24 PUBLIC FORUM – 15 minutes maximum public participation

3 minutes for individual contributions unless agreed by the Chairman

5 members of the public chose to speak on Item 4 (a) of the agenda.

One BH resident commented:

- Supported the build out/crossing planned near the church, being a motorised vehicle user. Felt to be a benefit as it provided wider, safer access to cross the road.
- Bridge Street can be difficult to navigate for families (with children and buggies) and users of mobility aids and when cars are parked bumper to bumper it can be difficult to cross.
- Disappointed by the loss of the convenience store for those that did not drive but understood why financially this was not viable for the developer.
- Disappointed by the lack of affordable housing as this was required in the village but again understood the developers' reasons for not providing this.
- Overall, did not wish for the Chambers site to continue to deteriorate further as per the Ambrose Garage in Bures Hamlet therefore keen to see the site developed.

One BSM resident who owned a property adjacent to the development raised the following concerns:

- Aware of the original plans when purchasing property in 2022, but the new proposed development meant that some of the housing had increased from single to double storey, namely dwellings 1 and 7, putting their outdoor space (to the front of the house) into shade for much of the day.
- Due to the location of the living accommodation and balconies at the rear of dwellings 2, 3, and 4, their living accommodation would be overlooked and their privacy compromised.
- Willow tree on the boundary of the property was not detailed in the plans and they believed that this had a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).
- In summary, loss of privacy and light of most concern.
- The Agent had not approached them to discuss the new plans and unfortunately having being out of the country, had only recently been made aware of the change in planning application and how this would affect them.
- Contacted Owen Fayers, Babergh Planning Officer, however had not received a response.

A church warden, not living in the village but representing Bures St Mary's Church, raised the following concerns:

- the change in parking on Bridge Street/Church Square and the effects of these on the church congregation.
- New highway arrangements posed problems for parking especially for those with mobility issues, for wedding and funeral vehicles. Opposed the buildout and reduction in parking on Bridge Street/Church Square.

A resident from Friends Field (BSM) raised the following concerns:

- Overlooked by the chalet bungalows proposed on the border of their property
- The chalet bungalows appear closer to the boundary than in the previous planning application.

- Previous design had light box/Velux windows in the roof. Revised plans have built out dormer windows.
- Contacted the Agent regarding the statutory 30m distance rule and had been reassured that these complied with legislation. Remained concerned.
- Contacted Owen Fayers (over 2 weeks ago). Experienced difficulties with the Planning Portal but awaiting response.

District Cllr Reece offered to assist with contact with Owen Fayers, Planning Officer for Babergh.

A resident from BH raised the following concerns:

- Development would result there being more cars parked permanently in the village rather than there being the more transient movement of traffic associated with the convenience store originally proposed.
- Suggested some households would have more than 2 cars. Planned parking was not sufficient.
- Village has an aging sewage system and suffers from power cuts. Questioned whether public utilities have sufficient capacity.
- Proposed another traffic survey should be undertaken
- Capacity of the local school and surgery to be considered.

An email had been received from a BSM resident (who was unable to attend the meeting) regarding the absence of green shielding to reduce the impact on the adjacent listed buildings.

4/04/24 PLANNING APPLICATION DC/22/00754 – Former Chambers Bus Depot, Church Square, Bures St Mary CO8 5AB

The Chair put forward the 2 main areas of concern for members to consider.

a) Housing element

b) Highways element

The Chair proceeded to outline to members valid Grounds for Objection, making reference to the National Planning Policy Framework July 2021.

To consider Housing element of application DC/24/01103

Cllr Jackson commented that the new planning application had a better mix of dwelling sizes, more in keeping with the village housing survey, however, was concerned regarding the impact on Willow House. She expressed surprise that the Agent had not been in contact with them. Cllr Fairbairn was in favour of the new development as it fits well aesthetically, however was also concerned with the overlooking issues of dwellings 10, 11 and 12. That said, these had been lowered from two storey to one and half storeys with Velux windows but felt clarification was required as to whether the distance rule had been adhered to. He also felt that the dwelling 7 required obscured glazing to reduce the impact of overlooking Willow House. The Willow tree TPO needed clarification. Cllr Fairbairn reiterated that the 32 residential parking spaces met with the guidance set out by Suffolk County Council and this could not be raised as a legitimate objection.

Cllr Koeck commented that Willow House and the new development were naturally angled away from each other and it appeared that the main problem was the proposed balcony. He also noted that the Willow Tree with the possible TPO was not marked on the plans.

Cllr Aries raised the issue of affordable housing. Rose Builders would be required to pay £246,792 to Babergh District Council instead of providing the required 3.25 affordable homes. The village would not directly benefit from this.

The educational impact of the proposed development had been assessed and there was no concern regarding capacity at the primary school. A Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) would be due for two fulltime early years places. As yet, a health impact report was not available and this could be requested.

It was also agreed that power provision for the village would not be affected by the 14 additional dwellings as most power cuts in the village resulted due to poor weather conditions, infrastructure failure and usually occurred at night when there was little consumption. This would be difficult to argue with the work National Grid were currently proposing on the Bramford to Twinstead Re-enforcement NSIP. With regards to sewage capacity, a holding objection had been lodged by Anglian Water, identifying the potential for increased flooding downstream.

To consider the Highways element of the application DC/24/01103

Members discussed the benefit of the buildouts versus the loss of parking. With the loss of the convenience store, should Highways revisit the layout as less traffic and less transient movement? The loss of parking spaces in Bridge Street/Church Square was concerning and could possibly be addressed with a new proposed layout/transport reassessment as the loss of the larger commercial unit had changed the context. Highways had yet to comment on the new development. Previously some residents had engaged a transport consultant to investigate their concerns. A report was subsequently produced and shared with Highways. However, it did not alter SCC Highways' decision to approve. The report was now out of date and had addressed a different context.

Cllr Fairbairn felt that the improved pedestrian access/safety of the road layout on Bridge Street was a benefit to families and mobility aid users and was a win for the village.

Cllr Aries reminded members that they could not object outright to the road arrangement, without evidence supplied by a qualified consultant, only raise concerns.

Cllr Aries concluded that she would contact the Agent regarding concerns raised by three BSM residents, two of whom spoke at the meeting and the third who was unable to attend. She would suggest that the Agent met with the residents to discuss their concerns further.

Cllr Fairbairn proposed the following:

To approve the housing element however comment on the reservations that members had regarding the loss of amenities to Willow House and concerns for residents of Friends Field with regards to the statutory distance being met by dwellings 10, 11 and 12.

To approve the highways element with a caveat as requesting a reassessment was probably not in the best interests of the village. The proposed plans at least offered a safer crossing which had been sought for many years but previously always refused. Highways have yet to submit their comments so changes may still be made. Ongoing discussions were required to ensure maximum safety to the public with regards to the crossing whilst addressing the on-street parking provision.

5/04/22 BRIEF INFORMATION & EXCHANGE

6/04/22 DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

AGM Thursday 23rd May 2024 to be held at the Garrad Room, Bures Community Centre, Nayland Road at 7.30pm.

Future dates 2024: 18th July, 19th September 2024

The meeting closed at 12.37pm.

Signed:

Chair:

Date: