

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Bures Community Centre, Nayland Road on Monday 24th March 2014 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: There were 6 parish councillors present and 4 electors plus Mrs J Wright (Clerk), Cllr David Finch (ECC), Cllr Tim Underwood (Bures St Mary PC), Peter Darlington (Village Agent).

Apologies received from Cllr J Evans, Cllr A Shelton (BDC), PCSO Warren Brown, Mr Hugh Turner (Parish Footpaths).

It was reported that Cllr Shelton had received a severe fall whilst on holiday and all those present wished him a speedy recovery.

Mr David Lee (Bures Hamlet Parish Council Chairman) took the chair.

MINUTES: Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting of 18th March 2013 were circulated and read (previously confirmed and signed 13th May 2013).

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: The Chairman, Mr David Lee welcomed those in attendance and thanked Cllr Finch for his help in progressing highway matters during the past year. ECC had recently completed drain clearance throughout the parish and had identified blockages which would require attention. He then proceeded to give a brief update of the year's events and a copy has been held on file for reference and duly advertised.

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT: Cllr David Finch gave a brief outline of ECC performance and achievements during the past year.

Main points of interest: ECC continued to support the library service. Libraries, although less used for books were increasingly being used for internet facilities and information drop in centres.

Council tax had been frozen for a fourth year. £3 million invested for flood management, drain and gully clearance and reported pothole repairs. Also investing in young people apprenticeships, vulnerable adults, youth service and primary schools. ECC in discussions with providers to bring broadband into the rural areas far quicker than the stated 2016.

The Chairman expressed his disappointment with the quality of the resurfacing of village roads last year. The work had not been requested by the parish council and the chippings left behind on the highway had still not been cleared. Cllr Matthews also noted that the drains in Colchester Road were blocked which had not helped during the recent floods. Cllr Finch would follow up on the reported items.

BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT: The Clerk had circulated Cllr Shelton's report on his behalf and a copy has been held on file for reference. Main points of interest: District Councils tax demand reduced by 1% for 2014/15. Joint collection of domestic and business waste planned. Collection days may change. Recycling at 60% for the district.

POLICE REPORT: PCSO Warren Brown had sent his apologies to the meeting. The Clerk submitted his report for 18th March 2013 – 23rd March 2014:

Reported Crime Incidents

2 x Assault: Common/ABH

1 x Dwelling Burglary

1 x Criminal Damage

1 x Hate Crime

1 x Burglary Other

Reported Non-crime Incidents

1x Abandoned Vehicle

1 x Nuisance Communications

1 x Obstruction of the Highway

2 x Nuisance Neighbour

10 x Suspicious Circumstances

3 x Nuisance Youths

4 x Concern for someone's safety

1 x Animal Related Incident

3 x Road Traffic Collision

2 x Nuisance Other

2 x Road Related Incident

1 x Prevention Breach of the Peace

VILLAGE AGENT: Peter Darlington gave the following report:

Village Agents has been a rural service in Mid Essex and is scheduled to end on 30th June 2014. From 1st July 2014 the service will become Community Agents. This will be a partnership of 4 voluntary and community sector organisations including Rural Community Council of Essex, British Red Cross, Age UK Essex and Essex Neighbourhood Watch. Essex County Council will be the main provider for the service. Peter's area would be Colchester but he advised that he will continue to serve the village of Bures. The Chairman expressed his appreciation to Peter for all his valued work in the village during the past year.

STATION ADOPTERS: The Clerk presented the report and circulated to all those present.

Garden Area: Following last year's tree removal a work party took place on 12th March, involving about 10 volunteers, principally to put in a sleeper bed, cut tree branches, and put in a new path. Not everything was achieved on the day but with a lot of work after the event as well, the station now looks refreshed and more inviting, albeit that planting up remains the main outstanding task. A feature is an old ground signal, kindly donated by the East Anglian Railway Museum, which the adopters have refurbished and which sits in the new sleeper bed. Special thanks go to Dennis Ambrose who supplied about 10 tractor bucket loads of earth. The budget of £1,000 has been mostly exhausted.

Hut: One of the pictures had its glass smashed and the frame burned. The glass has been replaced with acrylic.

Generally: During the year the new rail franchise had commenced and the station buildings had been redecorated.

The Chairman expressed his appreciation to Anne and David Taylor for all their hard work during the past year.

TREE WARDEN: Cllr Evans had sent his apologies to the meeting. The Clerk submitted a short report on his behalf. There had only been a few requests for his observations during the year. The extensive arboreal damage caused by the storms had now been mostly cleared except along the Colchester Road, although the parish council needs to be aware of weakening ditch banks caused by the very wet weather.

RIGHTS OF WAY: Hugh Turner, Parish Footpath Representative had sent his apologies to the meeting. The Clerk circulated the report on his behalf and a copy to be held on file for reference. The major part of the extensive Parish Rights of Way network is open, accessible, well way marked and well walked. Byeway 25 remains unpassable due to flooding for long periods during the past few months. FP27 requires reinstating.

The defective stile on the parish boundary near Bures Mill had been renewed. Hugh advised that he holds a copy of the Definitive Map in large scale if anyone wished to view it.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to Hugh for continuing as Parish Footpath Representative.

FINANCIAL REPORT: The Clerk presented the following report:

Business Saver A/C balance: £3855.17

Community A/C balance: £1793.98

Parish precept to Braintree District Council for financial year 2014/2015: £23,905

Parish Council Budget: £27,817.00 increased by £610 on previous year being the shortfall on the Localism Grant receivable from BDC thus representing 2.50% increase on the parish element for 2014/2015.

Localism Grant: £3,912.00 being new grant for 2014/15 additional to the the Parish Precept request

Parish Element of Band D Tax Rate: £77.12 for 2014/15 (£75.24 for 2013/14)

Allocation of Parish Budget:

Cemetery Authority	£3500 (as per previous year)
Bures Community Centre	£200 (telephone rental) Note: Final instalment of hall improvement loan paid March 2014)
Sportsground	£7582.50 (as per previous year)
Projects	£1500
Lighting	£2000 (to consider purchasing a lamp pole to Replace low level bollard along footpath)
Insurance	£540
Training	£300
Hall hire	£120
Auditors	£280
Administration	£750
Subscriptions	£300
Clerk's salary	£4300
Donations/parish items	£500
Dog waste bags	£475
Repairs/projects	£1500
Grounds Maintenance	£3000
Gritting	£300

Earmarked Funds £1100 for Elections/Referendum

We also receive a BDC Street Cleansing grant (2013/14) £741 and a Greenfields Housing Maintenance grant (2013/14) £184.64 to offset costs paid for by the parish council. These will be similar amounts for 2014/15.

ELECTOR'S QUESTIONS: None

This concluded the business.

