

Bures Hamlet Parish Council Annual Meeting

Chairman's Report

During the past year the Council has met six times.

Once again most of the business conducted has been of a routine nature, including reporting necessary repairs to footpaths, roads and streetlights and following up on drainage and other repairs.

It is to be regretted that works requested from Essex County Council seem to have had a low priority and therefore have taken a long time to be carried out. However, our County Councillor assures us that this is not due to spending restrictions.

We have been pushing Essex County Council for the long awaited traffic calming measures for the Bridge Street / Colchester Road corner; and have again requested improvements to some of our footpaths and an upgraded school crossing along the Colchester Road.

I cannot therefore report on the completion of any major projects this year but we have restored our Village Sign, which was necessary when we found that it was in urgent need of attention. I would like to thank all those who were involved in its careful restoration.

The 'Community Speedwatch Scheme' has been in place for over a year now and is contributing to slowing traffic along the Colchester Road by making motorists aware of the speed limit through our Village. My thanks to all those involved in giving up their time in training and running the scheme.

During the year the Bells Garage has rapidly deteriorated into the eyesore it is today. The Parish Council are in regular contact with Braintree District Council over tidying the site up and making it secure but to date there has been no response from the owners.

Progress has been made on our proposed Neighbourhood Plan covering the development criteria for the whole village and there will soon be a fact finding event to gather parishioners' views.

It is good to see that Bures Common is in regular active use by the public and to see the success of the periodic Transition Group local produce markets, which are now firmly established.

Once again the Parish Council would like to express our thanks to all those involved in erecting and maintaining the Village Christmas Lights.

We would also like to thank to David and Anne Taylor for maintaining the station surroundings in such excellent order.

A short time ago we said goodbye to our Village Agent, Peter Darlington who has now taken retirement. The Parish Council would like to thank him for all his hard work in the community and we look forward to working in future with his successor Jayne Laken.

Our Parish Councillors serve on the Cemetery Authority, Sportsground and Community Centre Committees and thanks to each one of them for all their commitment over the last twelve months. Thanks also to John Evans our Parish Tree Warden.

Thanks are also due to Tony Shelton our District Councillor and David Finch our County Councillor for all their help over the year. In particular I would like to thank Tony Shelton for his dedication to the Village over his years in office, as he is not seeking re-election.

In setting our budget for the forthcoming year we have again made the difficult decision to marginally increase our parish precept to make up for the shortfall in the funding received from the District Council.

Finally, as we all come to the end of our term of office as Parish Councillors an enormous thank you to all the members for their commitment over at least the last four years, in particular to those who have served several terms of office and have decided not to stand for re-election in May.

Also, many thanks to Jenny Wright our Parish Clerk for all her hard work on behalf of the Village as a whole and without whom this job would be impossible.

David Lee

23rd March 2015