

Bures Hamlet Parish Council

Chairman's Report

March 2016

In the past twelve months the Parish Council has met six times.

Both Alan Ryman and John Evans retired last May and their places have been filled by Mike Welch and Alan Crowe. Jacqui O'Sullivan resigned during the year and we have yet to appoint her replacement. Our thanks go to those councillors who are no longer serving for all their previous hard work.

Again this year much of the business has continued to be of a routine nature, including maintaining the parish lighting, signs, drainage, footpaths, road verges and highways. Further issues have been dog fouling, bench seat replacement, the repair of the landing stage, driver road visibility issues and car parking in the Village. At our request, bollards to prevent parking were installed at the entrance to the Millennium footpath and the resurfacing of the Bridge Street footpath remains a priority.

We have recently tendered our maintenance works contract and our new contractor commences in April.

The Parish Council remains greatly concerned over the excessive speed of some of the traffic passing through the village, in particular the resulting accidents which have occurred. Unfortunately the promised pedestrian refuge at the Colchester Road / Bridge Street junction has yet to materialise but is now promised for the new financial year. We do, however, now have a permanent vehicle activated sign at the entrance to the Village.

We would like to thank all those volunteers involved in operating the 'Community Speed Watch' scheme, which I am sure is having a positive effect.

The Parish Council continues to scrutinise all planning applications, making constructive comments as appropriate and during the year we have had a number of contentious applications to deal with. Not least of which was the Swan Public House proposed conversion which the Parish Council were not opposed to by majority decision.

We would still like to see the Bells Garage site developed as a convenience store and we have met with a national grocery store chain to explore possibilities.

Braintree District Council is currently developing a new Local Plan for housing and there are some sites in the Village which have been put forward for building by the landowners.

We are currently working with St. Mary's Parish Council to develop a property register of assets of community value.

The Parish Council is taking a pro-active approach in the proposed service alterations to the bus service to Halstead.

The reduction in policing remains a concern for us, particularly as we have had some anti-social behaviour issues recently in the village. We have also had vandalism at the Station. Our heartfelt thanks go to Anne and David Taylor who have maintained the Station hut and surroundings in excellent order, despite having to clear up after damage on numerous occasions.

The Parish Council would also like to thank Hugh Turner our parish paths representative and John Evans our Tree warden.

Thanks must also go to Becky Butcher and Team Tree for the splendid Christmas lights which improve year on year.

Members of the Council continue to serve on the Sportsground and Cemetery Authorities which continue to be maintained in good order.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our County Councillor David Finch and our New District Councillor Wendy Scattergood for their support throughout the year and I must thank, on behalf of the Parish, our Clerk Jenny Wright for all her hard work.

Finally, I know that from time to time parish issues are discussed on social media. I never see these comments as I do not subscribe and so none of these comments, positive or negative, can be taken into account when decisions are made. If parishioners have something valuable to say then can I appeal for them to be e-mailed to us so we are aware of the full picture. Thank you.

D.S.Lee
Chairman
Bures Hamlet Parish Council