

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Bures Community Centre, Nayland Road on Monday 21st March 2016 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: There were 5 parish councillors and 6 electors present plus Cllr Wendy Scattergood (District Councillor), Cllr Gill Jackson (Bures St Mary PC) plus Mrs J Wright (Clerk).

Also present James Salmon, Project Manager for County Broadband.

Apologies received from Cllr D Matthews, Mr Hugh Turner (Parish ROW), David and Anne Taylor (Station Adopters) and Mr John Evans (Parish Tree Warden).

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

WELCOME: Cllr Lee expressed a warm welcome to all those present.

PRESENTATION: James Salmon gave a short outline on the delivery of County Broadband and how it differed from other broadband providers. County Broadband is a Wireless Internet Service Provider specialising in the provision of broadband networks and services into difficult to get places and especially rural areas offering one of the fastest broadband speeds in the country. Finances needed for a community based project was in the region of £15,000 which could be raised via S106 funding, individuals and community groups. The members agreed there was a need for improved broadband in the village. It was suggested that James attends the Bures St Mary APM in May with a view to him setting up a Bures Open Meeting to examine whether a project is viable.

MINUTES: Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting of 23rd March 2015 were circulated and read (previously confirmed and signed 11th May 2015).

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Cllr David Lee gave a brief update of the year's events and a copy has been held on file for reference and duly advertised. Thanks were expressed to David and Anne Taylor Bures Station Adopters, Bures Team Tree, Bures Speed Watch Team, County and District Councillors, Parish ROW Representative Hugh Turner, John Evans Parish Tree Warden and the Clerk. Cllr Lee noted that the parish council remained keen to see the Eight Bells Garage site developed as a convenience store and was also constantly looking at ways to reduce excessive speed through the village.

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT: No report available. Cllr David Finch not in attendance.

BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT: Cllr Wendy Scattergood gave a brief report and a copy to be held on file for reference. Main points raised: Cllr Scattergood reported that she is a lone ward Councillor representing a ward of 10 villages but she continued to follow up on parish matters on behalf of the parish council and attends as many meetings as she is able. BDC council tax raised by 3.1%. Mi Community Fund is to cease. Funding via the Mi Community Fund for a sensory garden at Ferriers Barn was successful.

POLICE REPORT: The Clerk put forward a police report: Ten new Community Policing Teams, one per policing district to be launched in April. Each team will be headed by an Inspector and will include PCSOs. Also in April the launch of a new police website including a new online reporting tool to enable residents to be able to report crimes online as well as by telephone or in person. A range of services will be available online. Owing to police changes the Suffolk Police would no longer be able to monitor the Essex side of the village as a compliment to Essex Police. The Clerk had attended the Local Council Police Partnership Conference on 15th March and had circulated the agenda for information. The majority of those in attendance agreed that communication links were vital.

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

Main points of interest: Vandalism at the station hut had been curtailed enormously following police and parish council support. Still waiting on the installation of a 'mosquito' vandalism deterrent by Abellio. A mile post sign to be installed. 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 with nothing to report. He continued to make representations to BDC on parish tree applications on behalf of the parish council.

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. Byway 25 remains impassable due to flooding for long periods during the past few months and continues to be the biggest issue for the parish. Amendments to FP3 & 4 still being investigated by ECC. 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: £14,933.22

Community A/C balance: £ 3,055.20

Parish precept to Braintree District Council for financial year 2016/2017: £25,044

Parish Council Budget: £27,817 as per previous year but precept to BDC increased by £537 being the shortfall on the Localism Fund receivable from BDC thus representing 1.11% increase on the parish element for 2016/2017.

Localism Grant: £2,773 grant for 2016/17 additional to the Parish Precept

Additional one-off payment: BDC have agreed to make a one-off additional payment to parish and town councils in 2016/17. The payment is an allocation of the estimated surplus on the Council Tax Collection Fund as at 31st March 2016.

Bures Hamlet Parish Council is allocated to receive £292.

Parish Element of Band D Tax Rate 2016/17: £79.08 (2015/16 £78.21)

Allocation of Parish Budget:

Cemetery Authority £3500 (as per previous year)

Bures Community Centre £200 (telephone rental)

Sportsground £8,000 (as per previous year)

Lighting £2500 (to consider purchasing a lamp pole to replace low level bollard along footpath)

Insurance £525

Training £300

Hall hire £225

Auditors £300

Administration £450

Subscriptions £475

Clerk's salary £4325

Donations/parish items £500

Repairs/projects £2500

Grounds Maintenance £3500

Gritting/flooding £500

Earmarked Funds Minimum Retention funds £6,250

Elections/Referendum £1,000

Neighbourhood Plan £1,000

Xmas lighting £100

New bus shelter project £2,000

We also receive a BDC Street Cleansing grant £778.26 (2015/16) and a Greenfields Housing Maintenance grant £259.49 (2015/16) to offset costs paid for by the parish council. These will be similar amounts for 2016/17.

ELECTOR'S QUESTIONS: Mr Andrews raised the matter of the recent approval of change of use and erection of 3 dwellings within the Swan Public House site. He asked why the parish council had allowed this asset to be lost to the village. The Chairman confirmed that the council had carefully considered what action to take, if any, when it was first closed for business and again later when we were asked by Braintree District Council to comment on the planning application. In each case there was a majority decision not to actively oppose the proposed sale and conversion.

The parish council subsequently became aware that some members of the public wanted to see the Swan listed as an asset of community value and an application was duly submitted. The planning application was later determined based on a detailed officers report which took all matters into consideration. Mr Andrews suggested that the parish council should be more aware of developer's proposals and this was noted. The Chairman asked that in future parishioners should make all members aware of their comments on parish matters to enable the parish council to make constructive decisions.

This concluded the business.