Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Bures Community Centre, Nayland Road on Monday 23rd March 2015 at 7.30pm

**PRESENT:** There were 4 parish councillors present and 5 electors plus Mrs J Wright (Clerk), Cllr Tony Shelton (BDC), Cllr Carolyn Holbrook (Bures St Mary PC).

Apologies received from Cllrs J Evans, J O’Sullivan, D Matthews, Cllr D Finch (ECC), Mr Hugh Turner (Parish Footpaths).

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

**WELCOME:** Cllr Lee expressed a warm welcome to all those present. He asked for the parish council to record its congratulations to Cllr Matthews on his forthcoming 80th birthday on the 23rd March.

**MINUTES:** Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting of 24th March 2014 were circulated and read (previously confirmed and signed 12th May 2014).

**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. In particular he expressed his thanks to Cllr Tony Shelton for his dedication to the village during his 16 years in office, as it was noted that he was not seeking re-election. Cllr Lee also expressed his appreciation to all members for their commitment over the last 4 years and in particular to those members who had decided not to stand for re-election in May.

**ELECTIONS MAY 7TH 2015:** Cllr lee drew the election timetable to the attention of all those present and encouraged any persons interested in standing for election to contact the Clerk for further information.

**ESSEX COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT:** Cllr David Finch’s Parish Update for March 2015 had been circulated. Main points of interest: £23million invested into an ambitious flood defence programme to keep Essex residents and their homes safe of flooding, Superfast connections to reach 87% of premises across Essex by early 2016 and to expand to 95% of premises by 2017/18, second phase of the Essex Energy Switch currently being undertaken.

The Chairman expressed his disappointment that Essex County Council Highway works requested to be completed within the parish appeared to have been given low priority assessments thus giving either delayed or at times no action.

**BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT:** Cllr Shelton expressed his appreciation to the Chairman for his kind words following his decision not to seek re-election. He also thanked the Clerk for her loyal work to the parish and noted that Bures was a good community working together.

The Clerk circulated Cllr Shelton’s report on his behalf and a copy has been held on file for reference. Main points of interest: Council Tax reduced by 1%, delivery of 173 affordable homes in the district, investment of £250,000 in extending business broadband, refurbishment of 4 play areas across the district, reduced ‘food on the go’ litter by 68%. Cllr Shelton suggested that any grants sourced should be for the village as a whole.

**POLICE REPORT:** No police representative in attendance. Regular weekly police reports were circulated via the Clerk and it was noted that there had been very little crime reported for Bures Hamlet during the last year.

**COMMUNITY AGENT:** Peter Darlington had recently retired and Jayne Laken had taken over the role for the Colchester area and would continue to service Bures.

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

Main points of interest: Bakers of Greenstead continue to provide 4 planted troughs, remainder troughs and tubs being planted up and maintained by Anne and David Taylor. The hut had been vandalised and the pictures stolen during the year but new pictures now in place and the hut re-painted. 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 no report to present.

He had kindly offered to continue in his role as Parish Tree Warden.

**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. FP27 reinstated following several years of being ploughed over. FP12 gate often remains closed against the conditions put in place by ECC. Clerk to follow up. FP30 barbed wire fencing being investigated. ECC have agreed to adopt the footpath running down from Mount Bures to Colchester Road. Amendments to FP3 & 4 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: £8,676.87**

**Community A/C balance: £3,096.32**

**Parish precept to Braintree District Council for financial year 2015/2016: £24,507**

Parish Council Budget: £27,817.00 as previous year but precept to BDC increased by £602 being the shortfall on the Localism Fund receivable from BDC thus representing 1.41% increase on the parish element for 2015/2016.

Localism Grant: £3,310.00 grant for 2015/16 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 2015/16. The payment is an allocation of the estimated surplus on the Council Tax Collection Fund as at 31st March 2015.

Bures Hamlet Parish Council is allocated to receive £434.00.

Parish Tax Base 2015/16: 313.33 (2014/15 309.98)

Parish Element of Band D Tax Rate 2015/16: £78.21 (2014/15 £77.12)

**Allocation of Parish Budget:**

Cemetery Authority ` £3500 (as per previous year)

Bures Community Centre £200 (telephone rental)

Sportsground £8,000 (increase of £417.50 on previous year)

Lighting £2500 (to consider purchasing a lamp pole to

 replace low level bollard along footpath)

Insurance £550

Training £300

Hall hire £225

Auditors £280

Administration £400

Subscriptions £450

Clerk’s salary £4380

Donations/parish items £500

Repairs/projects £2500

Grounds Maintenance £3000

Gritting/flooding £300

Earmarked Funds Minimum Retention funds £6,127

Elections/Referendum £1,100

 Neighbourhood Plan £1,000

 Xmas lighting £100

The parish council recieves a BDC Street Cleansing grant £778.26 (2014/15) and a Greenfields Housing Maintenance grant £259.49 (2014/15) to offset costs paid for by the parish council. These will be similar amounts for 2015/16.

**ELECTOR’S QUESTIONS:** None

This concluded the business.