

Minutes of Bures Joint Annual Parish Meeting held virtually via zoom on Monday 26th April 2021 at 7.30pm

Present: BHPC: Cllrs M Baker, C Ellis, K McAndrew, B Raymond, R Shackell, M Welch
BSMPC: Cllrs J Aries, T Fairbairn, G Jackson, J McCrory, L Norton, S Pentney, T Saer
Cllr J Finch (SCC), Cllr D Finch (ECC), Cllr M Barrett (Babergh DC), Cllr W Scattergood, plus 11 members of the public

In attendance: A Cassy (Quiet Lanes Suffolk), S Aylward (Suffolk Wildlife Trust), W Cranstoun (Suffolk Wildlife Trust)

Also in attendance: Mrs J Wright (Clerk to BH and BSM Parish Councils)

In the Chair: Cllr Gill Jackson (Bures St Mary Parish Council Chairman)
Cllr Richard Shackell (Bures Hamlet Parish Council Chairman)

Welcome

Cllr Jackson welcomed everyone to the Joint Annual Parish Meeting for Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary.

Apologies

Apologies received from Cllr S Sills (BSMPC) and Cllr D Monk (BHPC).

Minutes

Minutes of the Joint Annual Parish Meeting of Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary held on 18th March 2019 were presented and agreed. These had been previously signed and circulated. Owing to the Coronavirus pandemic there had been no APM held in 2020. However a Bures Annual Parish Councils' Report 2020 had been made available to the public.

Presentation by Quiet Lanes Suffolk Parish Co-ordinator

Cllr Aries expressed her appreciation to the representatives from QLS and SWT for attending the meeting and to the members of the public in attendance. The Parish Council was required to hold this informal public consultation to explain the QLS scheme and to give the local community the opportunity to ask questions and make comments. Cllr Aries gave a PowerPoint presentation on Quiet Lanes Suffolk and put forward the parish councils' proposals for 3 Quiet Lanes for the parish of Bures St Mary, these being Arger Fen, Hollow Lane and St Edmunds Lane.

Andrew Cassy (QLS) advised that following the implementation of all agreed Quiet Lanes across Suffolk then the next aspiration would be to consider alternative speed limits. He also noted that QLS was working with Sat Nav companies to include Quiet Lanes in their data. However, the public should only drive at a speed suitable to the road conditions.

A number of members of the public opposed the inclusion of Arger Fen in the initiative. However, the inclusion of St Edmunds Lane was well-supported.

A number of objections had been received prior to the meeting. Objections raised at the meeting by the public: walkers arrive in cars before setting off to explore the area, thus increasing the volume of traffic in the area; it appears that the initiative is attempting to restrict traffic; concerns that tighter speed restrictions will be brought in.

Concerns were also raised regarding the increasingly high volume of visitors to the Nature Reserve over the past couple of years. Arger Fen Road was not suitable for heavy traffic and was being damaged beyond repair. Steve Aylward of SWT recognised the issues and the increasing popularity of the reserve. SWT were looking at alternative options for parking. Members of the public were encouraged to liaise with SWT to ease the concerns.

Cllr Aries was duly thanked for her presentation.

Thoughts for a Bures Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Jackson asked those present to consider joining a working party to move forward the initiative of a joint Bures NHP. Anyone interested to contact herself or the Clerk. Andrew Cassy advised that QLS could be a component of a NP. He kindly offered to assist directing the Working Party to information requirements.

Bures Annual Parish Councils' Report

Cllr Jackson and Cllr Shackell presented the following Bures Annual Parish Councils' Report to the meeting. The Parish Councils' Action Plan for 2020-1 had three main areas of focus: Community spirit and communication; Environment; Community assets, services and enterprise.

1. Community Spirit and Communication - the plan is informed by the Essex and Suffolk strategies for Health and Well-being and the NALC COVID-19 guidance

i) Mental Health and Well-being

We have not been able to hold the planned training and awareness sessions. However we have distributed leaflets at the market and councillors have attended on line training on a range of health and wellbeing matters.

The Swap Shop and refreshments on the recreation ground provided much needed support for some residents. The elderly and vulnerable residents' scheme run jointly by the churches and parish councils helped residents to manage over the year and this continues regardless of COVID-19 restrictions. It is hoped that Bures Common and the Dennis Ambrose barn will be used for social events to help encourage residents to safely resume community activities, using the outdoor space as a first step.

It had been hoped that we might explore the interest in a 'Men in Sheds' group. This was a suggested use for the Tawney's Ride garages. There has been no progress on this due in part to COVID-19 and in part to issues around the garages.

We are keen to encourage walking and cycling in the Bures area. Bures is on the Stour Valley Path and a board showing the route has been installed on Bures Common. It is possible to walk a stretch of the path and take the train back. There is new signage at the station explaining this and the Community Rail Partnership has reprinted their Essex and South Suffolk Railway walks leaflet and have the podcast, 'Steam, Dragons and Landscape Painting along the Gainsborough Line' to encourage walkers in Bures.

Bures St Mary Parish Council has taken up the invitation to join the Quiet Lanes Suffolk initiative. QLS reminds drivers to 'Expect and Respect' more vulnerable road users and so allow non-motorised users to enjoy rural lanes in greater safety. We are looking to designate St Edmunds Lane, Hollow Lane and Arger Fen road from Nayland Road to Gazely Gate.

We feel it is important to maintain a good working link with Bures Surgery. To this end we are fortunate to have a councillor who is a member of the Patient Partnership Group and another who meets with practice managers. There have been some issues over the management of patients waiting outside for appointments. These have not been resolved. However, we are receiving very good feedback on the Hardwick House Group vaccination programme.

ii) Covid – 19

The Parish Clerk has been efficiently disseminating COVID-19 information from national, county and district sources over the period since the last report. Where it has been important to share information this has been through noticeboards and social media. A large display was mounted in the window of Central Stores courtesy of the leaseholder. We have, as detailed above, an elderly and vulnerable residents support scheme which has been used through the period of the pandemic. The Parish Clerk and churches have liaised with the school and the Friday club to help those most in need. The Friday Club has continued to deliver hot meals to those wishing to take up their kind offer. Social distancing and closure of facilities signs have been used on the recreation ground as needed. The equipment has been disinfected as required under COVID-19 guidance.

iii) Parish Council Communication with residents.

Following last year's meeting with the vicar and the editor of the Parish Magazine, another meeting was held with the vicar regarding the secular element of the magazine. It was agreed that the Parish Councils would submit articles for inclusion in the magazine as previously. In addition to the monthly Parish Councils' Snippets page there have been two articles on activities and plans for the recreation ground. We have not, as yet, issued a bi-monthly Parish Council newsletter containing the minutes of meetings. This will be considered again for 2021-2. All Parish Council information is available on the website and on the Facebook page.

iv) Cultural/Social Committee

This idea has not been progressed due to the restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Environment – the plan is informed by the Friends of the Earth 20 Actions Parish and Town Councils can take on the climate and nature emergency; the Campaign for Rural England Landscape and Neighbourhood Planning document and The Tree Charter.

i) Hedge and tree planting schemes and areas for wildlife encouraged. (Tree Charter and Climate and Nature Emergency Actions)

The Tree Wardens for both parishes together with other interested parties identified several places for planting trees and hedges this year. The Woodland Trust provided trees and hedging. A row of oaks has been planted on Home Stable Field under an agreement

with the Bevills Estate and Bures School. Children from the school helped with the planting. Also as part of an agreement with the Bevills Estate, silver birches have been planted along the entrance to Claypits. Bures Common Land Trust agreed to the planting of some Alders along the riverbank and hedging along the boundary with the neighbouring property. Two Dutch Elm Disease resistant Elm trees have been planted as specimen trees on the common.

ii) Rights of Way

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 introduced a provision for a cut-off date of 1 January 2026 for the recording of historic rights of way. This was seen as an opportunity to bring more certainty for the public and landowners alike as to what and where the recorded Public Rights of Way are. The Bures Rights of Way officer has been working with local landowners to have changes to routes agreed where appropriate. However, the proposed diversion order for Bures Hamlet footpath 5 did not proceed.

iii) Link with Bures Transition Group (Climate Action Group) (Tree Charter and Climate and Nature Emergency)

The Suffolk Community Woodland continues to provide good habitat for wildlife and has been a particularly popular spot for residents to sit and look over the valley during the pandemic. The Essex Community Orchard on the Glebeland Allotments is thriving and hopefully there will be some fruit this coming year. Both of these woodland initiatives are the work of Bures Transition Group. The plan to take on the s106 land off Cambridge Way has not progressed as Braintree District Council decided to leave it with the present tenant rather than agree its transfer to Bures.

iv) Speeding

Community Speed watch was, unfortunately, put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A long-standing ambition, to have both Essex and Suffolk police working together to provide and share equipment, has been realised. A site on the Sudbury Road and the original one on Colchester Road are now being covered by a keen team of volunteers. Bures Hamlet has a Speed Indicator Device (SID) on Colchester Road. Bures St Mary have now purchased a moveable SID. This will be used on Sudbury Road, Nayland Road and Cuckoo Hill. The display will inform drivers of their speed and ask them to slow down if they are exceeding the speed limit. In addition to the use of SIDs in the village we have the support of the police carrying out periodic speed checks.

With the ongoing concern of speeding along Colchester Road Bures Hamlet requested the introduction of additional 30-mph roundels. The request was rejected citing that existing streetlight spacing denotes the 30-mph enforcement. Alternative calming measures are being considered.

The Bures Hamlet Parish Council is currently investigating the introduction of a pedestrian crossing at the millennium footpath gate onto Colchester Road. An initial footfall survey has been delayed due to pandemic lockdowns.

Road calming measures at the junction to Colchester Road/ Mount Bures junction have been detailed and requested. Unfortunately, these have not been identified for action in the Local Highways Plan budget for 2021/22.

Preliminary works on the project to install village entry gate signs has taken place. The next step would be gaining the approval of the Highways departments for both Essex and Suffolk and this is likely to take some time.

v) Parking

Contact has been made with Greater Anglia regarding the contract with NCP bringing in charges for parking at the station. The contract covers all stations in the area. It has not been possible for Bures to be taken out of the contract. We are asking for parking to be free when there are events on in the village. This was granted for the Christmas market.

Residents in the Claypits estate put forward the suggestion that householders should be able to purchase the land in front of their houses to provide off-road parking. Babergh District Council currently owns the land and the proposal to transfer ownership has been taken forward by our Babergh District Councillor.

The parking enforcement along Bridge Street currently does not support businesses in that location. After consultation with residents and business owners and following a meeting with North Essex Parking Partnership an application to introduce "20 minutes waiting. No return within 40 minutes" bays is being processed. Controlled parking also introduces both road calming and passive pedestrian protection measures.

vi) Reduce pesticide and weed killer use (Climate and Nature Emergency Actions)

No financially viable environmentally friendly alternative weed treatments have been identified. We are currently having weeds pulled or strimmed.

vii) Continue to work to remove empty property eyesores

Bank House was sold at auction in May 2020. Unfortunately local bids were unsuccessful and the building remains empty. Windows have been secured against the weather. Plans by the leaseholder of Central Stores to use the ground floor for craft sessions were halted by the pandemic.

Tawney's Ride garages have not been used for some time. The area has attracted anti-social activity. We have suggested other uses for the garages and there is due to be a meeting with Babergh officers.

Bures Hamlet has actively supported two planning applications relating to the derelict garage site. Both applications have been approved by Braintree District Council. Application one being for four residential properties (2 Semi, 2 detached) with application two the clearing of the site and installation of safety hoarding. Unfortunately, having gained planning approvals the current owner has unsuccessfully put the site up for auction.

viii) Support the plan to extend the Dedham Vale AONB to include Bures

We worked with the AONB on information boards and walks leaflets – see above. The proposed extension to the AONB is mentioned in responses to planning applications as and when appropriate. It is also being used to respond to the National Grid proposals for the Bramford to Twinstead reinforcement to carry more power from the North Sea.

3. Community assets, services and enterprise – the plan is informed by Babergh Open for Business scheme and Braintree One Vision Strategy

i) The Recreation Ground

The summer of 2020 saw unprecedented numbers of visitors to recreation ground. The area has been increasingly popular with young people in particular. Communication by social media together with the limited possibilities for recreation and leisure due to the COVID_19 restrictions saw hundreds of visitors at peak times. With this increase in numbers came increase in litter and some anti-social behaviour. The Parish Councils worked with the police who produced a Design Out Crime Plan. The plan saw CCTV being installed, a noticeboard explaining how the area should be used, BBQ slabs being installed to reduce scorch marks on the grass and a very successful volunteers litter-picking group. The litter picking group is now active for the summer of 2021.

Over the winter a new in-ground trampoline was installed. This has proved extremely popular. Fencing has been put around the main play area. There had been several unpleasant dog incidents where children were playing. Dogs are not permitted in the play areas. The rather worn skateboard ramp is due to be renovated this month.

The Sportsground Committee is keen to encourage residents to take part in physical activities. Tennis and pickle ball equipment is available on request. A new resident has kindly provided nets for the basketball hoops. The Cricket Club have installed new nets and are keen to hear from anyone interested in joining.

ii) Cemetery

The project to improve vehicular access to the cemetery is proceeding. A turning space for hearses will be provided. Work is due to begin in May. The Cemetery Authority suspended its charges for the period of the pandemic a move much appreciated by those already distressed by the impact of COVID-19 on their families. Both the access project and the fee suspension have been made possible by a government COVID grant.

iii) Facilities for Visitors

Last summer the sale of refreshments on the recreation ground proved popular. This year we put out to tender the contract to provide refreshment. The business has made a good start operating from the corner of the car park near the main gate to the field.

When visitors were spending the whole day on the recreation ground it was identified that toilet facilities would help prevent people using the rookery and the Coronation shelter for this purpose. The parish councils have a portable unit at the car park on a contract from April to September. This is a trial and, so far, it is being used responsibly.

iv) Lighting and pavements

The Parish Survey identified several areas where additional lighting would be helpful to residents. A solar powered light has been installed on the footpath next to the Three Horseshoes. Additional similar lamps may be provided if this proves successful. The village contractor has also repaired this footpath. Consideration is being given to the introduction of an extra streetlight on Parsonage Hill. A potential location has been identified but the recent lockdown has delayed progression.

Pavement maintenance is progressing all be it at a slower pace than normal due to pandemic restrictions. Particularly, the raised pavement due to tree routes on Station Hill, works have been agreed but no start date has been identified.

v) Retail facilities

The Post Office and the Deli continued trading throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This was very helpful to our residents. November saw the opening of the new village shop, Rose's Stores. This provides a very welcome addition to the retail facilities in the village. It has been hugely helpful to residents reducing, as it does, the need to shop elsewhere. The parish councils are committed to taking any opportunities they have to promote the facilities in the village.

vi) Superfast Broadband

Since last year a community group along the Sudbury Road has been successful in improving their broadband through Openreach. The group at Arger Fen was very successful and residents in that area are very pleased with their improved provision. Two areas, Smallbridge and St Edmunds Lane have been identified by Openreach for fibre Broadband in the next year which is very welcome news.

County Broadband have completed installation works for highspeed broadband at the following locations: Colne Road, Station Hill, The Paddocks, Colchester Road up to Cambridge Way and Hamlet Court. Throughout, County Broadband engaged with the parish council address issues to identify the least intrusive location of any telegraph poles required within the village conservation area.

Parish Council business conducted this year that is not covered by the Parish Plan includes major issues related to the Cuckoo Hill development. The Public Inquiry in October 2020 decided in Babergh District Council's favour and agreed that the houses on Plots 5 and 6 should not be permitted as built and that the enforcement order should continue. The developer has submitted new plans reducing the height of the properties. This, and the outstanding conditions relating to the development of the whole site, has yet to be decided on by the District Council.

Bures Parish Councils were invited to contribute to the Essex Association of Local Councils Conference on Climate Change. The presentation is available to those interested.

The Local Council Award Scheme celebrates the successes of the very best of local councils. Both Bures councils were awarded Foundation status under the scheme this year.

Our clerk, Jenny Wright, has been recognised by the HM Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, Clare Countess of Euston in recognition of outstanding work to the community in Suffolk during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Congratulations to Jenny who works so tirelessly behind the scenes on so many aspects of life in Bures.

With many thanks to all parish councillors who work so hard for the village, to our District councillors, Melanie Barrett and Wendy Scattergood, our County Councillors David Finch and James Finch and especial thanks to our outstanding clerk, Jenny Wright.

James Finch County Councillor for Stour Valley Division - Report 2020-21

The Year of COVID 19

The year has been dominated for all of us at National and local level by pulling together to overcome the unprecedented incident of Coronavirus throughout the year. The County Council with the Suffolk fire Service reacted from the very beginning back in March 2020 in many ways to the National guidance given by the Ministry of Health and the NHS. These are just some examples of actions taken by the Council: -

- Immediate response supplying the elderly and vulnerable with food packs so that they were well fed and nobody suffered because of the 1st lock down and were unable to visit the shops.
- The collection and dissemination of local data and advice to guide the local policy for best practice control.
- The organisation of Home Schooling with the local authority in maintained schools
- The introduction of "Home but not Alone" free phone line for the lonely. • Support Lines for those with Financial Worries.
- The follow up to Test and Trace and now recently totally co-ordinated at the local level since March 2021.
- Local co-ordination of the Vaccination programme with Clinical Commissioning Groups via the Director of Public Health – Stuart Keeble.

There will be lots of lessons learnt for this last year and no doubt our future modus operandi both in work and leisure will be different in the future.

We should all thank each other for the collaboration that has been achieved. My belief is that there is "always good that comes out of bad".

Resurfacing of 25% of the Suffolk Highway On 5th August it was announced that Suffolk Highways completed its 1000th resurfaced mile following the Council's commitment to relay new road surfaces on a quarter of Suffolk's road network. In 2017 Suffolk County Council's Cabinet committed to resurfacing 1,000 miles of road across Suffolk over a fouryear period in a bid to improve the quality of roads and reduce the number of potholes. There is still more to do.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points

In September it was announced that 100 fast charging points for electric vehicles were to be built in rural parts of the county. The council have reached out to interested parish and town councils and non-profit organisations to put in fast chargers where there are currently none. The funding will cover the installation and set-up costs, meaning very little expense for the hosts and possibly creating a source of income for them. The up take has been good.

Fostering and Adopting in Suffolk

In October the Council launched Adopt East, a regional adoption agency which has been established to recruit adopters across the East of England. Adopt East will work across local authorities to find families for children who are waiting to find their forever home. The target has also been doubled for increasing number of new foster parents from 30 to 60 for 2021/22 as a result of the predicted extra numbers required following the Pandemic. From James Finch County Councillor Stour Valley Division Endeavour House 8 Russell Road IPSWICH IP1 2BX

Choice of Schools for September 2021

On National Offer Day 98.57% of Suffolk children were offered a place at one of the schools preferred by their parents. Suffolk County Council received 7,602 applications from parents indicating which primary school they would prefer their child to join in September 2020. Some 7,116 children received offers for their first preference school and 7,493 children received an offer for one of their three preferred schools.

Suffolk' Response to the Climate Emergency

In response to its declaration of a climate emergency, SCC aims to lead the way with an unparalleled range of activities and policy changes to support its ambition of being a 'net zero' authority by 2030. The council's cabinet reviewed and agreed an extensive programme of recommendations to achieve this ambition including dozens of changes and new ways of working. Being 'net zero' means the council will remove its carbon emissions where it can; if it is unable to do so, it will compensate for those emissions

Investment in Suffolk's Natural Environment

The County Council will be investing in tree-planting, restoring hedgerows, and improving roadside verges for wildlife. £228,000 from the Suffolk 2020 Fund will enable Suffolk County Council to enhance its work to protect and encourage biodiversity in the county. The authority will do this through a number of new schemes, as well as building on existing work.

Suffolk Archives New Home "The Hold" Welcomes

First visitors in 2020 Monday 28 September saw the public able to access The Hold, Suffolk's flagship new heritage facility on Ipswich Waterfront. This versatile new building will be the permanent home of the Suffolk Archives Ipswich branch and is shared with the University of Suffolk, who have dedicated teaching spaces within the building. The creation of The Hold, and its associated countywide programme of events and activities, has been made possible thanks to a grant of £10.3m from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and further funding support from other national organisations and local Suffolk heritage groups.

Better Broadband for Suffolk reaches 100,000th customer as the 3rd phase contract is agreed with the UK Government.

By June 3, more than 100,000 households across Suffolk were using faster broadband, thanks to the council-led Better Broadband for Suffolk programme. The partnership - between Suffolk County Council, Openreach, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) and local councils – has made faster broadband available to around 150,000 premises so far, since being launched in 2010. It means the current total superfast broadband coverage in Suffolk now stands at more than 98 per cent coverage.

The team has plans to go even further, after today announcing an additional phase of work, to provide connectivity to approximately 5,000 more premises, including over 550 businesses, in some of the most rural parts of Suffolk under Phase 3.

Suffolk County Council secures £3.1M for building decarbonisation initiative.

Suffolk County Council (SCC), working in conjunction with property specialists Concertus, has secured £3+M of funding from The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to promote capital energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation projects within buildings used to provide frontline public services. Working with Concertus, the council has been preparing a range of packages to support the decarbonising of various buildings in the Council's estate including applications for the council's headquarters at Endeavour House in Ipswich, four rural fire stations, Beacon House, Waterloo Centre and Leiston Children's Centre. All this is to help reduce the County Council's running costs for the future.

Melanie Barrett District Councillor for Stour Valley Division – Report 2020-21

- Council tax will increase this year by 2.96% which on a typical band D house is 10p per week or £5 per year. Average general needs property rent will increase by £1.35 to £91.70 pw Average sheltered housing rent will increase by £1.10 to £76.10pw. Average sheltered housing service charge will increase by 0.69p to £21.69pw (for the services of the Site Manager, alarm system and communal area). No increase in utility charges, these remain at £15pw. Parkers Way charges may differ as above is based on average charges.
- Cabinet reported that the general fund at Q3 shows a surplus of almost £1.4m. However, there is still a lot of pressure on our budget into next year.
- The council's housing, public realm, waste, and recycling fleet will switch to hydrotreated vegetable oil to reduce carbon emissions. CIL funding has been awarded to partly cover the costs of this change.
- Babergh administered grants, loans and emerging needs fund during a quick role out of aid in Spring which has continued during second and third lockdown.
- The new Local Plan (Town and County Planning) is with the Planning Inspectorate/Department of Communities awaiting approval.
- Civil Parking Enforcement powers have been given to district councils incl Babergh. Teams are active every day across the district. We should expect greater revenue when lockdown ends.
- Babergh will reduce free parking in council owned car parks from current 3 to 1 hour with a charging tariff imposed from Oct 2021 subject to assessment of high street recovery.
- Sudbury Town Council will no longer host the customer access point for residents in this area. This will be moved to Sudbury Library and the main face to face service will reduce to 2 days a week from April 2021 although residents will be able to get assistance on the other 3 days.
- Babergh and Mid Suffolk DC have established a joint company called CIFCO Capital. The last investment has been made and is generating a return on capital without which we would struggle to maintain services as central government grants are cut. Net income in 2019/20 is £1.634m
- CIL funding continues to be paid to facilitate new infrastructure – details are available of the latest round of awards that provide new toilets, play equipment, electric charging points, village hall kitchen facilities etc

- Land at Belle Vue Park in Sudbury will be sold in a deal to develop the area of the old swimming pool and the house. Access will remain at the entrance from Newton Road. A new entrance will be made to open up the Cornard Road side and a new café and toilets will be built from the proceeds of the sale. The developer will build private retirement living accommodation and wants to retain the house and include it in future plans.
- Cabinet agreed to spend £350k on solar carports at Kingfisher Leisure Centre in Sudbury. Government has matched funded with the aims of creating jobs, develop skills, provide infrastructure, tackle climate change. The panels will provide energy to the leisure centre and battery storage and EV charging as part of carbon reduction strategy and will be implemented by Spring '22.
- Following an earlier decision at full council a higher rate of council tax will be applied on empty unfurnished properties after standing unused for 10 years. The new chargeable rate is 300%.
- Work started at Gainsborough's House Museum to build a new adjacent gallery despite a short interruption due to Covid. This was possible with the aid of a substantial heritage lottery award and Babergh's gift of the old labour exchange building next to the museum. While closed major art works were loaned to the prestigious Pushkin Art Gallery in Moscow and it is hoped we will see a reciprocal loan when the new extension opens.
- Work is to start on a Parking Review to make sure we have parking appropriate to our needs in the future right across the district. This should start in the summer.
- A review of all Babergh garage sites will be undertaken later this year to record ownership, condition and identify sites suitable for redevelopment [ownership allowing].

The housing team have worked hard to find temp accommodation for the homeless in the area during Covid. New accommodation has been purchased by Babergh that will offer temp places to homeless people.

- This is the first year that councillors have had an allocated budget of £2k to fund projects, items etc that will benefit the community, I spent my locality budget on 2 areas of expenditure. I agreed to fund a notice board at the recreation ground in Bures aiming to raise awareness of risks with swimming/diving in the river. I also part funded a new fuse board in the Village Hall, Bures. Finally, I agreed to allow Babergh to access the remainder of my 20/21 fund for emerging needs.
- The cost of the garden refuse collection increased this year by £2.50 to £57.50, and the compost 'giveaway' took place again this year.
- Food hygiene officers took action against a bakery who sold goods at various markets in Suffolk. They were fined £10k for the offence.
- Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (or CIL money) is in the 'pot' waiting for your community to spend it. Bures St Mary and Nayland have £8,787, Stoke by Nayland has £2,353 to spend.

- All council meetings are now live streamed on You Tube. You can watch live or at your convenience and you can see how each councillor voted on each motion. You can also see attendance rates for each councillor on each councillor's details page on Babergh site.
- More facts and figures are available for you to browse on the refreshed Joint Strategic Plan 2016-2020. It can be viewed at [X-6-16 - JSP Refresh-Appendix A.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

It is a pleasure to continue to work with residents and parish councillors in this beautiful area to try and find solutions on local issues and to advocate on your behalf.

Thanks to Cllr David Finch

Cllr David Finch informed those present that he would not be seeking re-election on the 6th May. On behalf of Bures Hamlet Parish Council Cllr Shackell thanked him for his helpfulness to the parish over the past 20 years and wished him all the very best for the future.

David Finch County Councillor for Hedinghams Division – Report 2020-21

Essex County Council is in a strong position financially. Zero tax increase. £500,000 set aside for Domestic and Drug Abuse. Invested more funds into the Local Highways Panel budget. Invested to support businesses with non-returnable grants. Funding for a greener climate as aim to be carbon neutral by 2030. School building extensions to be carbon neutral. Cycle ways being implemented. Increase in electric vehicles. 90% of Essex schools deemed Good or Outstanding. Recognises the need to support children to accelerate learning, enabling children to catch up following the pandemic. Scheduled to plant 50,000 trees in 2020/21. Covid-19 rates dramatically dropping. Secured funding from the Government Infrastructure fund to provide a train station at Beaulieu, to provide a rapid transit system, to improve road and bridges for Harlow. Laptop scheme provided 5,000 laptops for Essex children. Essex Children's Service deemed very good.

Wendy Scattergood District Councillor for Hedinghams Division – Report 2020-21

During Covid-19 restrictions all staff at BDC had been working hard. Staff working from home and many asked to take on different roles. Cllr Scattergood thanked the parish councils and members of the public for all the hardwork carried out over the past year to secure a strong community spirit. Under her Planning Chairmanship role she had seen a huge increase in planning applications submitted for the Committee members to consider. The National Grid consultation was under consideration. Cllr Scattergood had been disappointed that the survey results for the land at Cambridge Way had not been conclusive. She would support the village for an alternative use of the land and noted Braintree District Council has announced its draft strategy to help the district tackle the climate change challenge. This included working with Tree Wardens to provide greener areas.

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Financial Statements

The Clerk had provided the following reports which were made available to members of the public for scrutiny and comment at the meeting.

Bures Hamlet Parish Council

Balance as at 1st April 2021 £8,039.65

Parish precept to Braintree District Council for financial year 2021/22: £29,817.00

Parish precept remains as per previous financial year.

Council Tax Collection Fund BDC have agreed to make a one-off additional payment to parish and town councils again in 2021/22. The payment is an allocation of the estimated surplus on the Council Tax Collection Fund as at 31st March 2021.

Bures Hamlet Parish Council is allocated to receive £415.00

Parish Element of Band D Tax Rate 2021/22: £93.04 (2020/21: (£88.47))

Allocation of Parish Budget:

Cemetery Authority	£6,500
Bures Community Centre	£200 (telephone line rental)
Sportsground	£9,000
Clerk's salary	£6,200
Lighting	£500
Insurance	£580
Training	£500
Hall hire	£200
Auditors	£300
Administration	£550
Subscriptions	£575
Elections	£1,000
Donations/parish items	£500
Repairs	£300
Projects	£1,000
Grounds Maintenance	£5,000
Gritting/flooding	£500
Christmas lights	£500
Earmarked Funds	Minimum Retention funds £6,250

We also receive a BDC Street Cleansing grant (£865.58), an Eastlight Community Housing grant £152.48 and ECC Highways Devolution grant £1,000. These grants are to offset costs met by the parish council.

The parish council is scheduled to receive a refund of £1,059.96 from ECC Highways to offset the costs of the FP32 closure for the Millennium bridge footpath repairs last autumn.

A VAT claim of £1,337.84 has been submitted.

Both these refunds will improve the parish council's bank balances for the coming year.

Bures St Mary Parish Council

Balances as at 1st April 2021 £18,261.16

Parish precept to Babergh District Council for financial year 2021/22:£30,435

Parish precept remains as per previous financial year.

Parish Element of Band D Tax Rate: £70.51 for 2021/22 (£70.51 for 2020/21)

Allocation of Parish Budget:

Cemetery Authority	£6,500
Bures Community Centre	£200 (telephone line rental)
Sportsground	£9,000
Clerk's salary	£6,364
Lighting	£325
Lighting Loan	£1,749.92
Insurance	£395
Training	£300
Hall hire	£200
Auditors	£300
Administration	£475
Subscriptions	£600
Elections	£1,000
Grounds Maintenance	£4,750
Gritting	£250
Donations/parish items	£500
Repairs	£200
Projects	£1,000
Christmas lights	£500
Minimum Retention Funds held	£6,250

Street lighting loan balance is £3,422.96 – final payment March 2023

We receive a Street Cleansing Grant from Babergh District Council (£1,360.32) to offset costs paid for the Parish Grounds Maintenance Contractor.

The parish council received £7,826.93 from BDC CIL funding for parish amenities. This is currently held in the parish council reserves pending a decision on its use.

Questions:

New resurfacing at Colchester Road appeared to remain incomplete. Cllr Shackell agreed to follow up. Surface needed to be embedded down.

Query on County Broadband local connections. Cllr Shackell reported that the pole at the end of The Paddocks and those in Station Hill only serve those properties who signed up to CB. Equipment is installed ready to facilitate connections.

A member of the public thanked Cllr Finch for his service to the parish and questioned whether residents may prefer to pay extra council tax to have better facilities rather than ECC continuing to maintain a Zero tax increase. Cllr Finch responded that as Leader he had looked at all services and systems for efficiency over the past 20 years to reduce costs in preference to increasing taxes. He also considered it would have been morally wrong to put the burden on residents under the current climate.

A parish councillor questioned the slow progress of the proposed AONB extension. Cllr Scattergood responded that all correspondence on the matter remained positive.

Both Chairman thanked all those present for attending the meeting.

Meeting ended at 9.36pm

