

MOUNT BURES PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk Kevin B. Money

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Minutes of the Open Meeting held on Wednesday 15th. April 2026 at 5pm - 7.30pm in Mount Bures Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs I. Woodman (Chair), F. Willett (Vice-Chair), H. Bufton, M. Graham, CCC Cllr W. Sunnucks and Kevin B. Money (Parish Clerk). There were, over the period of the meeting, 24 members of the public present including the Chair of Bures Hamlet Parish Council.

During the meeting Councillors discussed with local residents the proposal in the draft Braintree Local Plan (site BURE 2070) to place a development boundary around an area of the field between the settlement in Mount Bures near the level crossing and the level crossing itself. A summary of the views expressed by local residents will be placed on the Parish Council website. The Parish Council was also given a copy of a petition arranged by a local resident signed by over 50 households in the Parish calling upon Braintree District Council to remove site BURE2070 from the Braintree Local Plan.

Following the meeting Councillors agreed that in the light of residents' views on the proposal the Parish Council should object to the inclusion of this site in the Braintree Local Plan due to the manifest failures in the planning process, particularly the failure of the duty to cooperate, and the unsuitability of the proposed site for development.

The introductory paragraphs of the Parish Council's response read as follows:

Mount Bures Parish Council notes that site BURES 2070 would form an extension to the small settlement near the level crossing in the Parish of Mount Bures in Colchester City Council District and lies remote from any settlement within Braintree District and across the natural boundary of Cambridge Brook which separates Bures Hamlet from Mount Bures. It is therefore the view of Mount Bures Parish Council that notwithstanding the position of the administrative boundary between Colchester City and Braintree District the site can only be considered in relation to the location, sustainability, housing needs and views of the residents of Mount Bures and not those of any remote settlement.

A public engagement process by Mount Bures Parish Council in relation to this proposal, including an open meeting for residents and representatives from Bures Hamlet attended by 24 people from the approximately 100 households in the whole parish of Mount Bures, showed overwhelming opposition to the proposed development. A petition presented to the Parish Council by local residents opposed to building on this site also includes signatures from over 50 households within the parish. Residents were concerned in particular by the unsustainability of the location for development, the safety implications of an access road so close to the level crossing, the impact on a valued landscape and the way in which this proposal seems to be driven by the housing needs of a quite separate settlement.

It is therefore the view of Mount Bures Parish Council that the inclusion of this proposal in the draft Braintree Local Plan represents a failure to follow proper planning process, in particular a failure to fulfil the duty to cooperate with adjacent Councils affected by the proposal, as well as a total failure to take into account the nature, connectivity and sustainability of the affected settlement. In addition, the Parish Council believes that the total absence of any evidence within the draft Local Plan justifying the extension of development boundary around the settlement of Mount Bures across an administrative boundary into Bures Hamlet – thereby allowing planning applications for housing of any kind, not just affordable housing, to come forward - together with the unsuitability of the site itself for development means that the site should be removed from further iterations of the draft Braintree Local Plan.

The Parish Council notes that if Bures Hamlet Parish Council and Braintree District Council continue to believe, despite the lack of evidence, that this site is both needed to meet affordable housing needs and that the site is suitable for development, then the proposal should be taken forward, outside of the Local Planning Process, as a possible rural exception site following proper process including cooperation with the District and Parish Councils representing the community affected by such a proposal.

The Parish Council's full response to the consultation is at <https://e-voice.org.uk/mountburespc/>

The Chair then closed the open meeting at 7pm and thanked everyone for attending.

Signed

12th. May 2026

Ian Woodman - Chair

DRAFT