

**Mount Bures Annual Parish Assembly held on Wednesday, 13th April 2022  
at 700pm in the village hall, Mount Bures**

**Present:** Cllr Ian Woodman (Chairman), Cllr Hillary Bufton (Vice Chairman), Cllr Mark Graham, Cllr Michaela Harris & Cllr Fiona Willetts CBC Peter Chillingworth & ECC Lewis Barber. The Clerk, Mr G. Walkingshaw and 2 residents.

**Apologies:** None

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly Meeting 2021**

The minutes of the above meeting were agreed as a true record.

The Chairman signed the minutes.

Proposed: Cllr Fiona Willetts

Seconded: Cllr Hillary Bufton

**Chairman's Report 2022/2023**

Despite continuing challenges, such as the sudden appearance and rise of the Omicron variant of Covid at the end of last year, the last twelve months have seen a gradual return to something approaching normality with lockdowns and social distancing largely retreating into the memory.

With the relaxation of restrictions Parish events that had been cancelled or severely curtailed were able to start up again. A flower festival – smaller in size but just as impressive in the scale of the church decorations – was held in June. An open Remembrance Service was held on the village green with many members of the public attending in November, and dog training and other activities have returned to the Village Hall. The Parish Council has also returned to face to face meetings, with members of the public able to attend in person in order to express their views. I am sure that most of us welcome this new breathing of life into communal village activities and look forward too much more to follow. During the year, the Parish Council has continued to work on a range of activities including:

- improving contacts with Wormingford Gliding Club, following complaints from some local residents about noise from powered aircraft on the Club's designated 'power days'. In October I attended a meeting of local Parish Councils with the Club at their premises on Wormingford aerodrome – the first such meeting to be held for a number of years – and was able directly to relay to the Club the concerns that had been raised with the Council. Dave Bolsdon the Club Chairman subsequently attended the March meeting of the Parish Council when he gave an overview of the Club's activities and answered questions from members of the public. The dates of the Club's power days have subsequently been published in 'the Mount' and the Club have undertaken to keep us informed directly of any alterations in their plans. The Parish Council expects to invite the Club back to another meeting at some point in the future to continue the discussion and maintain effective dialogue with local residents.

- continuing to press County Councillors for action over a range of issues relating to local roads, including flooding from excess rainfall discharging down Hall Road, the dangers to pedestrians crossing the Colchester Road at the bottom of Brook House Lane and potholes just about everywhere. A visit by Council Officers to look at the flooding issues has been promised but has not yet materialised. Similarly, after considerable pushing we have now been told that following the rejection of our case for a lower speed limit and other measures to improve safety at the Brook House Lane junction, we are to be allowed to resubmit the proposals to the Local Highways Panel with additional evidence provided by subsequent accidents and more written comments in support from residents. We hope that this will lead to eventual action. In addition, Councillors have continued to explore the possibility of

getting some form of occasional mobile speed checks on Hall Road where some vehicles persist in travelling dangerously fast. Along with other local councils Mount Bures has been offered access to grant funding from Essex County Council to cover the capital cost of a Vehicle Activated Sign. However, the annual running costs of such a sign, which are assessed at an extraordinary £500 or more, are well outside the Parish Council's budget. Discussions with adjacent Parish Councils about the possibility of reducing costs by sharing a mobile sign have so far been unsuccessful.

- chasing the Arch Co, the new 'owners' (on a 99-year lease) of the dilapidated Crossing Cottage, to clear the overgrown garden around the Cottage. Following the threat of enforcement action by the Borough Council some work was undertaken to clear the overgrown garden around the cottage. Unfortunately, this involved cutting down everything and leaving a wasteland with much unsightly rubbish. The Parish Council subsequently approached the company to suggest that local volunteers might clear and look after the garden to provide a wildlife haven but this offer was rejected. The Council is now considering how best to continue to apply pressure to get improvements to this site and to the building itself.

In addition, the Council has again continued to pay for the regular cutting of footpaths within the Parish and we are most grateful to our Footpath Officer, Ian Andrewartha, for his hard work in keeping so many paths clear for walkers and I should also thank Cllr Mark Graham for his prompt and effective work with a chain saw to clear yet another tree that had fallen across the footbridge across Cambridge Brook in the recent storms. In another piece of good news, I should note that Network Rail's application to close the footpath crossings over the railway at Thornfield Wood and the Golden Square were finally rejected by the Secretary of State for Transport. As Network Rail had previously withdrawn the application to close the crossing at Josselyns this means that all 3 of the crossings in Mount Bures will remain open. I should however note that the crossing at the Golden Square is currently temporarily closed for work on the steep cutting there.

Finally, I should note that in this Platinum Jubilee Year the Council is most grateful to Cllrs Harris and Willetts for undertaking to organise a Big Jubilee Lunch on Sunday 5 June alongside the Mount Bures Flower Festival which runs from Thursday 2 to Saturday 4 June. I do hope as many people as possible will attend both events.

### **Finance Report - 2022/ 2023**

The Accounts for 2022/23 are in the process of being compiled and have been handed to Internal Auditor today. Internal Audit will be completed on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2022. The accounts will be approved at the Parish Council AGM on Wednesday 11th May 2022.

The accounts are exempt from External Auditor's, as Parish Council's with revenue of less than 25k are no longer required to have them externally reviewed.

Total balances held by Mount Bures Parish Council as at 31 March 2021 are £8,394.84 (£3,941.28 & £4,453.56)

### **Guest Speaker**

Tony Evans informed the meeting of the background relating to Thomas Love. Thomas had been a beggar in the 1700's and had relied on the kindness of people within surrounding Parishes of Colchester, including Mount Bures. When he died he left money to over 20 different parishes that had helped him. The money was used for tenants who did not own their properties and was handed out on Shrove Tuesday every year. Today the bank account has £168 for Mount Bures remaining and it was agreed that the Charity should be wound up and the money given to the Charity commission. Agreed by all.

**Matters raised by Residents**

A resident reported that a farmer had been cutting hedges on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022 on Hall Road/Chappel Road.

Cllr Mark Graham will communicate with the farmer for future reference that it must be before the 1<sup>st</sup> March each year.

Signed..... Chairman                      Date.....

The meeting closed at 7.37 p.m.