

# MOUNT BURES PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk Kevin B. Money  
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## Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup>. April 2023 at 7.30pm in Mount Bures Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs I. Woodman (Chairman), M. Graham, F. Willett, ECC Cllr L. Barber, CBC Cllr W. Sunnacks and Kevin B. Money (Parish Clerk). There were also 3 members of the public present.

1. **Welcome by Chairman.** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting
2. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr. H. Bufton
3. **Minutes of last year's Annual Parish Meeting** held on 13<sup>th</sup>. April 2022. P. **All Agreed**
4. **Chairman's Report 2022/23**

Cllr I. Woodman informed the meeting that 2022 was a year of Royal events with first, her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee and subsequently the sad death of the Queen on 8<sup>th</sup>. September. Both events were marked in the Parish, and the Parish Council would particularly like to thank Mount Bures Church and the Benefice for organising first a Jubilee Big Lunch in June and the planting of a Jubilee oak tree, and subsequently a memorial service for the Queen in the October. We look forward to the King's Coronation in May with a Parish coronation tea to celebrate the event.

Another notable feature of 2022 was the extraordinary hot summer and the lack of rain. These features served to draw our attention to the importance of combating climate change and protecting our environment. During the year the Council heard representations from local residents about securing the long-term future of a private nature reserve lovingly developed over many years and over the maintenance of the substantial grass verge on the Colchester Road which has previously been designated as a wildlife area by the County Council but has more recently been neglected to the detriment of the wildflowers growing there. Sadly, the Parish Council does not have the funding to consider taking on the management of nature reserves or similar areas but has encouraged continuing discussions with the Essex Wildlife Trust over the future of the reserve and will actively support efforts to ensure wildlife verges continue to be maintained properly by Essex County Council.

Other matters on which the Council has been engaged include continuing to work with Bures Hamlet Parish Council to get improvements to the dangerous junction on to the Colchester Road (B1508) at the bottom of Brook House Lane and to get improvements to the dilapidated Crossing Cottage by the level crossing.

On the former, an application for a speed limit on the approach to this junction has previously been rejected by the Local Highways Panel on the grounds that the majority of vehicles are travelling within the 60 mile an hour speed limit – an assessment that ignores the fact that such speeds are unsafe when approaching a blind bend with a road junction, bus stop and pedestrian crossing point – however funding had been allocated for improvements to the bus stop at this location. However, engineers have now assessed the location as unsafe for the hard standing work proposed. In the light of this, the two Parish Councils have agreed to resubmit a case for a lower speed limit at this point and are encouraging local residents to write in support of this application. The Council is also continuing to explore options for a shared access for a Vehicle Activated Speed Sign to deter drivers speeding along Hall Road. The costs of this however continue to look prohibitive within the Council's very limited budget.

Following a lack of any response from the current lease holders – the Arch Company – of Crossing Cottage to efforts to get them to maintain the building properly, the Council, with the active help of our Colchester Borough Council Councillor, have prevailed upon our MP, Sir Bernard Jenkin, to write to the Arch Company asking them to make improvements to the condition of the building or sell the lease to someone who would renovate it. The Parish Council understands that the Arch Company has the Cottage on a 150-year lease from Network Rail and would be most interested if any residents know of anyone who might be interested in renovating the building as a potential domestic property.

During the year, the Parish Council was also approached by Bures Hamlet Parish Council asking for a view about a proposal from a landowner that land in the open countryside immediately adjacent to the Mount Bures Parish Council might be allocated for affordable housing in the developing Bures Hamlet Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish Council told Bures Hamlet Parish Council that it would not be appropriate for the Council to take a view on a speculative proposal that had not be put forward as a planning application, but that Mount Bures was not designated as a location for sustainable development

in the Colchester Local Plan, did not therefore itself have a Neighbourhood Plan nor a proven need for affordable housing, and that the Council would expect any development to meet Bures Hamlet's housing needs to be built in a sustainable location in line with national planning guidance. The Parish Council has asked to be consulted further if Bures Hamlet Parish Council were minded to include this location in its Neighbourhood Plan.

In addition, the Council has continued to pay for cutting the vegetation on the public footpaths within the Parish which have largely remained in good condition and easily passable. During the year at the request of the Council's Footpath Officer, the Council purchased a new wheeled strimmer to facilitate this work, the cost of this being met from the Council's financial reserves. The Council has also contracted for the repainting of the Village Sign the cost of which will also be met from the reserve. This work will be carried out over the summer. Using the Council's financial reserves in this way meant the Council has been able to keep the rise in the precept to 3% despite significantly increasing costs generally.

Finally, this is an election year, and it is disappointing that only three people put themselves forward for election to the Parish Council. The Council will therefore be looking to co-opt two other people to the Council to ensure we have a full number of Councillors and I would encourage all local residents to consider whether they would be willing to volunteer to serve the community in this way.

## 5. Financial Report

The Accounts for 2022/23 have been compiled with and the Internal Auditor has given his report. The accounts will be approved and signed at the Parish Council on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup>. May 2023.

The accounts are exempt from any External Auditor's inspection, as the Parish Council's revenue and expenditure is less than £25,000 so no longer require having them externally reviewed.

Total balances held by Mount Bures Parish Council as at 31<sup>st</sup>. March 2023 are £7692.19p (£3222.81 in current account & £4469.38p in the Business Reserves account)

## 6. Open Forum discussion (matters raised by residents)

- Follow up on Sir B. Jenkin letter to The Arch Company in May 2023
- Colchester City Council is under Lib Dem and Labour control
- Whichever party takes over at CCC there is budgetary problems due to lack of focus
- Big investments are coming to fruition
- ECC has budget pressures for 2023/2024
- ECC Highways budget has increased to cover the ever increasing pot hole problem.
- The dangerous junction on the B1508 – ECC is reviewing its road policy and speed limits in 2023/2024 with a paper being prepared to go to Cabinet meeting soon.
- Braintree LHP have run out of money even with an increase in funding. It can take up to 2 years for the application to be looked at.
- 20's plenty campaign should be looked at for speeding in the Parish
- Flooding issues in Hall Road has not been addressed also flooding by the level crossing in Mount Bures.

There being no further questions the Chairman then closed the meeting at 8.10pm and thanked everyone to attending

Signed

*I Woodman*

9<sup>th</sup>. May 2023

**Ian Woodman  
Chairman**