

**Mount Bures Annual Parish Assembly held on Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021**  
**at 7.30pm via zoom**

**Present:** Cllr Ian Woodman (Chairman), Cllr Doug O'Neill (Vice Chairman), Cllr Mark Graham, Cllr Hillary Bufton & Cllr Martin Baird. The Clerk, Mr G. Walkingshaw and one resident.

**Apologies:** CBC Nigel Chapman & CBC Peter Chillingworth &

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly Meeting 2020**

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

The Chairman signed the minutes.

Proposed: Cllr Mark Graham

Seconded: Cllr Doug O'Neill

**Chairman's Report 2020/2021**

The last year has been challenging for everyone with many changes to the way we live our lives.

With the introduction of Coronavirus restrictions, Council business continued as usual, but all meetings moved on to Zoom; a change that presented some challenges but also some advantages. The Government has now said that it will not extend the regulations allowing Council meetings to be held by Zoom beyond 6 May this year, and all meetings after that date will need to be held face to face. They are however consulting on the future use of remote technology in Council meetings and depending on the result of this consultation the Council expects to look into ways of maximising public involvement in its work through a mixture of both face to face meetings and remote access.

At the start of the first Lockdown in March last year, the Parish Council facilitated the start-up of the Mount Bures WhatsApp Volunteer Group to support local residents. Regularly used at first, there have recently been fewer calls on the group's services as things slowly return more to normal. The Parish Council would like to thank all of those who volunteered to help others and everyone who has continued to provide help and assistance during these difficult times.

To ensure that residents find it easier to keep informed about local issues the Council has also set up a new, and much easier to navigate, web site and has recently opened a Facebook Page. These will operate alongside the regular excellent editions of 'The Mount' edited and produced by Hildegard Hill. The Council is very grateful to Hildegard for her hard work in publishing 'The Mount'.

As a result of the Coronavirus restrictions, the majority of Village Events during the year were cancelled. However, we were able to hold a socially distanced Remembrance Service on the Village Green in November. The Parish Council is particularly grateful to Emma Barr for leading the service on the Village Green and to Stephen Barr for playing the bagpipes.

During the year, the Parish Council has taken forward a number of initiatives including:

- developing the old telephone kiosk on the Village Green, now owned by the Parish Council, as a local information point. The kiosk already hosts a powerful bicycle pump for the use of cyclists and the Council is arranging for the installation of a map showing local footpaths. Signs will be erected on the kiosk to indicate its new function. The Parish Council is very open to other ideas for additional uses for the kiosk.

- working with County Councillors over the dangers to pedestrians crossing the Colchester Road at the bottom of Brook House Lane in order to catch a bus or walk into Bures via the footpath to Bures Mill. An application for lower speed limit and other measures to improve safety was submitted to the Local Highways Panel but has been rejected following a speed

survey, which showed the average speed of vehicles was within the 60 mph speed limit. However, further vehicular accidents at the junction further demonstrate the dangers of high speeds at this junction and the Council will take this up again with Bures Hamlet and Essex County Council following the May local elections. Councillors have also been exploring the possibility of getting some form of occasional mobile speed checks on Hall Road where some vehicles persist in travelling dangerously fast.

- 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. The company have previously agreed to do this but sadly nothing has happened. The Council will continue to press the company to take action to smarten up the property, which is becoming increasingly unsightly. It is the Council's understanding that under the terms of the Arch Company's long term lease of this and many other Network Rail properties that the building cannot be sold but that the property could be leased if anyone had a use for it. The Council would be most interested to know if anyone has any ideas for a new use for the building

- developing improved contacts with Wormingford Gliding Club, following complaints from some local residents about noise from powered aircraft on the Club's designated 'power days', to ensure that residents are better informed about the Club's activities and the Council is better able to represent any concerns to the Club. The dates of the Club's power days will be published on the Parish Council website, Face Book page and in 'The Mount' as soon as they become available.

In addition, the Council has continued to pay for the regular cutting of footpaths within the Parish and is pursuing some concerns over access on specific paths within the Parish.

As a statutory consultee, Parish Council has commented on planning applications as they arose, including opposing a proposed travellers site on green fields near Hammonds Farm. This application was subsequently withdrawn.

In September 2020, Mark Graham stood down as Chair of the Parish Council after 10 years of service (while remaining a Councillor) and Ian Woodman was elected Chairman. Also, in January our Clerk, Liz Malvisi, retired. The Council has subsequently appointed Grahame Walkingshaw, an experienced Parish Clerk, as Clerk to the Council.

During the year a number of long standing residents who were particularly active in supporting the village have sadly passed away. I should mention in particular: Steve Brown of Hall Farm who was always ready to help with his equipment and knowledge, Shelia and John Cowlin who were at the centre of many village activities and most recently Richard Fordham of Richard Fordham Tree Surgeons. They will all be sadly missed.

Finally, I should note that the Council continues to look for projects around the village that would benefit residents and improve the local amenity and would welcome any ideas or proposals from residents.

### **Finance Report - 2020/ 2021**

The Accounts for 2020/21 are in the process of being compiled and have been handed to Internal Auditor today. Internal Audit will be completed before Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021. The accounts will be approved at the Parish Council AGM on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

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 £8,790.58 (£4,549.94 & £4,453.14)

This is slightly up on last year due to the effects of Covid and the restrictions of movement of the community in general.

The precept was issued with an error £3,950 should have been £3,590 (transfixed numbers) and has been corrected. The previous letters showing council tax can be ignored and will be re-issued as from today with correct figures.

**Matters raised by Residents**

A resident discussed the idea of turning gardens into wildlife habitats for animals & insects. This will be discussed further at a future Parish Council meeting.

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

The meeting closed at 8.02 p.m.