

# Bures Village Appraisal

## Parish Plan



2004

# Bures Village Appraisal 2002/2003

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## Introduction

The village of Bures is not a single entity but a union of the twin villages of Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary. These straddle the River Stour about half way along its journey from the source on the Cambridgeshire-Suffolk border to its estuary at Manningtree. Despite the fact that the two communities are in different counties (Essex and Suffolk), and district council areas (Braintree and Babergh) and each has its own parish council and Member of Parliament at Westminster, the residents consider themselves to be part of the one village, Bures.

Bures lies on the B1508 between Sudbury and Colchester and can be reached by bus from Bury St Edmunds and Colchester and by train on the Marks Tey to Sudbury line.

Bures is a rural village and stands among fields and low hills in the picturesque Stour Valley. In earlier days the village had a semi-industrial nature. This has changed over the years but several businesses still operate from the village.

Although industry has largely disappeared from Bures the village still has a practical, down to earth feel. The houses date from all periods from late medieval to the present day and there is a wide social mix amongst its residents. The population of the village numbers about 1800 (the number on the electoral roles are 659 and 728 for Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary respectively). The parish boundaries extend well beyond the village envelope and encompass many outlying small settlements.

Those members of the village community who are employed may work in the village or in nearby communities and an important proportion travel daily to work in London.

Currently the village has a post-office, a doctors' surgery, a newsagents, a delicatessen, a hair-dresser, a bus station, two garages, two churches, three pubs, a guest-house, a primary school and a railway station. The village is also visited once a week by a mobile library, a fruit and vegetable stall, a mobile fishmonger and a fish and chip van.

There is a public cemetery on the outskirts of the village.

Bures has a large recreation ground that is under the joint management of the two parish councils. The "rec" has a football pitch and a cricket pitch, each with its own clubhouse. There are also tennis courts, an outdoor table-tennis table and a children's playground. Beside the river, benches and tables and a brick barbecue have been set up to create a picnic area. A new footbridge across the river now links the two parishes downstream from the road-bridge and has created a popular circular walk around the village.

There is a Scout troop and both Cub and Brownie packs in the village as well as a wide range of clubs and organisations.

### **How the appraisal was performed**

In September 2001, following a well attended open meeting in the Bures Village Hall, a committee was formed to initiate the Village Appraisal. It was decided that the appraisal should be based around questionnaires to be completed anonymously by households within the village. Each household would receive a single questionnaire that applied to the household unit and further questionnaires for completion by each individual member of the household of 16 years and older. The opinions of younger people were sounded by a consultation exercise at Bures Primary School and at the youth club.

In addition an exhibition was created that contained maps and photographs of the village together with some historical information. Those visiting the exhibition were able to record their thoughts and opinions in the notebooks provided.

The questionnaires were distributed and collected in April/May 2002. Of the approximately 750 packs of household and individual questionnaires distributed 409 (55%) household questionnaires and 723 individual questionnaires were returned which is a good response for a village of this size.

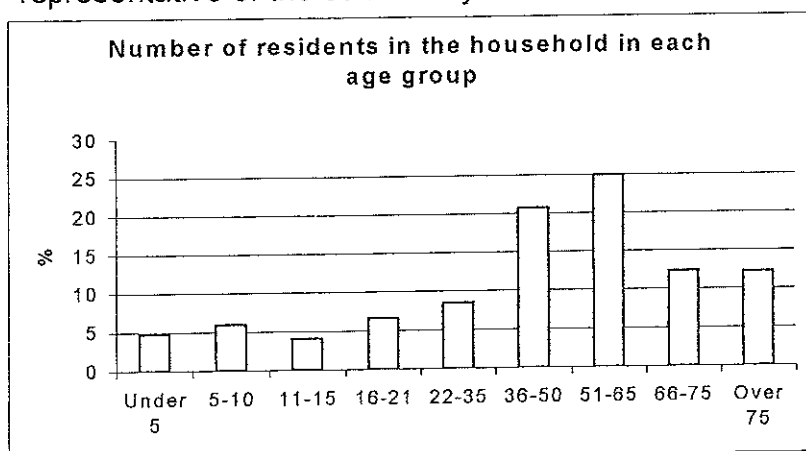
Funding for the Bures Village Appraisal was provided by the Countryside Agency and much valuable assistance has been provided by Jan Cole of the Rural Community Council of Essex.

### **How the data were analysed**

A company specialising in data processing performed the analysis of the returned questionnaires, and provided results in tabular and graphical form. Members of the village appraisal committee performed further analysis of information provided by respondents in the form of comments and text answers to questions.

## Results of the survey

**WARNING:** The village appraisal is a survey and not a census and thus the information provided and opinions collected are of those who completed the questionnaires. Nevertheless, the number returned is such as to suggest that they are likely to be representative of the community as a whole.

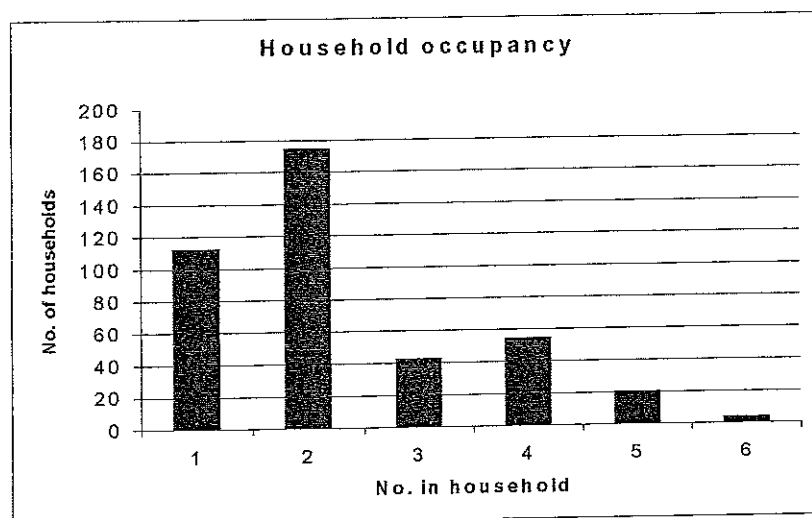


### Household section

Completed by 409 households

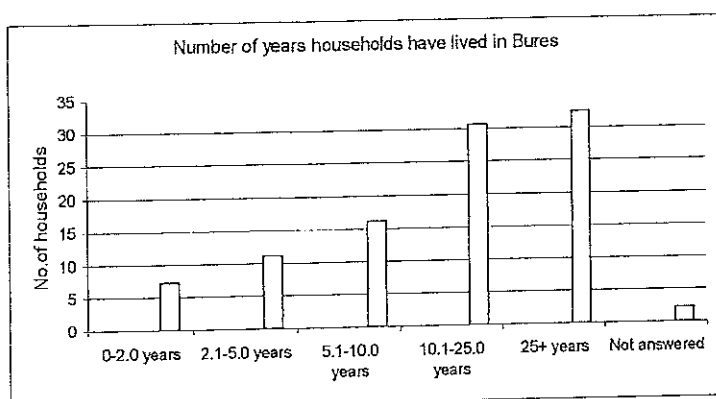
There are a total of 921 residents in the 409 households that returned the questionnaire. Of these 22% are less than 22 years old and 51% less than 51 years old. 25% of residents are aged 66 or older.

Almost 27% of households have a single occupant, which means that amongst those persons returning the questionnaire 109 live alone. 75% of these are aged 66 and above. If the survey is typical of the village as a whole then Bures has about 200 persons living alone of whom about 150 are 66 or older.



The households surveyed contained a total of 163 children up to the age of 15 years; suggesting that there are about 330 children in this age group in the village.

Households of two persons form the largest single group (43%). Of those surveyed 56 households (40%) contain couples of 66 years or older.

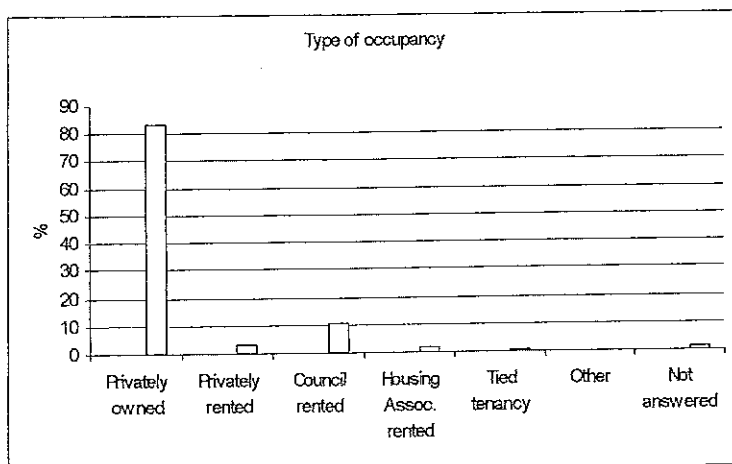


Over 60% of households have lived in Bures for more than 10 years and almost 33% for more than 25 years. These figures suggest that Bures has a stable population which may be one of its strengths.

More than 70% of households have family members living within 10 miles of Bures and are thus likely to have close links with the area.

### Type of occupancy

More than 80% of residents occupy a privately owned property whilst 15% live in rented accommodation.....



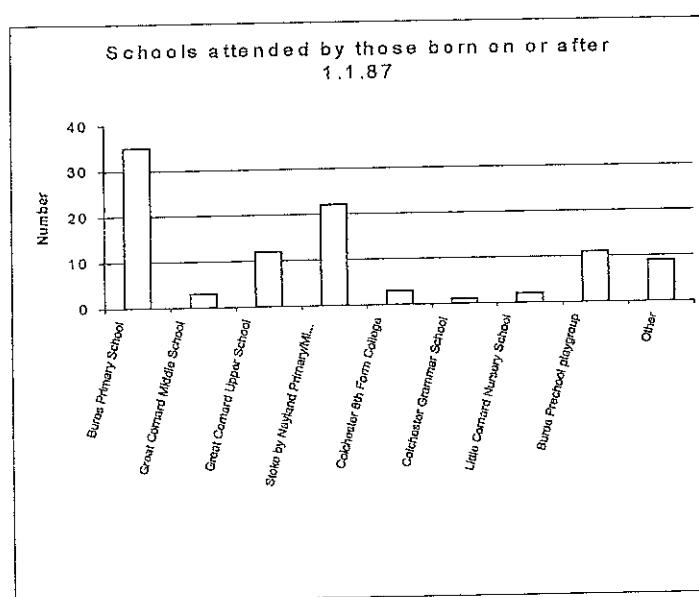
.....and 80% of residents live in houses as opposed to bungalows or other types of accommodation.

### Suitability of accommodation

Over 90% of residents think that their accommodation is suitable for their present needs. However, almost 40% perceive that they may not be able to find the type of accommodation that they will want in the future and 12% know of relatives or friends who, in the last five years, have had to leave the village because they were unable to find suitable accommodation.

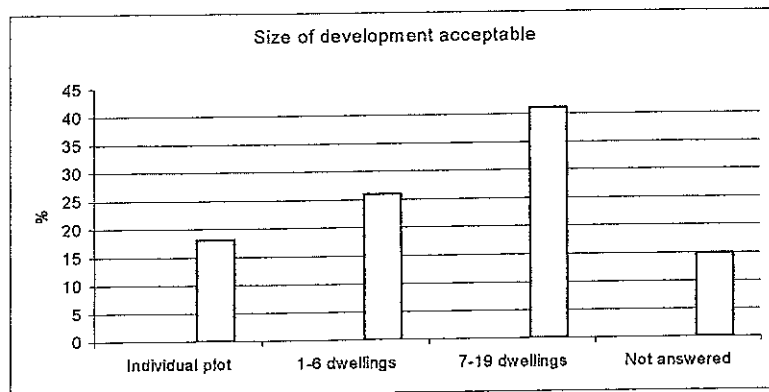
### Schools attended

The number of children attending Bures Primary School who live within the area surveyed is 91. But the number in those households returning questionnaires is only 35 which suggests that the younger adult group who are the parents of these children may be under represented in this survey.



### Acceptability of housing development

There is wide support for a housing development containing several homes to provide accommodation for local people and 76% of residents surveyed are in favour of a small housing development of some sort.



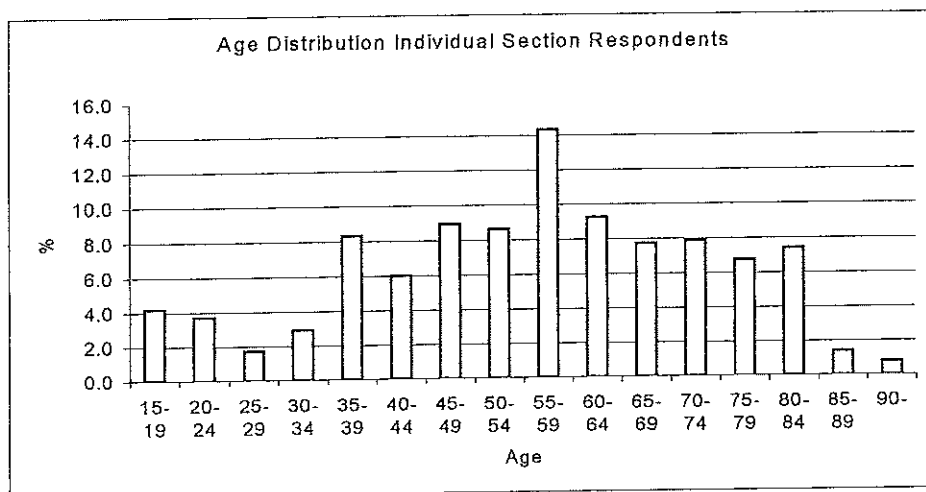
### Experience of flooding

Five households have suffered from floodwater coming into the house and a further 56 have experienced flooding in gardens or outhouses or have had access to their property restricted.

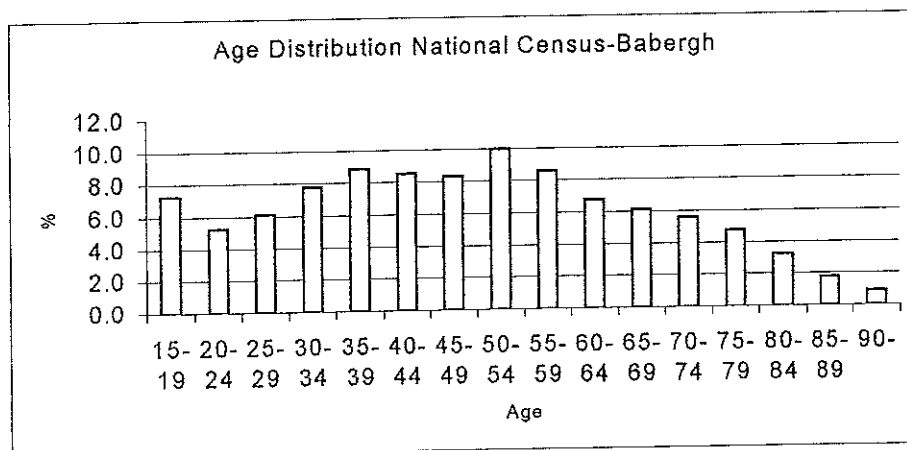
## Individual Section

### Age distribution

Of the 921 residents in the 409 households responding to the survey 723 completed individual questionnaires. The age distribution of this group is as shown in the graph.



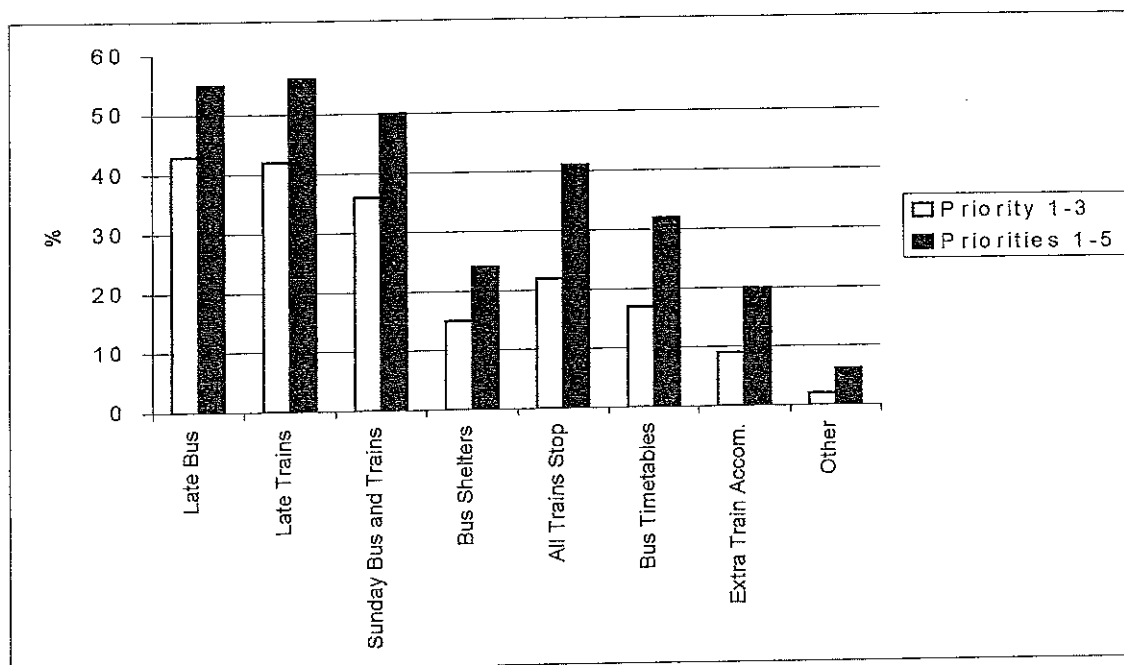
This should be compared with the same graph for the Babergh district derived from the 2001 National Census (NC). The NC data for Bures is not yet available but if the population distribution is similar to that of Babergh then those in the age range 15-34 years are under represented in our survey. Similarly those in the older age groups are over represented.





## Public transport

Residents were asked to show in order of priority (numbering in order of preference from 1-5) what improvements they would like to see in public transport.



The most popular options (around 50% of replies) were those requesting more bus and train services. 40% of residents wanted all trains to stop at Bures.

From current time-tables:

The last bus from Colchester Mon – Sat is at 18.15

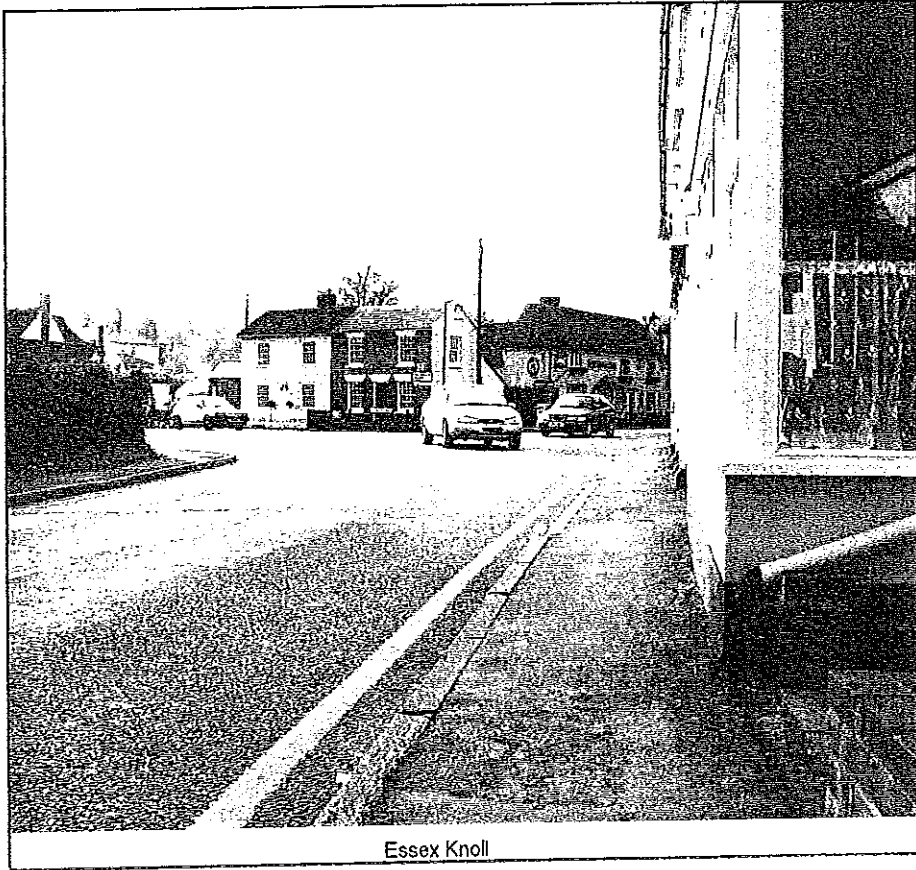
The last bus from Sudbury to Bures Mon – Sat is at 19.15

The last train Mon-Fri from Liverpool St to connect with the Marks Tey-Sudbury line is at 20.47

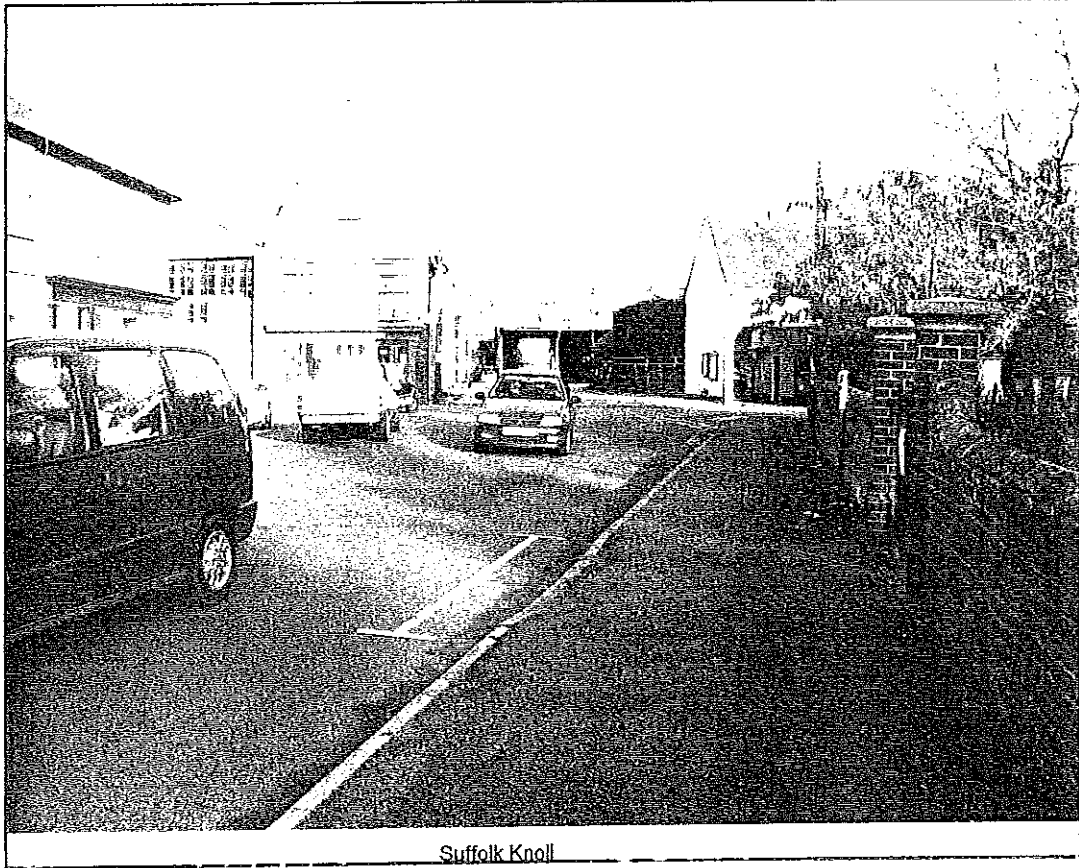
On Sundays there are only two buses to Colchester and two to Sudbury

On Sundays there is an hourly train service - last train to Sudbury 20.44, last train to Marks Tey 21.05

Bus shelters were requested opposite Normandie Way, near “The Eight Bells” and the Church. The posting of timetables at bus stops was also a common request. There are currently plans by Bures Hamlet Parish Council to install a shelter at the bus stop on Colchester Road opposite the entrance to Normandie Way.

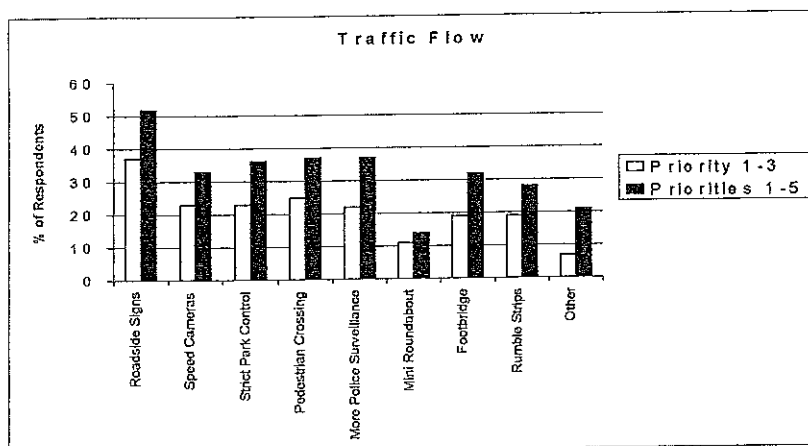


Essex Knoll



Suffolk Knoll

## Traffic flow



The most popular option was for roadside signs that light up to tell motorists when they are speeding.

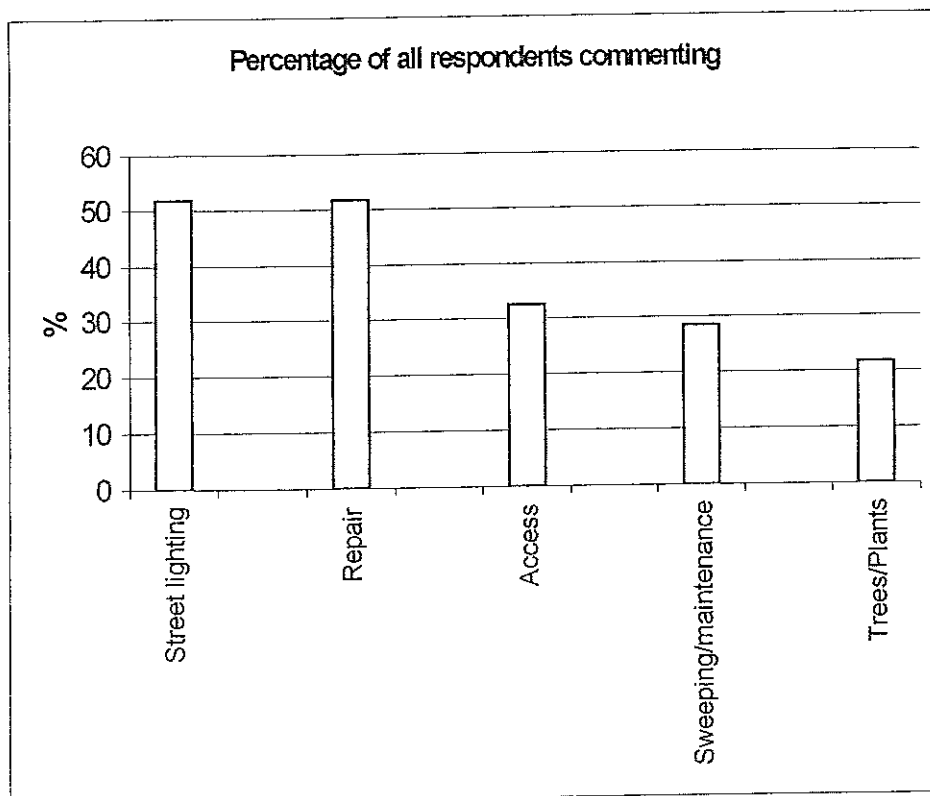
The most popular locations for the other traffic measures were as follows:

<i>Mini-roundabout</i>	Essex Knoll
<i>Speed cameras</i>	Colchester Road
<i>Stricter parking control</i>	Bridge Street and Nayland Road
<i>Pedestrian Crossing</i>	Outside St Mary's Church

A variety of other comments were received:

- No change required
- Restriction on heavy vehicles
- Traffic calming measures other than rumble strips
- More speed restrictions
- More road parking as a traffic calming measure
- More road signs
- Extra parking facilities
- Wider footpaths
- Pedestrian safety – beneath the railway bridge
- Extra footpaths
- Salt box – bottom of Colne Road

## Roads and Footpaths



Street lighting and the state of repair of roads and footpaths were the most commented upon items

### Street lighting

More than half of all respondents expressed a desire for better lighting. Most requests were for better lighting in the footpaths connecting the village thoroughfares and beneath the railway bridge.

*Footpaths frequently mentioned:*

Normandie Way to Colchester Road.  
 Nayland Road to Friends Field (beside "The Three Horseshoes")\*.  
 Nayland Road to Claypits.

\* This is not a public right of way.

Also mentioned were the Village Hall car park, the Croft, Nayland Road, Station Hill and Parsonage Hill.

*Normandie Way to Colchester Road.*

The path itself is poorly maintained (see later) and is quite steep at the Colchester Road end. The light at the corner of the path connecting The Paddocks and Normandie Way illuminates the top end of the alley and the other end is lit by the street lights in Colchester Road, however, the middle section is very dark. The path is bounded on both sides by the back gardens of houses on Colchester Road whose occupiers may be affected by any additional lighting.



Normandie Way/Colchester Road footpath

*Nayland Road to Friends Field (beside "The Three Horseshoes").*

The privately owned part of the path beside the beer garden of "The Three Horseshoes" is only poorly lit by Nayland Road street lighting but the section that runs beside the derelict buildings is very dark. The path has a private property on one side whose occupiers may be affected by any additional lighting.

*Nayland Road to Claypits.*

The lighting of this path has been improved by the addition of another standard light since the survey was conducted. However, its continuation that runs behind the school is quite dark towards the end that joins the new cottages built on a part of Eve's Orchard. This part of the path runs between back gardens.

The addition of street lighting to the footpath beneath the railway bridge is in hand.

### **Footpaths needing repair**

*Bures St Mary's*

Most mentioned was The Croft (124 respondents). This may be of concern not only to residents but to visitors as well as users of the Scout hut and allotments.

Other concerns, in order of frequency of mention by respondents were:  
Village Hall car park (this is in-hand).

\*Footpath from Nayland Road to Friends Field (beside "The Three Horseshoes"). (Inspection shows that only about a 4 metre section beside the derelict building is unmade).

\* not a public right of way.

Church Square (respondents are mostly not specific but some mention the area outside the Surgery).

*Bures Hamlet*

There were fewer complaints than for St Mary's but the footpath linking Normandie Way and Colchester Road was mentioned most. (This is in a poor state particularly at the Colchester Road end).

Some respondents mentioned Bridge Street though they may have been referring to the narrowness of the pavement (see later).

Colchester Road was also mentioned.

## **Better access for prams, wheelchairs etc. on footpaths**

The High Street and Bridge Street were the most frequently mentioned. These are very narrow and potentially dangerous since they are both near corners where there is a danger of traffic mounting the pavement. In Bridge Street the narrow pavement outside the butcher's shop has been the site of at least three bad accidents, involving a serious injury in one case and a fatality in another (a passenger in a vehicle, not a pedestrian). Solutions to these problems may be linked to traffic calming measures. Nayland Road was also frequently commented upon.

22 respondents mentioned Claypits/Eve's Orchard (an inspection shows this to be a well-maintained thoroughfare so it would be interesting if it were possible to ask some of the respondents what the problem is).

## **Sweeping and maintenance to be carried out more frequently**

No single area dominated, but almost a third of all respondents identified an area of concern.

Most frequently mentioned were the Village Hall car park, Church Square, Recreation ground, Colchester Road and Station Hill (possibly the area close to "The Swan").

## **Trees and plant boxes**

152 respondents expressed an interest in these. Fewer than the number that responded to the other questions in this section.

Most frequently mentioned was Colchester Rd (22) other sites Nayland Rd, Church Square, Recreation ground/Village Hall, Station Hill, Essex Knoll, Phillips's Field.

## **Facilities in the village**

### *Clubs and groups*

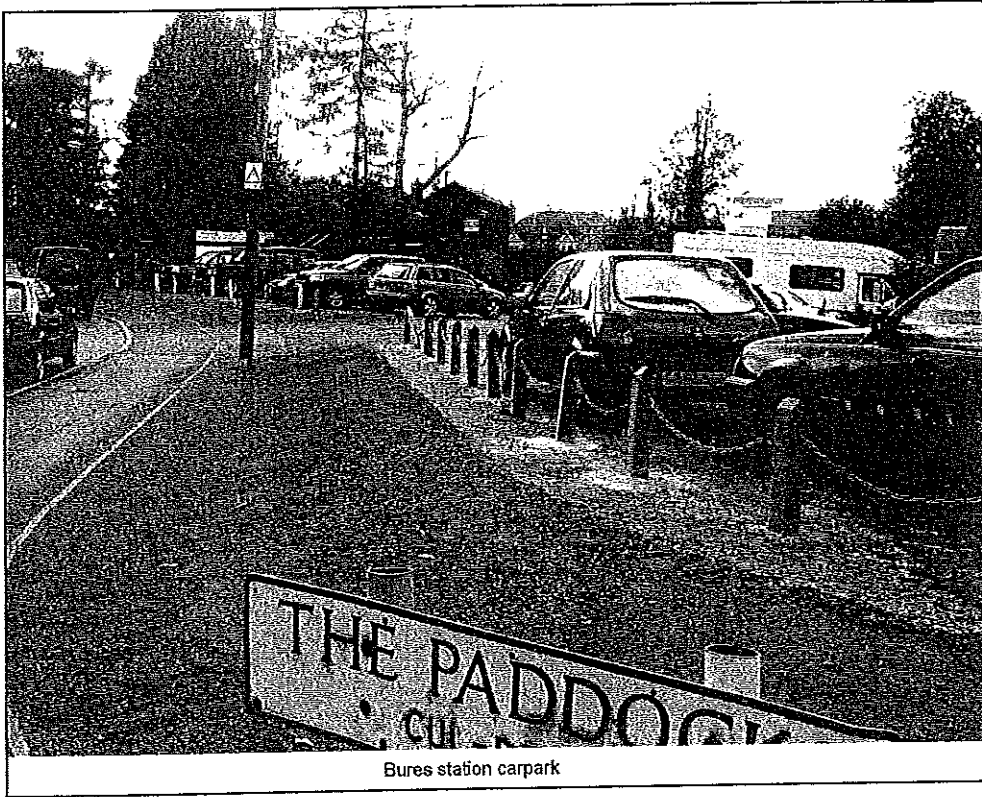
All village clubs and groups received wide written support and there is apparent enthusiasm for other recreational activities not currently available in the village. Organised coach outings were the single most frequently (30%) participated-in activity, with walking/rambling and the Horticultural Society being the next most frequently mentioned.

Continuing education received a lot of support, and much interest was expressed in the possibility of foreign language courses; French being the most popular option.

### *Services*

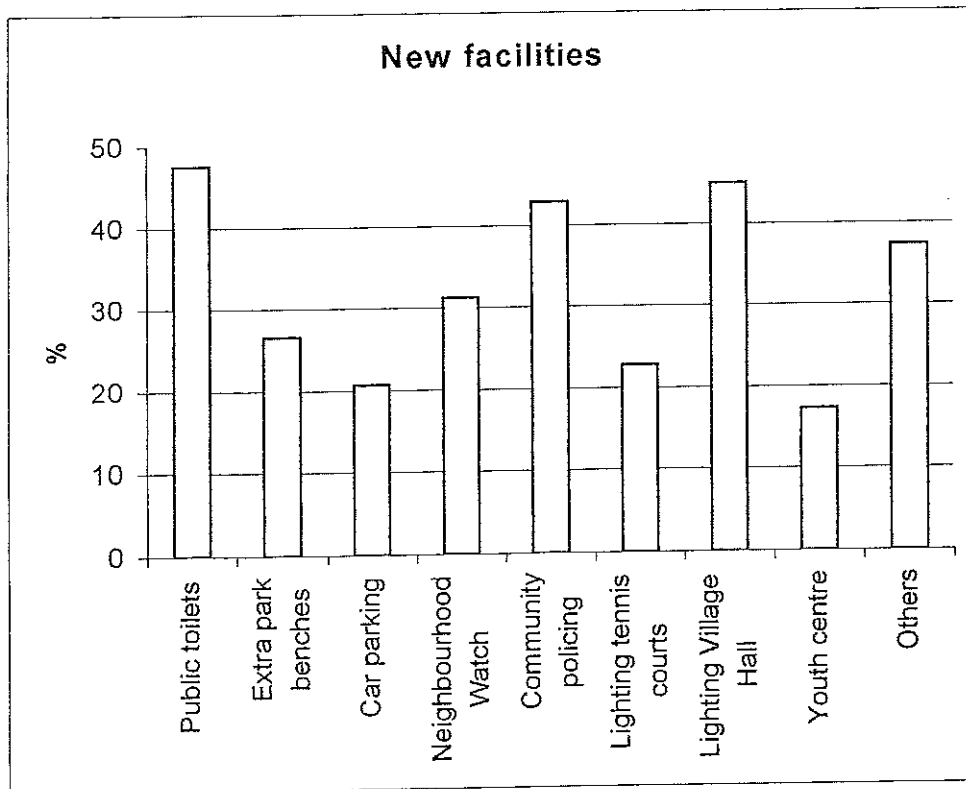
The majority of respondents claimed to support all of the existing services (surgery, shops petrol station etc) in the village. However, the questionnaire did not ask people to indicate the frequency with which they use each of the services. More than 40% say they would use a bank or ATM if it were present and a similar number would like to see a bakery in the village.





Bures station carpark

## New facilities and major improvements



The most popular option amongst those proposed in the questionnaire was for public toilets, and the most popular location was on the recreation ground or in the vicinity of the Village Hall. Improved lighting around the Village Hall was also a popular option.

The suggested locations and the numbers of respondents interested in more benches and improved parking are shown below.

<i>Park benches</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Car parking</i>	<i>No.</i>
Normandie Way	1	Church Square	19
Friends Field/ Cuckoo Hill	1	Bridge Street/Phillips's Field/Colchester Rd	26
Church/Bus Stop	26	Nayland Road/Village Hall	37
Picnic area riverside	31	Station	42
Recreation ground	113		

More benches have placed on the recreation ground and on the riverbank on the Essex side of the village.

## Youth consultation

According to the results of the Village Appraisal it is estimated that there are more than 300 children of 15 years and younger in Bures. Young people of this age group were not asked to fill in individual questionnaires, instead the views of some of them were sought using consultation exercises at Bures Primary School and at Bures Youth Club.

The following organised activities for young people already exist in Bures:

Scouts, Cubs, Brownies.  
Football, three youth teams.  
Cricket, colts.  
Tennis coaching.  
Church, three youth groups.

After-school club at the Baptist Church.  
Bures Amateur Dramatic Society involves large numbers of children in the annual panto.

## What young people say; in their own words

### The Good (in order of popularity)

- Recreation ground
- Tennis/Basketball courts
- Shops
- Wildlife
- River
- Arger Fen
- Water Lane
- Youth club
- Football goals
- It's quiet
- The Church
- Fields around the village
- School
- The view from Friends Field
- The views
- Oak tree
- Forest
- Clubs
- Scout hut
- Phillips's Field

### The Bad (in order of unpopularity)

- Graffiti, spray cans and glass in the hut (*on the "rec"*)
- Bumps and holes in the car park
- Cars going fast/traffic
- Dog muck at Essex Knoll
- Narrow path past the Butchers
- Litter
- Wheelie bins blocking the pavement
- Broken windows at Friends Field
- Chopped down trees on Sudbury Road
- Crossing the road at the bus station
- Dog mess on the path in Nayland Road
- Broken windows in Church's Seed Merchants
- "Three Horseshoes" (*footpath*)
- The bus station
- Things dumped at Arger Fen
- Noise
- People shouting
- People dumping rubbish next to my gate.

Bracketed notations added for clarification by the Village Appraisal committee.

## What young people say; in their own words

### The Future (in order of priority)

- Safer footpaths
- Keep the school
- Skate park
- Hockey pitch
- Coffee bar
- Big slide on the "rec" with a climbing frame on top and a fireman's pole.
- Underground train
- No factories
- Less cars, make people not drive too much
- Neater car park, less holes
- A petrol station in Suffolk
- School field
- Bigger shops
- More places to bike
- Cycle paths
- Take the hut (*on the "rec"*) away
- A Co-op
- Indoor ball games in the hall
- Affordable housing
- Cyber café
- Clean up the hut on the "rec"
- Traffic lights in front of the bus station
- Battery powered cars
- Ramps for people with wheelchairs and electronic chairs
- Picnic benches
- New bridge
- Change the bus station
- Homes for animals
- Flowers on the park
- An electronic board with speakers at the train station
- More trees

Bracketed notations added for clarification by the Village Appraisal committee.



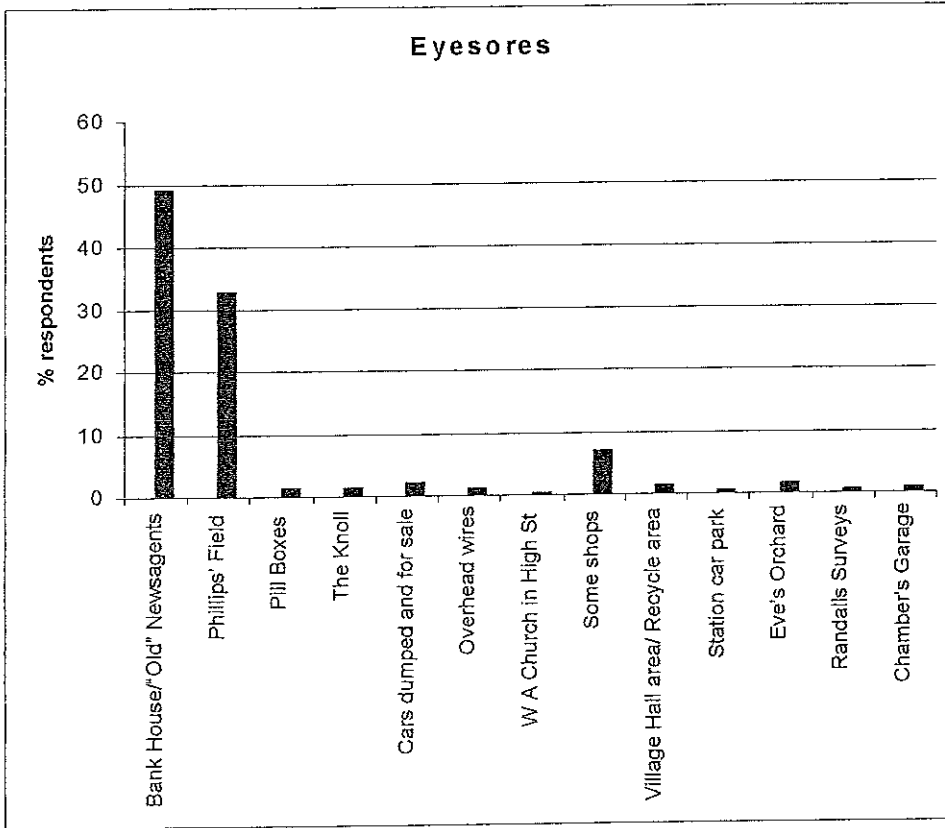
Bank House



Phillips's Field

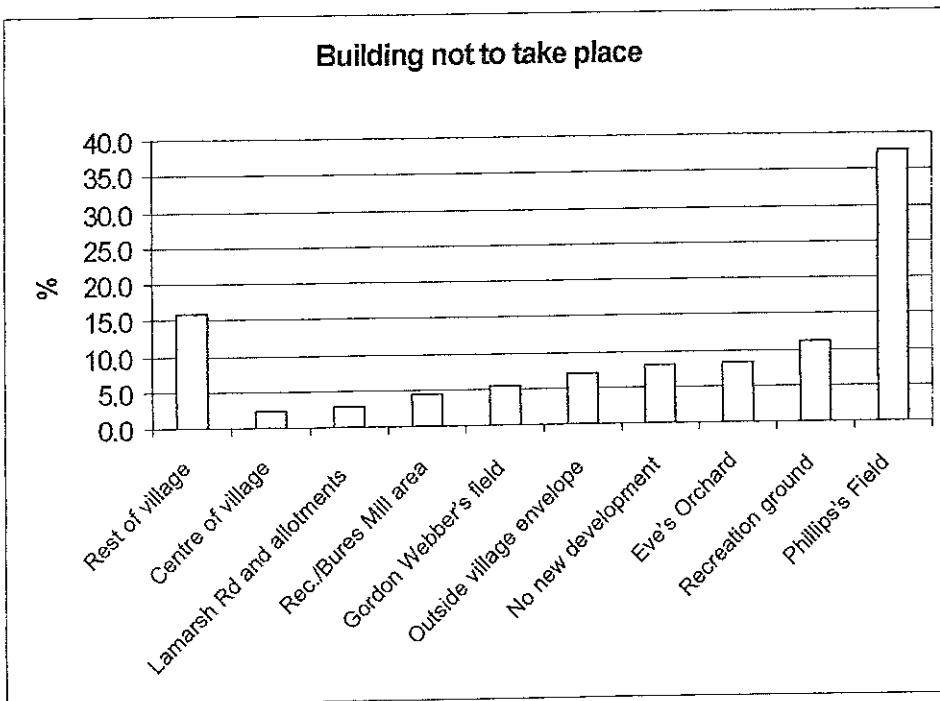
### Village Character and Landscape

A wide range of sites were identified as eyesores that could be improved but two dominate the responses; Bank House / "Old" newsagents and Phillips's Field.



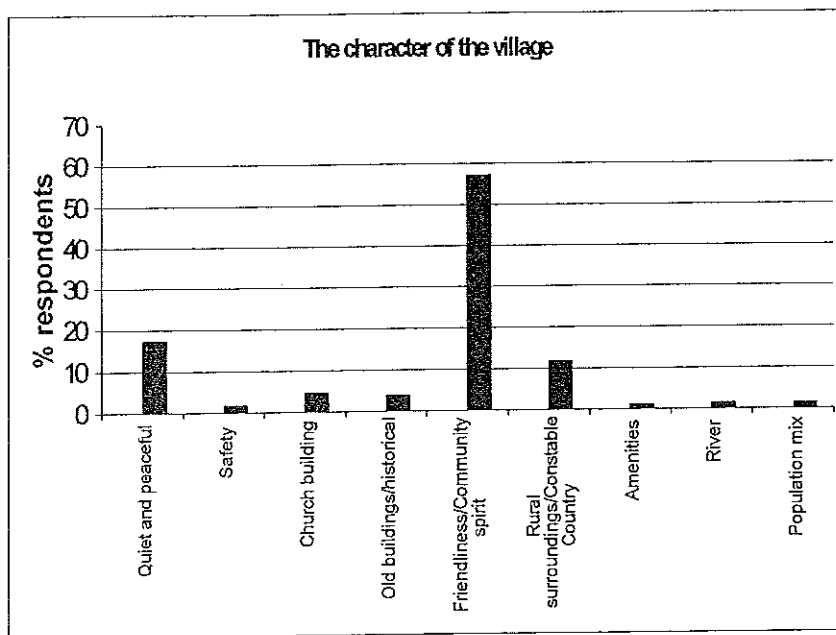
Bank House and the "Old" newsagents are adjoining properties in Bridge Street and have been empty for many years, although Bank House is currently occupied by squatters. Neither property has been regularly maintained. The owner of these two properties does not live in the village.

Phillips's Field occupies a riverside site in the middle of the village and is somewhat unkempt. The owner does not live in the village.



Several different sites were identified in responses to the question "Where would you NOT want any building to take place?" Phillips's Field and the recreation ground were the areas which people felt most strongly about.

In response to the open question "What sums up the character of the village to you?" the following answers were given.



For the majority the friendliness and community spirit of Bures are the village's most important qualities.

#### Other comments

- Many respondents state the need for more low cost housing in the village.
- There is much concern about dog fouling of footpaths and on the recreation ground.
- Many respondents ask for more shops and a wider choice of goods in existing shops.
- Several of those who completed the questionnaire gave their support to the Village Appraisal and are optimistic for its outcome.
- One respondent thinks that the problems of disabled people have been overlooked in the questionnaire.



### **Objectives and outcomes**

The open meeting held at the very beginning of the appraisal process identified the issues of most common concern affecting the quality of life of the residents of Bures. The questionnaire was built around those. A central objective of the Village Appraisal was to discover what the people of Bures thought about the issues as well as to give people the opportunity to express opinions about other matters. Another important objective of the appraisal was to obtain demographic information about the village that could not readily be obtained by other means.

The Village Appraisal committee used the information obtained from the questionnaires to make an initial list of 22 separate actions. Following meetings between the committee and the parish councils of Bures St Mary and Bures Hamlet a 13-point Action Plan was Produced (see below).

Eight of the actions are to be lead by one or other or both the parish councils. Four are to be lead by groups of volunteers, whilst one action is to be lead by the Sportsground Committee.

Nine of the initial 22-points are not included in the final Action Plan because they are already being addressed, are not currently practical or not of the greatest priority or are dependent on the outcome of actions included in the 13-point plan. These points will be reviewed at regular intervals and addressed when possible.

## Bures Village Appraisal 2002/2003 Bures St Mary and Hamlet Action Plan

	Action	Who leading	Who else involved	How funded	When
1	Investigate services available for the elderly with special emphasis on those living alone. Establish numbers of persons in each category. Identify their needs.	A committee of volunteers. To be recruited by Village Appraisal Committee.	Age-Concern, limited PC involvement.	Various agencies.	2004/5
2	Install discrete lighting around Village Hall.	Sportsground Committee.	-	Sportsground precept.	2004/5
3	Tidy Bures/Bures in Bloom Campaign. Objective is to improve the appearance of the village largely through the action of individuals and groups of village people.	A committee of volunteers. Horticultural Society to initiate an open meeting.	Individuals, relevant external bodies.	Not known.	2004/5
4	To improve evening transport to and from Bures.	Bures Hamlet PC, trains Bures St Mary PC, buses	Gainsborough Line Action Group (GLAG). Bus companies.	Not applicable.	2004/5
5	Address the problem of insufficient parking spaces in the station carpark. Conduct a survey of carpark users to find how many live in the village. Investigate the increased number of spaces to be obtained by resurfacing and marking.	Working group recruited by Bures Hamlet PC.	Relevant rail authority.	Not applicable.	2004/5
6	Youth facilities: A committee to be formed of adults and young people to promote facilities for young people in the village.	A committee of volunteers. To be recruited by Village Appraisal Committee	-	-	2004/5
7	Traffic calming at the Essex & Suffolk Knolls. Examine possibility of mini-roundabouts or stop-lines across all roads entering the junctions.	Bures Hamlet PC Bures St Mary PC.	ECC/SCC	ECC/SCC	2004/5
8	Examine the possibility of signs to warn traffic approaching Suffolk Knoll from Sudbury direction when Chamber's coaches are backing into the garage.	Bures St Mary PC.	SCC	SCC	2004/5
9	Traffic calming in Colchester Road: Proposal for a novel road surface to indicate to drivers the need to adjust speed.	Bures Hamlet PC.	ECC	ECC	2004/5
10	Normandie Way/Colchester Road footpath: Make up footpath and consult adjacent landowners about the installation of low level lighting.	Bures Hamlet PC.	ECC	ECC	2004/5
11	Nayland Road/Friends Field footpath: Negotiate with the landlord of The Three Horseshoes to resurface the offending strip and site low level lighting.	Bures St Mary PC.	SCC	SCC	2004/5
12	Phillips's Field: Investigate the means by which residents can have access to and make use of this field in the centre of the village.	Bures Hamlet PC Bures St Mary PC.	-	-	2004/5
13	Better access for prams, wheelchairs etc. on footpaths. Additional dropped kerbs and pedestrian crossings	Bures Hamlet PC Bures St Mary PC.	ECC/SCC	ECC/SCC	2004/5

*Bea Wainwright*  
*March*

### Items kept under review for action at a later date

- Increase affordable housing.
- Village shops: encourage the opening of new retail businesses.
- Bank House: Determine by what means this important building in the centre of Bures can be restored.
- Establish the post of police liaison officer in both parish councils to improve relations with the constabularies and increase police presence in the village.
- Nayland Road/ Friends Field footpath; create a safe and well-lit footpath between these roads.
- Flood prevention.
- Investigate the practicalities of installing public toilets in or around the recreation ground.
- Draw attention of outlets in the village to the possibility of installing Independent Operator ATMs (cash machines).

### **Action plan review and reporting**

Those actions for which the parish councils are responsible will be reviewed for progress at council meetings. Actions that are undertaken by volunteer groups will be subject to review on a regular basis by the Village Appraisal committee.

Progress on actions will be reported to the community by a variety of means e.g. notices and posters, the Parish Magazine or the local press, as appropriate. The parish councils will also, of course, record progress in council minutes.

### **Links to Babergh and Braintree District Councils' plans**

Many of the issues identified as requiring action by the Village Appraisal are dealt with in the following district council documents.

- Braintree District Council's *Community Strategy Action Plan 2004-2014*.
- *Braintree District Local Plan Review* (Revised deposit plan May 2003)
  
- Babergh District Council's Corporate plan publication, "Your District, Your future – Building a Better Babergh" 2004
- Babergh District Council's *Housing Strategy 2004-2009*

The information obtained as result of the Village Appraisal will be of use in the implementation of the policies and initiatives set out in these documents. For example the appraisal showed the need for affordable housing in Bures. This was taken up with Babergh District Council, which has identified space within the village envelope for this type of housing and included it in the District Plan.