

MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL

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FINAL MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING (HELD BY ZOOM VIDEO LINK) ON THURSDAY 22nd APRIL 2021 @ 6:30PM

Present: Cllr L Read, Cllr S Barr, Cllr G Paterson, Cllr A Cross
Clerk & RFO – J Challis, DC Cllr R Warboys

Apologies: CC Cllr J Fleming

1 Chair's welcome and to consider and approve apologies for absence

Cllr Read welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 To receive Declarations of Interest on agenda items

None received.

3 To consider requests for Dispensations on agenda items

None requested.

4 To resolve the draft minutes of the Parish Council Meeting (via Zoom) held on Thursday 25th March 2021 are a true and correct record.

The minutes for 25th March 2021 (via zoom) were approved unanimously.

5 Matters Arising / Update on actions from the 25th March 2021 meeting.

The Clerk has added all policies and documents approved at this meeting to the website.

6 Report from County Councillor

CC Cllr Fleming sent apologies in advance of the meeting advising there would be no report due to purdah.

7 Report from District Councillor

DC Cllr Warboys read his report, a copy of which can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

8 Public Participation Session (10 minutes set aside)

No members of the public present.

9 Chair's Report

- Mellis Primary School – A school Governor has advised that the school is in need of funding, and has had to make teaching assistants redundant as a result. There was a discussion as to whether the Parish Council has the power or authority to be able to help.

Cllr Cross suggested that as a Church of England school the Chair of Governor's needs to talk to the diocese.

- Defibrillator – Cllr Read proposed the Parish Council take over the cost of replacement batteries using the maintenance budget. After discussing Councillors agreed unanimously to pay for ongoing replacement batteries, and any other service costs required. Signage showing the location of the defibrillator was also discussed and will be a future agenda item.

ACTION

- **Cllr Cross to contact Chair of the Governors of Mellis Primary School to advise they make contact with the diocese.**
- **Clerk to check whether there is anything the Council can do within its powers and authorities to assist Mellis Primary School**
- **Clerk to include defibrillator batteries and service costs to maintenance budget**

10 Clerk/RFO's Report

- A summary of receipts and payments, (01/04/20 – 31/03/21), was sent to Councillors prior to the meeting.
- As per agenda item 5, all policies and documents approved in March have been added to the website. Work to update/improve the website is still ongoing, including ensuring it adheres to Website Accessibility guidelines.
- The Lifestyle desk of the Telegraph have made contact regarding an article they are writing on decommissioned phone boxes. See agenda item 12.
- Internal audit – process started.

11 Mellis Drainage Assessment Reports

After a discussion, it was decided that a summary of the reports should be made available as a point of information to residents via a link on the website, and an article should also be written for the Messenger.

ACTION

- **Clerk to add to website**
- **Cllr Read to contact the Mellis representative for the Messenger**

12 Telephone Box

The phone box has now been repainted by volunteers from the village. Cllr Read will submit expenses for the paint and materials used, as per the maximum £200.00 expenditure agreed at the 25th March 2021 meeting.

The Telegraph have contacted the Clerk asking to include it in an article they are writing on decommissioned phone boxes. Councillors and residents have arranged to meet with a photographer in the village on Friday 23rd April to provide quotes and information.

13 Wellhead Reconstruction

Cllr Paterson has spoken with the landowner who has given permission for the wellhead reconstruction to be carried out.

After discussing it was agreed for Cllr Paterson to request written permission.

ACTION Cllr Paterson to request written permission from the landowner

14 Mellis Common Bench Requests

After discussing it was agreed unanimously to incorporate a bench into the well head design, rather than installing separate benches.

15 MSDC Tree, Hedge, and Wildflower Planting Initiative

MSDC have sent a webform for parish and community groups where interested parties who own land can receive free trees and hedgerow plants to plant next autumn/winter.

Cllr Paterson suggested requesting trees such as apple trees for an orchard around the village sign area for resident's use.

After discussing, it was agreed for Cllr Paterson to ask the landowner if they would be amenable to this.

ACTION Cllr Paterson to speak to landowner for permission to plant trees around the village sign area.

16 Face-to-Face Meetings

The most recent advice from SALC is that the legislation for remote meetings will end on 6th May 2021, however Government guidelines state that face-to-face meetings cannot start until 17th May 2021, so there is an interim period 7th – 16th May 2021 when no meetings can be held in any format.

Therefore, Annual Parish Council Meetings and Annual Parish (Village) Meetings must be held either remotely 1-6th May, or face to face 17-31st May for Parish Councils and 17 May -1st June for the Parish (Village) meeting.

Councillors discussed this and felt very strongly that it would not be possible to comply with face-to-face meetings from 17th May 2021 without breaking Covid regulations.

Cllr Read proposed sending a statement expressing the view of the council to SALC and the Local Member of Parliament. Seconded by Cllr Barr, and agreed unanimously.

ACTION Clerk to send statement from Mellis Parish Council to SALC and Local MP.

17 Annual Parish Council Meeting and Annual Parish (Village) Meeting arrangements

Discussed under agenda item 16.

18 Finance

i) Confirmation of Barclays bank account balance:

The Barclays bank account balance was £32,731.17 as of 24th April 2021

ii) Review and authorisation of payments presented:

SALC Annual Subscription - **£264.40**

HMRC PAYE - **£56.70**

Admin payment (Clerk) - **£226.80**

100 Trees Project (Village sign) - **£130**

Agreed unanimously

iii) CIL payment received

Councillors acknowledged CIL payment of £5,139.14, and grant payment of £158, received April 2021.

iv) Financial Regulations

Cllr Read acknowledged concerns raised by Cllr Barr that although a maximum expenditure of £250 was agreed at the 25th March 2021 meeting, work had been carried out to the village

sign without further discussion between councillors. As a result, Councillors discussed and agreed ensuring that future projects, including the wellhead reconstruction, are carried out correctly and transparently.

Cllr Read suggested changing Financial Regulation 11.1h to a 'value above £500' instead of '£100' in relation to the procurement of quotations. This was proposed by Cllr Cross, seconded by Cllr Paterson, and agreed unanimously.

Wellhead reconstruction - Cllr Cross suggested making a more detailed plan for the work required, and then obtaining a quote for the work specifying the total number of hours anticipated, and the materials required. Agreed unanimously

ACTION

- **Cllr Read and Cllr Barr to pay agreed payments via online banking (dual authorisation)**
- **Clerk to amend Financial Regulation 11.1h**
- **Cllr Paterson to make a more detailed plan for the wellhead reconstruction**

19 Matters for future consideration

None

20 Date of the Annual Parish Council Meeting will be on Thursday 6th May 2021 following the Annual Parish (Village) Meeting which commences at 6:30pm via Zoom.

Meeting Closed at 8:27pm

District Councillor's Report April 2021

Current COVID - 19 Information	<p>Since March 2020, 6,237 business grants worth £30,041,539 have been paid to businesses in Mid Suffolk. On 31st March the COVID support grant scheme ended. However, there are still grants to help with business rates and a new Restart Grant to help retail businesses open safely with a second phase to help the hospitality, leisure and personal care businesses.</p> <p>Businesses in Babergh and Mid Suffolk who have had to close their doors to customers or have been significantly financially impacted by Covid-19 restrictions, may be eligible for support. Further info. https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/features/support-available-for-businesses-in-babergh-and-mid-suffolk</p> <p>The numbers of COVID-19 cases and deaths are on the Suffolk public health site which can be accessed at: HTTPS://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/jsna/coronawatch</p>
Advance notice - elections	<p>B&MSDC will be observing a pre-election period moratorium (purdah) in respect of the forthcoming Police and Crime Commissioner and Suffolk County Council Elections on Thursday 6 May 2021. The moratorium will run from 25 March 2021 – the date that the notice of election is published – through to 7 May 2021. Please note that the Mid Suffolk full council meeting will not be affected as the notice will be published after the meeting has concluded.</p>
Biodiversity	<p>Will Birchnall Corporate Manager - Public Realm, Planning and communities, has looked into tree canopy surveys with Islington who have surveyed their trees to gain a monetary asset value. Tree and hedge planting. Web form for parish and community groups will be going out and running through March. Interested parties who own land can receive free trees to plant on their land next autumn/winter. Tree wardens will be involved and have helped to develop this form. Meadow planting – open spaces and verges. Procurement team were re-deployed on business grants. This is being done now. Will B is scoping potential sites. Plan is for Yellow-Rattle seeding in Autumn. Two other pieces of equipment are purchased including scarifying machine.</p>
Sustainable Transport	<p>Katherine Davies - new sustainable transport officer in post now. Working with County, looking at Local Transport Plan. Mechanism to capture views of communities will include a mapping tool where communities think routes should be instated. Parish Councils can register. Cycling facilities can also be mapped. A vision document will set out intent for plan.</p>
Gateway 14 FREE-PORT BID	<p>As detailed in our recent briefing notes, Gateway 14 Ltd has submitted a planning application to Mid Suffolk District Council for the development of Gateway 14, a mixed-use business park planned for land adjacent to junction 50 of the A14 in Stowmarket, Suffolk.</p> <p>We are delighted that Gateway 14 is one of a variety of sites in our region to be granted Freeport status, as recently announced by Chancellor Sunak.</p> <p>The government's Freeports initiative aims to attract major domestic and international investment and offers a wide range of tax reliefs, simplified customs procedures and support to promote regeneration and innovation.</p> <p>In our region, Freeport East – a partnership made up of businesses and local government – has stated that its ambition is to create manufacturing, green energy and innovation hubs that capitalise on the unique qualities of the Eastern Region and will become an important part of the post-Covid recovery.</p>
Local Plan	<p>On Wed 31/03 Tom Baker Asst Director Sustainable Communities announce:</p> <p>Dear Councillors,</p> <p>This email is to inform you that we have today submitted the Joint Local Plan for independent examination by the Secretary of State.</p>

	<p>“This is a significant milestone for our councils and I would like to thank all those involved in the process so far, including our councillors, communities, officers, and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Following both councils opting to prepare a Joint Local Plan in 2016, careful consideration has been given to how the districts will balance the delivery of housing growth, important infrastructure, and essential employment, while safeguarding our natural and historic environment until 2037. Residents, local businesses and other stakeholders were invited to have their say on proposals at a public consultation in 2017, when more than 14,000 representations were received. This helped inform the preferred options consultation in July 2019, during which a further 4,000 comments were made by consultees. Public feedback has been reflected in the final version of the plan, which outlines how and where future development should take place – enabling Government housing targets to be met, whilst also supporting the councils’ ambition to build thriving communities</p>
<p>Council Meeting 25th March</p>	<p>In a rare moment of unanimity the full council voted in favour of the motion:</p> <p>That the Council carries out a review of green space to ensure that it is optimising the biodiversity and well-being aspects of natural and amenity green space in Mid Suffolk.</p> <p>This was proposed by Cllr Rachel Eburne (Green Party) and seconded by Cllr Jessica Fleming (Cons.)</p> <p>The Council has already agreed to prepare supplementary planning guidance to support its biodiversity commitments, and inclusion of well-designed green spaces as a material consideration for all new housing developments would add a health and wellbeing element to the biodiversity programme; the Council is urged to set out a time frame which is consistent with the new Joint Local Plan implementation.</p>
<p>End to Virtual Meetings after May 7th</p>	<p>Updated guidance has been published following confirmation that emergency legislation regarding virtual council meetings will not be extended.</p> <p>The legislation allowing virtual meetings for local government expires on 7th May, but the COVID regulations do not allow meetings in person until after 17th May. There is an appeal about extending the legislation for virtual meetings at the end of April, so we await further instructions about how meetings will be conducted next month.</p> <p>Next Full council Meeting 24th May.</p> <p>https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-stewardship/local-authority-remote-meetings-call-for-evidence/</p> <p>The above is a link to a survey asking for evidence of the current arrangement allowing meetings to take place virtually. Closes 17th June</p>

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