

MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 17th MARCH 2022 @ 6:30PM MELLIS MEMORIAL HALL

Present: Cllr L Read, Cllr S Barr, Cllr A Cross
Clerk – J Challis, CC Cllr Fleming, DC Cllr Warboys

Apologies: Cllr G Paterson

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

Cllr Read welcomed everyone to the meeting, and apologies received from Cllr Paterson were approved.

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 held on Thursday 24th February 2022 are a true and correct record.

The minutes for 24th February 2022 were approved unanimously.

5 Report from County Councillor

CC Cllr Fleming sent her report prior to the meeting, a copy of which can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

Cllr Read raised the issue of moving the 30-mph sign upon entering Mellis from the A143 further out of the village boundary, to make drivers slow down earlier, and had sent an email regarding this to CC Cllr Fleming prior to the meeting. CC Cllr Fleming said that obtaining permission to move a sign like this was a lengthy process. She will arrange for SCC Highways to conduct a site visit, and suggested installing a SID/VAS device first, and using the data collected to evidence the necessity of moving the 30-mph sign. CC Cllr Fleming said she can provide funding for a new SID/VAS device.

Cllr Cross reported that there is still an extremely high number of HGVs using the Mellis road as a cut through from the A140. CC Cllr Fleming asked Cllrs to take photographic evidence including number plates for her to send to Planning Enforcement. She also advised the PC contact Cllr David Burn, the Cabinet Member for Planning, to raise a complaint, and also the Speed Management Team at Suffolk Highways.

Cllr Barr said she was concerned that new housing plans in Eye will not have sufficient amenities to support them, particularly A&E facilities. It was discussed whether Hartismere Hospital may be able to offer this facility and it was suggested that the PC should contact other nearby parishes, and the Town Clerk for Eye, to see if they shared these concerns.

CC Cllr Fleming highlighted the confirmed cases of pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 at five sites; A 3km Protection Zone and a 10km Surveillance Zone are in place around each.

Cllr Read commented that the Queen's Green Canopy project looked very interesting and could possibly be a project to consider for Newsteads Land.

Cllr Cross asked for more information on the Sunnica Solar Farm Project feeling very strongly that roof space should be used for solar panels instead. CC Cllr Fleming agreed that agricultural land should not be used for solar farming and directed Cllrs towards the following link on the SCC website:

[Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects \(NSIPs\) | Suffolk County Council](#)

Cllr Barr commented that the community bus border hopper is due to close. CC Cllr Fleming advised that MSDC, supported by SCC, is looking at community transport and how it should be supported better. DC Cllr Warboys commented that funding for three electric buses in Stowmarket has been agreed.

ACTION

- **HGV traffic concerns – Cllrs to take photographic evidence, Clerk to Cllr David Burn and Suffolk Highways Speed Management Team**
- **Housing plans – Clerk to contact other parishes and Eye Town Clerk re concerns over level of amenity support**

6 Report from District Councillor

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

DC Cllr Warboys highlighted the Thurston judicial review where it was decided that more weight is attached to Neighbourhood Plans than previously considered.

DC Cllr Warboys also reported that he had attended an Innovations Lab presentation at the Mix in Stowmarket on 11th February 2022, and was very impressed by their work.

Cllr Cross asked if the Local Plan is available anywhere. DC Cllr Warboys directed Cllrs to MSDC's Joint Local Plan; [New Joint Local Plan homepage » Babergh Mid Suffolk](#)

Cllr Read thanked CC Cllr Fleming and DC Cllr Warboys and confirmed there were no further questions from Cllrs.

7:25pm CC Cllr Fleming and DC Cllr Warboys left the meeting.

7 Public Participation Session (10 minutes set aside)

No members of the public present.

8 Chair's Report

Cllr Read reported on behalf of Tree Warden Cllr Paterson, that Cllr Paterson has planted 350 out of the 480 trees received from MSDC, leaving 130 to get into the ground before April. Some of the trees have been planted around the village sign area and Cllr Paterson is currently in discussions with Suffolk Wildlife Trust regarding this. He has also instigated with the Headmaster at Mellis Primary School to start 'Copse in a Box'; a program initiated by the Tree Council to enable Mellis to have their own tree nursery producing 400 trees every year.

9 Clerk/RFO's Report

- Receipts and payments 01/04/21-24/01/22 were sent to councillors prior to the meeting.
- Neighbourhood Plan – ongoing; no further updates.
- New SID/VAS signs – ongoing; CC Cllr Fleming has offered funding assistance to purchase.
- Cow Pasture Lane email – reply sent to resident and Cllr Read and Cllr Paterson to monitor.
- Suffolk Wildlife Trust tree safety work at Mellis Common – written permission sent via email.
- Traffic Concerns – email reply received from CC Cllr Fleming advising that liaising with adjacent parish councils is the best approach, i.e. Wortham and Yaxley. Gathering and analysing current SID information will be helpful in enabling this to receive attention from Suffolk Highways. See also Agenda item 5.
- Suffolk Wildlife Trust contacted regarding the grass protection matting; waiting for a reply.
- Footpaths – Area Rights of Way Manager at SCC contacted; waiting for a reply. The Green Access Officer also contacted regarding QR codes for the footpath signs. Cllrs agreed they would like to request the QR codes.
- Memorial Hall Car Park – The Chairman of the Memorial Hall has given permission for sensor lighting to be installed, and is keen to resolve the anti-social behaviour and littering of the car park. It was agreed to contact a local electrical contractor for advice regarding how to proceed (FR 11.1(h): three quotations are not required for works under £500).

ACTION

- **Clerk to progress work on Neighbourhood Plans.**
- **Clerk to finalise application to SCC for new SID/VAS signs.**
- **Clerk to confirm to Green Access Officer that the PC would like to proceed with QR codes.**
- **Clerk to contact local electrical contractor re sensor lighting for Memorial Hall car park.**

10 Appointment of Internal Auditor 2021/22

After discussing, it was agreed to use SALC's Internal Audit services as they conducted the audit last year.

ACTION – Clerk to instruct SALC's Internal Auditor

11 Planning

- **DC/22/00968 – Ostlers Barn, Thrandeston Road, Mellis, IP23 8DR**
- **DC/22/00969 – Ostlers Barn, Thrandeston Road, Mellis, IP23 8DR**

After discussing Cllrs agreed that they had no objection to the above two planning applications.

- **DC/22/01136 – Clay Barn, Thrandeston Road, Mellis, IP23 8DR**

After discussing Cllrs agreed that they had a neutral response to this planning application, and would like it noted on the planning portal that they are concerned about additional traffic accessing/leaving the property on such a bend in the road.

ACTION – Clerk to add comments to planning portal as above

12 Tree Warden's Report

See Agenda item 8.

13 New Dog Bin Locations

After discussing, Councillors agreed unanimously to position the two new dog waste bins received from MSDC's Welcome Back Funding initiative, in the following locations:

- 1) On the Memorial side of the level crossing
- 2) At the end of Drury Lane (Dam Lane)

MSDC are currently storing the bins and will arrange for them to be installed. Cllr Cross offered to meet MSDC to show them the exact locations.

ACTION – Clerk to arrange installation with MSDC

14 Queen’s Platinum Jubilee 2022

The Memorial Hall have advised there is a booking from the Parish Council for hire of the hall Thursday 2nd June to Sunday 5th 2022. They have also said that there is a place on the Memorial Hall Committee designated for a member of the Parish Council, and would like to know if it can be filled. Cllrs are not aware of any booking for 2nd-5th June, and at the moment have no plans requiring it to be booked for that period. After discussing Cllrs agreed that due to the current vacancies on the Council, there is no time available to fill the seat on the Memorial Hall Committee, but will bear it in mind for future. Cllrs would instead like to invite a Memorial Hall Committee member to attend a Council meeting, and Cllr Cross said he will try to attend the next Memorial Hall Committee meeting depending on the date.

An email has also been received from the new Farmers market asking if the Parish Council would like to be involved with a market being held on Saturday 4th June 2022. Councillors were keen to support the market and will look into ways to do this.

Councillors discussed ideas for commemorative items and would like to look at finding a local craftsperson to produce something. They would like to progress with the beacon for the lighting ceremony which is being held across Suffolk on Thursday 2nd June at 9:45pm. Cllr Cross will liaise with Cllr Paterson and get the ball rolling with a local craftsman who has said he can help make one.

It was also agreed to look at a band for the Sunday and mobile catering, and to confirm with Rowland and Jessica as to how much funding they are able to provide. We need to check the Railway Taverns plans to make sure they are planning to be open on the Sunday, and liaise with Yaxley’s QPJ Steering Group.

ACTION

- **Clerk to advise Memorial Hall as above**
- **Clerk to advise Farmers Market as above**
- **Clerk/Cllrs to investigate local crafters for commemorative items**
- **Cllr Cross/Cllr Paterson to progress beacon**
- **Clerk to look bands/mobile catering, and speak to the Railway Tavern and Yaxley QPJ Steering Group**
- **Clerk to contact CC Cllr Fleming and DC Cllr Warboys**

15 Mellis Football Goals and Play Area

A request has been received from a resident regarding the football goals and play area. They have asked if the nets can be looked at as they are in a poor condition, and also whether the goals need to be moved to ensure the ground is maintained.

After discussing, it was agreed unanimously to purchase new nets for the goals. Cllrs did not feel the condition of the ground currently necessitated moving the goals.

ACTION – Clerk to organise purchase of new football goal nets and update resident

16 Mellis Community Support Fund

Cllrs agreed they still wish to progress with this, but that it needs further consideration, including how to advertise to make residents aware of the Support Fund.

ACTION – to be considered further at next PC meeting

17 Newsteads Land

Cllr Read contacted the school regarding their encroachment onto Newsteads Land, and they have subsequently admitted that the position of their fence line does infringe Newsteads Land. The school is proposing to leave the fence where it is, recognising the ownership of the Parish Council, because the children use the additional space at playtimes, and will install a gate to allow the PC access if required.

Cllrs are happy to allow the school to use the area, but discussed whether such an arrangement needs to be made officially through a solicitor, which Cllr Read will look into further.

Cllr Read reported that he has spoken to a local contractor regarding maintenance work required to Newsteads Land; there are dead trees and debris that need removing. The contractor has advised it will take 3 days to do the work required at £600 per day. Cllrs agreed unanimously to instruct the contractor to proceed (only one quotation is required as per FR 11.1 (h)).

Once cleared some of the unplanted trees Cllr Paterson has left could possibly be planted.

18 Village Improvements

Deferred to next meeting.

19 Annual Parish Council Meeting and Annual Parish (Village) Meeting Arrangements

Deferred to next meeting.

20 Finance

i) Confirmation of Barclays bank account balance

The Barclays bank account balance of 24th February 2022 £35,605.80.

ii) Review and authorisation of payments presented:

Admin payment (Clerk) - **£264.20**

Mellis Memorial Hall (March hire) - **£21.00**

Suffolk Cloud (hosting) - **£120.00**

All payments agreed unanimously.

The Mellisian's payment of £300 agreed at the 20th January 2022 meeting is still be made as no bank details have been provided.

The standing order mandate for the Clerk's basic salary, as agreed at the 20th January 2022, was due to be signed by Cllr Read and Cllr Barr tonight, but the figure is incorrect due to NALC just announcing confirmation of the new pay scales 2021/22. After discussing, Cllrs agreed unanimously to carry on making the payments online by the 25th of each month, rather than completing a new mandate and setting up the standing order.

Cllr Cross signed a mandate to add him as a third signatory on the bank account.

ACTION

- **Cllr Read and Cllr Barr to pay agreed payments via online banking (dual authorisation)**
- **Cllr Read/Clerk to speak to the Mellisians**
- **Cllr Read to submit mandate signed by Cllr Cross to Barclays**

21 Policies for review

- **Data Protection Policy**
- **Internet Banking Policy**
- **Health & Safety Policy**

- **Transparency Code**

The above policies were sent to Cllrs in advance of the meeting.
After discussing, all the policies above were approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to update and publish each policy

22 Risk Assessment

Sent to Cllrs in advance of the meeting.
Approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to update and publish

23 Asset Register

Sent to Cllrs in advance of the meeting.
Approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to update and publish

24 Financial Regulations

Sent to Cllrs in advance of the meeting.
Approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to update and publish

25 Standing Orders

Sent to Cllrs in advance of the meeting.
Approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to update and publish

26 Internal Controls

- **Internal Control and Internal Audit Effectiveness Review**
- **Internal Control Statement Approval**

Sent to Cllrs in advance of the meeting.

Approved unanimously. It was confirmed the Council's Internal Control and Internal Audit system had been reviewed as adequate and satisfactory.

ACTION – Chair and Clerk/RFO to sign, and Clerk to update and publish

27 Training

Any bookings now need to be made by the Clerk through the online Portal.

28 Matters for future consideration

None.

29 The date of the next Meeting will be Thursday 21st April 2022 at 6:30pm Mellis Memorial Hall.

Meeting closed at 9:06pm

District Councillor's Report for Gisleingham Ward: Mellis, Gisleingham, Thornham, Wortham & Burgate, Wickham Skeith Parish Councils

March 2022

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| A Peer Review of Mid Suffolk's Planning Committee processes | Waiting for the report. |
| Neighbourhood Plans | MSDC formally adopted the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan as part of its Development Plan after after Needham Market residents voted overwhelmingly in favour of the plan. The document carries statutory weight and will be used to inform planning decisions. This referendum comes at a time when the power of Neighbourhood Plans are being highlighted in other local news. |
| Thurston Judicial Review | Thurston Parish Council lodged a judicial review into the granting of planning permission for 210 new homes off Beyton Road. The allegation was that the planning committee had been wrongly advised on the weight given to the Neighbourhood Plan, which had not allocated that site for development. Thurston PC appealed against this development that had been passed on one vote. The appeal has been allowed and the decision overturned. The Judge found that the committee members had been wrongly advised regarding the weight that should be attached to a made neighbourhood plan that included housing allocations. |
| Thurston by-election | Following the departure of Cllr Wendy Turner there was a by-election for a new district councillor for the Thurston Ward. Green party candidate Austin Davies was elected and MSDC remains balanced with 17 members in each of the two groups. |
| Switch onto a new Digital Skills Programme for businesses | <p>Business owners in Babergh and Mid Suffolk who want to learn new or improve their digital skills can now access free courses as part of a new business support programme.</p> <p>The Digital Skills Programme is part of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils post-covid recovery strategy and is being run by MENTA using funding from Suffolk Inclusive Growth Investment Fund (SIGIF).</p> <p>The workshops, which are held virtually, are free to attend and cover topics such as online security, digital and social media marketing, e-commerce, and information management.</p> <p>Following the launch of the Virtual High Street in 2020, many businesses reported wanting to improve their digital skills to help their business engage with current and potential customers, but they needed support to help them understand which platforms they should be using and how to make them work for their business.</p> <p>The Digital Skills Programme was initially launched for businesses on the Virtual High Street and is now open to all businesses in the districts.</p> <p>In addition to the Digital Skills Programme, the recovery programme also includes the Virtual High Street, which operates in all five key towns and surrounding areas across Babergh and Mid Suffolk as well as the Innovate Local scheme.</p> <p>Innovate Local is supporting start-up businesses with access to a pitch at Stowmarket and Hadleigh markets while the Innovation Hubs will offer micro businesses start up support with desk space and business mentoring in Sudbury and Eye when they open later this year.</p> |

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| <p>Innovations Lab, Stowmarket</p> | <p>At a Presentation at The Mix, Stowmarket on 11th February I was again impressed by the work carried out at the Innovations Lab.</p> <p>Innovation Labs is an innovation hub, business hub and coworking space, strategically located within the heart of Stowmarket. Its aim is to foster: innovation, entrepreneurship, business growth and the</p> |
| | <p>development of an AI Centre of Excellence. This initiative is backed by Mid Suffolk District Council and will form the focal point for developing Stowmarket’s world leading cluster of technology and manufacturing companies</p> <p>More to be found here: https://innovationlabsstowmarket.com/#about_section</p> |
| <p>Mid Suffolk District Council Five-Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement 2021</p> | <p>The NPPF – National Planning Framework requires LPAs to prepare and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years’ worth of housing. NPPF requires an additional buffer should be added to the five-year requirement. In the case of MSDC this is 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land.</p> <p>The Council’s Local Housing Need figure is calculated by the government using the ‘Standard Method’ set out in the PPG.</p> <p>From 2017 to 2020 MSDC delivered 1567 dwellings against a target of 1524 dwellings.</p> <p>The Standard Method figure for Mid Suffolk district – with a 2021 base date – is 513 dwellings per annum (‘dpa’). The basic five-year requirement is therefore 2,565 units.</p> <p>The Council has undertaken a thorough review of policy, guidance, and appeal precedent to determine the ‘deliverability’ of its sites.</p> <p>MSDC considers it can demonstrate a ‘deliverable’ supply of 5,319 units across the five-year period. This includes a windfall allowance of 70 dpa in years four and five The Council’s five-year housing land supply position The Council therefore considers it can demonstrate 9.54 years supply.</p> |
| <p>Biodiversity Officer</p> | <p>A biodiversity officer has been appointed, joining us in April, and will be overseeing the parish tree and wildflower scheme over the next 2 years. The officer will likely need to carry out a second resident consultation for the proposed wildflower scheme on ‘the green’ at St Mary’s Close, Offton. There are a number of other parishes looking to create wildflower meadows but as yet there has been no local consultation by the parishes, or the schemes are at an early stages. Also, our ‘cut and collect’ mower has been purchased which will help us to improve conditions for wildflowers on council-owned land and verges.</p> |
| <p>Council Tax</p> | <p>Council tax is to remain at the same rate so annual Mid Suffolk proportion of the council tax bill for a Band D property be £171.59.</p> |

The Green and Liberal Democrat Group put forward an amendment to the budget. The proposal was that Mid Suffolk engage in a programme to provide two zero emission minibuses (electric) to operate on a network of routes to link communities together and to service critical locations. We will establish scheduled low cost or free services to complement and enhance demand responsive services provided by BSEVC (<https://www.bsevc.co.uk/>). The Council will work with the County and BSEVC or another appropriate operator to establish a service similar to the Counties Katch service (<https://www.katchlift.com/>). Knowledge will be drawn from that service and established community bus services to ensure that accurate cost estimates and effective service parameters can be established. This amendment was accepted and the budget passed almost unanimously.

More contentious was the HRA account which saw the following rent increase forced through by the conservative administration:

3.2 That the CPI + 1% increase of 4.1% in Council House rents, equivalent to an average rent increase of £3.42 a week for social rents and £4.99 a week for affordable rents be implemented.

Less controversial was: *3.7 That in principle, Right to Buy (RTB) receipts should be retained to enable continued development and acquisition of new council dwellings.*

**Full Council Meeting
24th Feb.**

MSDC Councillor Rowland Warboys rowland.warboys@midsuffolk.gov.uk Tel. 01379 783412 Mobile: 07484 186121

County Councillor Report



Suffolk
County Council

March 2022

Mellis Parish Council

Councillor Jessica Fleming, Hartismere Division, Suffolk

Jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07714-597980 Twitter: @jesstfleming

Ukraine - Information on Suffolk's support for Ukrainian refugees is available on [Suffolk County Council's website](#), including links for The Red Cross Ukraine Crisis Appeal.

Bird Flu - The UK's Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer has confirmed highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 at four sites, including Westhorpe, Redgrave, Botesdale and Thelnetham (also affects S. Norfolk). A 3km Protection Zone and a 10km Surveillance Zone are in place around each. Refer

to: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1060465/pz-sz-declaration-market-weston-west-suffolk-220312.pdf

Council's 2022-23 Budget Passed – SCC approved its budget for 2022-23 alongside a first time Net Zero carbon budget on 17 February, with focus on children's services and adult care. Total expenditure will rise by 4.5% (from £598.2m to £625.4m) with a 1.99% increase in council tax, a further 1.00% from the Adult Care Precept.

The Queen's Jubilee - Plans for a Festival of Suffolk with many community events can be found at: www.festivalofsuffolk.org/.

A Suffolk wide Jubilee Lunch is planned on Sunday 5 June and street parties are encouraged. SCC will waive fees for road closures and offer free assistance with traffic management, apply by Sunday 27 March.

www.suffolk.gov.uk/PlatinumJubileeEvent

The council is supporting the Queen's Green Canopy project and aims to plant about 775,000 new trees – one for each resident. Visit suffolk-lieutenancy.org.uk/queens-green-canopy/ to participate.

Women's Tour Cycle Race - Suffolk will host the finish of Stage 1 of the 2022 UCI Women's Tour, which will start in Colchester and finish in Bury St Edmunds on Monday 6th June. The route in Suffolk will be revealed in the coming weeks when it has been finally agreed and ratified by organisers.

Sunnica Solar Farm Project in West Suffolk/ Cambridgeshire – Cabinet has found that plans for this 2,792-acre 500-MW scheme are unacceptable in their current form and assessments inadequate. A link to the papers can be found [on the committee minutes page](#). Plans to build the Sunnica solar farm are currently with the Planning Inspectorate for examination

Fostering and Adoption - Suffolk's service currently has over 850 children in care and with more entering every year, the need for foster carers and adoptive parents to come forward has never been greater. These children need someone who can understand what they have been through, look at the world through their eyes and provide warmth, consistency and emotional support.

To find out more about fostering or adopting in Suffolk, visit: www.suffolk.gov.uk/fosteringandadoption or call 01473 264800.

