

MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 21st APRIL 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 17th March 2022 are a true and correct record.

Cllr Read requested the following amendments:

17 Newsteads Land – correction to last sentence; 'Cllrs agreed unanimously for the Clerk to instruct the contractor to proceed; FR 10.3 states an officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers. The work required to Newsteads Land is specialist and it has not been possible to find anyone else willing to undertake the works required'.

20 Finance – the last action point should read 'Cllr Cross to submit signed mandate to Barclays' The minutes for 17th March 2022 were approved unanimously to include the above corrections.

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.

CC Cllr Fleming read her report, and in addition highlighted the Public Consultation on Anglia Green Energy Enablement (GREEN) Project running from 21st April – 16th June 2022. The proposed route is just west of Mellis, and full information is available at [East Anglia GREEN | National Grid ET](#).

CC Cllr Fleming also said that she would like to know if any councillors or residents have knowledge of the condition of the old railway line route between Mellis and Yaxley/Eye. The possibility of using some or all of the old rail line has been raised in relation to the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk.

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.

Housing – Cllr Cross asked whether there were measures in place to ensure affordability for the families who had seen an increase to their rent. DC Cllr Warboys confirmed that affordability and arrears were being closely monitored.

DC Cllr Warboys advised MSDC is preparing a parking strategy looking at council car parks and on street parking which CC Cllr Fleming will have more information on in due course. CC Cllr Fleming confirmed there will be meetings in Eye, Stowmarket and Needham Market in the coming weeks to gather feedback from the Town Councils. There will be an opportunity for input from Mellis, particularly in view of the parking issues outside the school, when the consultation starts at parish level.

7:32pm CC Cllr Fleming left the meeting.

7 Public Participation Session (10 minutes set aside)

No members of the public present.

8 Chair's Report

All covered elsewhere on the agenda.

9 Clerk/RFO's Report

- Receipts and payments 01/04/21-24/02/22 were sent to councillors prior to the meeting.
- A Neighbourhood CIL payment advice of £3,170.27 for April 2022 has been received.
- Grass protection matting outside Mellis Primary School – Suffolk Wildlife Trust have confirmed they are happy to receive a proposal for formal consideration to help protect the Common from cars parking on the road outside the school at drop off and collection times. They agree however that this would be a short-term solution only. To be considered as a future agenda item alongside the traffic concerns in the village.
- Footpaths – the Area Rights of Way Manager at SCC has replied advising they are currently working on a project to consolidate the definitive footpath map. Mellis sits within the former rural district of Hartismere which is currently being consolidated, therefore the definitive map will be updated to include all of the modern background mapping. In the meantime, the AROW Manager will put together a digitised map which will be much clearer than the current one available. The QR codes for the footpaths have been requested.
- New dog bins – MSDC have added the locations for the 2 new dog bins to their work schedule. They will also provide the posts and fixings free of charge as part of the Welcome Back Funding scheme.
- Public Consultation on Anglia Green Energy Enablement (GREEN) Project, (as already mentioned by CC Cllr Fleming agenda item 5), is running from 21st April – 16th June 2022. The proposed route is just west of Mellis, full information is available at [East Anglia GREEN | National Grid ET](#). This will be included on the next agenda for further discussion.
- Natural Flood and Water Quality Management in the River Waveney Catchment – CC Cllr Fleming has advised there is a conference in Diss on 29th April 2022 if councillors wish to attend. Also, at the next meeting of the Suffolk Flood Risk Scrutiny Committee on 17th May 2022, they will examine the 'Quality of Suffolk's Rivers and Coastal Waters'. Anglian Water and the Environment Agency will be in attendance to discuss, in particular, the safety of waters for swimming and bathing and some of the causes of (and remedies for) water pollution. CC Cllr Fleming has invited councillors to email any comments or notes relevant to this topic they would like considered.

- Messenger Publication - The Clerk asked councillors if she should look at producing an advert for the Messenger regarding the current councillor vacancies. Councillors agreed unanimously and asked the Clerk to create a draft document to be approved by email before being submitted.

ACTION

- **Clerk to forward footpath map to councillors once received**
- **Clerk to include Anglia Green Energy Enablement (GREEN) Project on May agenda**
- **Suffolk Flood Risk Scrutiny Committee meeting - Councillors to email any comments or notes to CC Cllr Fleming prior to 29th May 2022**
- **Clerk to produce draft advert for the Messenger to email to councillors for approval**

10 Planning

- **DC/22/01393 – Earlsford House, Earlsford Road, Mellis, IP23 8DY**

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

ACTION – Clerk to add no objection comment to planning portal

11 Tree Warden’s Report

Cllr Read reported on behalf of Cllr Paterson that a resident has raised concerns that some of the trees recently planted as part of the MSDC tree planting initiative, have prevented access to a water stop cock.

ACTION – Cllr Paterson to investigate

12 Member’s consent to receive agendas by email

Cllr Read, Cllr Barr, and Cllr Cross confirmed their permission to receive agendas (summons) electronically via email. Cllr Paterson provided his consent by email prior to the meeting.

13 Community Governance Review

Mid Suffolk District Council are carrying out a Community Governance Review of Parishes, Town Councils and Unparished areas.

The first stage of the review process will be a consultation and the District Council will be inviting residents and other interested persons or organisations to submit their views. The deadline for submissions to the first stage of the review is Friday 27 May 2022.

Councillors discussed the review and felt that Mellis has a strong individual identity, partly due to the Common, and also the parish’s natural boundaries. Councillors agreed to discuss the review further at the next meeting, prior to the first stage submission deadline.

ACTION - Clerk to include on the May agenda and publish the Notice of Review document on the website and noticeboard.

14 Traffic/speeding concerns within the village including traffic survey results

The results of the traffic survey conducted in conjunction with Yaxley PC have been received and forwarded to councillors. The Clerk will request a previous survey for comparison. The Clerk has emailed Cllr David Burn, and Suffolk Highways Speed and Safety Management Team, as per the 21st March 2022 minutes, and is awaiting a reply.

ACTION - Clerk to ask Yaxley PC if they can share details of previous traffic surveys.

15 Memorial Hall car park – anti-social behaviour/minor vandalism

The clerk is waiting for a report from a local contractor who has agreed to conduct an initial site visit, to look at installing a sensor light directed on the car park to deter young people using it as a gathering place in the evenings.

ACTION – Clerk to forward report to councillors once received

16 Queen’s Platinum Jubilee 2022

- **Update on arrangements**

The Railway Tavern have confirmed they will be open on Sunday 5th June 2022 but for drinks only, not food. The Clerk has contacted 4 mobile caterers but only 2 were available for the Sunday. After discussing councillors agreed to book their preferred choice and discussed ideas to subsidise the food for residents attending the event; to be considered further. It was agreed to hold a fancy-dress competition, investigate someone to do face painting, and look at organising children’s games. A band to play during the afternoon is yet to be arranged, and the Clerk will liaise with the pub to see if they are arranging music. It was agreed to book the Memorial Hall for the afternoon.

Councillors discussed commemorative items and agreed that they would like to look at commissioning an item for the village as a whole, such as a plaque or a bench, and asked the Clerk to investigate further.

- **Update on beacon**

The local craftsman contacted by Cllr Paterson and Cllr Read has confirmed he can make a gas-powered brazier style beacon for approximately £800.00. This is something that would be installed permanently as a village feature to be used by residents to celebrate/commemorate events, ie weddings, birthdays, as well as village events. Suffolk Wildlife Trust’s Head of Property and Projects has confirmed that it could be installed in the area by the village sign. This is the only craftsman contacted who has been able to help with the commissioning of such a unique item, and in time for Jubilee weekend. Councillors agreed unanimously to go ahead with beacon, up to a price of £850.00, as the £800.00 cost given was an estimate.

ACTION

- **Clerk to confirm booking with caterers**
- **Clerk to book Memorial Hall for Sunday 5th June 2022 PM**
- **Clerk to look at music for Sunday 5th June 2022 PM**
- **Clerk to look at commemorative items**
- **Clerk/Cllr Cross to action beacon as above**

Cllr Read proposed moving to agenda item 19 before DC Cllr Warboys left the meeting. Agreed unanimously.

(19) Newsteads Land

The land has now been cleared by the contractor, with 4 trees being saved and remaining. The ditch and pond still need to be cleared of debris. Now clear the area is much larger than it previously appeared and there is enough space to plant a new woodland area or orchard. Councillors discussed future use of the land and decided to look at creating a space that can be used by the community as a park area/well-being area, especially with it being situated adjacent to the school. It would also be a good location for a commemorative bench should the council decide to commission one for the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. Before progressing further, Cllr Read asked the Clerk to find out if CIL funds could be used for such a project in time for the next meeting. DC Cllr Warboys advised that there is a new MSDC Biodiversity Officer who might be able to help as well. He will forward contact details.

ACTION – Clerk to speak to MSDC Infrastructure Team as above and contact the Biodiversity Officer

8:52pm DC Cllr Warboys left the meeting

17 Mellis Memorial Hall Committee meeting – update from Cllr Cross

Cllr Cross attended the Memorial Hall Committee meeting on Thursday 7th April 2022. He reported the Committee were very happy that the council is planning to install sensor lighting to address the anti-social behaviour in the car park. Cllr Cross suggested investigating a CCTV camera in

addition to the sensor light but committee members were concerned about the running costs. Committee members were keen to get involved with plans for the Queens Platinum Jubilee weekend so Cllr Cross and the Clerk will liaise with them prior to the May council meeting. The committee only meet quarterly so Cllr Cross has agreed to be the Parish Council's representative.

ACTION – Clerk/Cllr Cross to liaise with Memorial Hall Committee regarding the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations

18 Mellis Community Support Fund

To be left as an agenda item for discussion at the next meeting.

19 Newsteads Land

Discussed as above.

20 Village Improvements

Deferred to next meeting.

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

The Annual Parish Council Meeting will be held on Thursday 19th May 2022 at 6:30pm, followed directly by the Annual Parish (Village) Meeting, with refreshments to conclude. Reports will be invited for the Annual Parish (Village) Meeting from the Churchwarden, the school, the farmers market, the Railway Tavern, and the Memorial Hall.

ACTION – Clerk to invite reports from village organisations as above.

22 Finance

i) Confirmation of Barclays bank account balance

The Barclays bank account balance of 24th March 2022 £34,269.52.

ii) Review and authorisation of payments presented:

Admin payment (Clerk's salary including holiday pay and backdated pay rise in line with NALC pay scales 2021/22 announced in March 2022) - **£640.50**

HMRC (NIC contribution) - **£87.00**

Expenses (Clerk mileage) - **£10.26**

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

JC's Cleaning Services (bus shelter) - **£18.00**

SALC (Annual membership) - **£266.26**

Gislingham PC (CiLCA share) - **£29.72**

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 Clerk/RFO has telephoned HMRC regarding a tax refund due to the PC in relation to salary paid to the Clerk October 2021, as the refund has not been received yet. HMRC confirmed they have now raised the refund manually and it will be paid directly into the council's bank account by 25th May 2022. There are three unbanked cheques to HMRC for NI which the Clerk queried at the same time. HMRC advised that taking the refund due into account, there are no NI contributions due, so the cheques have not been presented. This does not match the council's records as per the Basic HMRC PAYE tools, so the Clerk has written to HMRC with copies of the payroll, for their further advice.

ACTION

- **Cllr Read and Cllr Barr to pay agreed payments via online banking (dual authorisation)**
- **Cllr Read/Clerk to speak to the Mellisians**
- **Clerk to follow up letter to HMRC**

23 Training

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

24 Matters for future consideration

None

25 The date of the Annual Parish Council Meeting will be Thursday 19th May 2022 at 6:30pm in Mellis Memorial Hall, followed immediately by the Annual Parish (Village) Meeting.

Meeting closed at 9:00pm