

# MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Ms Jane Challis  
75 Shelfanger Road  
Diss, IP22 4EH  
Tel: 07796 410694  
Email: mellisparishcouncil@gmail.com

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING of MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 30<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2023 @ 6:30PM IN MELLIS MEMORIAL HALL

**Present:** Cllr L Read, Cllr A Cross, Cllr L Farley, Cllr Paterson  
CC Cllr Fleming, Clerk – J Challis

**Apologies:** None received.

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

Cllr Read welcomed everyone to the meeting, and noted apologies received from DC Cllr Warboys.

### 2 To receive Declarations of Interest on agenda items

None received.

### 3 To consider requests for Dispensations on agenda items

None received.

### 4 To resolve the draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023 are a true and correct record.

The minutes for the Parish Council meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023 were approved unanimously.

### 5 Report from County Councillor

CC Cllr Fleming's report can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes. Cllr Read said it was disappointing that a representative from Suffolk County Council Highways did not attend the meeting with Cllr Fleming, Paul Ryle Headmaster, and himself, on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 to discuss the congestion issues caused at school drop off and collection times. Cllr Cross said lorries are also still an issue and it was agreed to look into the possibility of signage to deter HGVs.

CC Cllr Fleming commented that the night lighting on the substation in Yaxley is too bright, and suggested the PC contact MSDC.

**ACTION – Clerk to look at HGV signage as above. Clerk to contact MSDC regarding night lighting at the substation, and see if details of the contact from Conrad Energy can be found.**

Cllr Read thanked Cllr Fleming for her report.  
7:03pm CC Cllr Fleming left the meeting.

### 6 Report from District Councillor

DC Cllr Warboy's report can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

## **7 Public Participation Session (10 minutes set aside)**

No members of the public present.

## **8 Chair's Report**

- Cllr Read has received a comment from a resident that the original noticeboard is looking very tatty. Cllr Cross volunteered to have a look at it and carry out any repairs necessary. Cllr Farley asked if the one on Earlsford needs attention too, but Cllr Read said he checks it regularly and it does not need any maintenance at the moment.
- The Churchwarden has asked for feedback on the qualities councillors would value in their next vicar.

## **9 Clerk/RFO's Report**

- MSDC have confirmed the Pride in Your Place grant can be used for the new Carnser sign.
- The PCC has provided invoices for the electricity usage of the church from January to September 2023. Once the invoices for October to December 2023 are available, arrangements will be made to award the grant agreed at the 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023 meeting. The award was agreed up to a maximum of £900.00, and is not an ongoing annual arrangement. Any future donation requests from the PCC will be considered on an individual basis.
- NALC have advised that the LGA pay award 2023/24 has been agreed, and is backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. Full details have been emailed to councillors.
- An email has been received from a resident regarding maintenance of the ditches on Earlsford Road. Discussed under agenda item 14.
- MSDC have sent notice of Adoption of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan – Part 1 2018-2037. Full details emailed to councillors. Cllr Cross suggested holding an open day to make the details available to residents. Other village organisations could be invited to attend as well. The Clerk said details of the BMSDC Joint Local Plan could also be shared at the annual Village Meeting. Cllr Farley suggested organising a calendar of events for 2024.
- BMSDC are launching a new winter grant of between £500-2,500.00, to tackle social isolation called 'Living well in winter grant'. It has been set up to help local voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise organisations provide new, accessible spaces and activities for people to enjoy, or expand upon existing projects: [Mid Suffolk District Council Funding - Mid Suffolk District Council - Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils - Working Together](#)
- MSDC have provided an update on the Government's flood support payment: [Financial aid for flood-affected properties in Suffolk imminent as number of reports hits 750 - Mid Suffolk District Council - Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils - Working Together](#). All residents and businesses who registered a flood on the Suffolk County Council reporting tool are in the process of being contacted. [Suffolk County Council - ReportIT](#)
- Cosy Home initiative: MSDC has launched a new £2 million initiative offering free home insulation upgrades. The District Council is encouraging any resident that meets the criteria to express an interest. [Mid Suffolk Cosy Homes - Mid Suffolk District Council - Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils - Working Together](#).

## **10 Tree Warden's Report**

Nothing to report.

## **11 Footpath Warden's Report**

Cllr Cross and Cllr Farley reported that 8-10 new footpath signs and posts are still required. These will be chased up again with SCC. The Clerk has asked SCC Area Rights of Way Manager for details of the footpaths SCC are responsible for cutting again.

## 12 Planning

To Receive an Update on:

- DC/22/2190/HYB – Land at Shepherds Grove, Bury Road, Stanton, Suffolk - **AWAITING DECISION.**
- DC/23/03439 Proposal: Approval of Details reserved by Requirement 22 (Amendments to Approved Details) of the pursuant to The Progress Power (Gas Fired Power Station) Order 2015 -The submission concerns six requested alterations: 1. Gas Receiving and Metering Station (GRMS); increase in height from 5m to 6m (with a single item up to 7m) and minor increase in length; 2. Exhaust Stack; increase in width and length for lower section of stack (up to 16.5m above datum); 3. Portable Control Container (PCC); increase in width and length; 4. Fin/Fan cooler; increase in width and length; 5. Combined Water Storage tank and Fire Water Storage Tank; increase in diameter and height; 6 Modifications to the cross-section of the landscaping earth berms and addition of a berm on the Eastern side of the site Location: Progress Power, Potash Lane, Eye, Suffolk IP23 7HE – **GRANTED**
- DC/23/04261 – APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION WITHOUT COMPLIANCE OF CONDITION (S) – Proposal: Application under Section 73 of The Town and Country Planning Act for DC/23/00942, 4no terraced town houses, for the variation of Condition 2 (Approved plans and documents). Location: Land Lying to the North of the Railway Public House, The Common, Mellis, IP23 8DU – **WITHDRAWN**

## 13 National Grid Norwich to Tilbury update

Update received with CC Cllr Fleming's report:

**Pylons Project and Grid Reinforcement** – Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex County Councils have jointly commissioned Hiorns Smart Energy Networks to prepare an independent report into the Norwich to Tilbury project. Leaders of the three councils are asking National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) and the electricity system planner, National Grid Electricity System Operator (NGESO) to consider the findings. The final report is available to read in full [here](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/n2t-the-hiorns-report.pdf) or <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/n2t-the-hiorns-report.pdf>

## 14 Response to flooding in the village

Councillors discussed the recent flooding in the village, noting the email received from a resident regarding maintenance of the ditches on Earlsford Road, and the subsequent standing water on the road. Cllr Cross suggested the PC write to local landowners regarding their responsibility to ensure the ditches they own are maintained and cleared. Cllr Farley said it would be a good idea to conduct a survey to ascertain the locations of drainage issues. It was agreed that Cllr Cross will speak to local landowners before the PC takes the more formal step of writing to them, and that the Clerk will look into a water/drainage survey, starting with asking SCC if this is something they would be able to provide.

**ACTION – Cllr Cross/Clerk as above.**

## 15 Rural Coffee Caravan, including approval of expenditure to hire the Memorial Hall for future dates

Cllr Cross reported that the first meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 was very successful, and he was impressed with the amount of information and advice available. After discussing, it was agreed the PC will pay for hire of the Memorial Hall for 6 more meetings. Each meeting will require use of the Hall for two hours, plus set up and take down time.

Proposed by Cllr Cross, seconded by Cllr Read and approved unanimously. The Clerk will liaise with the Rural Coffee Caravan and the Memorial Hall to arrange the bookings, and request the invoices are sent directly to the PC.

**ACTION – Clerk as above.**

## 16 To discuss traffic calming measure in the village and outside the school

Discussed within CC Cllr Fleming's report (agenda item 5).

## **17 Newsteads Land including approval of expenditure, and Orchard Application update**

Richard Parmee, MSDC Biodiversity Manager, met with Cllr Paterson and the Clerk on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023 to see progress of Newsteads Land. He was very impressed with the work carried out since his first visit on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2022. He agreed to provide 30m of hedging plants for the fence line by the BT building, under MSDC's free trees, hedging and wildflowers scheme, and also a selection of 2m silver birch trees. There may be some heritage fruit trees available if any are required in addition to the ones being provided by the Orchard Project.

Cllr Farley attended the second online Orchard Project session on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023. They have confirmed that the planting pack the PC will receive includes fruit trees and accessories up to a total value of £500. Richard Parmee has recommended an online supplier and the Orchard Project have confirmed they are happy for the order to be placed with them. They have requested details of the trees requested by 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023, and will place the order on the PC's behalf. Cllr Farley and Cllr Paterson will compile a list of the trees required and send to the Orchard Project by the cut off date.

Cllr Cross and Cllr Paterson will arrange for the new gates to be installed once they are ready. It was also agreed to meet at Newsteads Land tomorrow to decide the best way to proceed with the pathways.

## **18 Village Gateways**

No update.

## **19 Defibrillator**

Cllr Read reported that new pads are required, and need to be ordered and logged with the National Defibrillator database before January 2024, at a cost of £155.00. The volunteer who looks after the defibrillator has arranged to purchase the pads, and submitted an expenses form for payment upon approval from the PC.

Approval proposed by Cllr Cross, seconded by Cllr Paterson and approved unanimously.

## **20 Carnser signage update**

Cllr Paterson reported that the sign has been ordered.

## **21 To discuss the wellhead project**

Cllr Paterson has spoken to the landowner, who is very keen to reinstate the project and has given permission to proceed. The PC already has drawings for the proposed plans, and councillors will look for any photographs of the original wellhead, when they meet to sort through the history of Mellis documents. Cllr Read will start to gather quotations for the work required.

**ACTION – Cllr Read/all councillors as above**

## **22 To consider phone box maintenance/improvements**

Deferred to next meeting.

## **23 To discuss digitisation of History of Mellis, and approve expenditure for hire of Memorial Hall**

It was agreed to meet on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2023, and book the Memorial Hall for 3 hours to sort through the photographs and documents. Approval of expenditure to hire the hall proposed by Cllr Cross, seconded by Cllr Farley and approved unanimously.

## 24 To consider and approve the Budget 2024/25

The draft budget 2024/25 was prepared by the Clerk and shared with councillors. After discussing, approval was proposed by Cllr Farley. Seconded by Cllr Paterson and approved unanimously.

**ACTION – Clerk to update and publish.**

## 25 Finance

A list of payments and receipts, expenditure against the budget, and bank reconciliation to 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023 were sent to councillors prior to the meeting.  
Cllr Cross conducted an internal audit of accounts to September 2023, confirming them to be in order.

### i) Confirmation of Barclays bank account balance

The Barclays bank account balance as of **22<sup>nd</sup> October 2023 - £34,373.06**

### ii) Review and authorisation of payments presented:

1	J. Challis	Clerk Admin November, including back dated LGA pay increase.	£663.55
2	J. Challis	Expenses – mileage	£17.82
3	Memorial Hall	November hire, October hire underpayment, Rural Coffee Caravan meeting	£56.00
4	L. Curtis	Bus shelter	£18.00
5	A. Cross expenses	Wire for Newsteads Land	£41.90
6	121 Computer Services	Annual antivirus for PC laptop	£29.99
7	L. Hall expenses	Defibrillator pads	£154.80
8	G. Paterson expenses	Paint for Newsteads Land	£89.00

Cllr Read proposed approval of all payments above; seconded by Cllr Farley and approved unanimously, with one abstention against A. Cross expenses, and one abstention against G. Paterson expenses.

### iii) Barclays bank account reclassification:

Ongoing; Cllr Read asked the Clerk to call Barclays Business Team again as the issue has still not been resolved.

### ACTION

- **Cllr Read and Cllr Cross to pay agreed payments above via online banking (dual authorisation).**
- **Clerk as above.**

## 26 Matters for future consideration

- Phone box improvements/maintenance
- Village calendar of events 2024

## 27 The date of the next Parish Council Meeting is Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 6:30pm in the Memorial Hall

Due to there being no meeting in December 2023, it was agreed unanimously that all payments will be approved by email (quorate number required), and the details included in the January 2024 minutes.

Meeting close at 9:29pm.

### Mellis Parish Council, November 2023

Councillor Jessica Fleming, Hartismere Division Tel. 07714-597980 [Jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk)

**Flood Recovery** – Suffolk Floods Team have issued a format for collecting local evidence following storms Babet and Kieran, if you have not received it please let me know. This will enable engineers to focus on trouble spots, actions and assess properties eligibility for grants to be administered through District Councils. Please refer to the following website: [Flood Recovery information for Suffolk - Suffolk County Council](#) and continue to report with photographs and relevant dates to: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/highway-maintenance/report-a-highways-issue>

**Highways and Mellis Primary School** – Cllr Laurie Read and I met with Headteacher Paul Ryle on 15<sup>th</sup> September to discuss traffic congestion associated with drop-off and collection times and other traffic matters. We agreed that the problem is complex and involves changing parental driving and parking habits; a separate but related issue is HGVs cutting through and factory shift traffic. We commended the work of Junior Road Safety Officers who are doing an excellent job all around.

**Reminder - Consultation on Suffolk Libraries** – a 13-week two-part consultation is open until **Friday 26 January 2024** to seek views on future library services. A competitive Tender Process will follow with a new contract awarded in November 2024. The three mobile library vehicles serve at least 500 stops across rural Suffolk each month and consideration needs to be given to their replacement. Outreach services include Pop-up Libraries and a home library service run by volunteers. Please do respond to this consultation if you value the current services or have ideas on how they might adapt: <https://www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/about/news/suffolk-county-councils-library-consultation-process>

**Pylons Project and Grid Reinforcement** – Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex County Councils have jointly commissioned Hiorns Smart Energy Networks to prepare an independent report into the Norwich to Tilbury project. Leaders of the three councils are asking National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) and the electricity system planner, National Grid Electricity System Operator (NGESO) to consider the findings. The final report is available to read in full [here](#) or <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/n2t-the-hiorns-report.pdf>

**Large Scale Solar Energy Developments** – SCC Cabinet Member Richard Rout has written to ministers objecting to the large land-take demanded by land based solar. Cllr Rout's letter can be found at: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/suffolk-cc-nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-very-large-scale-solar-farms-24-10-23-re-dacted.pdf>

An example of a potential large-scale array is the **Yaxley Green Energy Centre** about 450MW of PV Solar array and Battery storage. <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/14437282> (<https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/14437282>)

Other major solar proposals on land are coming forward which individually do not exceed the 50 MW threshold to be considered NSIPs, such as recently approved near Palgrave and pending near Wortham. As a result Suffolk and England are losing large areas of productive agricultural land which changes the rural landscape without the benefit of an overarching land use, food security or energy policy for guidance.

Please get in touch with me if you have questions or comments: [Jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk) Tel: 07714-597980  
Twitter: @jesstfleming