

MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Ms Jane Challis

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING of MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 28th NOVEMBER 2024 @ 6:30PM IN MELLIS MEMORIAL HALL

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

Apologies: Cllr Lockett

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

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

2 To receive Declarations of Interest on agenda items

Cllr Cross declared a non-pecuniary interest against agenda item 18, as a volunteer for the Rural Coffee Caravan.

3 To consider requests for Dispensations on agenda items

It was agreed unanimously with one abstention (Cllr Cross), for Cllr Cross to partake in discussing agenda item 18, but to refrain from voting.

4 To resolve the draft minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 18th October 2024 are a true and correct record

Cllr Farley requested one amendment; to include Drury Lane bridge under agenda item 13 for Highway repairs. The draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 18th October 2024 were approved unanimously, to include the above amendment.

5 Report from County Councillor

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

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 reported that he has received written confirmation from Barclays that there are no further issues with the Community Account.

9 Clerk/RFO's Report

- Richard Parmee, MSDC Biodiversity Manager, has advised that the 'free trees, hedging and wildflower scheme' will continue for 2025: <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/trees-and-wildflowers-scheme>.
- MSDC have advised that as part of the requirements under the Gambling Act 2005, they are carrying out their three yearly review of their Gambling policy. Details of the consultation which runs until 24th December 2024, have been sent to councillors.
- SALC have confirmed that the LGA pay award 2024/25 has been agreed. The increase is backdated to 1st April 2024.
- An email has been received from a resident regarding recent parking issues around the Memorial Hall during an event arranged by the primary school. The school has responded, addressing the issues to the Council's satisfaction.
- Suffolk County Council are reminding residents whose properties were affected by internal flooding as a result of Storm Babet, that applications for the £5,000.00 flood resilience grant from DEFRA, is open until the end of April 2025: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/property-flood-resilience-grant-scheme>.
- MSDC have shared details of their tree for life scheme, which runs until 10th January 2025. There is no direct link to the details, but more information is available on their Facebook page.
- An email has been received from the Chair of the Memorial Hall Committee regarding a donation request to help with recent unexpected expenditure. This will need to be a future agenda item as it was received too late to be included on this month's agenda.
- MSDC have shared details of their Pride in Your Place grant, which has been increased to £250.00-£5,000.00 per application: <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/community-funding>.
- MB Trees have contacted Cllr Read to say that they have been asked to carry out works to trees on the Common by Suffolk Wildlife Trust. The work requested is to address poor quality or dead trees near roads or public rights of way. MSDC have confirmed that due to the nature of the work they are happy for it to proceed without a planning application being submitted, so long as the parish council agrees. The email from MB Trees was received too late to be included as a separate agenda item, but councillors confirmed unanimously that they have no issues and do not require it to be carried over as a separate agenda item to the next meeting.

10 Field Yaxley – proposal for a battery storage system (BESS) on land to the south east of Yaxley Substation

Full details of the proposal are available online: <https://www.fieldyaxley.co.uk/>. A public consultation event is due to be held on the 5th December between 2-7pm, in Mellis Memorial Hall. Councillors discussed the proposal, commenting that whilst it purports to help in creating a greener and more stable grid, siting solar panels on commercial rooftops would be a more environmentally friendly option.

Cllr Read and Cllr Cross said they will attend the public consultation event and report back at the next meeting.

11 Planning

To Consider:

- DC/24/05112 – Application for works to trees in a Conservation Area – Fell 1 No. sycamore tree as too big for area, located in a ditch and overhanging shed. Elm Tree Stables, Thrandeston Road, Mellis, IP23 8DR.

After discussing councillors agreed they have no objection/comment against this application, but would like to make comment that the information and photographs within the application submitted were poor.

ACTION – Clerk to add comment to planning portal as above

To Receive an Update on:

- DC/24/04325 – Application for works to trees in a Conservation Area – All trees to be felled as per application form and plan and prune back branches of 1No Oak tree due to risk to buildings and of possible subsidence. The Old Parsonage, The Common, Mellis, IP23 8EE – **GRANTED.**

- DC/22/00416 – Application for Outline Planning Permission (All matters reserved) – Erection of petrol and electric charging facility with associated shop; roadside restaurant with drive through facility; E(g) (formerly B1) and B8 starter units; HGV lorry parking facility for rest area and drivers’ facilities as a phased development. Land Adjacent North Roundabout A140, Ipswich Road, Brome Part in the Parish Of Thrandeston, IP23 8AW – **Awaiting decision.**

12 Tree Warden’s Report

Nothing further to report.

13 Footpath Wardens’ Report

No updates to report.

14 To discuss clearance work required to pond next to Memorial Hall car park

It has been brought to the council’s attention, that the pond behind the hall may require clearance work due to the current shallow water level, and the impact on the drainage ditches it connects to, as well as the Memorial Hall’s septic system. This raises the issue of damage to any new surfacing laid in the car park, if work to the pond is not carried out prior to this. In addition, it appears that planning permission may be required if the car park surfacing is replaced with anything other than the current ecoblock.

Councillors discussed the issues, and the fact that the owner of the pond has not been identified on Land Registry documents. Therefore the three landowners bordering the pond, which includes the parish council, are liable to maintain it as a watercourse under riparian ownership.

After discussing further, it was agreed to write to the other two landowners explaining the situation, and the potential implications on the councils plans for improvements to the car park, for their initial feedback. It was also agreed to contact MSDC planning department to clarify if a planning application is required, and how it needs to be submitted if so. Cllr Cross will advise the contractor approved to carry out the work to the car park, that it needs to be put on hold until these issues have been addressed.

ACTION – Clerk/Cllr Cross as above.

15 To consider and approve quotations for new VAS device and village gateways.

The Clerk obtained three quotations for a new solar powered VAS device with battery backup, and data capture, plus posts for all three locations. Cllr Warboys has indicated that he may be able to contribute to the cost from his locality budget.

After discussing the quotations, it was agreed to proceed with the device from Message Makers, at a total cost of £3,391.54 plus VAT. Proposed by Cllr Read, seconded by Cllr Cross and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to confirm order with Message Makers and complete application for locality funding from Cllr Warboys.

The village gateways will be considered at a future meeting.

16 To consider ongoing maintenance work requirements for Mellis Garden (Newsteads Land)

Cllr Paterson confirmed that the one-off clearance work has now been carried out, and an invoice will be submitted to the council shortly by the contractor.

Cllr Read has taken delivery of the benches and will arrange to install them on the concrete slabs in the garden with Cllr Cross, ensuring they are secured correctly. Cllr Cross and Cllr Paterson will meet at the garden tomorrow to confirm the location for the benches.

Cllr Paterson has spoken to a gardener in Diss who may be able to carry out the on-going maintenance, and will report back at the next meeting.

ACTION – Cllr Cross/Cllr Read/Cllr Paterson as above.

17 To discuss and approve quotation to cut area around the goalposts and village sign

Cllr Cross reported that the main football pitch area will no longer be used. The football club has shut down and the old fixed goal posts will be dismantled and removed. The smaller moveable junior goal posts will remain. Quotations have been sought to cut this area and also the area around the village sign, however only one has been received, which is for the goal post area only. After discussing, Cllr Cross proposed proceeding with this quotation and including it as a new item for the budget. Seconded by Cllr Read, and approved unanimously. Cllr Paterson said he will ask the contractor in Diss if they can look at the area around the sign as well, when they provide a quotation for Mellis Garden.

ACTION – Clerk/Cllr Cross to arrange for contractor to proceed with cutting of goal post area, as above. Cllr Paterson to speak to gardener as above.

18 Rural Coffee Caravan – to discuss ongoing support

Current support will run out after the Rural Coffee Caravan’s meeting in January 2025. Cllr Cross reported that the last few meetings have been very well attended with at least 20 people from Mellis, and also nearby parishes. Cllr Cross also highlighted their work with men’s health charity, the Men’s Shed. After discussing it was agreed to continue the council’s support by paying for a further 12 meetings at the Memorial Hall. Proposed by Cllr Farley, seconded by Cllr Paterson and approved unanimously with one abstention (Cllr Cross having previously declared a non-pecuniary interest against this item).

ACTION – Clerk to confirm ongoing support with the Rural Coffee Caravan as above, also advising the Memorial Hall Booking Clerk for invoicing purposes.

19 To consider and approve Budget 2025/26

Prepared by the Clerk and shared with councillors. After discussing, Cllr Cross proposed approval of the draft Budget 2025/26. Seconded by Cllr Paterson and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to update and publish.

20 Finance

A list of payments and receipts, expenditure against the budget, and bank reconciliation to 24th September Barclays bank account balance as of 24th October 2024 - **£29,698.67**

ii) Review and authorisation of payments presented:

1	J. Challis	Clerk Admin November, incl. LGA back-dated pay award @ 0.63p p/hr.	£878.61
2	J. Challis	Expenses – mileage October meeting	£5.94
3	L. Curtis	Bus shelter cleaning	£18.00
5	Memorial Hall	November hire	£30.00
6	Memorial Hall	Rural Coffee Caravan November hire	£20.00
7	Mellis PCC	Donation towards utilities	£627.86

Cllr Paterson proposed approval of all payments above; seconded by Cllr Farley and approved unanimously.

ACTION

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

21 Matters for future consideration

- Wellhead Project
- Traffic/speeding concerns within Mellis
- Phone box-stained glass repairs
- Digitisation of the History of Mellis
- Printing of more Common leaflets for new residents

- Electric vehicle charging points outside the Memorial Hall
- Precept request 2025/26

22 The date of the meeting is Thursday 16th January 2025 at 6:30pm in Mellis Memorial Hall.

Meeting close at 8:49pm.