

MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Ms Jane Challis

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING of MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 19th FEBRUARY 2026, AT 6:30PM IN MELLIS MEMORIAL HALL

Present: Cllr L Read, Cllr A Cross, Cllr L Farley, Cllr Paterson
Clerk – J Challis, DC Cllr Warboys, 1 member of the public

Apologies: None.

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.

4 To resolve the draft minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 22nd January 2026 are a true and correct record

Item 9: Cllr Read requested a spelling correction; amendable needs to be changed to amenable. The draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 22nd January 2026 were approved unanimously, taking into account the above amendment.

5 Reports from County Councillor and District Councillor

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

No report received from Cllr Fleming.

Cllr Read thanked Cllr Warboys.

6 Public Participation Session (10 minutes set aside)

No participation.

7 Chair's Report

- Cllr Read reported that he was disappointed to arrive at the Eye Grid Stability Community Forum meeting in Yaxley on 11th February, only to find it had been cancelled. The Clerk will contact Nikki Berry, Eye Synchronous Condenser Community Forum Secretariat, to find out why the meeting was cancelled, and whether it has been rearranged.
- VAS (vehicle activated speed) device installation: Cllr Warboys has met with the new Highways Officer covering this area, and will share her contact details for the PC to liaise with her directly, to arrange for the posts to be installed as soon as possible.

8 Clerk/RFO's Report

- Memorial Hall car park: Cllr Cross is due to meet with the contractor to assess the current condition of the car park, to see if any updates to the quotation are required.
- Dawn Wnowski, MSDC Emergency Planning Support Officer will be now attending the 26th April meeting.
- Charlie Poulter of Transport Made Simple, has advised that he would support the PC, if it were to apply for funding from Suffolk County council's new Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), for a replacement bus shelter. He has also advised that if Mellis would like to see an increased bus service, the PC would need to contact Cllr Fleming and request she engages with Suffolk's Transport Team to understand what solutions might be available. It was agreed to include a request for feedback on the current bus service from residents, in the next copy of the Messenger publication.
- Reminder - Adrian Ramsay MP is hosting a Sustainable Communities Conference on Friday 13 March, 9.00am–3.00pm, at the Corn Hall in Diss. The conference will focus on two key themes: *nature recovery* and *community energy*. The aim of the day is to bring together existing community-led projects from across the constituency, providing an opportunity to share expertise, inspire one another, and build supportive networks. Anyone interested in starting a sustainable project in their community is also warmly encouraged to register.
- Ed King from the River Waveney Trust has suggested working with neighbouring parishes, with regard to the flood management element of the PC's draft Biodiversity Action Plan. This is also in relation to Mid Suffolk District Council's new funding package of £1.8m over the next three years for nature recovery and biodiversity. The funding will be used to carry out the plans of the cross-party biodiversity working group, as well as meeting government proposals for biodiversity and nature recovery. Around half of the funding is going towards a new community Nature Recovery Grant fund. The fund will be split equally between both community-led projects and projects for the restoration of rivers and their catchments. The funds will support communities to create and manage habitat and nature recovery schemes, including natural flood management. Councillors felt wider involvement might be better addressed via another Parish meeting, and that the PC's Biodiversity Action plan is specifically for Mellis and not neighbouring parishes.
- MSDC Catchment and Landscape Nature Recovery Grant - Launch Event 4th March - The Mix, Stowmarket. Full details sent to councillors.
- Network Rail have sent advance Notice of Mellis Level crossing Road closure, which will involve overnight railway track replacement and will require full road closures at the level crossing, Yaxley Road, and the Common on several dates between April and June 2026. Diversion routes and a pedestrian minibus service will be in place during these closures. Full details will be shared once received.

9 Environmental issues, including:

- **National Grid Norwich to Tilbury preliminary meeting and hearings update** – positive feedback has been received from a resident who attended the hearings to make verbal representation. Full details of the hearings and meeting agendas can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's website: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN020027>.
- **Biodiversity Action Plan** – ongoing; Cllr Cross has sent updated missing sections of the plan, which the Clerk will forward to councillors. See addition update within item 8.
- **Mellis Common - information leaflets and update from meeting with Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT)** – Cllr Cross and Cllr Paterson met with Will Cranston from SWT to discuss management of the area of the common owned by SWT. During the meeting the common was walked to assess the ponds and ditches, as well as trees and hedging. Will Cranston agrees that Mellis common has been neglected by SWT, and confirmed they are prepared to work with the PC and the Common Rightsholders going forward. Plan of action to be confirmed.
Cllr Cross used the projector to show councillors his progress so far with the information leaflets. He also advised that the Mellis Advisory Committee is due to be resurrected.

- **Mellis Garden including consideration of metal shed** – Cllr Read is due to view Finningham Parish Council's metal storage shed, and will report back at the next meeting.
- **Consideration of reinstating wellhead** – to be discussed further at next meeting.

10 Traffic and highway concerns

In addition to Cllr Read's update within item 7, he reported a noticeable increase in the number of unmarked HGVS using Mellis Road. Cllr Cross shared information about an experimental traffic regulation order which parishes in Gloucestershire can apply to the County Council for. This information will be shared with Cllr Fleming to see if Suffolk County council has the authority to offer anything similar.

11 To consider concern raised by resident regarding location of the Parish Council noticeboard

A resident has raised concern that the positioning of the noticeboard outside of the Memorial Hall doors, makes anyone viewing the notices vulnerable. After discussing, it was agreed to carry out a full risk assessment of the location as this was not done prior to installation. Cllr Cross agreed to conduct the risk assessment.

ACTION – Cllr Cross as above.

8:23pm Cllr Warboys and the member of the public left the meeting.

12 EN0110019 EcoPower Suffolk Solar Project EIA Scoping Notification

Notification has been received from the Planning Inspectorate that EcoPower Suffolk intends to make an application for Development Consent under the Planning Act 2008, and has sought a Scoping Opinion as to the scope and level of detail of the information to be provided within the Environmental Statement that will accompany its future application. The PC has been invited to submit comments by 23 February 2026. After discussing, it was agreed for the Clerk to collate councillors' comments in response to the Scoping request, for submission prior to the deadline.

ACTION – Clerk as above.

13 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Review Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report Consultation 2026

As part of the evidence-gathering for the Joint Local Plan, the Councils have published a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and are asking for the PC's views by the 16th March. Full details shared with councillors. <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/joint-local-plan>.

ACTION – Councillors to let Clerk know if they have any comments.

14 Planning

To consider: None.

To receive an Update on:

- **DC/25/05579** – Approval of Details reserved for Requirement 22 pursuant The Progress Power (Gas Fired Power Station) Order 2015. The Progress Power (Gas Fired Power Station) Order 2015 – **AWAITING DECISION.**
- **DC/25/02824** Regener8 Power Red House Farm - Planning Application - Construction and operation of a Battery Energy Storage System, together with related infrastructure, access, drainage, landscaping and other associated works. Land West Of A140, Red House Farm, Yaxley, IP23 8BH – **AWAITING DECISION.**
- **DC/25/03257** Regener8 Power Stone Cottages - Planning Application - Construction of ground mounted solar panel arrays and associated infrastructure which will have the ability to export 49.9MW (AC) electricity. Construction of new vehicular access. (EIA Development). Land At Stone Cottages, Bury Road, Botesdale, IP22 1QH – **AWAITING DECISION.**
- **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.**

15 Finance

i) A list of payments and receipts, expenditure against the budget, and bank reconciliation to 24th November was sent to councillors. Barclays bank account balance as of 23rd January 2026 - **£25,976.53.**

ii) Review and authorisation of payments presented:

1	J. Challis	Clerk Admin February	£564.08
2	J. Challis	Expenses – mileage	£24.66
3	Memorial Hall	February PC hire	£30.00
4	Memorial Hall	Rural Coffee Caravan Feb hire	£20.00
5	Suffolk Cloud	Annual hosting – domain name	£90.00
6	G. Paterson expenses	Sam’s signs (Carnser sign) - £60.00 Jacques Amand (bulbs for Mellis Garden) - £136.80 FH Brundle (Mellis Garden gate letters) - £154.08 FH Brundle (Mellis Garden gate letters) - £60.96 Leigh Cromwell (Mellis Garden tree planting) - £160.00	£571.84

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

ACTION - Cllr Read and Cllr Cross to pay agreed payments above via online banking (dual authorisation), except for items 3 and 4 to the Memorial Hall. This is due to the October 2025 approved payment to the Memorial Hall totalling £50.00, being paid twice in error. The overpayment is still outstanding. Clerk to advise Memorial Hall.

16 The date of the next meeting is Thursday 26th March 2026 at 6:30pm in Mellis Memorial Hall.

Meeting closed at 9:0pm.

District Council Report - February 2026

<p>NSIP's</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Norwich to Tilbury examination in public has started. Agendas and application details are available here: https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN020027 . MSDC are continuing to offer a regular drop in support session for this project which all ward members and Parish Councils should have received an invite for. This is open to anyone and the invite can be shared. The next session is on 12th March. • Consultation on the scoping report for the EcoPower project has been received. • Ecopower Suffolk Scoping report now published can be found on the Government's website: • https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN0110019/documents • Useful maps in Part 9. Very detailed but a great deal has been produced by consultants so reviewing by residents with local knowledge is very important, for example it appears that red deer have not been mentioned despite their migratory routes has been raised.
<p>Elections update</p>	<p>The Mayoral elections will be postponed until May 2028, and that means they will probably be held under a Supplementary Vote System rather than First past the Post.</p> <p>SCC received permission to cancel the May County Councillor elections after claiming that holding the elections would compromise the ability to deliver LGR on time. Reform UK lodged a judicial challenge – to be heard 19th/20th Feb.</p> <p>Following legal advice County elections will be held in May. Mid Suffolk did not pause preparations for the elections so they will be able to proceed as normal.</p>
<p>LGR updates</p>	<p>We are expecting the Government to publicise the final decision by March 2026.</p>
<p>Local Plan</p>	<p>The Councils will be beginning a five-week consultation on a Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) Scoping Report commenced 5th February 2026, which will run until Monday 16th March 2026. The Scoping Report is a key early document supporting the preparation of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Review.</p> <p>Comments can be made via the online consultation system or to localplan@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk.</p> <p>Sustainability Appraisal helps the councils understand the social, environmental and economic impacts of the plan and the different options we could take. This Scoping Report explains how they propose to carry out that assessment.</p>

<p>Biodiversity and Nature Recovery</p>	<p>At its November meeting, Mid Suffolk District Council approved a package of funding of £1.8m over the next three years for nature recovery and biodiversity. The funding will be used to carry out the plans of the cross-party biodiversity working group, as well as meeting government proposals for biodiversity and nature recovery.</p> <p>Around half of the funding is going towards a new community Nature Recovery Grant fund. The fund will be split equally between both community-led projects and projects for the restoration of rivers and their catchments. The funds will support communities to create and manage habitat and nature recovery schemes, including natural flood management.</p> <p>This is the link to the introduction: Boosting biodiversity by funding nature in your neighbourhood - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk And there is a link to the funding page: Funding opportunities and support - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk</p> <p>Scrolling down the page there are several schemes that fall under “Boosting Biodiversity.”</p>
<p>Council Grants</p>	<p>For information on Mid Suffolk council grants available to support community projects and organisations, please see: https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/community-funding or email BMSDCgrants@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk for advice on funding options. My Locality budget will be renewed in April so if you have a project that you feel would qualify for funding please contact me then.</p> <p>Further information on Locality Grants: https://midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/locality-awards</p>

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