

MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING of MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 21st AUGUST 2025, AT 6:30PM IN MELLIS MEMORIAL HALL

Present: Cllr L Read, Cllr G Paterson, Cllr N Lockett, Cllr A Cross
Clerk – J Challis, DC Cllr Warboys, 8 members of the public

Apologies: Cllr L Farley

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

Cllr Read welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies from Cllr Farley were approved unanimously, and it was noted that Cllr Cross had advised he would be late joining 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 24th July 2025 are a true and correct record

The draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 24th July 2025 were approved unanimously with 1 abstention (councillor who was not at the meeting).

5 Report from County Councillor

CC Cllr Fleming sent her apologies in advance of the meeting, and will be forwarding a report to be added as an addendum at the end of the minutes once received.

6:32pm Cllr Warboys and 1 member of the public arrived.

6 Report from District Councillor

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

Cllr Lockett commented that he is disappointed the District Councils and County Council are still in opposition with their proposals for the new unitary council system.

7 Public Participation Session (10 minutes set aside)

A member of the public raised concern regarding the management of the common, and the fact that it has not been cut by SWT (Suffolk Wildlife Trust), therefore posing a fire risk. SWT have told the member of the public that there is insufficient crop to cut, due to the horses grazing the common earlier in the year. The member of the public asked for the Parish and District Council's support and assistance to address his concerns.

A second member of the public commented that the area of common outside her property has been cut by a neighbour's gardener without her knowledge or permission, and that there seems to be a lack of understanding regarding the laws, responsibilities, and ownership of the common areas within the parish.

A member of the common rights holders was present and volunteered to act as a point of contact with the council.

This will be an agenda item for further consideration at the next meeting.

A member of the public said he has been made aware that the four new properties known as Railway Mews, are being used to house asylum seekers. He is concerned that Mellis does not have the infrastructure to support them.

7:30pm Cllr Cross arrived.

Cllr Warboys confirmed that the properties have been leased by Serco, and that there are currently two families housed. Cllr Warboys will introduce himself to the families and act as their point of contact in the village.

Councillors and the members of the public present confirmed their support to the families, and will endeavour to ensure they are made to feel welcomed into the community.

The Chairman of the Memorial Hall Committee was present, and reported that Suffolk County Council have had sight of the Deed of Grant, in relation to the installation of vehicle charging points in the car park. They have advised that the Parish Council needs to confirm they are satisfied with the draft lease between the Memorial Hall Committee and Plug in Suffolk. The Parish Council will need to take legal advice and this will then be an agenda item at a future meeting.

A member of the public raised concern regarding a drone recently being flown in the vicinity of their property. It was being operated by a company called Castle Keep. Cllr Cross advised the member of the public to contact Castle Keep to find out exactly why the drone was being used.

Cllr Read thanked residents for their input, and 6 members of the public left the meeting.

Cllr Read proposed moving to agenda item 11, to accommodate the remaining members of the public.

(11. Roger Deakin commemoration)

Cllr Read confirmed that an official Blue Plaque is not an option because the criteria requires it to be positioned on Roger Deakin's former home, and to be visible from the road. He will look at an unofficial version which could be sited on Cowpasture Lane instead.

Cllr Cross is trying to get in contact with Roger Deakin's son, and will also contact Rob MacFarlane, his friend and literary executor.

8:28pm 2 members of the public left the meeting.

8 Chair's Report

All covered elsewhere on the agenda.

9 Clerk/RFO's Report

- As already discussed during the public participation session, there are two new families living in the recently developed Railway Mews properties. Cllr Warboys has confirmed this afternoon that Serco have leased all four properties to house asylum seekers. Serco operate completely independently of the county and district councils, and Cllr Warboys has raised concern at their lack of communication with council officers and community representatives.
- Regener8 Power Stone Cottages solar farm and Red House Farm BESS proposals - Simon Schofield from Marengo Communications, acting on behalf of Regener8 Power, previously advised that the TCPAs for Stone Cottages (solar farm), and Red House Farm (BESS), were

due to be submitted around 17th June, and he would attend a PC meeting. Following numerous attempts to contact him, he replied yesterday, to advise that both applications have already been submitted, however the council has not been included as a consultee against either. An extension to the deadline for comments against both applications has been requested from MSDC Planning Department.

[DC/25/03257 | 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](#)

[DC/25/02824 | 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](#)

- MSDC have advised that their 'free trees, hedgerow, and wildflower' scheme remains open for landowners such as parish councils, community groups and charities: [Our trees, hedgerows and wildflowers scheme - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk](#).

10 Suffolk Devolution and Local Government restructuring update

As reported by Cllr Warboys, a motion to full council regarding MSDC's desire to move forward with unitary authorities, as part of local government re-organisation across Suffolk, has been submitted. The 5 district councils across Suffolk, including Mid Suffolk, support multiple unitary authorities across Suffolk, in opposition to the county council's support of a single unitary. More details of BMSDC's proposals can be found on their dedicated new website: <https://threecouncilsforsuffolk.org/>

11 To consider acknowledgement/commemoration of Roger Deakin

Discussed as above.

8:47pm Cllr Warboys left the meeting.

12 Biodiversity Action Plan

Cllr Lockett explained that he attended a 'Wildlife in Your Community' course run by Suffolk Wildlife Trust, which focused on Neighbourhood Planning and Biodiversity. Cllr Lockett has already shared some information with councillors, with a view to creating of a Biodiversity Action Plan for Mellis. After discussing, councillors agreed unanimously that this is something they would like to pursue, particularly taking into account the number of energy projects impacting Mellis, both in progress, and at a proposal stage.

Cllr Lockett has a meeting with Richard Parmee MSDC Biodiversity Manager on the 28th August, and has requested a meeting with Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

Cllr Read said he will look at the information from Suffolk Wildlife Trust and pull out the relevant points.

ACTION – Cllr Read/Cllr Lockett as above.

13 Planning

To consider: None.

To receive an Update on:

- DC/25/02216 – Full Planning Application – Construction of open-sided agricultural building. West End Farm, The Common, Mellis, Eye, IP23 8EF – **GRANTED.**
- DC/25/02215 – Full Planning Application – Construction of open-sided agricultural building. West End Farm, The Common, Mellis, Eye, IP23 8EF – **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

14 Tree Warden's Report

Nothing to report.

15 Footpath Wardens' Report

No report.

16 Speeding and traffic concerns in the village update, including quotations for village gateways

Cllr Lockett and the Clerk attended a site meeting with Andrew Moore from Highways on the 7th August, to look at the council's concerns, in addition to the requested footpath from Mellis to Yaxley.

Andrew Moore looked at the site for the proposed village gateway entering Mellis from the A143, and recommended raising a request to replace the faded national speed limit signs on the back of the current 30mph sign. Once received the pole can be changed to a single one, and the current faded Mellis/30mph sign replaced by a new 30mph one, and the gateways approved and ordered as the last step. He advised that deterrents such as dragon teeth and 30 mph markings on the road could be looked at, in addition to other types of signage. A report has been raised with Highways for the faded national speed limit signs.

The footpath from Mellis to Yaxley requested by pupils at the primary school was also discussed. The location actually falls within Yaxley, and not Mellis, and Andrew Moore advised that his initial findings unfortunately suggest it is not a viable proposal. The current road width is approximately 5.4 metres. A footpath needs to be 1.8 metres, which would reduce the road width to 4.2 metres making it too narrow. There also appear to be BT services underneath the verge, and telegraph poles that would need to be moved.

Andrew Moore recommended consideration of Suffolk County Council's Community Self Help Scheme, which would allow the parish council to carry out minor works:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/highway-maintenance/community-self-help-scheme>

After discussing it was agreed for this to be a future agenda item.

Cllr Lockett advised that he is investigating Quiet Lane designations, and that Andrew Moore confirmed a cost of £465.00 for Suffolk Highways to carry out a speed survey, which also measures axle weight. A speed survey is the first step for any application to look at speed reduction measures.

Cllr Lockett provided a report from the Speed Watch Team. There have been 11 sessions with 40 speeders being reported for driving at a speed between 35-43mph.

ACTION – Clerk to advise Mellis Primary school of Andrew Moore's finding in relation to the footpath request. Clerk to include consideration of the self-help scheme on the next agenda.

17 Consideration of ongoing support for the Rural Coffee Caravan

After discussing, and recognising the success and positive impact of the Rural Coffee Caravan monthly meetings, Cllr Read proposed supporting the charity by paying their monthly meeting hire of the Memorial Hall for a further 12 months, from August 2025 to August 2026. Seconded by Cllr Paterson and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to advise the Rural Coffee Caravan and the Memorial Hall's booking secretary.

18 Mellis Garden update

Cllr Paterson advised that he is meeting Cllr Cross at the garden tomorrow to carry out some mowing of the pathways and strimming; the thistles need maintaining to keep them under

control. Cllr Paterson is also meeting with a gardener in Diss regarding regular ongoing maintenance work to the garden.

It was noted that the area around the village sign needs to be cut again. Cllr Cross will ask Carl Beecroft to cut it when he next cuts the football pitch area.

ACTION – Cllr Paterson/ Cllr Cross as above.

19 Consideration of a Parish Meeting to discuss energy projects and other village concerns

Ed King from the River Waveney Trust has booked the Memorial Hall on the 23rd of October, and at the previous meeting consideration was given to seeing if this could be combined with the proposed Parish Meeting. However, after discussing further, it was agreed to hold a separate Parish Meeting on Saturday the 15th of November, 10-1pm, in the Memorial Hall. The meeting agenda will be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting, and the date will be publicised in the Messenger, village noticeboards, and Parish Council’s website.

20 Finance

i) A list of payments and receipts, expenditure against the budget, and bank reconciliation to 24th June was sent to councillors. Barclays bank account balance as of 24th July 2025 - **£26,971.72.**

ii) Review and authorisation of payments presented:

1	J. Challis	Clerk Admin August, incl. backdated LGA pay increase.	£594.60
2	J. Challis	Expenses – mileage (July PC meeting & Andrew Moore meeting), and additional sight test shared with Finningham and W&B PCs.	£21.88
3	Memorial Hall	Rural Coffee Caravan August hire	£20.00
4	Memorial Hall	August PC hire	£30.00
5	Stock Signs	Additional posts for VAS device.	£156.54

Cllr Cross proposed approval of all payments above, seconded by Cllr Lockett and approved unanimously.

iii) Budget/reserves review – report prepared by the Clerk. Councillors noted that the budget and reserves breakdown appear on track.

iv) Quarterly internal accounts review – accounts information to be sent to Cllr Lockett for his review prior to the next meeting.

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

21 To approve Internal Audit comments 2024/25

Deferred.

22 Parish Council insurance renewal

The insurance renewal is due on 1st October 2025. The current provider, Zurich Insurance, has provided a renewal price of £264.00, the same as the current year. Two other quotations have been sought from Community Action Suffolk, who have declined to quote due to the competitive nature of the current provider, and Clear Councils, who have not provided a quotation. After discussing, Cllr Read proposed renewing with Zurich the current provider. Seconded by Cllr Lockett and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to request invoice from Zurich, and raise an online payment request with Cllr Cross and Cllr Read.

23 Matters for future consideration

- Condition of the bus shelter
- Digitisation of the History of Mellis
- Printing of more Common leaflets for new residents
- Consideration of a Neighbourhood Plan

24 The date of the next meeting is Thursday 25th September 2025 at 6:30pm in Mellis Memorial Hall.

Meeting closed at 9:27pm.