

MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Ms Jane Challis

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING of MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 22nd JANUARY 2026, AT 6:30PM IN MELLIS MEMORIAL HALL

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

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 4th December 2025 are a true and correct record

The Clerk has amended item 11 to reflect that Cllr Cross said he was prepared to continue cutting the grass in Mellis Garden on a volunteer basis, and will submit an expenses claim for any costs incurred.

The draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 4th December 2025 were approved unanimously, taking into account the above amendment.

6:35pm Cllr Paterson arrived.

5 Reports from County Councillor and District Councillor

CC Cllr Fleming read her report, which can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes. Cllr Cross raised his grievance at the lack of democracy should the county council elections be cancelled as proposed.

There was also a discussion on the bus service funding mentioned in Cllr Fleming's report, and the items the Clerk asked Cllr Fleming to look at with the new Highways Officer on the 18th December 2025. Cllr Fleming said she will forward the new Highways Officer's contact details for the Clerk to speak to her directly about these items, which included installation of the VAS poles at the locations previously approved by Highways, the village gateways, and an unsuitable for HGVs designation on Mellis Road to facilitate the Lorry Watch Scheme Cllr Fleming recommended be looked at, following complaints raised to Wortham & Burgate Parish Council by residents on Mellis Road.

Cllr Read thanked Cllr Fleming for her report.

7:22pm Cllr Fleming left the meeting.

DC Cllr Warboys sent his apologies in advance of the meeting, his report can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

6 Public Participation Session (10 minutes set aside)

No members of the public present.

7 Chair's Report

Cllr Read said everything he wanted to raise was covered elsewhere on the agenda, but reminded the Clerk to ensure the Memorial Hall Committee are advised of the start date for the work to the car park, and to speak to the Mill to request they allow their car park to be used during this period.

8 Clerk/RFO's Report

- Dawn Wnowski, MSDC Emergency Planning Support Officer will be attending the 19th February meeting. Waiting for Regener8 Power to confirm a date.
- The Parish Council's response to Suffolk Water Recycling Transfer & Storage Project Winter 2025 non- statutory public consultation, was sent prior to the deadline:
Mellis Parish Council objects to this project.
The Council has concerns regarding the cumulative impact of this project in its current form, to build the Western Service Reservoir and new pipelines, alongside the numerous energy projects coming forth in this immediate area, both via the TCPA and NSIP routes. The WSR sites being considered will all have an immediate and long term negative impact on local communities, the environment, heritage and landscape, local businesses, and result in the loss of prime agricultural land.
The Council has concerns that the reservoir proposed is a closed reservoir, which does not address the flooding issues experienced in this area. An open reservoir would help to address this concern by providing storage for flood waters.
Out of the proposed WSR sites, the council considers WSR7 to be the most desirable. It is the least impactful on local heritage and the environment, provides the easiest access to/from the A140 for construction and operational traffic, thereby minimising the impact on the local rural road network. It is also the least impactful and disruptive to local residences.
The Council also feels that there has been a lack of clarity and communication in relation to the project, and would like to invite you to a future meeting to discuss these concerns, and allow local residents to be present and engage.
- An email has been received from Charlie Poulter of Transport Made Simple, regarding Suffolk County Council's new Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding, (mentioned within Cllr Fleming's report), asking for engagement with local councils for ideas to improve the bus service at parish level.
- New dog bin by Cavalry Barn – a resident has requested it be moved closer to the hedge line, approximately 10 metres from its current location. Suffolk Wildlife Trust have confirmed they have no issue with this, just waiting for MSDC to respond. Councillors indicated they are happy for the bin to be moved if MSDC confirm their agreement.
- 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.
- The next Eye Community Forum meeting on Wednesday 11th February at Yaxley Village Hall at 6.30pm.

9 Environmental issues, including:

- **National Grid Norwich to Tilbury – invitation from Planning Inspectorate to preliminary meeting and notification of hearings** – As an interested party the council has received an invitation to the Preliminary Meeting regarding the application by National Grid for an Order Granting Development Consent for the Norwich to Tilbury Project, which will be held on Tuesday 10 February 2026 at 10:00 at Ipswich Town Football Club, and virtually via Microsoft Teams. Councillors agreed that they do not wish to add a verbal or written statement further to the submission already presented to the Planning Inspectorate.
- **Biodiversity Action Plan** – Cllr Cross has a meeting with Will Cranston from Suffolk Wildlife Trust and asked the Clerk to forward the draft plan prior to the meeting. Ed King from the River Waveney Trust has recommended that the area from Earlsford Road to the school should be considered for ditch clearing and tree planting, from a flood management point of view.
- **Mellis Common information leaflets** – Cllr Cross reported that he is two thirds of the way through rewriting and updating the leaflets. Once completed, Cllr Cross will share with councillors for proof reading, and also send to Suffolk Wildlife Trust to check.
- **Mellis Garden ongoing works**– Cllr Read has been looking at mower storage options and reported the choice to be vast. Finningham PC already has a metal shed to store their lawn mowing and grass cutting equipment, which he will arrange to view. There was a discussion on where a storage shed would be sited, with the concrete pad being an ideal location. However, it is owned by BT and not within the PC's boundary. It was agreed to approach BT to ask if they would be amenable. Cllr Paterson reported that some areas of hedging need to be replaced. He has procured some bareroot plants, including 50 hazels, 50 viburnum opulus, as well as 80-100m of native hedging species, at no cost to the PC. Cllr Paterson has been provided with a quotation of £160.00 by a local contractor to help with the planting. Approval of the quotation proposed by Cllr Cross, seconded by Cllr Read and approved unanimously.

10 Traffic and highway concerns, including approval of quotations for village gateways

At the previous meeting, it was agreed to proceed with village gateways on the A143 side; one sign saying 'Welcome to Mellis' on the left as you enter the village, with another on the other side of the road saying 'Thank you for driving carefully', as you leave.

The Clerk shared quotations from different companies for various styles and sizes of gateways, which were discussed by councillors. It was agreed to proceed with white recycled plastic wood effect gateways 1.8m tall by 1.5m wide, with 3 rows and a cross bar. If there is room councillors would prefer an L shaped design. Cllr Cross proposed expenditure up to £6,500.00 for the gateways, signage and street furniture licence. The street furniture licence will be submitted prior to the gateways being ordered, and will determine whether an L shape is appropriate. Seconded by Cllr Paterson and approved unanimously.

The Clerk will contact the new Highways Officer to progress installation of the VAS posts.

ACTION – Clerk to submit street furniture licence as above.

11 To consider quotations for new bus shelter

Cllr Read shared quotations for various styles of new bus shelters with councillors. After discussing, it was agreed to proceed with a metal mesh design. Councillors noted that Cllr Fleming has indicated she may be able to assist with funding. Cllr Cross proposed expenditure up to £5,000.00, including potential funding from Cllr Fleming, for the purchase and installation. Seconded by Cllr Paterson and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Cllr Read will confirm total cost of new bus shelter, and the Clerk will look at part funding.

12 Planning

To consider:

- **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.

Councillors agreed unanimously that they object to this application for the same reasons as previously stated.

ACTION – Clerk to add comments to MSDC Planning Portal as above.

To receive an Update on:

- **DC/25/05185** - Application for Listed Building Consent - Replacement of removed cementitious render with horizontal timber weatherboarding. The Old Forge, The Common, Mellis, Eye Suffolk IP23 8EB – **GRANTED.**
- **DC/25/04508** - Planning Application. Change of use of land to residential. Home Farm, The Common, Mellis, IP23 8EE – **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.**

13 Budget 2026/27

The draft Budget 2026/27 was prepared by the Clerk and presented to councillors. After discussing, Cllr Cross proposed the draft Budget be approved, seconded by Cllr Farley and approved unanimously.

14 To consider and approve Precept request 2026/27

After discussing, and taking into account the Budget 2026/27, it was agreed to request a precept amount of £10,726.00 for 2026/27. Proposed by Cllr Farley, seconded by Cllr Paterson and approved unanimously. Cllr Read and the Clerk signed the completed precept request paperwork.

ACTION – Clerk to submit completed form to MSDC by 31st January deadline.

15 Finance

i) A list of payments and receipts, expenditure against the budget, and bank reconciliation to 24th October was sent to councillors. Barclays bank account balance as of 24th November 2025 - **£28,119.92.**

ii) Review and authorisation of payments presented:

1	J. Challis	Clerk Admin January (5 weeks)	£686.70
2	J. Challis	Expenses – mileage	£12.33
3	Memorial Hall	January PC hire	£30.00
4	L. Curtis	Bus shelter cleaning	£20.00
7	ICO (Information Commissioners Office)	Statutory annual data protection fee	£52.00

Cllr Cross 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).

16 The date of the next meeting is Thursday 19th February 2026 at 6:30pm in Mellis Memorial Hall.

Meeting closed at 9:06pm.

Parish Councils, January 2026

Happy New Year!

Councillor Jessica Fleming, Hartismere Division. Tel. 07714-597980 Jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk

County Elections and Local Government Reorganisation – An Extraordinary Meeting of the County Council took place on **Monday 12 January 2026**, please refer to: [Extraordinary County Council - 12 January 2026](#) The Council considered a Ministerial invitation of 18th December (see Written Ministerial Statement in Appendix A and a Letter to the Leader, Appendix B). This invitation invites councils to:

“set out your views on the postponement of your local election and if you consider this could release essential capacity to deliver local government reorganisation in your area and so allow reorganisation to progress effectively”.

1. Response to this invitation is an Executive decision by Cabinet taking account of the debate at council. The council majority vote and was that the Leader should submit a letter that responds to the Minister’s question by the deadline of 15th January and acknowledges capacity pressures.
2. Pressures on both resources and officer time were considerations discussed at the council meeting. May council elections would undeniably take up substantial resources alongside the need to respond to local government reorganisation. Other responsibilities include training new councillors albeit for less than one year, reorganisation of council functions to meet the 2027 and 2028 deadlines for unitary council and mayoral elections, respectively, and preparations for dissolving the council.
3. It is noted that legal powers to postpone local elections rest with His Majesty’s Government.

Information about devolution and local government re-organisation can be found at Suffolk County Council’s web site: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/devolution>

Bird Flu – Sadly, outbreaks continue in Suffolk. DEFRA’s Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA) has imposed restrictions on the premises. Information on the locations of outbreaks can be found at: [APHA Interactive Avian Influenza Disease Map](#) SCC Trading Standards is managing controls. Two premises have been affected in the Bacton area with the outer surveillance zone extending into Mellis - [Bird flu: second premises near Bacton, Mid Suffolk, Suffolk \(AIV2026/10\) - GOV.UK](#)

Battery Disposal - Hidden batteries can spark Christmas chaos: Suffolk residents are urged to correctly dispose of items with small (and large) batteries, to avoid sparking fires. Items such as toys, power tools, vapes, small gadgets and even Christmas cards can contain hidden batteries, often difficult to remove. These can overheat or explode at recycling centres and waste transfer stations, even in waste collection vehicles, or at home. Therefore:

- Do not put batteries or items containing batteries in any of your bins at home
- Take them to the battery recycling point at your local recycling centre, or local shops – [use the battery recycling locator](#) to check your nearest location

- If you are unsure if your item contains a battery, do not throw it in any of your bins at home, take it to your local recycling centre for experts to check

£26 million bus funding coming to Suffolk from DfT - Government funding for public transport in Suffolk is confirmed for three years. This funding will enable the continuation and expansion of new services introduced over the past two years through LABG support and its predecessor, the Bus Services Improvement Grant (BSIP), many of which were shaped by community feedback.

New 20-mph Speed Limit Policy Adopted - changes to the existing 20mph speed limit policy to enhance road safety and improve quality of life across Suffolk's communities were approved by SCC's cabinet on 9th January. The amended criteria give communities greater opportunity to reduce the speed limit, where appropriate, in residential and high-pedestrian areas to 20mph. Please refer to the Agenda for the Cabinet meeting papers on: [Meeting Documents - Committee Minutes](#)

Regener8 – Developments ongoing for a solar farm at Stone Cottages Botesdale and battery electric storage and a substation at Yaxley.

National Grid – Preliminary Meetings for the above application (the 'Rule 6' letter) being scheduled, there is a meeting for 'interested parties' on Tuesday 10 February 2026 at 10:00 in The Sir Bobby Robson Suite at Ipswich Town Football Club, Portman Road, Ipswich, IP1 2DA and virtually via Microsoft Teams. Additional meetings are planned throughout that week in Ipswich. Access to meetings is also available on Teams.

New Reservoir, Thrandeston or Eye Area– Essex & Suffolk Water's proposal is ongoing to construct a new drinking water storage reservoir (large concrete storage tank) and other water supply facilities in the area of Thrandeston and/ or Eye. Potential locations are currently under consideration. A second reservoir is planned near Sipton as part of a wider project to bring treated wastewater water to the area and to Sizewell C from Lowestoft. Refer to <https://suffolkwaternetwork.co.uk/>

Please get in touch with me if you have questions or comments: Jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07714-597980
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District Councillor's Report January 2026

<p>Mayoral elections postponed</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>LGR updates</p>	<p>We are expecting the Government to publicise the final decision by March 2026.</p>
<p>SCC' response to Government regarding cancelling SCC elections</p>	<p>Following Council and Cabinet Meetings Monday 12th January, the council leader Mathew Hicks has responded to the government request regarding the possible cancelling of the May 26 County Council elections detailing the capacity issues resulting from LGR, managing current high levels of demand and the possible election of a new administration, summing up: "Therefore, in accordance with that decision, I submit this letter giving the view that postponing the May 2026 elections would release essential capacity to deliver Local Government Reorganisation effectively."</p>
<p>Social housing and homelessness</p>	<p>At present there are 961 active applicants for a council house in Mid Suffolk. Over 50% are already in some form of rented accommodation. Mid Suffolk has prevented 462 cases of homelessness and has provided accommodation for 292 cases of homelessness 2025/6, 25% families with children a small decline from 2024/25. 147 cases have been resolved. At present there are 33 households in temporary accommodation and 26 in B&B. A budget has been allocated to help bring empty homes back into use, last year 99 homes were brought back into use. There are currently 194 cases. The HRA Tam has caught up with work to bring homes in line with current regulations regarding fire, water, gas, electric, all 100% and all 73 reported cases of damp and mould have been investigated and mould removed, remedial works are being carried out on 72 properties.</p>
<p>Essex and Suffolk Water consultation on major new water projects for the Eye area</p>	<p>Essex and Suffolk Water has launched a consultation on its plans to build new reservoirs, treatment plants, and install new pipelines, across northern Suffolk. The project is intended to tackle the growing water shortage in our area.</p> <p>Water recycling plant near Lowestoft, Clean water released into R Waveney to be pumped out at the existing Barsham Works, pumped to new reservoirs and Sizewell C.</p> <p>Potential sites for a partially underground reservoir are being considered at Thrandeston and Eye airfield.</p> <p>As this is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), the government will have the final say on this project (not the local planning authority). MSDC is responding to this non statutory consultation.</p> <p>Essex and Suffolk Water held drop-in events in Eye Community Centre on Nov 12th and Thrandeston Dec. 3rd. Link: https://northsuffolkreservoir.co.uk/</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>For more on the new funding see: £2 million for Mid Suffolk biodiversity and nature recovery - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk The action plan can be found here: https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/biodiversity-action-plan</p>
Armed Forces Day Saturday, 27th June, 2026	Mid Suffolk District Council would be leading Armed Forces Day in Suffolk in 2026, and the event would be held in Stowmarket. Stowmarket Town Council has resolved to support to the District Council in hosting Armed Forces Day in the town.
New Youth Council for Mid Suffolk	The November Council meeting agreed unanimously to set up a new Youth Council for Mid Suffolk. The Youth Council aims to provide an avenue for young people to have their views heard, and to enable young people to better understand and engage with the political process. It is hoped the Youth Council will be operating by September 2026, the beginning of the next school year
Funding	Sustainable Communities Food fund: Our Sustainable Communities Food Fund provides grants to small scale food initiatives such as community pantries, fridges and food pop-ups.
Health and Wellbeing	The Councils vision is to build 'great communities with bright and healthy futures that everyone is proud to call home'. Wellbeing is one of six key priorities to help deliver this vision. For example Dance East has received funding for its dementia support classes.
Council Grants	<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</p> <p>BMSDCgrants@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk for advice on funding options.ny requests for funding must be completed by Jan 2026 so if you have a project that you feel would qualify for funding please contact me.</p> <p>Further information on Locality Grants: https://midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/locality-awards</p>

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