

MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING of MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 23rd APRIL 2026, AT 6:30PM IN MELLIS MEMORIAL HALL

Present: Cllr L Read, Cllr A Cross, Cllr L Farley, Cllr Paterson
Clerk – J Challis, Dawn Wnukoski Suffolk County Council Emergency Planning Officer,
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

Cllr Read declared a non-pecuniary interest against agenda item 16, as a member of the Mellisians.

3 To consider requests for Dispensations on agenda items

It was agreed for Cllr Read to participate in the discussion for agenda item 16, donation request received from the Mellisians, but to abstain from voting.

4 To resolve the draft minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 26th March 2026 are a true and correct record

The draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 26th March 2026 were approved unanimously.

5 Reports from County Councillor and District Councillor

Cllr Fleming's County Council report can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.
Cllr Warboys's District Council report can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

6 Public Participation Session (10 minutes set aside)

The member of the public did not wish to make any comments.

Cllr Read proposed moving to agenda item 9. Approved unanimously.

(9 To discuss updating the Mellis Emergency Plan)

Dawn Wnukoski introduced herself and explained that the County Council is encouraging councils to have an Emergency Plan. Dawn spoke about the importance of emergency plans, outlined the process, and confirmed she will forward an emergency plan template for councillors to consider and compare to the current historic plan for Mellis.

Dawn suggested the Memorial Hall could be established as an official rest centre in the case of an emergency, and recommended the council considers a table top exercise to test any new plan, which would also encourage community engagement.

Further information can be found on the Suffolk Prepared website, and Dawn suggested looking at other local emergency plans such as Walsham Le Willows.

<https://suffolkprepared.co.uk/>

After further discussion, Cllr Read thanked Dawn for attending the meeting, and the information provided. This be considered further at another meeting.

7:10pm Dawn Wnukoski left the meeting.

7 Chair's Report

All covered on the agenda. Cllr Read asked for the Standing Orders to be a future agenda item to review items 13 and 15.

7:13pm Cllr Paterson arrived.

Cllr Read proposed returning to agenda item 2 and 3. Agreed unanimously.

(2 To receive Declarations of Interest on agenda items)

Cllr Paterson declared a non-pecuniary interest against agenda item 16, as a member of the Mellisians.

(3 To consider requests for Dispensations on agenda items)

It was agreed for Cllr Paterson to participate in the discussion for agenda item 16, donation request received from the Mellisians, but to abstain from voting.

8 Clerk/RFO's Report

- The minutes and slides from the Eye Grid Stability Facility forum meeting held on 11th March have been received, and shared with councillors.
- The Notices for the County Council elections on 7th May have been received and published on the noticeboard.
- Richard Parmee MSDC Biodiversity Manager has sent an email regarding 'Tree Planting Opportunities'. This is part of MSDC's drive to both help biodiversity and the environment, to increase the tree canopy cover. MSDC are looking for areas that are on land owned by the District Council, the parish/town council, or land owned by others who are keen for tree planting – this could be a community group, school, youth organisation, or a local landowner. Full details shared with councillors.

9 To discuss updating the Mellis Emergency Plan

Discussed as above.

10 To consider Mid Suffolk District Council's Neighbourhood Plan funding offer

In late March, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils announced that they would be stepping in to offer financial assistance to groups wishing to prepare Neighbourhood Plans, subject to certain conditions being met. This offer follows on from the withdrawal of central government grant funding and technical support in June 2025. They are requesting councils respond with a letter of interest to enable them to gauge the level of interest.

It was agreed unanimously to send a response confirming the PC is interested in the funding offer. Councillors noted that this would not commit the PC in any way.

ACTION – Clerk as above.

11 To consider Suffolk Preservation Society Neighbourhood Planning workshop

The workshop is being held online, on Saturday 16th May, at a cost of £10 per non-member. Cllr Read indicated he would like to attend.

Approval proposed by Cllr Cross, seconded by Cllr Farley, and approved unanimously with 1 abstention (Cllr Read).

ACTION – Clerk to arrange booking as above.

12 Environmental issues, including:

- **NSIP and large-scale energy project updates** – see reports from Cllr Warboys and Cllr Fleming, (addendums at the end of the minutes). In addition, Cllr Cross reported that surveyors have been seen taking pictures of listed buildings within the parish. It is believed this in relation to the EcoPower Suffolk proposals.
- **Biodiversity Action Plan** – it was agreed for cllrs to form a working party and meet prior to the next meeting, to discuss a plan of works. The difference between the parts of the Common owned by SWT and Mr Spence were discussed. The impact of the illegal grazing was also noted.
- **Mellis Common** – discussed above alongside the Biodiversity Action Plan.
- **Mellis Garden including consideration of metal shed** – The costs of the Asgard metal sheds will be considered further, once progress has been made with Suffolk Highways Community Self Help Scheme, and a response has been received from BT.
- **Consideration of reinstating wellhead** – working party meeting to be arranged.

13 Traffic and highway concerns including VAS installation update

SCC's Speed and Safety Management Team have reapproved the sites already approved by Joshua White from Suffolk Highways. Approval needs to be provided by a resident for one of the sites, and then the installation will be arranged by the Speed and Safety Management Team. No response yet from Sophie Farrington, the new Highways Officer. The street furniture licence for the Village Gateways has been approved. The licence will cover the gateways on both sides of the road. Once the licence payment has been made, and the licence received, the gateways can be ordered.

ACTION – Clerk as above.

14 Parish Council noticeboard risk assessment findings

Cllr Cross has conducted the risk assessment, finding all considered risks to be very low. The full risk assessment will be published on the website, and can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

ACTION – Clerk as above.

15 Updated quotation for works to Memorial Hall car park

Awaiting updated quotation from the agreed contractor due to their concerns regarding the impact of the Iran war on material costs. Cllr Cross will request a comparable quotation from Frank Davey in case the agreed contractor is unable to proceed.

ACTION – Cllr Cross as above.

16 Donation requests

- **Mellis Parochial Church Council**

A donation request has been received from Mellis PCC for funding assistance with utility bills. Invoices have been submitted to evidence their electricity costs for the last 12 months.

Cllr Farley proposed a donation of £578.68 towards electricity costs. Seconded by Cllr Cross and approved unanimously.

- **The Mellisians**

A request has been received from the Mellisians for funding assistance to enable them to purchase additional books, supply the new members with folders and cover ongoing costs for printing.

Cllr Farley proposed a donation of £200. Seconded by Cllr Cross. Vote carried with two in favour and two abstentions.

ACTION – Clerk to advise Mellis PCC and the Mellisians as above, and request bank details.

8:21pm the member of the public left the meeting.

17 Arrangements for Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Parish Council Meeting

The Annual meetings will be held on Thursday 21st May 2026, with the Parish Council meeting starting at 6:00pm, followed by the Parish meeting at 7:00pm. Cllr Read has prepared a draft agenda for the Annual Parish meeting agenda, which will be shared with councillors for their feedback, and then put into the usual format for publishing.

ACTION – Cllr Read/Clerk as above.

18 Planning

To consider:

- **DC/26/01413** - The Progress Power (Gas Fired Power Station) Order 2015: Application pursuant to requirement 16(2) to amend working hours to include Saturday - Sunday (07:00 - 19:00) from 01st May 2026 to 30th April 2027 (Weekend extended hours). National Grid Yaxley 400kV Substation, Leys Lane, Yaxley, Eye, Suffolk, IP23 8DX. Objection comment approved unanimously, based on the original approval being granted on the working hours provided in the initial application. The amended working hours will have a negative impact on local residents based on noise and light pollution, traffic and road works.
ACTION – Clerk to update planning portal as above.

To receive an Update on:

- **DC/26/01031**- Application for works to trees in a Conservation Area - T1 Cherry T2 Conifer T3 Sycamore. All to be reduced back to hedge height. Whitegates Bungalow, Earlsford Road, Mellis, Eye Suffolk IP23 8DY – **GRANTED.**
- **DC/26/00301** - Householder Application - Conversion of existing garaging and single storey rear extension to provide ground floor accessible bedroom and bathroom, with associated works. Mallard House, The Common, Mellis, Eye Suffolk IP23 8EE – **AWAITING DECISION.**
- **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 – **GRANTED.**
- **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.**

19 Finance

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

ii) Review and authorisation of payments presented:

1	L. Curtis	Bus shelter cleaning	£20.00
2	Suffolk County Council	Street furniture licence fee for village gateways	£170.00
3	Pearspace (formerly Suffolk Cloud)	Annual hosting	£120.00
4	Memorial Hall	Rural Coffee Caravan April hire	£20.00
1	Memorial Hall	April PC meeting	£30.00
2	SALC	Annual membership	£280.94
3	J. Challis	Admin April	£588.60
4	J. Challis	Mileage March PC meeting	£12.33

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).

iii) To confirm internal auditor 2025/26
SALC – agreed unanimously.

20 The Annual Parish Council Meeting will be held at 6:00pm in Mellis Memorial Hall, followed by the Annual Parish Meeting at 7:00pm.

Meeting closed at 8:39pm.