

# MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL

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## MINUTES OF THE MEETING of MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 25<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2025, AT 6:30PM IN MELLIS MEMORIAL HALL

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

**Apologies:** None.

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

Cllr Read welcomed everyone to the meeting, and advised that Neil Lockett has resigned from the council with immediate effect.

### **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 21<sup>st</sup> August 2025 are a true and correct record**

Item 11: Cllr Cross asked for an amendment to clarify that he was trying to make contact with Roger Deakin's nephew, and not his son, and that it was Cllr Lockett attempting to make contact with Rob MacFarlane.

The draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2025 were approved unanimously with 1 abstention (councillor who was not at the meeting), taking into account the above amendment.

### **5 Report from County Councillor**

CC Cllr Fleming sent her apologies in advance of the meeting, her report can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

### **6 Report from District Councillor**

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.

Further to the information on Serco within the report, Cllr Cross raised concern that members of the public helping the families by providing transport to school, are at potential risk by not being to do this on their personal car insurance policies.

### **7 Public Participation Session (10 minutes set aside)**

No members of the public present.

## 8 Chair's Report

- As advised at the start of the meeting, Neil Lockett has regrettably resigned from the council with immediate effect. Councillors were disappointed by the news, and agreed for Cllr Read to email Neil Lockett thanking him for his input and commitment during his time as a member of the council.
- Following concern raised by Cllr Cross in relation to residents helping the families in Railways Mews with transport to school, Cllr Read advised that the Clerk has been in contact with SALC for their advice on the role the Parish Council has to play in this situation, ensuring it acts within its authority. SALC have advised that the Parish Council has no official role, and has praised the community support shown to the families so far. SALC has been in contact with Mid Suffolk District Council and Suffolk County Council, and been advised that both councils are aware of the situation and carrying out their relevant responsibilities accordingly. Suffolk County Council confirmed to SALC that they have put school transport in place. However as this is clearly not the case, Cllr Read will contact Cllr Fleming to express the Council's disappointment and frustration that the County Council has not arranged transport, despite advising on many occasions that it has been put in place.
- Bus shelter – Cllr Read has investigated the cost to carry out repairs, which are in excess of £1,500.00 more than it would cost to replace. The main concerns are that it has faded and lost transparency, and is having a negative visual impact on the village. Cllr Paterson suggested planting ivy around the sides to create a more natural structure, leaving the roof clear. To be a future agenda item for further discussion/approval.
- National Grid have submitted the Development Consent Order for their Norwich to Tilbury proposals.

## 9 Clerk/RFO's Report

- A resident has asked if a list of future meeting dates can be made available. The Clerk has advised that meeting dates are confirmed a meeting at a time, and not for the whole year in advance. The next meeting date is minuted, and displayed on the website, but will also be shared on the village WhatsApp group.
- Suffolk Wildlife Trust has asked if the council is happy for work to be undertaken to the willow trees in front of the Limes Residential Home. MSDC have provided their permission. Due to the urgency of the work, and the request falling outside of meeting dates, councillors provided their quorate consent via email.
- Ed King from the River Waveney Trust has shared details of three 'building community resilience' events he has arranged, including an event in Mellis Memorial Hall the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 4-8pm. A poster advertising the events has been shared on the noticeboard.
- Advice has been sought from SALC in relation to the lease with 'Plug in Suffolk' for the electric vehicle charging points outside the Memorial Hall.
- Mid Suffolk District Council have shared up to date details of available grants and fundings: [Funding opportunities and support - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk](https://www.babergh.gov.uk/midsuffolk.gov.uk)

## 10 Suffolk Devolution and Local Government restructuring update

Further to the updates in Cllr Warboys and Cllr Fleming's reports, copied below, councillors expressed their continued grievance at the ongoing lack of cohesion between the councils, and waste of public money. After discussing it was agreed to write to Cllr Warboys and Cllr Fleming to raise these concerns.

District Report (Cllr Warboys):

The council released draft proposals on its proposed 3-unitary model, which included splitting Suffolk into a "Western", "Central & Eastern", and "Ipswich and Southern". As neither Mid Suffolk nor Babergh comfortably fits into this model, this would see the two councils effectively broken up across the 3 councils. A full website on the 3-unitary model, including the proposed map effecting these changes, is available here: [Welcome – Three Councils For Suffolk](https://www.babergh.gov.uk/midsuffolk.gov.uk)

County Report (Cllr Fleming):

SCC took its business case for a single unitary council to Full Council and Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> September, it was endorsed by a majority of councillors and by cabinet. The County Council's proposal can be accessed on: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/onesuffolkbusinesscase> This is one of two business cases from Suffolk's councils being presented to the minister for Local Government as part of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The alternative proposal from the districts and borough councils is to split Suffolk into three arbitrary council areas. No plans have been prepared for a two-unitary Suffolk.

Next step is to debate and vote on proposals for Suffolk County Council to ask Government to implement devolution and local government reorganisation (LGR) at an accelerated timeline, on the assumption that one (or more) unitary council(s) will fall under the government of a Norfolk-Suffolk Mayoral Authority. Following debate at full council on 2<sup>nd</sup> October the matter will go to Cabinet which will be asked to give consent to '*the making of Norfolk and Suffolk Combined County Authority Regulations as required by s46(1)(d) of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 such that Suffolk County Council will be a constituent council of the Authority.*' Norfolk is undergoing a similar process.

**ACTION – Clerk as above.**

## **11 Management of the Common**

Cllr Read has obtained a quotation for £260.00 to reprint 200 of the Mellis Common leaflets. Cllr Cross suggested it would be better to look at a digital copy that can be downloaded from the council's website, or emailed upon request. After discussing, it was agreed for Cllr Cross to create a digital copy which can be updated to ensure all information shown is correct. Cllr Cross also suggested consideration of a long-term plan for a Community Group to manage and purchase the common, should it ever become available. This would need to be a future agenda item.

**ACTION – Cllr Cross as above.**

## **12 Parish Meeting Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2025 10-1pm**

It was agreed for Cllr Read, Cllr Cross, Cllr Farley and Cllr Paterson to form a working party which will meet on the 10<sup>th</sup> October to agree the items to be presented and discussed at the meeting, which will be in the format of a drop-in event and not a formal Parish Meeting. It will be a point of information, and an opportunity for members of the public to meet councillors, provide feedback and share any other concerns.

## **13 Mellis Road mains renewal programme**

Essex & Suffolk Water are carrying out mains renewal work along Mellis Road between 30/09/25 and 13/02/26, to replace old water pipes with modern plastic ones, adding new valves to improve water quality, increase resilience, and reduce bursts and leakage. The work will involve road closures, the dates of which will be confirmed following feedback from stakeholders. Full details will be sent to councillors for their consideration and comments.

**ACTION – Clerk as above.**

## **14 Roger Deakin Commemoration**

Cllr Read advised that there is no alternative to the official Blue Plaque. There was a discussion on commissioning an informal plaque to commemorate Roger Deakin and his connection to Mellis, and displaying it by the noticeboard, but it was agreed that the council needs to wait until input from Roger Deakin's nephew has been received.

**ACTION – Cllr Cross to pursue contact with Roger Deakin's nephew.**

## **15 Biodiversity Action Plan**

Cllr Read is still looking at the information from Suffolk Wildlife Trust, to pull out the relevant points. The Clerk has contacted Richard Parmee from MSDC, and Cathy Smith from Suffolk Wildlife Trust, for their advice on creating a Biodiversity Action Plan for Mellis, following their initial contact with Cllr Lockett prior to his resignation, and will work on a draft plan.

**ACTION – Cllr Read/Clerk as above.**

## **16 Planning**

### **To consider:**

- **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.

After discussing, councillors agreed unanimously that they OBJECT to this planning application and asked the Clerk to submit a response based on their reasons for objecting.

- **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.

After discussing, councillors agreed unanimously that they OBJECT to this planning application and asked the Clerk to submit a response based on their reasons for objecting.

**ACTION – Clerk to add objection comments to MSDC Planning Portal for DC/25/02824 and DC/25/03257, as above.**

### **DC/25/02824 Red House Farm comment submitted:**

*Mellis Parish Council strongly objects to this proposal for the following reasons:*

*Fire Risk; the proposed site poses a severe fire risk and the Council has concerns that Suffolk Fire and Rescue does not have the equipment, staff, or training to deal with such an emergency situation. There is also the risk to the local community from vapour clouds caused by sustained combustion. The Council is very conscious of the significant fire risk posed by BESS sites which can lead to explosions and the release of toxic gases.*

*Access; Leys Lane is unsuitable for construction traffic, and may not be able to bear the weight of the Fire and Rescue Service's vehicles.*

*Flooding; this development will create additional impermeable surfaces, and the Council has concerns that the proposed drainage system lacks the capacity to satisfactorily deal with either fire water run off or contaminated water. Loss of valuable agricultural land, which will have a negative impact on long term food security and local rural livelihoods.*

*Environmental and Heritage Impact; the proposal will have a detrimental impact on a number of listed buildings, including Goswold Hall, White House Farmhouse, and Truss Farmhouse, which are all Grade II listed. The noise/odour/light/smoke pollution will have a significant impact on nearby residences, as highlighted by BMSDC Environmental Protection.*

*Cumulative impact and lack of clear communication: The proposal does not take into account the cumulative impact of the many energy projects in progress, in this area. In addition, the engagement with the Council and Mellis community from Marengo Communications on behalf of Regener8 Power, has been very poor, and although this proposal has been received via the TCPA route, we are concerned that the informal consultation and public information events have been inadequate.*

### **DC/25/03257 Stone Cottages comment submitted:**

*Mellis Parish Council strongly objects to this proposal for the following reasons:*

*Loss of valuable grade 2 and grade 3a agricultural land, which will have a negative impact on long term food security and local rural livelihoods.*

*Environmental Impact; the developer has failed to provide sufficient information regarding the full environmental impact of the proposal. Furthermore, the Council supports the objection from the Woodland Trust in relation to the impact on Stubbing' Woods, an ancient woodland and historically important site, which will be surrounded on three sides by the development.*

*Visual impact; the proposal will have a hugely detrimental visual impact, which has been confirmed in the Landscape and Visual Impact Statement. In addition to Stubbing's Wood, there are SSSI sites in the surrounding area which will be affected.*

*Traffic and Infrastructure; The impact of this proposal and the additional HGV movements on local road networks will be huge. The cumulative impact with other energy and infrastructure projects must be considered, as below.*

*Cumulative impact and lack of clear communication; The proposal does not take into account the cumulative impact of the many energy projects in progress, in this area. In addition, the engagement with the Council and Mellis community from Marengo Communications on behalf of Regener8 Power, has been very poor, and although this proposal has been received via the TCPA route, we are concerned that the informal consultation and public information events have been inadequate.*

**To receive an Update on:**

- 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.**

**17 Tree Warden’s Report**

Nothing to report at present.

**18 Footpath Wardens’ Report**

Cllr Farley reported that some of the new footpath signs are now leaning slightly. Any signs needing repair/rectification work will be reported to Suffolk County Council.

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

The faded national speed limit signs reported to Highways have been replaced. Highways Community Self Help Scheme: after discussing, councillors agreed unanimously to proceed with an application for the community self help scheme on a volunteer basis.

**ACTION – Clerk to submit application for community self help scheme as above.**

**20 Mellis Garden ongoing maintenance**

Cllr Farley reported that the bulb planting day was very successful with 1,200 bulbs being planted in 2 hours. There are approximately 400 bulbs left over. Cllr Paterson purchased the bulbs and will submit an expenses claim for reimbursement. No update on the ongoing maintenance.

**21 Finance**

i) A list of payments and receipts, expenditure against the budget, and bank reconciliation to 24<sup>th</sup> June was sent to councillors. Barclays bank account balance as of 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2025 - **£25,549.46.**

**ii) Review and authorisation of payments presented:**

1	J. Challis	Clerk Admin September, (5 weeks).	£686.70
2	J. Challis	Expenses – mileage & Norton anti-virus.	£40.93
3	Memorial Hall	Rural Coffee Caravan September hire	£20.00
4	Memorial Hall	September PC hire	£30.00
5	L. Curtis	Bus shelter cleaning	£20.00
6	Zurich	PC annual insurance	£264.00
7	C. Beecroft	Grass cutting	£48.00
8	C. Beecroft	Grass Cutting	£48.00
9	G. Paterson	Expenses – bulbs for Mellis Garden	£109.00

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

**iii) Budget/reserves review** – reviewed at the last meeting.

**iv) Confirmation of councillors to conduct quarterly internal accounts review** –

Following Cllr Lockett's resignation, Cllr Farley volunteered to conduct the quarterly reviews. Agreed unanimously with one abstention (Cllr Farley).

**ACTION – Clerk to forward accounts information to Cllr Farley.**

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

## **22 To approve Internal Audit comments 2024/25**

Deferred.

## **23 'In Camera'**

Deferred.

## **24 Matters for future consideration**

- Condition of the bus shelter
- Digitisation of the History of Mellis
- Consideration of a Neighbourhood Plan
- Wellhead

## **25 The date of the next meeting is Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at 6:30pm in Mellis Memorial Hall.**

Meeting closed at 8:48pm.