

MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING of MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 26th MARCH 2026, AT 6:30PM IN MELLIS MEMORIAL HALL

Present: Cllr L Read, Cllr A Cross, Cllr L Farley
Clerk – J Challis, 2 members of the public – Mr & Mrs Peel

Apologies: Cllr Paterson.

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

Cllr Read welcomed everyone to the meeting, and apologies received from Cllr Paterson were approved unanimously.

2 To receive Declarations of Interest on agenda items

Cllr Read and Cllr Cross both declared a non-pecuniary interest against agenda item 16, DC/26/00301, due to being immediate neighbours.

3 To consider requests for Dispensations on agenda items

It was agreed for Cllr Read and Cllr Cross to partake in the discussion for agenda item 16, DC/26/00301, but abstain from voting. Decision carried with 1 vote in favour, and 2 abstentions.

4 To resolve the draft minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 19th February 2026 are a true and correct record

The draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 19th February 2026 were approved unanimously.

5 Reports from County Councillor and District Councillor

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

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

6:49pm Two members of the public arrived.

Further to the Biodiversity & Nature Recovery item within Cllr Warboys's report, Cllr Cross reported that he attended the Catchment and Landscape Nature Recovery Grant launch event held in Stowmarket on the 4th March. In addition, SWT (Suffolk Wildlife Trust) have started clearance work on the common, following the meeting Cllr Cross and Cllr Paterson held with Will Cranston. SWT are also due to reinstate the ditches discussed, and two ponds. Cllr Cross has reported the flooded culverts in the village; however, Highways have only addressed the problem by sweeping the road. Cllr Cross will report the flooded culverts again.

6 Public Participation Session (10 minutes set aside)

Mr Peel introduced himself as the new Church Warden. He extended thanks to Cllr Read and Cllr Cross, (in their capacity as residents), and two members of the public, for clearance work they have carried out around the church. Mr Peel is planning an event at the church on Thursday 28th

May, an evening of poetry and wine, and is keen to engage with the PC and local community in his new role.

Cllr Read thanked Mr & Mrs Peel for attending the meeting.

7:17pm Mr & Mrs Peel left the meeting.

7 Chair's Report

- Cllr Read has received a quotation of £1,287 to install the new bus shelter, but needs to clarify whether the costs include removal of the old shelter.
- Cllr Read met with Cllr Saunders from Finningham PC to view the metal storage sheds they use to house grass cutting equipment. Cllr Read was impressed with the sheds, reporting them to be very well made, and will contact the supplier, Asgard, for further information and cost details.
- An updated quotation, to reflect current costs and any additional work required due to deterioration since the initial quotation, has been requested from the contractor for the Memorial Hall car park. The owners of the Mill have confirmed that delivery drivers are no longer using the car park to turn around in.

8 Clerk/RFO's Report

- The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has confirmed that Suffolk will move to three unitary councils. These new authorities will replace the current six councils, with the three new unitary councils covering western Suffolk, central and eastern Suffolk, and Ipswich and southern Suffolk. The new councils will come into operation in April 2028. Ahead of this, elections scheduled for next year will establish three shadow authorities responsible for guiding, shaping and overseeing the transition within their respective geography.
- A donation request has been received from the Mellisians, however it was received too late to be considered at this meeting, and will therefore be an agenda item for the April meeting.
- A resident has contacted regarding a school project they are undertaking, based around being an active citizen. They have made the decision to focus on litter in local areas, and requested permission to use the council's resources to organise a litter pick. Permission has been given, based on the understanding that the litter pick is not being carried out on behalf of the PC, and anyone involved will have parental consent and conduct their own risk assessments. Cllr Cross will arrange for the resident to use the council's litter picking equipment.
- The council did not submit an article for the April Messenger magazine, so any inclusions for the May publication need to be sent to Cllr Farley prior to the deadline of 11th April 2026.
- Only one response has been received so far in relation to the request for feedback from residents on the bus service; this will be a future agenda item.

9 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).
- **Biodiversity Action Plan** – no further updates.
- **Mellis Common** – update received from Cllr Cross within agenda item 5.
- **Mellis Garden including consideration of metal shed** – see Cllr Read's report, agenda item 7.
- **Consideration of reinstating wellhead** – deferred.

10 Traffic and highway concerns including VAS installation update

A request has been sent to Sophie Farrington Highways Officer, and SCC's Speed and Safety Management Team, for assistance in moving forward with the installation of the VAS posts. A street furniture licence application has been submitted to SCC for the village gateways. No further updates.

11 Parish Council noticeboard risk assessment findings

Deferred to next meeting to allow full assessment to be undertaken.

12 Updated quotation for works to Memorial Hall car park

Deferred to next meeting as updated quotation has not yet been received.

13 Donation request received from Mellis Parochial Church Council

Deferred to next meeting.

14 Consideration of ongoing financial support to the Rural Coffee Caravan

At the February 2025 meeting it was agreed to support the Rural Coffee Caravan for a further 12-month period, by paying for the monthly £20 cost to hire the Memorial Hall. Cllr Cross proposed the council supports the Rural Coffee Caravan for a further 12-month period, March 2026 – February 2027, up to a maximum of 12 meetings at a cost of £20 per meeting. Seconded by Cllr Farley and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to advise the Rural Coffee Caravan and Memorial Hall booking Clerk, as above.

15 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 6:30pm, and being immediately followed by the Parish meeting. Cllr Read will give consideration to items for the Annual Parish meeting agenda.

ACTION – Cllr Read as above.

Planning

To consider:

- 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.

No objection; agreed unanimously.

- 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.

No objection; decision carried with 1 vote in favour, and 2 abstentions (Cllr Read and Cllr Cross having both previously declared a non-pecuniary interest).

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.**

16 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 March, including holiday pay 2025/26	£1,516.96
2	J. Challis	Expenses – mileage	£12.33
3	Memorial Hall	March PC hire	£30.00
4	Memorial Hall	Rural Coffee Caravan March hire	£20.00

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).

17 Policy and document review

- Asset Register
- Standing Orders
- Internal control Statement
- Financial Regulations
- Risk Assessment & Management Policy

The above policies and documents were sent to councillors for review prior to the meeting, and after discussing, approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to update and publish.

18 The date of the next meeting is Thursday 23rd April 2026 at 6:30pm in Mellis Memorial Hall.

Meeting closed at 9:03pm.

<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. • Cllr Stringer attended on behalf of Mid Suffolk District Council. He made clear that we believe these plans must be halted so alternative options - such as an undersea route or undergrounding of the entire length of the project - can be properly considered. We remain seriously concerned about the project's impact on the environment, communities and businesses. • Consultation on the scoping report for the EcoPower project has been received and will probably be completed Sept. 2026 • 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 disturbance to their migratory routes being raised.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Norwich to Tilbury examination continues. Deadline 2 is 12th March. Deadline 1 submissions are expected to be published today / tomorrow. Application details are available here: https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN020027 .. • Construction of the Bramford to Twinstead development is continuing with work on Bramford substation due to start shortly and the sealing end compounds likely to start in the next month or so. • Bron Curtis Pricipal Planning officer (NSIP's) has decided to trial expanding the scope of the Norwich to Tilbury regular drop in session to all NSIPs. The sessions will be held via Teams using the existing meeting invite and is open to anyone with queries about any NSIP. The next session is at 11.00. 9th April Link to join: Norwich to Tilbury NSIP: Babergh and Mid Suffolk drop in surgery Meeting-Join Microsoft Teams • SALC have appointed an advisor for NSIP's.
<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>

	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.
LGR updates	We are expecting the Government to publicise the final decision by the end of March 2026.
Local Plan	<p>Late last year MSDC & BDC carried out a “call for sites” this process is to identify land that could potentially meet the housing requirement identified, if enough sites come forward can then set policies that direct the development to the most appropriate locations. (including potential new settlements)</p> <p>Between Mid Suffolk & Babergh we had over 1100 sites put forward, these sites have now been plotted on an interactive map which will be shared with you all very soon.</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>This can be accessed here: https://www.babergh.gov.uk/web/babergh/w/call-for-sites and https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/web/babergh/w/call-for-sites</p> <p>This is not a list of preferred development locations.</p> <p>Planning policy officers will begin work to assess all these sites for their suitability for development and inclusion in the joint local plan.</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>
Biodiversity and Nature Recovery	<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>Better Recycling update.</p>	<p>The new bins are now arriving in parts of the district. Every home across Mid Suffolk will be receiving a new blue lidded bin and a smaller food waste bin during the next 2-months. The blue-lidded bin will be for glass bottles, jars, tetra pak, plastic bags, cans and plastic bottles. Paper and card will go in the existing green-lidded bin.</p> <p>The new bins will not be collected until June.</p>
<p>Neighbourhood development plan funding</p>	<p>At the end of last year, the government cut the funding for neighbourhood development plans! Mid Suffolk has now looked at what is left in the pot, as well as added new MSDC funding to have a revised offer for parishes wishing to bring forward their plans.</p> <p>The revised offer has been approved by cabinet and the new policy will put ward member support at the heart of any funding being sought.</p>
<p>Council budget 2026-27</p>	<p>At the Council Meeting Thursday Feb 26th the Budget for 2026/27 was discussed and approved.</p> <p>The Government settlement has not been favourable for Mid Suffolk, creating a cliff edge in 2029/30 and the implementation of Local Government Reorganisation will have costs that will accrue to the current Council (whilst anticipated savings will accrue to the successor authorities). As the council's reserves are still robust there was some discussion in favour of not increasing the District council's share of the Council Tax however going forward the Medium-Term Financial Position forecasts the Council switching from having a significant surplus on the revenue budget to a significant deficit from 2029/30 onwards, mainly due to reduced funding from Government as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement. This position is not sustainable over the longer term. As part of demonstrating responsible financial management, a series of efficiencies and staff reductions form part of the overall £13.808m of savings and it was decided to increase the DC council Tax by 2.99% – the govt. recommendation. The budget assumes a gross expenditure of almost £40M (up about 15% from the current year) and gross income of £43M (up about 16% from current year).</p> <p>For the Housing Revenue account there is a proposal for a 4.8% (CPI + 1%) increase in social rents, and a 4.5% increase in garage rents. Utility charges and service charges in sheltered accommodation is continuing to increase to reach full recovery over 4 years.</p> <p>There are still long term concerns regarding the sustainability of the HRA account and financial constraints on building new social housing (940 families on the waiting list for social housing in MSDC) without significant government reform but it is financially stable, has a clear road map for bringing properties up to a good standard and will continue to play a vital role.</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>

County Councillor Report



Parish Councils, April 2026

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

Devolution - On 25th March 2026 the Government confirmed that Suffolk's current two-tier system will be replaced by three new unitary authorities covering the areas of western Suffolk, central & eastern Suffolk and Ipswich & southern Suffolk. The full Written Ministerial Statement is here: [Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#).

The three unitary councils include East, West and Ipswich to include Hadleigh, Caple St Mary, Copdock, Sproughton, and Felixstowe. Similarly, plans to sub-divide Norfolk include three unitaries. This approach seems to overlook the importance of cost and service consistency especially in the areas of social care, education, highways and flood management; an additional factor is that multiple councils may fragment (and weaken) the County unit rendering it easier for a Mayoral authority to exert powers over local interests. Further steps in the Local Government Reorganization process include making a Structural Change Order for agreement this coming summer which would in effect dissolve the County (and other Councils) later in 2026; unitary elections are scheduled for May 2027, and Mayoral elections in 2028 along with new councils.

“Simpler” (Better) Recycling – Commencing in June 2026 government mandated changes come into effect regarding collection and disposal of household and business wastes. Currently District and Borough councils collect waste (black bins), co-mingled/ mixed recyclable materials (except glass), and garden waste from households. The County Council is the disposal authority and manages the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in Blakenham where most dry recyclables go for separation and repurposing. Black bin contents go to the Energy from Waste Facility (EFW), some rubble goes to Masons Landfill in Blakenham. In practice, both District and County councils act cooperatively through the Suffolk Waste Partnership to manage the County's non-hazardous waste streams.

The changes imply substantial costs such as modifying the MRF to take glass, contracting for a new food waste processing facility in Suffolk (Bio Capital in Southwold), and finding new markets. Local glass collection will continue for a trial period alongside kerbside collection in Mid Suffolk.

Retirement of Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk Lady Clare Countess of Euston - Lady Clare retires on April 15th after 12 years in this role. She will be succeeded by Mark Pendlington. The Lord Lieutenant plays a civic or ceremonial role in the County as the representative of the reigning monarch at important events such as citizenship, religious services and the national honours and awards. Lady Clare attended Full Council on the 19th March and gave her Thought for the Day.

Nationally Significant Infrastructure (NSIPs) and Major Projects – Over the past year Suffolk has experienced a pronounced increase in proposals for energy infrastructure relating mostly to renewables (solar with battery storage and wind) and transmission driven by current net zero targets (e.g. grid decarbonisation by 2030 and net zero by 2050). Current NSIPs and other projects are shown in [Major infrastructure projects, including NSIPs - Suffolk County Council](#) with a link to maps. The Planning Inspectorate determines NSIPs while the County Council is a consultee, its main role is to shape applications and ensure that cumulative impacts from other related major projects are taken into account. These 'major' projects are usually determined by district councils.

NSIP Planning Update - the UK government wishes to push schemes through without delay and remove some powers from local authorities. [In response to a report by the Nuclear Regulatory Taskforce](#), government has accepted a recommendation to establish an in-house unit at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) to discharge Development Consent Order (DCO) requirements which is currently the responsibility of local authorities. Also government intends to extend this approach to all electricity network and energy projects, not limited to nuclear. SCC is concerned that this will add bureaucracy and put communities at risk of being subject to ill-considered projects which do not take into account local factors.

National Grid Pylon Scheme – National Grid (NG) has adjusted some routes in Palgrave, Mellis and Gislethorpe following public consultation but proposals for undergrounding in the Waveney Valley have been rejected. The Application for a Development Consent Order was submitted in January. Refer to [Norwich to Tilbury Frequently asked questions | National Grid ET](#)

Open Floor Hearings have taken place across Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex since February. SCC representatives gave evidence on Tuesday 10 February at Ipswich Town Football Club. Transcripts are available on the Planning Inspectorate's website : [Norwich to Tilbury - Project information](#)

The week commencing 27th April is reserved for further Hearings and Site Inspections, if scheduled. The Examination is due to end on 10th August unless extended. Contact the project team which will ask the Examining Authority if you wish to participate or comment further, or to request a site meeting: email NorwichToTilbury@planninginspectorate.gov.uk with your request

The County Council's position is to oppose the overground option with preference for off shore or undergrounding, along with scrapping the 2030 target for completion which has been put forward as the main reason for NG's preference for overgrounding.

Information is available on – nationalgrid.com/norwich-to-tilbury

Please get in touch with me if you have questions or comments: Jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07714-597980
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