

MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Ms Jane Challis

Tel: 07796 410694

Email: clerk@mellisparishcouncil.gov.uk

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 25th JUNE 2026, AT 6:30PM IN MELLIS MEMORIAL HALL

Present: Cllr L Read, Cllr A Cross, Cllr L Farley
Clerk – J Challis, CC Cllr Bains, DC Cllr Warboys

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

None.

3 To consider requests for Dispensations on agenda items

None.

4 To resolve the draft minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 21st May 2026 are a true and correct record

The draft minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 21st of May 2026 were approved unanimously.

5 Reports from County Councillor and District Councillor

Cllr Bains sent his report in advance of the meeting, and can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes. Cllr Bains highlighted Suffolk County Council's legal challenge to the Local Government Reorganisation and a brief discussion ensued.

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

6 Public Participation Session (10 minutes set aside)

None.

7 Chair's Report

- Cllr Read provided a summary of the EcoPower Suffolk Liaison Group meeting held on 11th June. Notable feedback being the current scale of the project which has increased from approximately 1,500 acres to 2,500, and accessibility concerns for some members due to the implementation of charges for hard copies of project information documents. Cllr Read will draft a letter to EcoPower Suffolk making complaint on behalf of the council over this.
- The Mellis Open Garden event held on the 12th and 13th June, was a great success with 106 people attending on the Saturday, and over 300 on the Sunday. Suffolk Wildlife Trust were involved as well holding bug themed activities as a way to engage with local children.
- No meetings have been arranged yet regarding Thrandeston PCs request to collaborate a response to the NSIP and infrastructure projects.

- A leaflet has been received regarding road closures in relation to Essex and Suffolk Water's Recycling Transfer and Storage project. It does not appear to have been delivered to all households, and does not include provision to allow access to the school. The Clerk will request further information and clarification.
- An email has been received from Nikki Morgan, the new BMSDC Emergency Plan Support Officer to enquire as to whether Mellis Memorial Hall would be willing to consider becoming a designated Rest Centre as part of local emergency response arrangements. The email was also sent to the Memorial Hall and will need further joint consideration.

8 Clerk/RFO's Report

- Email received from the Chair of Thrandeston Parish Council, as already reported by Cllr Read.
- Mellis PCC and the Mellisians have both emailed their thanks to the Parish Council for the funding donations approved at the previous meeting.
- Dawn Wnukoski has shared the Community Emergency Plan Guidance document and template, which have been forwarded to councillors.

7:34pm Cllr Warboys arrived.

9 EcoPower Suffolk Statutory Pre-application Consultation 22nd June – 16th August 2026

It was agreed unanimously that the council continues to object to the proposal. Cllr Read will prepare a draft response for approval at the next meeting. As mentioned under agenda item 7, the council will raise their concerns regarding public access to the consultation documents, and ensure all documents and maps are available in the Memorial Hall in addition to the church.

ACTION – Cllr Read as above.

10 Environmental issues, including:

- **NSIP and large-scale energy project updates** – covered above.
- **Biodiversity Action Plan** – plan of works still being worked on.
- **Mellis Common** – SWT have cut more of the common, and will be starting the area towards Earlsford Road when conditions allow. Cllr Cross has requested SWT engage with the school to encourage more activities on the common. Will Cranston is keen to develop this.
- **Mellis Garden** – updated under agenda item 7.
- **Reinstating wellhead** – no further updates at present, this will be removed from the agenda for now.

11 BMSDC Joint Local Plan Scoping Consultation 2026

After discussing, it was agreed to defer this to the next meeting, to allow councillors more time to consider the details.

12 Donation request received from the Messenger

Deferred to the next meeting.

13 To consider nominees for the Suffolk Community Awards

After discussing, it was agreed unanimously that the council does not wish to make any nominations.

14 Traffic and highway concerns including VAS installation update

The Clerk will request an update on a date for Suffolk Highways to install the posts for the VAS device at the four approved sites, and pursue a site visit with the new Highways Officer. Cllr Read asked the Clerk to speak to the VAS supplier regarding additional solar panel options for the device.

ACTION – Clerk as above.

15 Planning

To consider: None.

To receive an Update on:

- **DC/26/01709** - Application under S73 for Removal or Variation of a Condition following grant of Planning Permission DC/23/01494 dated 26/06/2023 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) - Construction and operation of Synchronous Condensers with ancillary infrastructure, and associated works including access and landscaping. - For non-compliance with and removal of Condition 12 (Use and Re-instatement of Temporary Access Track) To allow for the retention of the access as per submitted plans/documents. Land Between A140 And Leys Lane, Yaxley, Eye - **AWAITING DECISION.**
- **DC/26/01708** - Full Planning Application - Permanent retention of the access road between the A140 and Leys Lane, Yaxley, Eye. Land Between A140 And Leys Lane, Yaxley, Eye - **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 To approve Accounting & AGAR statements 2025/26

The Accounting and AGAR statements 2025/26 were prepared by the Clerk and shared with councillors; approval proposed by Cllr Cross, seconded by Cllr Farley and unanimously approved.

17 To approve CIL expenditure report 2025/26

The CIL expenditure report 2025/26 was prepared by the Clerk and shared with councillors; approval proposed by Cllr Cross, seconded by Cllr Farley and unanimously approved.

18 Finance

i) A list of payments and receipts, expenditure against the budget, and bank reconciliation to 24th April was sent to councillors. Barclays bank account balance as of 22nd May 2026 - **£28,699.11.**

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

4	Memorial Hall	Rural Coffee Caravan June hire	£20.00
1	Memorial Hall	June PC meeting	£30.00
3	J. Challis	Admin June	£523.20
4	J. Challis	Mileage June PC meeting	£15.18
3	L. Curtis	Bus shelter cleaning	£20.00
4	C. Beecroft	Grass cutting	£48.00

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).

19 The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Thursday the 23rd of July, at 6:30pm in Mellis Memorial Hall.

Meeting closed at 8:39pm.

County Councillor Report



Parish Councils, June 2026

Councillor Paul Bains, Hartismere Division. Tel.07889066305 Paul.Bains@suffolk.gov.uk

1. Council challenges legality of Government's Suffolk reorganisation

The County Council has formally challenged the proposals and has issued a pre-action letter to the Secretary of State. The Council's position is that the decision may be unlawful, with concerns that Ministers have exceeded their legal powers, not followed the required statutory process, and departed from their own published criteria. The Government was asked to respond by 12 June 2026. The government has since responded, and these concerns were not addressed; the Council is considering further legal action through judicial review which would likely be heard in Sep 26. The purpose of this challenge is to seek clarity and ensure that any changes to local government structures are lawful, transparent, and in the best interests of Suffolk residents and communities. Further updates to follow as the situation develops.

2. Council moves to review 'climate emergency'

Suffolk County Council's new administration is proposing to review its 2019 climate emergency declaration, with a decision expected in July. The aim is to ensure that all environmental work delivers clear benefits, practical outcomes, and good value for residents, with funding directed to where it can have the greatest impact. Early changes have already identified potential savings of up to £175,000 a year by moving to a more cost-effective electricity tariff. The Council remains committed to protecting and enhancing Suffolk's environment, but with a stronger focus on delivering measurable, real-world outcomes. Locally, this includes monitoring major proposals such as the EcoPower solar project to ensure impacts on agricultural land and wildlife are carefully considered, alongside tracking the Suffolk Water Recycling and Storage project to help secure long-term water supply. Parish councils can also benefit from direct local funding to support smaller-scale environmental improvements, including tree planting, biodiversity initiatives and enhancements to village green spaces, helping communities take practical steps to improve their local environment.

3. Healthy Start Scheme – June 2026

Suffolk County Council is encouraging greater uptake of the Healthy Start Scheme, with eligibility still unclaimed by over 1,000 families despite improved participation of 77% (up from 50% in 2022); this equates to around £1 million in unclaimed support over four years. Payments increased in April 2026 to £9.30/week for children under one and £4.65/week for pregnant women and children aged 1–4, with families able to receive approximately £1,000 per child over the first four years, alongside free vitamins and support for essential food costs. The Council is working with partners to raise awareness and improve uptake.

4. Suffolk businesses to benefit from expanded apprenticeship support scheme

Suffolk County Council is expanding its Apprenticeship Levy Support Scheme to help local businesses and residents. The scheme allows larger organisations to transfer unused training funds to smaller businesses, reducing or removing the cost of taking on apprentices. This approach has already been successful in Norfolk and is now being rolled out more widely in Suffolk. It is particularly beneficial for small and rural businesses that want to invest in skills but

face financial barriers. For residents, this means more opportunities to gain qualifications and access good local jobs, while also helping strengthen the local economy. If any local businesses are interested, they can contact the council's apprenticeship team for further advice and support.

5. Local Infrastructure & Energy Projects (NSIPs)

The Hartismere division continues to experience significant pressure from Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) and localized energy storage applications.

Ipswich Northern Bypass: Following a motion during the Suffolk County Council meeting on May 21, 2026, the council passed an amendment to explore all potential solutions to the congestion caused by Orwell Bridge closures. This includes reconsidering a second bridge, a tunnel underneath the River Orwell, or rail improvements. The council agreed that an officer report evaluating these various infrastructure solutions must be presented to the new cabinet no later than September 2026.

EcoPower Suffolk Solar Project: Suffolk County Council is encouraging residents, businesses and parish councils to take part in [EcoPower Suffolk's public consultation for its proposed solar farm and battery energy storage project](#). This statutory consultation launches Monday 22 June 2026 and closes on Sunday 16 August 2026. The council's formal response to the consultation will then be considered and agreed at the cabinet meeting on 14 July 2026. Further details about EcoPower Suffolk's proposals, consultation events and how to submit comments before the 16 August 2026 deadline can be found on its website www.ecopowersuffolk.com. Residents should also be aware that they are not legally obligated to sign any licence agreements proposed by EcoPower.

Suffolk Water Recycling, Transfer and Storage (SWRTS): We are tracking the proposed reservoir sites, intended to relieve long-term water supply issues across Hartismere. I am pushing to ensure that any future construction phase includes strictly defined HGV traffic routing to prevent community disruption and safeguard local cycling routes.

6. Highways and Community Safety

Flexible Criteria for 20mph Speed Limits: The County Council is updating its criteria for implementing 20mph speed limits. Rather than enforcing a blanket approach, this change gives parish councils and local communities a much stronger mechanism to introduce lower limits in specific residential areas and high-pedestrian zones where they are actively wanted and needed.

Routine Maintenance: I am monitoring ongoing local matters, ensuring highways reporting tools are used effectively. Highways currently report of a staffing issue which is currently causing delays, and I am meeting with Highways shortly to discuss this issue as part of the wider meeting.

Highways Community Self Help Scheme: Parishes can use this scheme to tackle small highways issues—such as cutting back vegetation or cleaning signs—more quickly, with guidance from Suffolk Highways. It offers a simple way to take local action, although it's limited to low-risk work and not major repairs. More details can be found on this link: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/highway-maintenance/community-self-help-scheme>

7. Locality Budgets

Each Suffolk County Councillor is given £6,000 per annum to spend on local initiatives and projects for their division. I am now accepting applications for ideas that meet the funding criteria.

Division Contact and Support

If you have specific issues regarding local county services, school transport allocations, or unresolved highways defects, please contact me with your relevant case reference numbers.

Please get in touch with me if you have questions or comments: Paul.Bains@suffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07889066305

CLLr Warboys District Council Report June 2026

Better recycling	The new recycling regime comes into force in June 2026 for the whole of Suffolk. The changes are described here: https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/future-changes-to-bin-collections and the schedule: https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/mid-suffolk-waste-collection-schedule-june-to-november-2026
Construction of £18m Stowmarket Innovation Gateway complete	Construction of a 'transformational' £18 million, state-of-the-art skills and innovation centre in Stowmarket has been completed – and is ready to open this summer. The Innovation Gateway, at Gateway 14, will offer a range of office spaces for high growth start-ups, collaboration and innovation areas, meeting rooms and high-quality training spaces. The project, led by Mid Suffolk District Council, was made possible thanks to a Freeport East agreement to provide £16.66m for its construction, with the remaining costs provided by the council. The centre is also being developed in partnership with West Suffolk College and the Universities of Suffolk and Essex
Stowmarket to host Suffolk's Armed Forces Day celebrations	Stowmarket will play host to Suffolk's 2026 Armed Forces Day celebrations, with military fanfare and a full day of family fun to recognise and celebrate the contribution of the armed forces community. The free event, organised by Mid Suffolk District Council in partnership with Stowmarket Town Council, will take place at the Recreation Ground on Saturday 27 June and brings together service personnel, veterans, families and the wider community for a day of both fun and reflection.
CIL allocation for local communities	Developers building homes within the districts are charged a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which the councils then reinvest in neighbourhoods via their towns and parish councils. In this latest round of funding, 29 town and parish councils in Mid Suffolk will receive a share of a £553k. The town and parish councils can decide how to spend this money to best support the development of their local area and meet the need of the community.
Mid Suffolk Youth Council	Launched last year by Mid Suffolk District Council, the Youth Council is designed to give young people a chance to have their voice heard and get involved in local politics. The initiative was driven by research showing the disconnect between young people and politics, with almost three quarters of those asked believing that politics should be taught more in schools or colleges. Debenham High School was the first to elect members to the Youth Council with Stowupland High School following closely behind with three of their students also having been elected. Claydon High School, Finborough School, Hartismere School and Thurston Community College all in varying stages of appointing students. Each school can elect three students aged between 11 and 19 to serve a two-year term.
Businesses set for energy savings under new scheme	A pair of businesses in Eye are the first to see energy savings thanks to a new council partnership. sister firms Wrightfield and Wrightform, based at Mid Suffolk Business Park in Eye had 250 solar panels installed last month as part of the Solar for Business scheme. The cost of the panels is covered by the Council, and the business receives electricity at a lower rate. The panels are on track to save £10,000 in electricity bills during the first year as well as saving 25 tonnes of CO₂.
Riverside land purchased to save it from development	A riverside site will be protected from development and enhanced as a wildlife haven after Mid Suffolk District Council purchased the land and teamed up with the River Waveney Trust. The land is by the River Waveney in Palgrave, and is mostly covered in trees and scrub, alongside some more open areas. It was put up for sale and marketed for its development potential – but Mid Suffolk stepped in to buy it, protecting it for the local community.

	Mid Suffolk has now agreed a plan with the River Waveney Trust (RWT), which will take over the management and restoration of the site. It will form part of the RWT's 'River Access for All' project, reconnecting Waveney Valley communities to their rich waterside heritage.
Mid Suffolk Council Funding for Citizens Advice	Citizens Advice services in Babergh and Mid Suffolk have received significant financial backing as part of the latest round of community funding from the district councils. Through the councils' Community Development Fund, Sudbury & South Suffolk Citizens Advice has been awarded £103,000, while Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice has received £129,265. These local Citizens Advice branches are recognised as key strategic partners of the councils and, by receiving these crucial funds, they can continue to provide residents with free and essential guidance on everything from housing and debt to benefits and wellbeing support.
Fod Museum award	The Food Museum's exhibition featuring "all the things that you will love, and love to hate" when it comes to school dinners has won a national award. The museum was named Best Temporary or Touring Exhibition of the Year at the Museum and Heritage Awards in London on Thursday during a celebration of museums, galleries and cultural and heritage visitor attractions.
EcoPower Suffolk	Any concerns can be raised at the upcoming statutory consultation which will go to joint cabinet briefing for member review and amendments in June or July. The Statutory Consultation is anticipated to run from 8 June 2026 to 19 July 2026, although they note dates may still change.
Norwich to Tilbury (Pylons)	MSDC are engaging with National Grid on their proposals for enabling works for the Norwich to Tilbury project, to be carried out before the project is consented. Grid are intending to submit Town and Country Planning Act 1990 applications for planning permission (determined by BDC and MSDC respectively) for temporary construction compound and haul road works at Palgrave and Holton St. Mary. The applications are for construction compounds and haul roads, which will be reversed should consent not be obtained. Affected residents and landowners will be receiving letters early next week The expected timetable is: - Emails to parish councils Monday 15th June - Letters to residents and landowners to arrive Tuesday 16th June - Public comment period 26th June to 14th July - Applications for planning permission to be submitted July - Works to commence (if permission granted) Jan / Feb - Planning decision on Norwich to tilbury expected Feb 2027 You can find more information on NSIPs in general and projects in Suffolk, including an interactive map, on the Suffolk County Council website.

Rowland Warboys MSDC Cllr. Gislingham Ward
rowland.warboys@midsuffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07484186121