

Mellis Parish Council

Approved Minutes of the Remote Council Meeting held on Tuesday 14 July 2020 at 7.00pm via Zoom

Present: Cllr Lawrie Read (Chair), Cllr Sue Barr and Cllr Belinda Hubbard

Attendance: Cllr Rowland Warboys (District Councillor) (arrived 8.20pm), Cllr Jessica Fleming (County Councillor), Simon Ashton (Parish Clerk & RFO) and one Member of the Public

1. Apologies and Approval of Absences

Standing apologies had been received from Cllr Phil Cunningham prior to the previous meeting. Cllr Ghed Paterson and Cllr Tina Wilby did not attend the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interests by Members & Requests for Dispensation

There were no interests declared or requests received by any of the Members.

3. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting on 12 May 2020

Minutes of the previous meeting of the Parish Council on 12 May 2020 were received and approved as a true record. It was agreed that arrangements would be made for the minutes to be signed by the Chair once the restriction on physical meetings was removed.

4. Reports by the District Councillor and County Councillor

The Parish Clerk had shared a copy of the district council report received from Cllr Warboys with Members in advance of the meeting for their information. A county council report had not been received from Cllr Fleming in time to be shared in advance of the meeting. Copies of these reports have been made available at the end of these minutes for information.

5. Contributions by Members of the Public

A member of the public raised the issue of traffic speeding through the village and whether the Council had planned to assess the risks associated with the development of a new roundabout on the A140 at Yaxley. This matter was then discussed as part of Item 8a).

6. Finance

(a) Members noted the receipt of a BDC precept (1/2) payment of £3,950.00 on 15 April 2020.

(b) Members noted the receipt of a VAT refund (2019/20) payment of £134.82 on 20 May 2020.

(c) Members noted the Barclays Bank account balance of £21,332.07 as at 24 June 2020.

(d) The Council's internal audit report (2019/20) prepared by SALC was presented by the RFO which was reviewed and approved by Members.

- (e) In advance of the meeting, following the internal auditor's comments, the RFO had presented a need for Members to be directly involved in the preparation of an internal audit report response and action plan (2019/20). A proposal for Cllr Read and Cllr Barr to work on this in advance of the next meeting was approved by Members. They agreed to present their report for the Council's approval at the next meeting.
- (f) The Council's Statement of Accounts (2019/20) prepared by the RFO was reviewed and approved by Members.
- (g) The Council's Asset Register (2019/20) updated by the RFO was reviewed and approved by Members.
- (h) The AGAR Section 1 Annual Governance Statement (2019/20) prepared by the Parish Clerk was reviewed and approved by Members.
- (i) The AGAR Section 1 Explanation of Negative Responses (2019/20) prepared by the Parish Clerk was reviewed and approved by Members.
- (j) The AGAR Section 2 Accounting Statements (2019/20) prepared by the RFO was reviewed and approved by Members.
- (k) The AGAR Section 2 Explanation of Variances (2019/20) prepared by the RFO was reviewed and approved by Members.
- (l) The AGAR Part 2 Certificate of Exemption (2019/20) prepared by the RFO was reviewed and approved by Members.
- (m) The Notice of Public Rights (2019/20) prepared by the RFO was reviewed and approved by Members. The six-week consultation period was due to commence on 20 July 2020.
- (n) A request for churchyard maintenance funding had been received from Mellis Parochial Church Council. In advance of the meeting, the RFO had researched this matter and had shared the advice of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) with Members which confirmed that a restriction contained within the Local Government Act 1894 prevented councils from contributing to the maintenance of cemeteries. The RFO confirmed that he had dealt with a similar case previously and fully supported the advice received. Members then discussed the church's need for funding and agreed an approach of making funds available subject to the confirmation of an amount received in writing. Following the approach taken by the Council, the reason why NALC's advice had not been accepted was requested by the RFO but an explanation was not provided. The RFO also requested that he be advised by the Council of the legislative power under which the planned payment was to be made before he was expected to prepare the payment.
- (o) Payments were authorised in favour of the Parish Clerk's wages and office and personal expenses (£562.38), HMRC for income tax and national insurance (April to June 2020) (£169.80) and Suffolk Association of Local Councils for the internal audit (2019/20) (£186.00). These payments were approved by Members. Following a query raised by Cllr Barr, the RFO agreed to provide the two cheque signatories with all supporting payment documentation rather than just the payment summary that they had received in advance of previous Zoom-hosted meetings.

7. Governance

- (a) Cllr Read updated Members on the position with Newsteads Land, that Suffolk Wildlife Trust was supportive of the Council's aims and there was a need for a traffic survey and a firm to process the full planning application. He also confirmed that he had contacted

Mid Suffolk District Council on 10 July 2020 and requested that the previously submitted planning pre-application be transferred into the name of Mellis Parish Council. He agreed to provide an update on these matters at the next meeting.

- (b) Cllr Read confirmed that repairs to the dog waste bin located in Earlsford Road had already taken place and that a debt of appreciation was owed to the person involved.
- (c) A resident had referred the matter of the need for remedial work required to the village sign and brickwork. Members agreed with Cllr Read's offer to obtain a quotation to address the work required for reporting to Members at the next meeting.
- (d) Members considered the merits of splitting the role of Parish Clerk & RFO. This division of duties was an approach the current postholder was happy to pursue before continuing as the Council's RFO. The scheduling of meetings on a Tuesday evening had originally attracted the appointee but this had become a problem for some of the councillors. The Parish Clerk & RFO believed that a division of duties would create further meeting scheduling opportunities for the good of the Council. Cllr Read requested the need for further information regarding the availability of the pub. Members agreed that the Council had insufficient information to make a decision.
- (e) A list of members' responsibilities (2020/21) was prepared by the Parish Clerk following discussion with Members who then approved a final version for publication on the web site and noticeboard.
- (f) The Parish Clerk had shared details of the forthcoming SALC AGM on 30 July 2020 in advance of the meeting. Members were happy to accept Cllr Read's offer to represent the Council at the meeting. The Parish Clerk agreed to make the booking with SALC.

8. Highways

- (a) Members considered the flow of traffic through the village, the development of a new roundabout on the A140 at Yaxley, speeding and traffic calming. Cllr Read had been advised that by Yaxley Parish Council, operator of a speed indicator device, that there had been no appreciable increase in traffic through their village. Members discussed the possibility of a traffic calming scheme. Cllr Read agreed to approach Suffolk County Council for traffic flow data and to provide an update at the next meeting.

9. Consultations

- (a) Following discussion, Members agreed to submit individual responses to the LGA Code of Conduct consultation by the due date of 17 August 2020.

10. Contributions by Members of the Public

The Parish Clerk had received correspondence from a resident about rubbish being left in the Memorial Hall car park. Members agreed to discuss signage at the next meeting.

11. Matters for Future Consideration

- (a) Consideration of the Presence of Rubbish in the Memorial Hall Car Park
- (b) Consideration of the Parking of Vehicles Near the Railway Line

12. Date of the Next Meeting

- (a) 8 September 2020 (Urgent Agenda Items & Documents Received by 31 August 2020)
- (b) The meeting finished at 9.40pm.

Simon Ashton, Parish Clerk
mellisparishcouncil@gmail.com
8 September 2020

District Councillor Report: Gislingham Ward July 2020

Mellis, Gislingham, Wickham Skeith, Thornham Magna, Thornham Parva, Wortham and Burgate

Covid-19	Staff are continuing to work from home, making use of Microsoft Teams to hold virtual meetings with colleagues, councillors and residents. Non-urgent site inspections are not taking place. Some officers are beginning to return to their normal jobs having been seconded to different duties arising from the pandemic. The Home but not Alone emergency line continues: 0800 876 6926.
Meetings	All District Council and Committee meetings are now being held as virtual meetings using the Microsoft Teams platform. They can be viewed on YouTube. The full Council meeting on 23 July will be the Annual Council Meeting where the Chair of the Council will be elected for the year and appointments to committees and outside bodies will be confirmed.
Joint Local Plan	We still don't know when the Joint Local Plan will be available and ready to be considered at a meeting of the full Council. We will soon be provided with a timetable for the remaining steps that need to be followed. The next version of the Plan, when we see it, may well be very different from the consultation draft of July 2019. If, and when, Council approves the Plan, it will be subject to further consultation and an Inspector's Examination before it can be formally adopted as planning policy.
Environment and Climate Change Task Force	<p>Proposals from the Cross-Party Task Force of Mid Suffolk and Babergh Councillors were considered by Cabinet on 6 July. They contain a number of environmental measures which could form the councils' first Carbon Reduction Management Plan, setting out how they aim to fulfil their ambitions of becoming carbon neutral within the next ten years. The following decisions was taken by the Cabinet and will come into effect on 15 July</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:-</p> <p>1.1 That the Cabinet's Carbon Reduction Management Plan, as informed by the Environment & Climate Change Task Force, be approved in principle.</p> <p>1.2 That the Cabinet Member for Environment and the Cabinet Member for Finance, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, be given delegated authority to consider the business case for each proposal and approve the funding up to a total of £500,000 from the General Fund, which has been allocated from the Growth and Efficiency Fund</p> <p>The proposed actions are the first steps in achieving the long term objective to reduce the councils' current emissions of approximately 5,452 tonnes (Mt) of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e) per year, looking into how best to invest in order to reduce this to nett zero by 2030</p> <p>Two proposals that may be of interest:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. B&MSDC will develop a plan to significantly increase tree and hedgerow planting in the districts including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A target for planting on Council land. • Investigating alternative funding options e.g. Woodland Trust funding; facilitating community groups to plant on Council land. • Promote and facilitate community groups and individuals to increase tree and hedgerow planting on communal land and in private gardens. <p>A management approach to secure long-term survival of trees and reduces need to cut down mature trees.</p> 2. B&MSDC will work with local communities and support them to develop local 'place-specific' solutions and build resilience to climate impacts. We will assess the risks that climatic events pose and the opportunities available to prepare and respond, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying communities at greatest risk from climate change

	<p>(particularly flooding) and co-creating appropriate actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying stakeholders with greatest contact with communities and working with partners to build their capacity to provide the right information on community resilience to severe weather. • Producing overarching plans and processes to support and empower communities to build resilience to future climate impacts and severe weather through community-led resilience plans. • Producing plans and processes to support community resilience projects and signposting to sources of support and funding. • Monitor involvement of community level groups in resilience.
Gateway 14	MSDC and the Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH) will be jointly funding a study into low carbon opportunities for Gateway 14, the commercial development site bought by MSDC in 2018. Green Party councillors have been pressing for the site to developed sustainably making use of green energy technology and we welcome this study to look at how low and zero carbon initiatives can be integrated into new developments. It is hoped that the findings of the study can be to be used to share learning and best practice across the region.
Cycling Strategy	MSDC is commencing work on rewriting the Cycling Strategy which is out of date. We have asked for better provision for cyclists between Old Newton and Stowmarket, within the town of Stowmarket and between neighbouring villages to improve links to schools, local retail outlets etc as well as for leisure.
MSDC out of county investments	Three years ago, MSDC and Babergh set up an investment company (CIFCO) and have so far borrowed around £60 million which they have loaned to CIFCO to buy commercial properties, almost all of which are outside Suffolk. The scheme was set up to make profits to improve services for residents of the districts. A recent revaluation of the portfolio shows a loss in the last 12 months of around £3 million; with fees of some £500,000. In recent months only 50% or so of the rental due to CIFCO has been paid. A recent scrutiny of the CIFCO Business Plan for 2020/2021 raised many concerns which need to be considered before full Council is asked to approve the Business Plan at the meeting on 23 July.
Business grants	Another round of business grants is due to be launched on 3 July; Early Years Settings will be eligible, amongst others not covered by previous grant schemes.
Locality Awards	A reminder that Locality Awards have been launched for 2020/21. If you know of a community group in need of some funding, please put them in touch with me.
Disabled Facilities Grant	In the recent Performance Reporting we raised concerns, again, that the grant available is not being spent. If you know anyone who needs any kind of adaptation to their home, from a handrail to a wet room, please ask them to get in touch. The application process is very straightforward.

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Councillor Report July 2020

Mellis Parish Council

Councillor Jessica Fleming, Hartismere Division, Suffolk

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County Council and Covid-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan - The Plan contains measures to manage and contain any localised outbreak of Coronavirus in the County. Delivery of the Plan is the responsibility of the Suffolk COVID-19 Coordination Centre. A copy of the plan is available [here](#).

Public Transport - as of Monday 6th July concessionary bus passes in Suffolk are NOT valid before 9.30am Mon – Fri. Also, all passengers are required to wear face covering on public transport.

The Connecting Communities mini-bus services operate Monday to Friday 7am to 7pm. Further details can be found at communities.suffolkonboard.com or by calling 0345 606 6171.

Public Health Services during COVID-19 – Please refer to the link below for updates concerning health services provided or commissioned by Suffolk County Council:

<https://sway.office.com/m5RhYSBclOQe7DUF?ref=Link>

A140 Roundabouts – Construction has commenced on the roundabouts, the A140 will need to be closed over 2 weekends for connection with diversion via the A143 and A14, dates to be advised. The COVID-19 lockdown has slightly delayed the scheme, roundabouts and link road will be completed in November 2020 and all by February 2021. <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/transport-planning/a140-eye-airfield-junction-improvements/>

Schools Opening – Both primary and secondary schools are gradually opening, decisions about this are made by individual schools. Refer to <https://schoolclosures.suffolk.gov.uk/>

Suffolk's Recycling Centres (HWRCs) – Booking is still required, as are contactless card payments for items for which there is a charge. Trade waste is now accepted along with car trailers. Compost is available for purchase. www.suffolk.gov.uk/recyclingcentres or call 0345 606 6067.