

MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Ms Jane Challis

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING of MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 22ND AUGUST 2024 @ 6:30PM IN MELLIS MEMORIAL HALL

Present: Cllr L Read, Cllr A Cross, Cllr Farley, Cllr Lockett, Cllr Paterson
Clerk – J Challis, CC Cllr Fleming, CC Cllr Warboys

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

None received.

3 To consider requests for Dispensations on agenda items

None received.

4 To resolve the draft minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 22nd July 2024 are a true and correct record

The draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 22nd July 2024 were approved unanimously with 2 abstentions, (councillor who was not present at the meeting, and councillor who had not had time to read the minutes).

5 Report from County Councillor

CC Cllr Fleming read her report, a copy of which can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

Further to the meeting with Joshua White from Highways, Cllr Fleming said it would be worth investigating HGV signage for the Mellis Road, and liaising with Yaxley and Wortham & Burgate Parish Councils on this.

6 Report from District Councillor

DC Cllr Warboys read his report, a copy of which can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

Cllr Lockett asked how MSDC advertise the Household Support Fund, which is open to both private and social tenants. There was a discussion on engagement with tenants. Councillors raised concern that lack of awareness may result in vulnerable, eligible households not accessing the funding available.

Cllr Read thanked Cllr Fleming and Cllr Warboys for their reports.

7:36pm Cllr Fleming left the meeting.

7 Public Participation Session (10 minutes set aside)

No members of the public present.

8 Chair's Report

- Cllr Read reported that Steve Aylward from Suffolk Wildlife Trust, has confirmed they are aware of concerns raised by residents regarding horses grazing the common, but currently no action is being taken.
- Cllr Read has approached Hubbard Garden Services regarding ongoing maintenance work for Mellis Garden, but due to their current workload, they are unable to provide a quotation.
- The Parish Council noticeboard outside the entrance to the Memorial Hall is for council business and notices only. There have been notices put up recently that are not council related, which Cllr Read has removed. Cllr Read will speak to the Memorial Hall Committee to ensure they are aware.

7:50pm Cllr Warboys left the meeting.

9 Clerk/RFO's Report

- National Grid Norwich to Tilbury consultation: the final response was submitted to National Grid prior to the deadline of 11:59pm 29th July 2024. Councillors thanked the Clerk for her hard work and time taken to prepare the draft response.
- Cathy Smith From Suffolk Wildlife Trust has visited Mellis Garden to view the progress since her initial visit in November 2022. Positive feedback has been received from Cathy, however she has recommended checking the thistles which are growing in the garden, because spear and creeping thistle are considered injurious weeds under the Weeds Act 1959.
- Essex & Suffolk Water will be conducting repair and upgrade work to leaking stop taps in the Memorial Hall car park on 30th August 2024. The Hall is not in use on that day.
- NALC is seeking views from local councils on the government's proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is proposing revising the NPPF to achieve sustainable growth in the planning system. The consultation also includes wider policy proposals concerning increasing planning fees, local plan intervention criteria and appropriate thresholds for certain Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. To help inform NALC's response, councils are invited to complete NALC's online survey by 9 September at 12:00 noon. A link has been sent to councillors, who are encouraged to complete the survey. Councillors can complete the survey as individual councillors.
- The Suffolk Climate Action Team are running 'Keep the Heat', a project which enables community groups and parish/town councils the free use of thermal imaging cameras and equipment to carry out heat loss surveys in their local community. Councils need to submit an Expression of Interest by 30th August 2024 to help gauge interest for this year's project.
After discussing, councillors agreed they would like to submit their interest.
- Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are undertaking two separate consultations on the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Part 2 Development Plan Document Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and the Proposed Approach to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, from Thursday 22nd August until 4pm on Monday 30th September 2024. Full details sent to councillors.
- The next meetings of the Progress Power Community Benefit Fund are due to take place on 17th September 2024 and 28th January 2025. The funding is not open for applications yet. Details of the meetings have not been received so the Clerk will contact MSDC to ensure they have the correct contact details.

- Suffolk County Council Area Rights of Way team have requested confirmation as to whether the original finger posts at each end of the Carnser have been disposed of. They need to be reinstated, and new posts installed if the originals are not available. They have stated a cost of £80.00 per post, however the original posts were rotten and broken, so should have been replaced FOC.

10 Planning

To Consider –

- DC/24/03612 Proposal: Application for works to trees in a Conservation Area - Reduce 2No Lime trees (T1 and T3) as they have outgrown position. Location: 6 Robinsons Mill, The Common, Mellis, Eye Suffolk IP23 8DN.
- DC/24/03590 Proposal: Application for works to trees in a Conservation Area - Dismantle 1No Ash tree (T1) to stump level (rear garden of no. 2) and dismantle Twin stem Ash tree (T2) to stump level (in rear garden of No 3). Location: 2 Aggas Acre, Mellis, Eye, Suffolk IP23 8DP.
- DC/24/03367 Proposal: Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Reduction of tree by two thirds to a height of 10ft. Location: Saddlers Cottage, The Common, Mellis, Eye Suffolk IP23 8EB.

Councillors approved unanimously that they have no comment against the above applications. Cllr Paterson will review the work carried in his capacity as Tree Warden.

ACTION – Clerk to add no comment on MSDC Planning Portal, as above.

To Receive an Update on:

- DC/24/02322 – Application to amend working hours to include Saturday-Sunday 7:00-19:00. National Grid Yaxley 400kV Substation, Leys Lane, Yaxley, Eye, Suffolk, IP23 8DX – **AWAITING DECISION.**
- DC/23/05647 – Approval of details reserved by Requirement 16 (Construction Hours) pursuant to the Progress Power (Gas Fired Power Station) Order 2015. Progress Power Ltd, Potash Lane, Eye, Suffolk, IP23 7HE – **AWAITING DECISION.**

11 Tree Warden's Report

Nothing to report.

12 Footpath Wardens' Report

Cllr Farley reported that Suffolk County Council have cut the footpaths they are responsible for. The cutting has been carried out very well, and made a big difference to the accessibility of the paths ways.

13 To discuss Memorial Hall car park maintenance quotations

Three quotations have now been obtained for the work required, details of which were shared with councillors. Councillors will review the quotations further before deciding on their preferred contractor at another meeting. As all the quotations are in excess of £10,000.00, funding will need to be secured in order the work to proceed. After discussing, it was agreed to apply for the maximum grant of £10,000.00 from the new Progress Power Community Benefit Fund, which opens imminently for applications. Should this be unsuccessful, an application will be made for a Capital Grant when the round opens in November.

ACTION – Clerk to submit funding applications as above.

14 Speeding and traffic concerns within Mellis, including updated VAS quotations

The site meeting was held with Joshua White from Suffolk Highways, on 6th August 2024, to look at locations for the VAS device and village gateways, as well as other options to address the speeding and traffic concerns. It was attended by Cllr Luckett and DC Cllr Warboys; the Clerk was unable to attend. Cllr Luckett prepared a report detailing the mitigation discussed, in order of priority, with councillors prior to the meeting. The VAS sign, village gateways, signage repairs, and

Community Speed Watch team are considered to be the highest priority, with lesser actions including investigation of Quiet Lane designations, engagement with local HGV and bus companies, and HGV signage.

Joshua has suggested 7 potential sites for the VAS device to be rotated between, recommending the following 4 sites to be the most effective:

- 1) Left hand side heading into Mellis from Wortham, just before the Memorial Hall
- 2) Right hand side just past Earlsford Road, heading towards Yaxley
- 3) Right hand side by Fern Hill, heading towards Yaxley
- 4) Left hand side opposite the Lodge, heading towards Yaxley

After discussing, Cllr Farley proposed proceeding with the above 4 locations. Seconded by Cllr Paterson, and approved unanimously.

Joshua has also said that he does not feel the council's preferred location for the first village gateway, Dam Lane, is suitable. He recommends the gateway is sited where the 30mph boundary starts, with the current 30mph sign. Cllr Cross said he feels that this location is too far from the parish boundary, and does not address speeding on the S bends by Dam Lane. Cllr Lockett said that extension of the 30mph speed limit was discussed with Joshua White, and requires an evidence based approach as it does not meet Suffolk County Council's criteria.

After discussing further, Cllr Read proposed proceeding with placement of the first village gateway by the current 30mph sign on Mellis Road. Seconded by Cllr Paterson.

Votes: 3 for, 2 against. Motion carried.

It was also agreed for Cllr Lockett to draft a letter to be sent to local haulage and bus companies, who currently use the Mellis Road.

ACTION – Clerk to submit VAS device location and village gateway applications to Highways. Cllr Lockett to draft letter as above.

15 Mellis Garden (Newsteads Land) update, including approval of commemorative bench, and maintenance work contract

As reported by Cllr Read within item 8, no one has been found yet to provide a quotation for the ongoing maintenance work contract. Cllr Cross said he feels it is very important to find someone, rather than relying on the good will of councillors and/or volunteers. Cllr Paterson said he knows two local gardeners who may be interested in taking on the work. He will make contact with them prior to the next meeting.

Cllr Cross has not received the design proof or quotation for the commemorative bench yet. Cllr Farley suggested the council also considers a bench made from recycled materials which is both environmentally friendly and low maintenance. Councillors agreed to consider quotations for this type of bench too.

ACTION – Cllr Paterson to speak to gardeners regarding the ongoing maintenance work, Cllr Cross and Cllr Farley to obtain quotations for the bench, as above.

16 New dog bins update

Still awaiting approval from MSDC for the three locations.

17 Phone box stained glass repair quotations, and relocation of defibrillator

Cllr Read reported that he has spoken to Laurence the volunteer who looks after the defibrillator. Laurence does not feel that the location of the defibrillator needs to be changed. He feels the problem is lack of signage showing where the location is. Signage was looked at previously by the council, but not progressed because it was decided to relocate it.

After discussing, it was agreed to leave the defibrillator in the phone box, but add signage in the top panels, and at various locations in the parish, so people are aware of the location.

Cllr Read suggesting approaching Diss Signs, who supplied the new sign for the Memorial Hall car park. Agreed unanimously.

ACTION – Cllr Read to request quotation for defibrillator signage from Diss Signs.

18 Parish Council annual insurance renewal

The insurance is due for renewal on 29th September 2024. Renewal details have been received from Zurich, and comparable quotations requested from CAS Business Services and Clear Councils.

After discussing the quotations and requirements of the council, Cllr Read proposed renewing with Zurich. Seconded by Cllr Farley, and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to advise Zurich as above, and thank CAS Business Services and Clear Councils for their quotations.

19 To approve Internal Audit comments 2023/24

The Internal Audit comments were shared with councillors prior to the meeting, and approved unanimously by councillors.

Councillors expressed their thanks to the Clerk for a successful audit.

ACTION – Clerk to publish.

20 Finance

A list of payments and receipts, expenditure against the budget, and bank reconciliation to 24th June 2024 were sent to councillors prior to the meeting.

i) Confirmation of Barclays bank account balance

The Barclays bank account balance as of **24th July 2024 - £28,576.19**

ii) Review and authorisation of payments presented:

1	J. Challis	Clerk Admin August	£409.67
2	J. Challis	Expenses – mileage July meeting	£5.94
3	HMRC	PAYE/NIC	£1.00
4	ICO	Annual fee	£40.00
5	Memorial Hall	August hire	£30.00
6	Memorial Hall	Rural Coffee Caravan July hire	£20.00
7	Zurich	Insurance renewal	£264.00

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).**

iii) Confirmation of councillor conducting internal audit checks

After discussing, it was agreed unanimously for Cllr Read to conduct the checks, with 1 abstention (councillor Read).

iv) Budget review

A budget review to 24th June 2024 was prepared by the Clerk and shared with councillors, who noted that the cost to empty the dog/litter bins was approximately 35% higher than budgeted. All other items are in line with the budget.

v) Reserves review

A review of the reserves to 24th June 2024 was prepared by the Clerk and shared with councillors.

The CIL figure has been amended to show an available amount of £5,657.00 because the VAT had not been removed from the expenditure for 2023/24.
The CIL Report 2023/24 has been amended to reflect this, and the updated report was approved unanimously by councillors.

ACTION – Clerk to send amended CIL report 2023/24 to MSDC.

21 Matters for future consideration

- Wellhead Project
- Traffic/speeding concerns within Mellis
- Phone box-stained glass repairs & location of defibrillator
- Memorial Hall car park maintenance
- Digitisation of the History of Mellis

22 The date of the meeting is Thursday 19th September 2024 at 6:30pm in Mellis Memorial Hall.

Meeting close at 9:22pm.

District Councillor's Report:
Gislingham Ward
Mellis, Gislingham, Thornham, `Wortham & Burgate, Wickham Skeith Parish Councils
August 24

Local listed building consent order	At July's Council meeting, a process was agreed to enable thousands of Grade II listed building owners to make sensitive energy efficiency upgrades more quickly and easily. The first such initiative in the country, it will involve both Mid Suffolk and Babergh working closely with Historic England, and potential upgrades will include improving or replacing windows, and permitting solar PV and other renewable technologies to be installed on un-listed outbuildings. The aim is to enable residents to more easily reduce the energy needed to power and heat their listed homes.
State of the District Report	Suffolk's second State of the District Report (2024) was discussed at last month's Council meeting, the first was produced in 2023. Drawing on a range of open-source data and the Council's Resident Survey, the report provides an overview highlighting many of our district's strengths, alongside some key challenges that the Council is seeking to address. In doing so, it forms part of the evidence base underpinning the strategic plan (The Mid Suffolk Plan) and helps to inform and support the district's actions. The Report is available on the Mid Suffolk website here. https://baberghmidsuffolk.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s35544/Appendix%20A%20-%20State%20of%20the%20District%20Report.pdf
New Grants available	MSDC have launched 3 new grant funds which utilise the Government's REPF (Rural English Prosperity Fund). There are three schemes available for activities which will have a positive impact on rural business and communities. Details and application forms can be found at https://heartofsuffolk.co.uk/invest/business-support/grants-and-funding/rural-spf-fund/ . Some of the income generated from Gateway 14 is being used to provide grants to enhance Stowmarket Town Centre. Details of this scheme can be found here: https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/stowmarket-town-centre-gateway-fund .
Household Support Fund	The household support fund is available to help tenants who are finding it difficult to pay their housing costs, and in some cases can also be used to reduce rent arrears. Please encourage any residents in need to apply via the MSDC website https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/household-support-fund or to phone 0300 1234000, option 3.
Call for Biodiversity Land Summit	MSDC are holding a 'call for land' summit on 5 th September, 10am-2pm, at the Mix in Stowmarket. Any landowner who would like to use their land to help wildlife – for example by tree or hedge planting or creating a meadow – is welcome to attend. This is a free event, and advice, support, and resources from local environmental organisations will be available. Register your interest at https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/call-for-land-summit-tickets-950534031877
Norwich to Tilbury	The Statutory Consultation on the proposed Norwich to Tilbury Pylons came to a close last month and the Chair of Mid Suffolk District Council has written to Edward Miliband MP, the Secretary of State for Energy, Security and Net Zero. His email address is: secretary.state@energysecurity.gov.uk

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

cils, August 2024

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

Bus Service Changes – Due to a change in management of Simonds, many bus services will change as of the beginning of September. There are no changes affecting Mellis (or Yaxley). The contract covering the 110/113/114 was retendered this summer but no changes to the timetable were proposed and it is staying with Simonds as the operator.

Highways and Speeding – Feedback from a site visit by SCC Highways officer Josh White are noted.

Sunnica Solar Farm Approval - Suffolk County Council has expressed its extreme disappointment that a huge solar farm has been approved in West Suffolk. The Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, Ed Miliband MP, has announced that approval had been granted for the Development Consent Order, as proposed by Sunnica. The project will see 2,792 acres of solar panels and battery storage installed in West Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. Additional applications for major solar arrays are anticipated.

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's Deputy Cabinet Member for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, said: *"The approval of this solar farm is a massive blow to local communities, agriculture, nature and our landscape in the west of Suffolk. "I am frankly shocked that the poorest infrastructure application that I have ever dealt with, has now been approved - we highlighted numerous deficiencies in the submission which have been ignored."*

On the same subject, the anticipated judicial review from four local councils against the Sunnica solar farm project will not be pursued after West Suffolk Council and Cambridgeshire County Council chose to withdraw from the process. Suffolk County Council and East Cambridgeshire District Council remained committed to seeing through the legal challenge but were left in an impossible position. The costs for the two remaining councils versus the likely financial return in a successful outcome are no longer a justifiable use of public funds.

Major/ EIA Planning - Application for Outline Planning Permission - DC/22/00416 for Erection of petrol and EV charging with associated shop, roadside restaurant with drive through facility, B1 and B8 starter units, HGV lorry parking facility for rest area and drivers' facilities as a phased development. Location: Land Adjacent North Roundabout, A140 Ipswich Road, Brome, Part In The Parish of Thrandeston IP23 8AW This outline application comes to Mid Suffolk's planning committee next Wednesday 28th August. It is one of several major applications in the Eye Airfield area, others currently at scoping stage include expansion of Cranswick's Chicken Operation and a related application for a reservoir in Brome to supply water to Cranswick.

Carbon Charter Awards - Suffolk County Council's annual Carbon Charter event, hosted at the Coddensham Centre on 11 July 2024, honoured businesses from Suffolk and Norfolk for their achievements in environmental sustainability.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust and Volvo Trucks UK were guest speakers. The Carbon Charter was set up in 2010 by Suffolk County Council and the Environment Agency. Since then, over 500 businesses have received Carbon Charter awards. Earlier this year, the Carbon Charter itself received the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT) award for Delivering Clean Growth in the UK. Refer to www.carboncharter.org

Flood Investigation Report issued for Framlingham - Suffolk County Council has today published a detailed report into one of the worst-hit communities during Storm Babet in late 2023. Refer to <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/framlingham-flood-investigation-report-24-07-2024.pdf>

Longer term recommendations emphasise improvements to drainage infrastructure and creating new natural flood management features to reduce catchment flood risk. Longer-term measures would require external funding and collaboration with landowners and communities to implement.

Brecks Fen Edge Project Festival - Over 50 events, many free, will celebrate the fifth and final year of The Brecks' Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme this September. Activities include walks around the River Lark, to yoga, wildlife identification and outdoor swimming; a huge range of activities for all ages and abilities is planned. The Brecks' Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme began in 2020 aided by a grant of £1.97 million from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. The festival runs from 7 to 22 September 2024, refer to www.brecks.org

Fire Safety - Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service is asking everyone to be fire safety aware. Last summer firefighters responded to more than 200 fires in woodland, heaths, farmland, and fields, between July and September. During 2022 there were 500 fires due to extreme temperatures. During hot dry weather, people are encouraged to:

- Avoid barbecues and campfires in public open spaces.
- Ensure that any cigarettes are totally out and disposed of properly.
- Pick up the remove any glass items after a picnic as they can start a fire.
- Report any fires in the countryside immediately by calling 999.

Farmers are also urged to take measures such as storing hay and straw with a break between stacks and away from other buildings, especially those housing livestock or containing fuels and chemicals.

Norwich to Tilbury Pylons – No new information to date.

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