



# MELTON PARISH COUNCIL



MPC(14)M\_APM

**Minutes** of the Annual Parish Meeting on Thursday 24th April 2014 commencing at 1900 in The Lindos Centre Saddlemakers Lane Melton IP12 1PP.

**Present:**

**Parish Councillors**

Cllr Mrs BK Abbott [Chairman]  
Cllr Mr JE Bale  
Cllr Miss EA Barrington  
Cllr Mr GK Butterwick  
Cllr Mrs JEJ Eckersley  
Cllr Mrs EJJ Hilson  
Cllr Mr MJ Kennedy

Cllr Miss KS Martin [Vice Chairman]  
Cllr Mr AH Porter  
Cllr Mr MW Sherwen  
Cllr Mr C Taylor  
Cllr Mr A Thomson  
Cllr Mr ML Webb

**Electors**

Mr JE Nafton  
Mrs M Hampton  
Mr J Hampton  
Mr J White  
Mr P Brockett  
Mr S Dunkerley  
Ms K Broyd  
Ms J Dale  
Ms S Margittai  
Mr L Dann  
Ms B Dann

Ms J Kennedy  
Mr M Girling  
Mr J Eckersley  
Ms K Colbear  
Ms M Burgess  
Ms C McBurney  
Mrs L Southall  
Mr B Hawkins  
Mrs V Hawkins  
Mr J West  
Mrs West

**In Attendance:**

Mr MJ Green [Clerk to Melton Parish Council]

**14.01 INTRODUCTION – CHAIRMAN MELTON PARISH COUNCIL**

The Chairman of Melton Parish Council, Cllr Mrs Bryony Abbott, warmly welcomed everyone to the annual parish meeting.

**14.02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The following apologies were received:  
Mrs M Addington  
Mrs E Ashford  
Ms Therese Coffey MP

Cllr Mr AG Corston  
The Revd M Hatchett

**14.03 REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE MELTON PARISH COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2014**

The Chairman read from her Annual Report that is also available on the parish council website at:

[www.melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk/index.html](http://www.melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk/index.html)

Melton Parish Council is made up of fifteen full councillors who serve on three committees, Finance Employment and Risk Management, Planning and Transport, and Recreation.

Meetings of full council take place bi-monthly and there are monthly meetings for Planning and Transport. Finance committee follows the calendar for setting the precept, agreeing the budget and monitoring the management accounts. Recreation committee meets regularly to manage the work of our contractors for the playing field and woodland management.

All our meetings take place in public and everyone is welcome. Agendas and minutes are published on our website. [www.melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk](http://www.melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk)

Achievements over the past full council year include the following highlights from our work.

#### **14.03.01 Planning**

Our Planning committee is chaired by Cllr Butterwick, one of a team of long-standing and informed councillors with substantial knowledge of planning decisions. Over the past twelve months Melton Parish Council has considered forty-four substantive applications, seeking permission for large extensions or new developments, mostly private residential but also some alterations of conditions to business premises.

Suffolk Coastal District Council is the main planning authority in this area and they have recently computerised their system so we now receive everything to do with planning here in Melton.

Melton has several so-called brownfield sites where permission for development has been granted but building work has yet to start. These include Girdlestons and the old GAH site where a care home is planned. We have made it clear that we would prefer to see these sites brought back into use before development is allowed in the countryside.

Currently Melton is facing significant change to the Woods Lane area with an application from a developer for outline planning permission for 180 dwellings opposite the Bredfield Road turning. This would result in pressures on our infrastructure in the village and early consultation by the developer with local residents resulted in concerns about increased traffic on Woods Lane at an already hazardous junction.

We are grateful to all Melton residents who completed the Questionnaire recently sent out by the Neighbourhood Planning Group, led by Cllr. Barrington. We received good feedback that the forms were user friendly and were pleased with a response rate of 20%, which shows that planning is very much a live issue in the village. Results are still being analysed but there are some early themes emerging, including concerns about perceived threats of over-development and increasing traffic problems. People enjoy the quality of life we have here in Melton and they value especially our playing fields, woodlands and access to the River Deben. 48% of respondents to the survey would like to see the Pavilion rebuilt. We are aware that it is an important part of the Garrod memorial bequest but it is no longer fit for purpose and the dilapidations are considerable. On the other hand there is an opportunity to provide an improved recreational facility on the site, subject to planning and substantial fund-raising efforts if there is enough support.

The new Neighbourhood Plan is one of the most important changes made to the Planning laws in recent times and Melton has been an early adopter of this process. Our overarching vision for planning in the village is to have the right development in the right place of the right design and quality.

Over the past year Melton Parish Council has attended meetings of the EDF Community Forum and we will continue to monitor progress with the development proposals for Sizewell as they affect Melton. Currently a further round of public consultations is planned for later this year.

#### **14.03.02 Crime reports and Emergency Plan**

Compared to local towns, Melton remains a safe place to live, although a spate of recent burglaries gave cause for concern. We participate in the Safer Neighbourhood policing initiative and were represented at their meetings last year by Cllr. Martin. As residents will be only too well aware, our main policing problems in Melton are to do with car parking and incidents of speeding traffic, of particular concern are Woods Lane and the crossroads near Melton Primary School.

The St. Jude's storm in December resulted in police advising residents in low-lying roads near the river to move from their homes for their own safety. This led us to identify the need for a village Emergency Plan and work by Melton Parish Council is underway with Cllr. Taylor leading. We are grateful to John West who has volunteered to contribute his expertise in crisis management and the parish council would welcome anyone interested in working with us as volunteers to help with the implementation of Emergency Planning.

#### **14.03.03 Melton Woods and Playing Fields**

The jewel in Melton's crown, we were sad that our woodlands suffered considerable wind damage in the storms of December 2013. We completed a programme of works to rectify and remove the damaged branches and make the area safe for people to enjoy the walks and trails again. Recreation committee have been working on the development of a Tree and Woodland management plan to enable us to preserve the trees for the longer term. I would like to extend my thanks to the Friends of Melton Woods who volunteer to help conserve this important community asset. Signs have gone up in the woods to remind people that camping and the lighting of fires are not allowed. The playing fields were in a soggy state over the winter and still need to be drained because of the all the wet weather but it has been difficult to get anyone to quote for the work. Suffolk Wildlife Trust has been assisting councillors and volunteers with practical help and expert advice on hedgerow restoration.

Cllr. Eckersley chairs the Recreation committee, ably supported by Cheryl Tye, our Assistant Clerk and Mr. Keith Stebbings our Park Warden. Mrs. Elizabeth Ashford, a long-standing resident, has volunteered her time to work with Melton Parish Council on Recreation Committee. The woods and fields are the centre of village life here in Melton and I am grateful to the whole team who look after them, including our contractors SCL L/S Mgt Ltd.

The parish council has recently acquired an amenity piece of land at Orchard Close near Bredfield Road, to be maintained on behalf of the local community and we are also seeking to acquire more land in the village centre to provide car parking for shoppers, with Cllr. Corston leading on this.

#### **14.03.04 Our Community Partners**

Melton Parish Council works in partnership with local organisations in the village to strengthen community identity and involvement. We are represented on the governing body of Melton Primary School by Cllr. Martin, at the Burness Parish Rooms by Cllr. Porter and on the Melton Trust charity by Cllr. Thompson. We make an annual grant to the Melton Messenger, the only publication that goes consistently to every household in Melton. The Melton Messenger is published by the team at St. Andrew's Church but is much more than a church newsletter as it aims to provide information and news from all around the village of interest to everyone. This year we also made a small grant to the local branch of the Citizens' Advice Bureau in recognition of the work they do for Melton residents. The new Melton Women's Institute is up and running, meeting monthly at the Burness Parish Rooms. Community life is thriving in Melton because of all the wonderful people willing to give their valuable time and contribute all their wisdom and experience, greatly appreciated! The village Fete has become an annual event raising funds for the school and the church and later this year there will be a series of events marking the 1914 centenary.

#### **14.03.05 Melton Parish Council Precept and Budget**

We set the precept for this year so that there will be no increase and in fact residents will notice a small reduction in their council tax paid to Suffolk Coastal District Council. Our Clerk Mr. Malcolm Green is also our Responsible Finance Officer and he assists us in the preparation and management of the budget. Cllr. Thompson chairs our Finance committee and I am grateful to both for their knowledge and expertise in managing and monitoring our accounts.

Your councillors work hard to be proactive and do their best for the residents of Melton. We are a non-political council and pledge ourselves to be objective in the cause of local democracy. We work together effectively and have good regular attendance at meetings. We have stability because many of our councillors are long-standing while others have joined more recently and so there is a good mix of skills and experience to call on.

Melton Parish Council has recently relocated its office from the bungalow at the Lindos Centre to a new office based with the district council at Melton Hill. We were sad to leave the Lindos Centre as it suited us very well and it is a fantastic community resource but co-locating with the district council has enabled savings to be made that can be ploughed back into community grants and contingency reserves.

This is my last report as Chair of Melton Parish Council as I will be stepping down after three enjoyable and challenging years. I would like to think that we have made a difference for the community and I thank everyone for their hard work and support.

#### **14.03.06 Annual Report from Therese Coffey MP**

Sorry I cannot join you at your Annual Meeting but please find an update on some of the work that I have undertaken on issues that affect your parish and the wider area.

The recent bad weather and subsequent flooding affected many parishes. The Government announced compensation schemes for householders and businesses and we have made changes to the Bellwin Scheme to ensure local authorities are reimbursed for dealing with emergencies. I have asked the District Council to work with parish and town Councils to ensure all emergency response plans are up to date. I know Melton wasn't particularly affected but the emergency plan is important nonetheless.

I wrote to the Council leader, Ray Herring, about the grant support for the local council tax support scheme. The Government encouraged billing authorities to pass a portion of the grant down to Town & Parish Councils affected by the change in their tax base. SCDC did pass down some of the grant this year and I will continue to press them.

Network Rail have informed me that the barrier level crossing is due to be installed by the end of June. There will be an overnight half road closure in place and that it will have no impact on trains.

Thanks to anyone who signed (2,292 did) which added to the meetings with the Prime Minister, the Chancellor and the Transport Secretary. I am pleased that the Government decided to proceed with the £1.5bn upgrade but drop the toll. On rail, the Government has established an expert group tasked with finding ways to speed up rail services to Suffolk & Norfolk for passengers, building on the work already underway to increase capacity on the line. The Transport Department has asked the current operator to develop plans to refurbish and modernise the current fleet, update interiors and provide improved facilities, such as power sockets so commuters and business travellers can work more easily as they travel by train. On freight rail, this has increased substantially. Network Rail is developing a scheme involving loops at various points along the branch line that will increase resilience.

On health, I have been pressing the case for a better Ambulance Service since 2011 when I was first alerted to the poor response times suffered by patients in rural areas. It became clear after very little change that we needed an entire new Board and I campaigned with my fellow MPs to make that happen. I also secured and spoke in debates in Parliament and held numerous meetings with Ministers and Ambulance bosses. We now have a new Chief Executive under Dr Anthony Marsh who successfully runs the West Midlands Ambulance Service. He has already shown impressive

leadership and will focus on a few key priorities to turnaround the service. These are: - the recruitment of 400 new student paramedics, accelerating the ambulance replacement programme, reducing the amount of response cars, maximising clinical staff on the frontline and reducing overheads to invest in more paramedics. I also led a debate in Parliament to reform the NHS funding formula to reflect the greater needs and demands of elderly patients, who are not being recognised as much as they should in the allocation of funds across the country, particularly in rural, coastal areas. Some changes have been made but they do not go far enough. I continue to press the board of NHS England to do that.

On education, there is still similar progress to make on schools funding although I am glad the 'per pupil' funding has increased by £105 for all schools in Suffolk as the Government recognises the rurality element. I have put a lot of attention and focus on schools liaising with the County and the DfE.

On energy, ongoing discussions are happening regarding Sizewell C. I am conscious of the traffic issues that may be generated locally. I now chair the Suffolk Coast Energy Board which includes representatives from business, further education, district and county council and, crucially, Government departments to ensure we have a joined up approach to the investment in energy in the county including enabling our young people to have the right skills to take advantage of the job opportunities as well as an eye on legacy benefits.

I continue my work on off-gas grid issues. We are starting to make some progress. There is now a code of conduct for oil suppliers (those who belong to the federation at least) – the key feature of which is that the price you are quoted is the price you pay. I am still working on earlier Winter Fuel payments which is proving technically challenging to identify those who would benefit, without contravening data protection laws. I was pleased to be appointed Off Grid champion and please look out for the launch of the domestic Renewable Heat Incentive which should make it cheaper to buy a biomass replacement boiler.

Broadband is still being deployed across the county. The street cabinet to give fibre broadband to Melton was upgraded in March serving premises with postcodes beginning with IP12 1.

I undertook a two-day constituency tour visiting every town and village in the constituency. Like last year, many of the issues raised actually related to local council matters and so I have involved local councillors to resolve the issues.

Finally, as you will have probably seen from my recent letter I have moved my constituency office to Felixstowe. I hope you have been able to display the poster I sent on your notice-board. If you require any more posters then please let me know.

#### **14.04 MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2014**

Copies had been available on the Parish Council Website and at the meeting

Minutes MPC(13)M\_AGM previously circulated were received, noted and signed as a correct record.

**Proposed by:** Cllr Porter

**Seconded by:** Cllr Martin

#### **14.05 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AND PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Planning and Transport Committee outlined the concept of the Neighbourhood Plan introduced by government as part of the localism act.

Hopefully all of you will know that this Parish Council is well into the production of a Neighbourhood Plan for the village. We have a working group of about 20 people, mostly residents, who are helping with the work of putting it together. The work involved is extensive, not least because it involves constant and detailed consultation with all residents and local businesses as well as landowners, neighbours and any other 'interested parties.'

What we are trying to achieve here is a document that, if passed by you in a referendum, will provide real and lasting protection to our village with regards to all future development.

It is NOT a way to stop development completely but it is a way to give us a much better chance of getting it where and when we want it, in the appropriate quantity and with appropriate design.

The most recent piece of work we have done has been to send round a business questionnaire and a household questionnaire. The full analysis of both these will take us some time but I have some preliminary results here which I am going to share as it shows what direction our plan may well take once we begin to think about writing actual policies.

It is also useful to look at the stats we have already because we may well need them to show WHY a huge housing estate at the top of Woods Lane would probably be a bad idea.

So....From these conclusions we will start to write the policies that will form our Neighbourhood Plan, at which point we will consult with you again to make sure that what we are writing has the full support of the village.

Policies that we may well be looking at with regards to the results we have already might be as follows:

1. A policy which restricts major development anywhere where it will increase the already problematic flow of traffic along Woods Lane and down towards the railway crossing.
2. A policy which ensures that infrastructure (roads, services, transport etc.) is in place for any new developments and is guaranteed as part of the development if not in place beforehand.
3. Policies protecting the 'green lung' of Melton village and keeping it rural and part of the countryside
4. A policy to protect and develop more bridleways and footpaths so that we have long circular walks around the green belt of the village as many paths finish on busy roads.
5. A policy which maintains the village identity of Melton and stops it becoming a big suburb of Woodbridge
6. A policy which makes sure we get good and appropriate DESIGNS for new developments

This is a very basic and early summary of what we MAY be focusing on based on evidence gathered so far. It is not definitive.

I want to thank everyone here very much for any input you have already had to this process and I hope very much you will continue to follow what we are doing and get involved. This is one of the most important things we can do for Melton right now as developers are always circling and the pressure on us to accept houses that we neither need nor want is increasing.

Please keep your eye on the website which will be constantly updated with any news.

More events will take place over the summer and for the rest of this year and there will be further opportunities for you to give your views and comment on the policies we will soon be working on.

### **297 questionnaires have been input so far:**

We have about 200 more to input making it an overall 20% response to this questionnaire.

(Business Questionnaire also got an excellent response of approx. 17% but we haven't yet had a chance to analyse this as we have been concentrating on the Household one...)

Over half those responding have children.

Reasons to live here:

Nr Woodbridge – 70%

Rural – 40%

Quality of urban environment – 23%

## OBJECTIVES – 70% interested in Preserving our Village Identity

### Threats to Melton

- over development
- increase in traffic
- losing our village identity and being swallowed by Woodbridge

### Traffic problems:

- Woods Lane, Traffic Lights, Railway crossing
- Melton Road
- Bredfield Road
- The Street

### How to stop traffic issues getting worse:

- avoiding over development
- don't build on Woods Lane
- make sure infrastructure is there FIRST before building new houses

### Restricted development:

Large Commercial, Retail, Industrial

Large, dense estates and anything high rise

NO supermarkets

73% Small residential

51% Affordable housing

49% Extensions

48% Special needs

38% Small retail

38% Community buildings

38% Small Business

28% Infill

Conservation area important – 99%

Most think it has the right boundary

Those that don't pretty much all say that the playing field and woods should be included in it. Also included by many would be Melton Old Church and St Audry's Park.

47% think we should make more spaces for parking opposite McColls

91% think Design criteria is important. Should be throughout Melton, not restricted to certain sites. In keeping with what is here already, traditional designs mixed with WELL designed eco-friendly / modern

Majority of all respondents value River and playing fields

48% want to rebuild the pavilion.

Suggestions centre on a café, loos, place to use for events and to rent for functions.

59% don't believe there are enough facilities for young people

The Planning and Transport Committee met every month over the period April 2013 to March 2014 and considered a total of 33 'substantive' planning applications [i.e. seeking permission for new buildings or large extensions to existing ones]. As the district council's new computer system now means we get everything to do with planning permissions, we also received 22 'non-substantive' applications [for approval of materials to be used, confirmation that planning consent is not required, control of advertising, etc.; these we can generally ignore, but occasionally they contain something which requires more

attention. The great majority of applications considered were for extensions to private houses, but there were a handful of alterations to or conditions of use of business premises.

There are still some applications where a decision to approve or refuse has yet to be made by Suffolk Coastal, these include 5 houses at Deben Mill and 11 on the 'Woodroyd' [plot on Woods Lane.

There are also a number of derelict [or brownfield] sites where planning permission has been granted, but building work has yet to start. These include the former Girdlestone factory on Station Road, the former GAH Refrigeration factory on Melton Road and the former Anglian Water site on Bredfield Road. On a more positive note, work has at last started on the block of retirement apartments at Deben Mill.

April is not yet out and the next Planning and Transport Committee is not until 28<sup>th</sup> April, but we already have 5 'substantive' and 4 'non-substantive' applications. Two of these are particularly significant. One is seeking outline permission for a small estate of 10 dwellings in the grounds of Cedar House, and on Pyches Road/Melton Hill corner. This is within the 'physical limits boundary' of Melton and the principle of using the land for housing cannot be opposed, although issues such as design, density and traffic impact must be carefully considered.

The other is much more important, it is seeking outline permission for a large estate of 180 dwellings on land at the top of Woods Lane, opposite the Bredfield Road junction. This site is outside the 'physical limits boundary' of Melton and thus deemed to be countryside, on which new development should not be permitted. As it is required by new planning legislation, the developer has held 'pre-application discussions' with the parish council. This was a brief meeting at the end of which the developer was told that a Neighbourhood Plan was being prepared and that the site was regarded a 'greenfield' site which should not be developed. Nothing more was heard until several boxes arrived in the parish council office a fortnight ago; at the time of this meeting we have yet to read the contents.

## ***BREAK FOR REFRESHMENTS***

### **14.06 OPEN FORUM**

#### **14.06.01 Former Girdlestone Site**

There has been no further news on the development of the site but planning consent that lasts for 5 years is now 4 years old.

#### **14.06.02 New Development Site**

A new area of development for consideration in due course by the Planning and Transport Committee which will be larger than the Woods Lane proposal will be subject to a pre-application discussion at the May Planning and Transport Committee meeting.

#### **14.06.03 Melton Primary School**

Mr Mark Girling advised the meeting that the numbers on roll have grown from 103 to 146 over the last few months – the capacity is 210. It is encouraging that children from the village are attending their local school. The school is working in the local community and whilst academic achievement is important the opportunity for children to do something with their lives should not be lost.

Residents are most welcome to visit the school – just ring and book. Cllr Martin, who recently became a community governor to represent Melton Parish Council, added that there is a lovely atmosphere in the school and her visits have inspired her greatly.

#### **14.06.04 Flooding on the Playing Field**

The meeting was advised that the council was working hard to resolve the problem of flooding on the field but a lack of contractors willing to provide estimates for the work was hindering the grant application process with the inevitable delay in work commencing.



**14.06.05 WW1 Heritage Project**

There will be many events organised this year to commemorate the centenary of the start of WW1. A group of village organisations is joining together to mark the solemn occasion by planning a framework of events in the community, including researching the history of the village before, during and after WW1.

There will be a candlelit vigil in the village church on 4<sup>th</sup> August to commemorate the day 'when the lights went out across Europe'. On Remembrance Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> November, there will be a civil ceremony beside the War Memorial involving local groups laying wreaths. Melton Old Church will be open for teas that day and there will be the opportunity to view the original and poignant display of wooden crosses.

The primary school is planning links across the curriculum for the children to learn more about WW1. It is hoped their work will be displayed and there will be a chance for parents, grandparents and the community to visit the school on Armistice Day from 3.30 p.m. onwards.

Watch out for the village big screen showing of a classic WW1 film and on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November there will be a roadshow style event at the Burness Room where we will have the chance to bring along WW1 artefacts and memorabilia.

**14.07 DATE OF NEXT ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015 commencing at 1900 venue TBA

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20:40

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

[Chairman]