



MELTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chair: Councillor Mrs P Warburg

MPC(07)M-AGM

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on Wednesday 25th April 2007 commencing at 7.30 p.m. in Melton Primary School Melton Road Melton.

Present:

Mrs BK Abbott

Mrs J Abbott

Mrs ME Addington

Cllr Mr M Bond

Mr PJ Brockett

Cllr Mr GK Butterwick

Mrs Christine Cone

Mrs Deborah Dann

Cllr Miss ML Davis

Cllr Mrs PD Ferguson

Mr C Footman

Cllr Mr GD Laight

Mrs LS Leonard

Mrs D Lockwood

Mr RP Morrett

Cllr Mr GA Pratley

Cllr Mr MW Sherwen

Cllr Mr KR Tester

Mrs G Tinsley

Cllr Mrs P Warburg [Chair]

In Attendance:

Mr Robert Cutts [Chairman – Melton Primary School]

The Reverend M Hatchett

Mr G Richardson [SCDC Community Safety Officer]

Mr A Rowe [Headteacher – Melton Primary School]

Mr MJ Green [Clerk]

Apologies:

Cllr Mrs CE Aitchison [County Councillor]

Cllr Mr JA Chalmers

Cllr Mr AG Dunford

Cllr JE Lineker

Cllr Mr J Perry [District Councillor]

PC M Thompson [Community Policeman]

The Chair of the Parish Council extended a warm welcome to all those present and formally opened the meeting at 7.30 p.m.

07.01 REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE MELTON PARISH COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2007

07.01.01

Chairman's Report

Cllr Warburg outlined the work of the council over the year. The following is the text of her report:

The Parish Council has met ten times since the last annual meeting in March 2006, including one unadopted meeting in September and three extraordinary ones, including a meeting in February 2007 held principally to consider the Local Development Framework in an open

forum. There has been an average of 10.3 councillors present at meetings, up from 9.7 for the preceding year.

Also in attendance at council meetings have been Mrs C.E. Aitchison (County Councillor), Mr J.W. Perry and Mr. P. Callaghan (District Councillors) and P.C. Mark Thompson, among others and up to seven members of the public.

This year has seen the resignation of Trevor Brown from the office post as Clerk to the Council: This is an office of unsung heroes most of whose work goes on behind the scenes and outside the bimonthly meetings. Trevor has served the council as Clerk for the past 24 years, in which time we have witnessed great changes in the village, all of which have been dealt with by Trevor with his usual mix of cool energy, unflappability and wit. I know we shall all miss him and wish him well.

I would like to thank Mrs Carol Williamson for the sterling work she has performed in the role of temporary Parish Clerk, particularly her help in adopting the National Association of Local Councils Standing Orders and revising the Financial Regulations, and in the search for the new Parish Clerk, Malcolm Green, who was appointed on 1st December last year and officially welcomed at the EGM on 6th December.

Malcolm brings with him managerial skills and many years experience, which are already proving very valuable in these challenging times.

We were delighted in May to welcome the Rev. Michael Hatchett. He and his wife the Rev. Ruth Hatchett have already contributed much to Melton. The Melton Messenger proposed by Michael combines parish council news with the church newsletter. It commenced publication in June and has been an enormous success: delivered to every household in the parish it keeps everyone in touch and informed.

At meeting on 14th March 2006 we welcomed Mr Michael Bond to the Council. His wide experience in the RAF and subsequent management roles will no doubt be of great benefit to the PC.

Mrs Clare Aitchison has kept us abreast of county council developments in particular the implications of the shortfall of the Government's revenue grant on Parish Councils. We have seen the improvements made to the crossroads at the traffic lights and this has had made a marked improvement on the traffic flow. We have watched the building of the new primary school with great excitement. The building is impressive and has been warmly welcomed. The Parish Council wishes the school every success in the future.

Mr John Perry has kept us informed on District Council matters throughout the year in particular the reduced grant settlements. On planning applications Mr Perry reported the great displeasure felt by people in Melton to the building of the Deben Industries Warehouse built alongside Melton Station.

P.C. Thompson's attendance at and reports to the meetings, together with his visible presence in the village have been and continue to be a valued contribution to the peace and safety of village life. A total of 152 suspected crimes were reported between January 2006 and December 2006, with criminal damage being the most commonly

reported offence, followed by theft. Although crime remains generally low in this parish, there have been incidents anti social behaviour in Woodbridge, which have caused concern to Melton residents. Burglaries of residential premises though few in number are nonetheless distressing to those householders involved.

This year saw the opening of the new Melton Parish Council Office at the Lindos Centre. Mr Dunford initiated the development of the Melton Parish Council website

www.melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk , bringing Melton up to speed in its IT function.

Melton Playing Fields. The official opening of the new play area was held on Friday 26th May 2006. Mrs Pam Ferguson was congratulated on her hard work, enthusiasm and in securing the BIFFA Award. Improvements continue with the clearing of the Pond and siting of two new chairs, just two items of a whole range of new developments and projects.

The Parish Council has received 36 applications since March of last year which have been considered by the Planning and General Purpose Group. This figure is down from 56 the previous year and the 64 applications reported in 2005. While again most applications were for extensions to domestic premises and conservatories, the building of the Deben Industries Office and Warehouse, to which the Council strongly objected, the demolition of the old slaughterhouse and its replacement by processing works, the residential development at Beresford Drive, to which strong objection was made, were approved by SCDC.

Melton station attracts an increasing number of passengers however the lack of parking spaces remains an issue. In January the Council submitted an application to Suffolk County Council for a grant towards the cost of constructing 30 parking spaces on land adjacent to the station forecourt. Everyone, including Network Rail, is keen to see this added to the list of Melton's facilities.

The accounts remain in good order and we continue to retain sufficient reserves for occasional items of large expenditure, such as the Playing Fields.

The Finance Report to the end of 2006 was tabled at the meeting on 10th January 2007. After consideration of the current financial position the Council has resolved to apply a precept of £27,600 for 2007/08, the same as for 2006/7. Despite this, the average Band D Council Tax payer will have to pay an increase of £0.78 a year, or 4.6%. This increase has been caused by the decision of the district council which resulted in the loss of 60 houses in Melton Park to Ufford.

At the end of my second and final year as Chairman, I would like to say that it has been both a privilege and a pleasure to have taken the chair of this council over the past two years in such challenging and changing times for the village. We continue to maintain a strong sense of community, identity and spirit. This is due in no small part to the time and efforts of my fellow councillors, the parish clerk, and all those who have given their time to make Melton a better place to live for its residents. My sincere thanks to them all, without whose help and

enthusiasm my time as Chairman would have been less rewarding - not to mention much harder work! . I shall be staying in Melton and look forward to take a great interest in the village.

Cllr Warburg thanked the retiring councillors for all their dedication and hard work on behalf of the people of Melton. Cllrs Chalmers, Davis, Laight, Lineker, and Pratley had between them given almost 100 years of service to the council. The meeting expressed their appreciation to the councillors.

Cllr Laight responded by asking the meeting to express its appreciation for the leadership and support given to all the council by the retiring chair, Cllr Warburg. This was duly given.

07.01.02 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 14th March 2006

Copies of the minutes of the annual parish meeting held in 2006 were available at the meeting. The Chair signed them as a correct record.

07.01.03 Matters Arising

There were none

07.02 ALCOHOL DESIGNATION ORDERS

The chair welcomed Mr Guy Richardson Suffolk Coastal District Council Safety Officer to the meeting to explain what an alcohol designation order would mean in Melton.

The following is the text of his talk:

The new measures

On 1 September, sections 12-16 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 come into force. These provide local authorities with an adoptive power to restrict anti-social public drinking in designated public places and they provide the police with the power to enforce this restriction. Also on 1 September the Local Authorities (Alcohol Consumption in Designated Public Places) Regulations 2001 come into force. These set out the procedures to be followed by local authorities in designating public places for this purpose. A copy of the Regulations accompanies this letter.

These new statutory powers will replace the Home Office model byelaw relating to the consumption of intoxicating liquor in designated public places. From 1 September, local authorities who wish to place a restriction on public drinking within their area, where this is associated with nuisance or annoyance to members of the public, or disorder, should consider whether to make an order under section 13 of the Act rather than proceeding with a byelaw.

Which authority?

For the purposes of these provisions of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001, the local authorities with the power to make a designation order under section 13 is defined in section 16 of the Act. They are:

- *in England, unitary authorities and district councils so far as they are not unitary authorities;*
- *in Wales, county councils or county borough councils.*

In this context, unitary authorities are defined as county councils so far as they are councils for an area for which there are no district councils; district councils in areas for which there are no county councils; London borough councils; the Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a local authority; and the Council of the Isles of Scilly.

A new offence: section 12

Section 12 of the Act provides new police powers to deal with anti-social drinking in areas that have been designated for this purpose by the relevant local authority under section 13 of the Act. The police will have the power to require a person, in such a place, not to drink alcohol in that place where the officer reasonably believes that the person is, has or intends to do so, and to surrender any alcohol or alcohol containers (other than sealed containers) in the person's possession. It will not be an offence to drink alcohol in a designated public place, but failure to comply with an officer's requirements in respect of public drinking or surrender of alcohol, without reasonable excuse, will be an arrestable offence.

Alcohol consumption in designated public places

Clause 12 is intended to reduce the incidence of disorder and public nuisance arising from alcohol consumption in public places. By virtue of Clause 13, local authorities will be able to designate areas in which it will become an offence for any person to drink alcohol after being required by a police officer not to do so. The police will also have the power to confiscate and dispose of any alcohol and containers in the person's possession. It will be an arrestable offence to fail, without a reasonable excuse, to comply with the police officer's request

*Clause 13 will allow local authorities to designate public areas for the purposes of clause 12 **where they are satisfied that** nuisance, annoyance or disorder has been associated with public drinking in that area. **Where areas have been so designated, a police officer MAY require a person:***

- **not to drink in that place; and/or***
- **to surrender alcohol or open alcohol containers if the officer reasonable believes that the person is, has been, or intends to consume alcohol in that place.***

Designation orders: local authorities procedures: section 13

There is no intention that the provisions of the 2001 Act should lead to a comprehensive ban on drinking in the open air. Accordingly, section 13 allows local authorities to designate areas for this purpose only where they are satisfied that nuisance or annoyance to the public or disorder have been associated with public drinking in that place. Where there have been no such problems, a designation order under section 13 will not be appropriate.

It is for the local authority to be satisfied that public nuisance, annoyance or disorder has been associated with public drinking in the area concerned and that a designation order under section 13 is appropriate. The Local Authorities (Alcohol Consumption in Designated Public Places) Regulations do not place a requirement on the local authority to conduct a formal assessment, over a given period, of the nature of the problem, as was the case with the byelaws procedure. Whether or not a designation order is appropriate will be a matter for local judgement, based on the circumstances applying.

The local authority will want to satisfy itself that these new powers are not being used disproportionately or in an arbitrary fashion which could be the case if one, isolated incident led to a designation order. Clearly there should be evidence of an existing problem, with an assessment as to the likelihood that the problem will continue unless these powers are adopted. Against this background, it is possible that a single, serious incident might be sufficient to justify adoption of the powers.

Consultation

The Regulations require local authorities to consult with the police prior to making a designation order (Regulation 3(1)(a)). This is to seek the views of the police on the nature of the problem and the appropriateness of adopting the section 12 powers to respond to it, recognising that it will be the police who will have the responsibility for enforcing the resulting restrictions on public drinking.

Regulation 3 sets out the other bodies who must be consulted before a designation order is made. These are:

- any parish or community council covering all or part of the public place to be designated. In addition, local authorities should be open to receive representations from parish or community councils in their area, relating to the designation of a public place within the area of the parish or community council;*
- the police and neighbouring local authorities, parish or community councils where a designation order covers an area on the boundaries with that neighbouring authority. This is to allow for consideration to be given to the consequences of the designation order on the neighbouring authority (such as the possible displacement of anti-social public drinking problems) before the designation order is made;*
- licensees within the area or who may be affected by the designation order;*
- the owners or occupiers of any land that may be identified in a designation order. There may well be occasions when it is impossible to identify or find the owners of particular land or property, so Regulation 3(2) does not place an absolute requirement on local authorities in this instance. It requires local authorities to take all reasonable steps to consult land owners.*

Publicity

Regulations 5-9 cover publicity requirements. Regulations 5 and 6 are concerned with advance publicity. By virtue of regulation 4, local authorities will be under a duty to consider any representations received as a result of this publicity.

Regulation 7 concerns publicity once a decision has been made to designate an order under section 13 of the Act. Regulation 8 sets out the requirement to erect signs to ensure that the public (including visitors to the area) are made aware that restrictions on public drinking may apply. As was previously the case under the Home Office byelaws guidance, signs to indicate the effect of a designation order should be clear and unambiguous and not conflict with or obscure traffic signs. They should be placed at the approaches to designated areas and repeated within them, and the local highway authority should be consulted.

Council procedures

Regulation 10 makes an amendment to the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000. The effect of this is that this function will not become a function of the executive under the terms of the Local Government Act 2000 but will be one that remains with the council. In all normal circumstances, the local authority may wish to ensure that decisions relating to designation orders are made by the full council or a committee of the council, as opposed to being delegated to an officer of the council.

Existing public drinking byelaws

By virtue of section 15 of the 2001 Act, existing public drinking byelaws will cease to have effect once the area is designated in accordance with section 13. We would

expect local authorities who have adopted the model byelaw on public drinking to replace this, at a suitable opportunity, with a designation order under section 13. The local authority will need to follow the consultation and publicity requirements set out in the accompanying Regulations in order to do so. The practical effect of doing so will be to enable the police to enforce the public drinking restriction through the use of the powers conferred by section 12 of the Act, once the area is designated.

Any relevant local authority byelaw which is not replaced by a section 13 designation order will, by virtue of section 15 of the Act, lapse after a period of five years commencing on 1 September 2001.

Confiscation of Alcohol (Young Persons) Act 1997

Section 29 of the 2001 Act, which also comes into force on 1 September, brings into effect an amendment to section 1(1) of the Confiscation of Alcohol (Young Persons) Act 1997. This is necessary to ensure consistency between the powers conferred by section 12 of the 2001 Act and section 1 of the 1997 Act, so that the police are not faced with the possibility of implementing two different sets of powers in relation to people under 18 who are drinking or who intend to drink in a place designated under section 13 of the 2001 Act.

There then followed a wide ranging question and answer session. It was stressed that it would be for the local parish to decide whether or not the order would be applied for. The process would be that the Safety Office would undertake an investigation on behalf of the council producing a report of his findings and the possible implications. The important part of the process would be to determine whether in fact there was a serious need for the order or could the perceived problems be resolved in other ways. The order in itself was a tool in the police toolbox not a solution in itself. Should the parish decide to proceed that the matter would be considered by the district council cabinet and if that proved to be positive the Home Office would be advised. The process normally takes up to 8 months.

The chair thanked Mr Richardson for giving of his valuable time to discuss this important matter.

07.03 MELTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

The chair invited Mr Andrew Rowe [Headteacher] to talk to the meeting about Melton Primary School. The following are the main points he wished to share about his school:

- He had been in post for three years and he considered it an honour to hold such a position. He was pleased that Mr Robert Cutts [Chairman of Governors] was able to be present and share in the talk
- The school was a Community Primary School with 175 children aged between 5 and 11
- There were 9 teaching staff with 30 other support staff
- The school took children from Melton, Ufford and Bromeswell
- The school successes included taking part in concerts at Snape Malting, the opening of the early years outdoor area, test results above national and county averages, they were in the top 15% of all primary schools and 13th best school, they had very skilled teachers and had an Artsmark from the Arts Council of England
- The activities on offer include the normal National Curriculum, French lessons for 7/11 year olds, curriculum enrichment with external visits and many visitors to the school, pupils were given the opportunity to view life in and out of school

- Working with the community the school has monthly parents forum meetings, an active friends group, Christmas and Harvest services at St Andrew's, contributions to the Melton Messenger and helping pupils to develop good citizenship
- They provide a safe environment during the school day for the children, they produce an annual yearbook in the summer term and they try to keep the village involved through the school website www.melton.suffolk.sch.uk
- Planning was starting on the development of the remainder of the outside play area and support from the council in this venture would be much appreciated

A discussion followed during which the recent upgrading of the crossing provision outside of the school was praised. However, concern over pupils and parents crossing at the top of Woods Lane to get the children to school was highlighted.

The Chair thanked Mr Rowe for his excellent presentation and for hosting the annual meeting in the school. She added that she hoped that the relationship that was developing between the council and school would grow in the coming years.

07.04 MELTON VILLAGE PLAN

Cllr Bond reported on behalf of the council the progress being made towards the implementation of the village plan. The following is the text of his talk:

I am the least worthy councillor to talk to you this evening about The Melton Village Plan because ironically I actually had absolutely nothing to do with its compilation. Perhaps I was asked to report on progress because I am the most junior councillor. The work that went into the Village Plan came from my colleagues on the Council: Geoff Butterwick, Pam Ferguson, and Kim Tester, who were very ably supported by a team of capable and hard working village residents, all of whom I do not know personally apart from Mary Addington, but anyway, all these people put together an extremely comprehensive analysis of the geographical, economic, social, and demographic structures of the village, together with the aspirations of the residents. The information was derived largely from questionnaires that were sent to people living here.

We are all well aware of the factors, good and bad, that have an influence on us here in Melton: for example, the increase in housing in recent years, the disagreeable increase in traffic, the surge in house prices that make it impossible for many young people to buy their own place, the unsatisfactory service that we get from the railways and some bus companies, the lack of shops, and so on. On the other hand, most of us are very conscious that we live in a lovely area of England and we want to see the countryside protected, we do have an excellent school where our children get a good start in life and we do have a very serviceable playing field, which is much used.

The point that I want to make is that many of these matters fall within the responsibility of outside bodies: the County Council, for example is responsible for the roads, the District Council for planning permission, One Railway for the trains, and so on. But the Parish Council can nevertheless seek to influence decision making at all levels, and the existence of the sort of Village Plan that we have, comprehensive, rigorous, and sensible, can only lend weight to what we say. Put another way, Melton Parish Council demonstrates, through the Village Plan, that it knows what it is talking about.

I do recommend that if you have not read the Plan, that you get hold of a copy and go through it. I should now like to touch on some of the matters that have arisen in recent months.

We wanted an NHS dental service to be available, and a surgery is now open in the Deben Mill Melton.

We wanted to improve the scope for recreation on the playing field, and we secured considerable outside funding through the Herculean work of Councillor Mrs Pam Ferguson to rebuild the children's play area. In the event £ 72,000 was spent in this area, and I am pleased to say that the Melton children seem to approve of it all. For the grown-ups, we now have keep-fit and yoga classes at the Lindos Centre. Policing is of central interest to the Parish Council, and the Village Plan highlighted the need for the retention of community policemen. I am glad to say that this has been realised through the formation of a new Safer Neighbourhood Team from last month. Some progress has been made with the bus services in that the frequency has increased, but there is still a long way to go with reliability and with access for wheelchairs and buggies. This sort of accessibility has got better on the trains; even reliability improved during 2006, but it is still generally unsatisfactory, as you know. The Village Plan identified several stretches of road that needed better pavements, indeed that had no pavements at all, and at least Pytches Road, a road that could have been described as very dangerous for pedestrians, has at last got a pavement along its entire length. Some improvements have been made to cycle tracks too, and as you know, the Melton Crossroads were re-worked during the last year. The Parish Council is concerned about the traffic on Wood's Lane and about the children that need to cross this road on their way to and from school. We are now pressing for this stretch to be professionally surveyed so that suggestions for improvement are made on a sound footing. Similarly, we are discussing with Ufford Parish Council and the County Council the condition of the pavements on Yarmouth Road, which again are used by children, particularly those going to Melton School. In the meantime, there has been some use of visual roadside speed indicators to act as a discouragement to speeders, and the police have been encouraged to use their own enforcement equipment. The Village Plan and the Council see footpaths as a valuable asset and we have contributed to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan during the last year. Councillor Dunford is bringing together several bodies with responsibilities for the interests of pedestrians with a view to beefing up the maintenance of the village footpaths.

The compilers of the Village Plan were mindful of the need to improve the openness of the way in which the Parish Council worked, and closely related to this notion was the desire to get some sort of "Melton Newsletter" in circulation, again to improve the dissemination of local information. In the event, the Rector, Michael Hatchett launched his excellent "Melton Messenger", which has been a great success, and which the Parish Council supports. At the same time, Council meetings now include an open forum during which the Chairman invites members of the public to address the Council if they want to do so. A considerable contribution to transparency within the village was made by the new Council website, which was set up by Councillor Dunford.

I mentioned earlier that many of the goals of the Village Plan are largely in the hands of outside agencies and organizations, but nevertheless the Parish Council still has an important part to play in representing the people here and in applying pressure. We are much better placed to do that now because we now have an office here in the Lindos Centre where our excellent clerk, Malcolm Green, sits. Malcolm Green bears the brunt of the real work in implementing the Village Plan, but I am sure that he will give you a warm welcome if you want to talk to him yourselves. He is available two mornings a week.

Finally, I should like to encourage residents to attend parish council meetings, which are of course open to the public. Generally, the chairman and the clerk will arrange for

a period to be set aside for members of the public to voice any matters that they wish to raise, but that apart, you will find that the meetings are an excellent way of keeping in touch with some of the issues that arise in the village.

Cllr Bond was thanked for his update.

07.05 OPEN FORUM

Members of the public were invited to ask question or make comments. The following matters were raised and council agreed to consider the matters further:

- The grassed area surrounding the village sign was being misused and damages by cars parking inappropriately
- The need for a venue for a nightly drop-in centre for young people was brought to the attention of the council. Mrs Cone was working towards providing a secure environment where young people could meet and have it as their own base for activities. She asked the council if they would consider the provision of suitable accommodation on the playing field either by extending the pavilion or by the provision of a purpose built community centre
- The meeting was advised of a project that was being introduced to reinstate the 'beating the bounds' walk. The inaugural walk would commence at the White Lion Ufford on May 13th 2007.

07.06 DATE OF NEXT ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Wednesday 23rd April 2008 at 7.00 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting close at 9.20 p.m.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
[Chair]