



MELTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chair: Councillor Mrs P Warburg

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2007

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.

Penelope Warburg

Chairman

April 2007