



Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Melton Parish Council

Held on 14th May 2025 at 7pm

Melton Parish Council offices, 17 Riduna Park, Station Road, Melton, IP12 1QT.

Present:

Cllr Gradwell (Chair)
Cllr Corston
Cllr Hillier
Cllr Packard

Cllr Bourne
Cllr Darby
Cllr Martin
Cllr Stearn

Cllr Brown
Cllr De Vita
Cllr Nicoll
Cllr Taylor

Absent:

Cllr Bann

In Attendance:

J Hallett *Clerk to Melton Parish Council*
District Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte
1 member of the public was present

K Thomas *Assistant Clerk to Melton Parish Council*
County Councillor Alexander Nicoll

Cllr. Gradwell welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1) To elect a Chair of the Council and to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office:

The Clerk asked for nominations for the role of Chair of the Council for 2025/26. Cllr. Bourne proposed Cllr. Gradwell. This was seconded by Cllr. Martin and Cllr. Gradwell indicated she would be willing to undertake the role for one further year. There were no other nominations. Cllrs voted unanimously that Cllr. Gradwell be the Chair.

Cllr. Gradwell signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

2) To elect a Deputy Chair of the Council and to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office:

The Chair asked for nominations for the role of Deputy Chair of the Council for 2025/26. Cllr. Martin proposed Cllr. Nicoll. This was seconded by Cllr. Stearn and Cllr. Nicoll indicated he would be willing to undertake the role, should there be no other candidates; there were none. Cllrs voted unanimously that Cllr. Nicoll be the Deputy Chair.

Cllr. Nicoll signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

3) Apologies for Absence:

- a) To Receive Apologies – Apologies from MPC Councillors had been received from Cllr. Bann (Previous Commitment).

Chair's Initials:

- b) To Accept Apologies – The apologies of Cllr. Bann were proposed as accepted by Cllr. Hillier seconded by Cllr. Darby and all were in agreement.

4) To receive any:

- a) Declarations of Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Items - None
- b) Declarations of Non-Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Items – the following declarations were made:
- Cllr. Corston – A new employment at Sizewell C may result in him not taking part in any activity in connection with the project
 - Cllr. Corston – As a neighbour of the proposed development at 1 Yarmouth Road, Cllr. Corston will not take part in the vote in item 8) a)
- c) Applications for Dispensation on Agenda Items - None
- d) Declarations of Gifts or Hospitality received over the value of £50.00 – The following gifts were declared:
- Cllr. Darby – Handed 6 free tickets for the Russells Circus – approx. value £75 [returned to the office unused the following day]
- e) Notification of Lobbying with reference to any Planning Application to be discussed - None

5) Public Session:

- a) To receive a report from the District Councillor – Cllr. Smith-Lyte reported on the following items:
- DC/25/1480/FUL – I am very interested to hear what MPC will say about this application and I am especially concerned about the very large trees in the grounds.
 - ACV on St Audry's Sports and Social Club has been renewed but there is no further news on the sale of the Hopkins land/properties at Melton Park
 - The Bee Cafés are doing very well but do need water in this dry spell [Cllr. Hillier volunteered to water as much as she could]
- b) To receive a report from the County Councillor – Cllr. Nicoll reported on the following points:
- Highway Clearance – As part of the Active Travel project, funding has been secured for a significant amount of highway clearance. I am awaiting the schedule of works and will share it with the Clerk. One section may require a road closure but details are as yet unknown.
 - 150 New dwellings at Rendlesham – I have been sent unsolicited correspondence regarding a proposal to build a further 150 dwellings north of Rendlesham. This concerns me greatly; especially the additional volume of traffic that will be created and the lack of facilities in the Rendlesham area. The proposals include social housing and bungalows and a meeting will shortly be held between the developer, Rendlesham PC and me. East Suffolk does have an older demographic compared to other parts of the county, & therefore good local transport services are essential.

Chair's Initials:

c) To consider village matters raised by Members of the Public or Councillors – The following items were noted:

- DC/25/1480/FUL – It is acceptable to have infill development but I have many concerns. Two dwellings will be over development of this land, there is no turning circle meaning cars will back onto the road or will park on the road causing even more congestion, especially when there is an issue on the A12. Two bus stops outside the property are not mentioned. The application is confusing as it refers to three-bedroom houses but the plans show 4-four-bedroomed (all with ensuites). The trees on the plot are magnificent and may be damaged or an application may be put forward to fell them at a later date. There is a sewer running at the back of the property and this may be compromised by foundations. The dormer windows will overlook neighbours (applications for these in neighbouring properties have been refused in the past).
- Road Sweeping – Cllr. Gradwell shared a question from a resident regarding road sweeping. Cllr. Packard suggested details of roads which required attention should be passed to East Suffolk Services, as they had two machines.

6) To consider co-option to the Council, in respect of the two vacancies:

The Clerk reported that no applications had been received. Following discussion it was agreed that the office should prepare an advertisement encouraging residents to attend a future meeting, with a view to joining the Council.

7) To approve the Minutes of Full Council from 23rd April 2025:

It was RESOLVED that minutes 'Minutes (April 25)', which had been previously distributed, be signed as a correct record by the Chair.

Minutes (April 2025)

Proposed by: Cllr Brown

Seconded by: Cllr Corston

8) Planning - To discuss and agree response to the following Planning Applications or Appeals:

- a) DC/25/1480/FUL - Extension of 1 Yarmouth Road and erection of two dwellings on land that currently forms the side garden to 1 Yarmouth Road at 1 Yarmouth Road Melton. After discussion it was RESOLVED to object to the application (11 Councillors voting 'For' with Cllr. Corston abstaining), citing the following grounds:
- The scale of the development is disproportionate to the size of the plot and the neighbouring properties
 - The parking provision is inadequate, with no turning circle which will result in vehicles backing out onto Yarmouth Road
 - The development is outside the Settlement Boundary, and therefore in the 'countryside' but does not satisfy SCLP 5.7, as the scale *will* result in harm
 - There is no mention of the very large oak trees on the plot, these must be protected by a TPO and an assessment should be carried out by the ESC Arboriculture Officer
 - The dormer windows will result in overlooking into neighbouring properties and these have been refused in the past
 - The sewer at the rear of the properties must remain undamaged
 - The documentation mentions three-bedroom houses but the plans show four bedrooms

Chair's Initials:

14) TPO and TCA Applications:

- a) To acknowledge comments sent to ESC:
 - None
- b) To discuss and agree comment on the following applications:
 - None

Following discussion at item 8) a), Cllr. Smith-Lyte agreed to speak to the ESC Arboriculture Officer with reference to obtaining TPO status on all significant trees on the land at 1 Yarmouth Road, and report back to the Clerk for the process to be followed. It was remarked that similar designation of trees on Waterhead Lane had been carried out.

15) Melton Fete – To receive update on progress of planning for the 2025 Melton Fete: Cllr.

Darby updated the meeting on the progress of the fete plans. She further reported that a resident had donated a full Royal Doulton Tea, Coffee and Dinner Service, valued at appr. £150.00. It was agreed that Cllr. Darby should attempt to sell the service, obtaining the best price possible, with all profit going to the fete funds.

16) Finance Matters:

- a) To receive and accept Internal Auditor's Report for 2024/25 and 'Annual Internal Audit Report' within Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25 – The papers had been published and the Clerk and Assistant Clerk were congratulated on the comments within the Audit report. The Chair reported that she was slightly concerned about certain words within the report regarding protection for the CCLA Investment Account and she agreed to speak to the Auditor directly to seek clarification. The report was unanimously approved as received.

Proposed by: Cllr Bourne

Seconded by: Cllr Martin

The Clerk advised that all Year End papers would be published on the website and all relevant details sent to PKF Littlejohn LLP, for the Limited Assurance Review to be carried out.

- b) To agree and complete Section 1 of Part 3 of the AGAR 2024/25 – The clerk read aloud each item in Section 1 of Part 3 of the AGAR 2024/25. It was unanimously agreed that the Council should answer in the affirmative to each item and the document was signed by the Clerk and Chair

Proposed by: Cllr Brown

Seconded by: Cllr Corston

- c) To agree and complete Section 2 of Part 3 of the AGAR 2024/25 – The draft paper had been published and mirrored the figures suggested by the Internal Auditor. There were no further questions and it was unanimously agreed that the Council should approve the figures. The document was signed by the Clerk and Chair.

Proposed by: Cllr Darby

Seconded by: Cllr Hillier

- d) To agree the CIL Report as at 31st March 2025 – The draft report had been published. There were no further questions and it was unanimously agreed that the Council should approve the figures. The document was signed by the Clerk and Chair.

Proposed by: Cllr Martin

Seconded by: Cllr Nicoll

Chair's Initials:

- e) To agree the Reserve Allocations as at 1st April 2025 – The Reserve Allocations were unanimously agreed as correct as of 1st April 2025.
Proposed by: Cllr Taylor Seconded by: Cllr Hillier
- f) To confirm all Standing orders and Direct Debits presently set up for the Council – A list of all Standing Orders and Direct Debits had been produced and it was unanimously RESOLVED to continue to allow these.
Proposed by: Cllr Brown Seconded by: Cllr Bourne
- g) To receive the financial management and budget reports for the period 1 April 2025 to 30th April 2025 Papers: ‘Finance May 2025’ and ‘Scribe Reports a-g’ – Cllr. Hillier had assessed the accounts in her role as ‘Councillor Internal Controller’ and had no questions. The Chair viewed the Bank Statements, Building Society Book and CCLA Statement and signed the Bank Reconciliation. It was acknowledged that the CCLA Statement for 30th April had not yet been received and this was noted on the Reconciliation.
Proposed by: Cllr Nicoll Seconded by: Cllr Martin
- h) To discuss the draft ‘Investment Policy May 2025’ – Paper ‘Investment Policy May 2025’– After discussion, especially around logistics for accessing funds in the Suffolk Building Society and CCLA, it was unanimously RESOLVED to adopt this document.
Proposed by: Cllr Brown Seconded by: Cllr Martin

17) To review the Recommendations as listed by the Internal Auditor in the Internal Auditor's Report for 2024/25:

- a) Governance and Operating issues relating to operating through a framework of Working Groups – After discussion it was agreed to re-establish the 'Planning and Transport' working group and 'Finance, Employment and Risk Management' working group as formal committees, in line with the recommendation made by the Internal Auditor. These would have full decision-making powers, where permitted by law and would meet when required (provisionally P&T monthly and FERM quarterly). It was agreed that these would require careful monitoring, to ensure they did not overload the office staff. The Clerk was asked to draft the Terms of Reference for each committee and present for consideration at the June meeting. It was acknowledged that, if a decision was made by a Committee, it was not re-debated at Full Council. It was also agreed that any major decision should be made by Full Council.
- b) Business Plan Review – The Clerk reported that she had assessed the Business Plan and suggested that she carry out an initial review and produce a draft Plan for FERM to discuss/amend. This was agreed.
- c) Update of Policies and Procedures – The Clerk reported that the Assistant Clerk had already started a full review of all Council Policies and Procedures; this would continue until all had been reviewed and any new policies established. A list of the Policies would also be produced and published
- d) Additional text on the Risk Register – The Chair asked that she be permitted to speak to the Auditor regarding this matter and this was agreed.

Chair's Initials:

18) Annual Tasks

a) To appoint the following officers of the Council:

- i. Responsible Finance Officer – Mrs Judi Hallett
- ii. Internal Auditor – Mr Trevor Brown

Proposed by: Cllr Gradwell

Seconded by: Cllr Stearn

It was agreed that the Clerk should seek advice from SALC as to the length of time that an Auditor should be appointed.

b) To review the arrangements for insurance cover – The Clerk reported that the current insurance policy was held with Hiscox, through the broker Gallagher. An LTA (Long-Term Agreement) had been entered into but ended on 30th Sept 2025. It was agreed that the Clerk should seek quotes from at least two other companies in early August, in order that Council could make an informed decision.

c) To review and confirm the Council's Standing Orders – Paper 'Standing Orders (May 2025)' – After discussion it was unanimously RESOLVED to adopt this document.

Proposed by: Cllr Stearn

Seconded by: Cllr Bourne

d) To review and confirm the Council's Financial Regulations – Paper 'Financial Regulations (May 2025)' – After discussion it was unanimously RESOLVED to adopt this document.

Proposed by: Cllr Gradwell

Seconded by: Cllr Da Vita

e) To review signatories to Melton Parish Council Bank and Building Society Accounts, and the CCLA – The following signatories were acknowledged and agreed for a further year:

- Lloyds: Judi Hallett, Kelly Thomas, Carol Gradwell, Charles Taylor and James Stearn
- SBS: Carol Gradwell, Katy Martin and Charles Taylor
- CCLA: Judi Hallett, Kelly Thomas, Charles Taylor and Katy Martin

It was suggested that Cllr. Nicoll should be added to all three functions at a date in the near future.

Proposed by: Cllr Corston

Seconded by: Cllr Nicoll

f) To review Council's subscriptions to other bodies – It was agreed to continue the following annual subscriptions: SALC, Norton, and Parish Online

Proposed by: Cllr Gradwell

Seconded by: Cllr Martin

g) To consider and affirm the Council's adherence to the National Code of Conduct – It was agreed to defer this matter until the June meeting, as the link to the Code of Conduct had not been present in the published Agenda.

h) To agree to receive the summons to attend meetings electronically - After discussion it was unanimously RESOLVED to agree to this.

Proposed by: Cllr Gradwell

Seconded by: Cllr Taylor

i) To note and review the Council's Schedule of Policies – See item 17) c)

Chair's Initials:

- j) To consider arrangements for meetings of the Council (May 2025 – May 2026) – The draft schedule of meetings had been distributed and was unanimously agreed.
Proposed by: Cllr Corston Seconded by: Cllr Hillier
- k) To advise Members to review their entry on the ESC Register of Interests Website – The Clerk reminded all Members of their duty to review their entry on the Register of Interests held by ESC.
- l) To review and appoint representatives on or to work with External Bodies – The following appointments were agreed:
- Burness Parish Rooms Management Committee – Cllr. Gradwell
 - Melton, Woodbridge and Deben Peninsula Community Partnership – Cllr. Packard
 - Deben Estuary Partnership - Cllr. Packard
 - Melton Trust – Cllr. Corston (see item 21))
 - Melton Primary School Governing Body – Mrs Pip Alder
 - Melton Messenger Editorial Committee – Cllr. Brown
 - Suffolk Association of Local Councils – Cllr. Gradwell and the Clerk
 - Suffolk Disability Forum – Cllr. Darby
 - Woodbridge and Melton Society – Cllr. Bann
 - SZC Transport and Community Forums – Cllrs. Bann and Bourne
 - Major Energy Projects – Cllrs. Gradwell and Brown

19) Risk Management

- a) To consider risk issues – Link to Register: <https://melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk/documents-base/risk-register/> and to review the new design 'Risk Register' – The Clerk reported that the new Risk Register had been drafted and was currently out for review with the members of FERM. It will be sent for general review before the June meeting.

20) To receive and consider reports from Representatives to Outside Bodies – Paper 'Outside Bodies Report (May 2025)' – Councillors confirmed receipt of this report the following updates were given:

- None

21) To appointment of a Representative Trustee to the Melton Trust – Cllr. Corston stated he would be happy to step up to become a Representative Trustee on the Melton Trust. His appointment was unanimously agreed.

Proposed by: Cllr Gradwell

Seconded by: Cllr Martin

22) To consider Items for the Melton Messenger (July edition) – It was suggested the following items be included:

- Councillor vacancies
- TPO's
- BIMP (Biodiversity In Melton Project)
- Bee Cafes (Watering)
- Energy Projects
- Pavement clearance

Chair's Initials:

23) To discuss any matters of concern authorised by the Chair – The following matters were discussed at the discretion of the Chair:

- Cycle Path on Wilford Bridge Road – The Clerk reported that details of a proposed Cycle Path along Wilford Bridge Road had been received just a few hours before the meeting (these had been printed and were very quickly viewed by the councillors). The Clerk was asked to request an extension to respond to the proposals until the June meeting and a meeting with the SCC Officer to answer questions.
- Committees and Working Groups – It was agreed that these would be finalised at the next meeting.
- Lorry movements along Station Road – It was reported that large lorries were using Station Road more frequently and were possibly Sizewell traffic. Cllr. Nicoll urged all councillors to note vehicle registration numbers and report them to the Sizewell team, who would contact the haulier.

24) To receive agenda items, and agree date and Chair of Next Meeting (18th June 2025) – The date of the meeting was confirmed as 18th June 2025, commencing at 7pm at 17 Riduna Park, Station Road, Melton IP12 1QT, with Cllr. Gradwell taking the Chair. Members were asked to pass any agenda items to the Clerk at least one week prior to the meeting.

25) To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed
– There were no members of the public present.

After consideration of the confidential items and there being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.29pm

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Chair

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Date

Chair's Initials: