

Provision of Health Services

The Household Questionnaire asked residents "If you have used any of the following services, which cover Meldreth during the last year, how do you rate the service?" 845 people replied:

Service	Good	Reasonable	Poor	Not used/ No opinion	Satisfaction Rating
Health Visitor	37	14	0	579	100%
Ambulance	53	14	2	574	97%
R&D Community transport	23	7	1	601	97%
Home help	53	14	2	613	97%
District Nurse	62	31	6	557	94%
Chiropody	13	18	3	597	91%
Maternity care	21	5	3	599	90%
Doctor	295	217	70	232	88%
Loan of medical equipment	29	5	5	595	87%
Physiotherapy services	38	13	18	569	74%
Counselling services	6	1	3	618	70%
Meals on wheels	2	1	3	6	50%

(Satisfaction rating is "good plus reasonable" as a percentage of "good plus reasonable plus poor")

Health visitors are contacted through doctors' surgeries and are shared with surrounding villages. They clearly provide a valued service with 100% satisfaction.

Ambulance services are provided by East Anglian Ambulances NHS Trust and cover 3000 square kilometres in Cambridgeshire. This service was used by 69 respondents, with only 2 not satisfied. Twenty businesses also rated this service as good or satisfactory and none was negative about the service.

Royston and District Community Transport (RDCT) This valuable service has been mentioned elsewhere in the Parish Plan. It plays a very important part in the transportation of patients to and from health appointments. 48 extra volunteer drivers have been identified from the questionnaire.

Home Help is a highly rated service now incorporated into the Carers' Service provided by South Cambridgeshire Social Services. It is no longer called Home Help, although many people still use that name.

District Nurses cover visits to all ages of patients, mainly for medical procedures for those too frail or ill to attend surgery. With at least 100 Meldreth users, they are the second most used local health service and appear to be generally greatly appreciated.

[In addition there are Rapid Response Teams in South Cambridgeshire that include nurses, carers, physiotherapists and occupational therapists who work in the community. They follow up patients who have had recent surgery or a stroke and have been discharged from hospital. The visits are initially for two weeks to allow for assessment and for a care package to be set up.]

Chiropody services: of the 34 respondents, only 3 had a poor opinion. It is not known if the respondents were using NHS or private chiropodists. There is a busy private chiropody and podiatry practice in Melbourn.

Maternity Care is mainly provided by the Rosie Maternity Hospital on the Addenbrooke's site in Cambridge, with follow up by a District Nurse and Health Visitors, as appropriate; 90% of users were pleased with the service.

Doctor

The question used was not specific enough to determine which surgery the respondent visited. Most residents use surgeries in Melbourn, Royston or Harston

Whilst a satisfaction rating of 90% appears acceptable, it still means that 70 Meldreth residents of all ages think the service they get from their doctor's surgery is poor.

The nearest surgery is the Orchard Surgery in Melbourn. This has a pleasant modern building with good parking and disabled access. This surgery serves Melbourn and other surrounding villages.

Several questionnaire respondents made specific comments relating to the difficulty in making appointments. Many do not like the type of appointment system used at the Orchard Surgery in comparison to the Royston surgeries. This has caused some to leave that practice.

The principle problem for those without use of a car is the limited or impractical public transport to get to any of the local surgeries. This places reliance on friends, Royston and District Community Transport or relatively expensive taxis. 136 residents say they have difficulty getting to the doctor often or occasionally. (141 have some difficulty getting to a hospital, 106 to a chemist and lesser but still very significant numbers have difficulty getting to a chiropodist, optician or dentist.)

There is now a very efficient fast-track X-ray service between the Primary Care surgeries and Addenbrooke's Hospital. The night service for all local surgeries is supplied by CAMDOC.

Loan of medical equipment: mainly a good response with 34 respondents satisfied and 5 dissatisfied. There is a Red Cross medical loan centre in Bassingbourn, and Cambridge Mobility, plus a shop for private purchases, in Great Shelford. Some surgeries provide a limited service from their District Nursing Service.

Physiotherapy

This was the second highest percentage of respondents with a poor opinion of a health provider. Out of the 69 people who had used the service, 18 had a poor opinion. Again the question was not specific enough to determine which practice was used.

Some voiced concerns about the long waiting list for NHS physiotherapy appointments at Royston Hospital, used by both the Royston and Melbourn surgeries. The waiting list is said to be 6 months for chronic conditions. This is despite having a team of physiotherapists working there 5 days a week.

There is a once weekly service at the Melbourn surgery and some respondents used private physiotherapists in the area.

Counselling yielded a 70% satisfaction rate. It is not clear if this was for NHS or private sessions.

Meals on Wheels

Only 6 people said that they had used this service with only a 50% satisfaction rating.

Other services

In retrospect it would have been helpful to ask of people's experience on dentistry where there is a national shortage of NHS providers.

There was not a specific question about pharmacies. However it is known that some surgeries have their own dispensaries with clear guidelines on 'catchment' areas. The surgeries all have communication with the local pharmacies to dispense their prescriptions. The Orchard Surgery provides an emailing service to their dispensary for repeat prescriptions. Some pharmacies offer a delivery service.

Other health providers available in the area are osteopaths, chiropractors, mental health services, dieticians, speech therapists and alternative therapies such as aromatherapy, yoga teachers, Pilates classes and acupuncturists.

Residents will soon be able to become a member of a fitness centre at the McSplash pool in Melbourn, and a new leisure centre is being built in Royston which should encourage further provision of fitness options.

Issues for those with Disabilities

107 (12%) respondents have a health problem/disability affecting their daily living. 51 of these are registered disabled. In addition there are 55 disabled young people at the SCOPE Meldreth Manor School.

Respondents identifying special problems for people with disabilities in Meldreth highlighted dissatisfaction with:

- access to London-bound trains platform (374 responses)
- uncut hedges/overhanging trees obstructing pavements (356)
- pavement conditions (301)
- parking on pavements (217)
- access to commercial premises (147)
- height of shop counters (63)
- access to Holy Trinity Church (50).

The One Stop Shop entrance step was singled out in "other comments" as were adverse pavement cambers, width of pavements, and lack of pavements or drop kerbs at key danger points.

The comments about services and amenities should reflect any decision making about resources for Meldreth in the future. The recent implementation of the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act should increase the urgency of the resolution of many issues.

Action Points

With about 100 registered disabled people in Meldreth, many using wheelchairs, and about 60 young people needing pushchairs, the village would benefit from the following:

- access improvements at the railway station - HIGH PRIORITY
- access improvement to the One Stop Shop - HIGH PRIORITY
- discuss with the doctors' surgeries any problems highlighted by the questionnaire - HIGH PRIORITY
- an audit of pavements followed through by a programme of pavement design improvements - HIGH PRIORITY
- volunteer pavement wardens, each caring for a stretch of pavement to encourage owners to trim hedges and trees, to discourage inconsiderate parking and to clear leaves (and litter) - HIGH PRIORITY
- resolution of the One Stop Shop counter height - MEDIUM PRIORITY
- improved access to Holy Trinity Church - MEDIUM PRIORITY.

Facilities for the Young

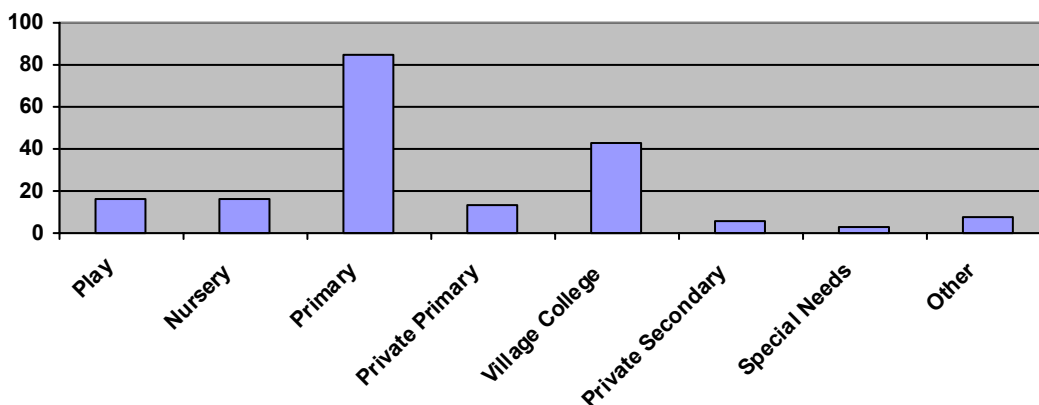
The household questionnaire received responses from 453 households containing 1137 people. 228 people (20%) are 17 or under; the age distribution is:

Age years	0-4	5-10	11-15	16-17
Number	55	95	60	28

These numbers do not include the young people at the SCOPE Manor school.

Schools attended by respondents under 16 are:

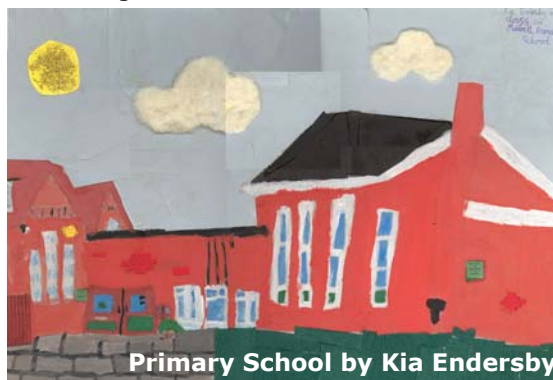
Types of Schools Attended



Of the circa 200 under 16s, 19 attend private primary or secondary schools. Of the children with special educational needs, 3 attend special schools, 7 attend mainstream schools. For the very young there is a thriving Toddlers Group and Pre-school organisation.

Meldreth Primary School is well regarded; it had the highest number of favourable comments from the Village Model consultation. Of household questionnaire respondents who expressed an opinion, 99% consider that it is important or very important for Meldreth to have its own primary school.

In recent years on average only around 50% of the children attending the school actually come from the village itself. This makes the future of the school precarious were it to fall out of favour with families from the surrounding villages for any reason.



Reasons for the low numbers of Meldreth children at the school include the low housing stock of affordable family houses, and the increasing average age in the village generally. Furthermore, the school currently has only five classrooms for the six years that the children attend, leading to mixed-age classes. In refusing requests for the funding for a sixth classroom, the LEA has cited (amongst other reasons) the low numbers of Meldreth resident children at the school.

The village is well served by nearby Melbourn and Bassingbourn Village Colleges, which also provide sporting and adult education opportunities. Cambridge sixth form colleges and private schools complete the picture of high-quality education facilities.

Local Social Facilities

855 people responded to the question "What are your views on local social facilities for the various age groups?" Of those who had definite opinions:

Facilities for	Good	Reasonable	Poor	
Children up to 16	46	164	286	58%
Young people 17-25	9	67	406	84%
Aged 26-60	43	251	223	43%
Over 60s	107	236	92	21%

The rating for each group for their own age group's facilities was virtually identical to how all age groups rated that age group's facilities.

There is a strong majority who believe facilities for 17- to 25-year-olds are poor and a majority considering facilities for those 16 and under are poor as well.

Young people also value the train services into Cambridge and Stevenage to go shopping, bowling and to the cinema and other venues.

Role of Village Organisations

Apart from organisations serving the very young, Meldreth has its Youth Club, United Football Club and Riders Group. The Youth Club has 46 members aged 11-15 with an average of 20 attending weekly during term time. It is based in a cramped low-quality pavilion on the recreation ground. The pavilion, with limited changing and bathing facilities, is shared with footballers and tennis players. The football club is for "lads aged 15 to 47"; the pitch is used by 7- to 8-year-olds and the Youth Club at the weekends. The Rider's Group has use of the Scope Manor School's excellent indoor facilities, but there are limited bridleways and significant traffic hazards from inconsiderate and speeding drivers in Meldreth.

There are no Meldreth-based facilities for scouts and guides. Those wanting to take part go to Orwell and Melbourn.

There is a Sunday School at Holy Trinity Church, Meldreth. Some children and young people are in the church choir. Church members hold a holiday activity club in the Village Hall during the school summer break.

Other village organisations such as the bowls, croquet and tennis clubs are strongly geared to middle-aged and older members. Use of the Village Hall for activities tends to be pitched at older people. Organisations should be encouraged to provide taster sessions and coaching for younger participants, and to market themselves more actively to younger people including Meldreth Manor School staff.

Sports Facilities

Asked what new sports clubs and activities would be attended if they were available, the village response was strongly supportive of badminton, billiards/snooker, table tennis and judo – all of which should be attractive to the young.

Many young people attend sports facilities in Melbourn, Royston and Cambridge. These include swimming, football, tae kwondo, judo, karate and drama.

The facilities available in the primary school, SCOPE Manor School, village hall and Eternit (and an eventual larger pavilion) could beneficially be worked in co-operation to provide opportunities for more sports activities.

The village should support the building of a replacement larger pavilion on the recreation ground and improvement of the recreation ground facilities. These facilities should be compared with those of other villages.

The consultation process has indicated that an area with an all-weather surface (for basketball, 5-a-side football and skate boarding), and better playground equipment, would be appreciated. Criticism has been made of the new swings and slide at the playground and of the removal of (unsafe) playground equipment in the last couple of years.

Household respondents identified the recreation ground and children's play space as amongst the top four priorities for Parish Council spending.

Traffic and Speeding

The High Street between the shop and the primary school is very congested, typically at the beginning and end of the school day and when lorry deliveries are being made to the shop. This creates hazards, particularly for the young, for horse riders, and for the elderly and disabled. Further improvement of traffic management measures and consideration of a school pelican crossing would be welcomed.

Other Issues

Other issues which the Parish Plan needs to address that are not exclusive to the young, but are important to them, are:

- need for a family friendly pub
- better bus service
- maintaining good rail links with Cambridge
- better cycling conditions
- better communication about social and sporting activities in Meldreth
- work experience opportunities with Meldreth businesses.

The Household Questionnaire identified 17 volunteers to help with the running of the Youth Club, which will be extremely helpful. The more that villagers and village organisations can engage with and involve the young in activities, the lower will be the opportunity for bored young people to disrupt the village.

Facilities for the Over 65s

This section reflects the views of our senior villagers on a wide variety of topics raised in our questionnaire.

Of the 1137 people living in 453 households who responded, 203 people (18%) said they were over 65 years old.

Eight people resided in sheltered housing or housing built or adapted for elderly people. This represents less than 1% of all dwelling types recorded by the questionnaire.

However, we know there were some difficulties in obtaining returns from elderly people so we believe our figures for the over 65s resident in Meldreth are likely to be low.

Asked for opinions on accommodation needs in Meldreth, this group was consistent across gender and other age groups in selecting 'affordable housing' as a priority need (136 responses) followed by small family homes (57 responses).

On questions regarding street conditions 38% of this senior group thought pavements were poor and 18% cited street lights in the same category.

Over 65s rated as grass cutting and fighting crime as the highest priorities for the Parish Council, with other areas rated as follows:

Priorities for Parish Council	Responses from Over 65s
Grass cutting	120
Fighting Crime	118
Recreation ground & Children's Play area	75
Village Hall	71
Traffic calming	59
Over 65 services	53
Conservation	45
Youth	35

Services in the village, e.g. the Post Office, were thought to be important for this group which may contain greater numbers of less mobile people.

However the key findings from 188 respondents were:

Post Office Counter service monthly use:

- less than 5 times: 71
- between 5 & 10: 58
- more than 10: 32
- never: 27.

Cash Point in One Stop Shop monthly use:

- 30 over 65s used the Cash Point, 138 respondents (68%) did not. (Since a ram-raid in December 2004, a cash point does not exist in the village.)

Of services for the over 65s rated by all groups, 378 had no opinion, 341 thought services good or reasonable and 91 thought services were poor.

A significant 21% of over 65s thought money to implement the suggestions in the questionnaire should be raised by moderate to higher Council Tax increases.

Housing Provision

Meldreth has sheltered housing bungalows in Elin Way, Bell Close and Whitecroft Road, with a resident warden. Some are rented from SCDC and others are on an Equity Share scheme.

There are also 13 bed-sits, a warden's house and a community room in Elin Way, built in the early 1970s. These are being demolished, because of lack of demand for bed-sit accommodation for the elderly, and will be replaced by affordable housing (in 2006) and a new community centre (in 2005).

There are also 4 Alms Houses, on the High Street opposite the Stocks and managed by the Trigg's Charity, and a residential care home for 25 elderly people at Maycroft.

Good Companions Club

Formed over 35 years ago for the over 60s, this club attracts about 30 people to its monthly meetings (15% of over-65 respondents). The club made valuable comments, which contributed to the "Comments from the Village Model" section.