

Final Questions and Comments Including Some Views from Children

Comments from the Village Model

The Village Model is a map of the village on a polystyrene board. People were invited to write their comments on coloured flags and put them on the map. Comments were either Good (keep it that way!) or So-So (could be improved) or Bad (do something about it!).

The Model was used at the Church Fete, the two schools and at meetings with six organisations (Youth Club, Good Companions, Women's Institute, Tennis Club, Riders' Group and the Meldreth Village Association). It attracted 238 comments, of which 27% were Good, 24% were So-So and 49% Bad.

Some Typical Comments

Hazards for horse riders (27 adverse)

"Outside Eternit a car came round blind bend on wrong side very fast. It managed to swerve, but my horse panicked and shot forwards – both of us in ditch!" "A car tried to overtake me beside another parked car by the shop. I could touch the car with my hand – he was so close. The police cautioned the driver for bad driving. Always get a witness if you can"

Speeding (20 adverse)

"Whitecroft road – speeding cars and heavy lorries" "Traffic goes too fast past the church and stocks" "Mettle Hill and Whaddon Rd – Speeding drivers especially near corner before Eternit and hill near Royston Fencing".

The pub (20 adverse)

"Shame we don't have a welcoming pub with good food in the village"

Poor/limited facilities for young people (17 adverse) especially associated with the recreation ground and pavilion

"The rec. – needs better play equipment"

Traffic-calming design (11 adverse)

"Need to re-site/modify because of restricted view at Station end of High St"

Lack of Bridleways for safe horse riding (9 adverse)

"More bridleways linking villages to enable riders to get off the main roads"

Very dangerous corners and intersections (9 adverse)

"Dangerous crossing for children and mothers at Fieldgate" "Accident black spot at Whitecroft Rd junction with Fenny Lane" "Safer pedestrian crossing at College Farm bend in North End" "Railway bridge dangerous for both cyclists and pedestrians" "Exit from Bell Close difficult due to car parking in front of shop"

The Primary School (9 positive)

"Meldreth School is fantastic"

The Bus service to Cambridge and Royston (8 adverse)

"(Need) regular buses into Cambridge and Royston. At least four times a day. When I was young that's how we got to see our school friends in other villages" "One thing about Meldreth – poor bus service"

Pavement conditions including overhanging hedges (8 adverse)

"Hedgerows not cut along Whitecroft Rd footpath/pavement" "(Poor) condition of pavements for wheelchairs and prams"

The railway (8 positives)

"Great having a railway station with trains that run quite late" "Station Master Dave Piggott –what a star! A real service to the community"

The look of the village and its flora and fauna (8 positives)

"Really gorgeous village – the trees are fantastic, especially in the autumn" "A very pretty village overall. Lovely place to live and excellent community spirit"

Concerns about future for the (closed) Mettle Hill Travellers' site (7 adverse)

"We don't need another Cottenham. Once the travellers' site was closed, crime went down in the area"

Other positive comments

"We like our tennis club!"

"The River Mel walk"

"The shop is important"

"Having a lovely Village Hall"

"Untouched and unspoiled at the church"

"Very friendly village"

"Xmas in Meldreth"

"Meldreth Matters is super"

"Supportive attitude of the village community" (to the Manor school)

Some comments from the young

"Train being close is good"

"You get friends here" at the Primary School

"We like school"

*"Meldreth – it's b****y boring"*

"It is boring – there is nowt to do"

"Get a place 2 socialise more than the youth club"

"Good Indian take away"

"We like our house!"

"The good thing about living in Meldreth is having your friends"



Holy Trinity by Laura Betts and Catherine Mannix (right)

Summary of Key Points

The majority of people living in Meldreth like the village. They like the way it is now and would like it to remain broadly unchanged.

"Friendly, rural, peaceful, attractive, with a good community spirit and sense of village life" are all feelings held many villagers. Over half have highlighted their love of village or country life, or being born here, or having relatives nearby, as their main reason for being here.

Meldreth has seen many changes over the last fifty years as it has grown and orchards have given way to arable farming in the area. Whilst retaining much of its charm as a rural village, new businesses have developed, and there are now some ninety businesses offering around nine hundred jobs; unemployment is very low. Rail links with London and Cambridge provide wide opportunities, but the village is not a dormitory town. Rather, particularly for those with use of a car, Meldreth offers an excellent base in attractive countryside for work, shopping and recreation.

Meldreth has a highly valued village primary school, well-regarded village colleges in adjacent villages, plus access to sixth form colleges and private schools in Cambridge.

The village has its own church, village shop, post office, butcher, greengrocer, pub, take-away restaurant, and fruit, arable and turkey farms. These, with the many social and sports organisations, provide a good range of facilities and activities for most age groups.

The Parish Plan surveys and consultations have highlighted the many good features of village life enjoyed in Meldreth. Not all is good however, and there are plenty of issues that can be addressed to remove worries and annoyances, and provide better facilities without detracting from what is valued in the village.

The main concerns villagers have highlighted are:

- any further increase in the numbers of travellers
- lack of a family pub, serving food
- speeding cars and lorries in narrow roads
- facilities for youth
- limited communications about social and sporting opportunities
- disabled access and pavement conditions
- potential loss of the post office or railway station
- poor bus service, particularly affecting those without a car.

Other concerns with potential for improvement are highlighted in the Parish Plan.

The challenge will be to carry out the plan to sustain and improve what is already a very good village to live in - Meldreth.

