

Annual Parish Meeting held Thursday 6th April 2006 at 7.00 p.m. in Meldreth Primary School

Apologies for absence:

Mrs J. Gane, Mrs J. Gipson, Mr S. Hawkins, Miss M. Hunter, Mrs S. Inman, Andrew Lansley, M.P., CBE, Mr David McCraith (County Councillor), Mrs T. O'Malley, Mrs A. Rayment, Mr K. Singleton, Lady Wright

The District Councillor together with 11 members of the public were present.

The Chairman thanked Mr R. Elbourn, Mr J. Hanson and Mrs D. Jones-Barrie for their work as Parish Councillors.

Minutes of previous meeting:

Conservation Report, Page 2, to be referred to as Melwood Conservation Group.

Minutes of the previous meeting held Thursday 7th April 2005, were then signed as a true record. Proposed Mrs Course, seconded Mr Chamberlain.

REPORTS:

CHAIRMAN

I would like to thank Councillors and the Clerk for their work and in particular Mrs Jones-Barrie, Mr Elbourn and Mr Hanson who will not be standing for re-election.

Parish Plan: a Parish Plan Implementation Team (P.P.I.T.) is in place, which includes members of the Parish Council and others with expertise and interest in a certain topic. Some items are going to take longer to deal with than others and whether money is required.

Community Access Point: available to all age groups and all levels, volunteers offer help to anyone who is interested or needs assistance with computer skills.

Quality Parish Council: now that Meldreth has been awarded Quality Status, mostly due to the efforts of the Clerk, it is hoped project funding will be more easily accessible.

Parish Paths: volunteers meet on a regular basis to work on by-ways and footpaths and assist with maintenance. Bridle Ways and the possibility of a new route are being explored.

Melwood: Melwood was awarded Local Nature Reserve status in January 2006.

Mettle Hill (ex Travellers Site): On-going work is progressing.

Precept: the precept has been set at £35,000 for the year 2006/2007. The Council had hoped to apply for a reduced sum but due to the District Council being capped and the need for the Parish Council to absorb street lighting costs and a reduced grant from Cambridgeshire County Council for grass cutting costs, this has not been possible. Recycling credits have also been discontinued.

Whaddon Road Development (housing): outstanding issues have been addressed and work should shortly commence.

Alan Land
Chairman

FINANCIAL OFFICER

Parish Councillors are in possession of the receipts and payments report. Additional copies have been circulated to those members of the public present. A balance of £27,098.18 to be carried forward at 31st March 2006.

As a result of capping, Parish Councils will be paying more for Council services, i.e. street lighting, grass cutting, etc. Recycling credits have been cancelled. Money has been set aside for a Parish Office in the Sheltered Housing Communal Room in Elin Way with the Council waiting to hear from S.C.D.C. on the financial terms and conditions.

General housekeeping costs have risen as well as money having to be spent on repairs due to vandalism. Two pieces of equipment were added to the play area with donations given to two village organisations. The following also received financial assistance: Melbourn Library, Royston and District Community Transport, Meldreth & Melbourn Self Help Group, the Mobile Warden Scheme, Shepreth L-Moor Appeal, The Royal British Legion, CAMSIGHT (in memory of Pat Elbourn) and the Air Ambulance. A sum of money left over from the Parish Plan grant will assist the P.P.I.T.

Pauline Penfold
Financial Officer, Meldreth Parish Council

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Council tax capping: as previously mentioned, S.C.D.C. staff made redundant as a direct result of capping is low, many staff departed in anticipation of capping and a number of vacant posts have been frozen. The area planning team for Meldreth has been hard hit and the remaining smaller staff is faced with a huge workload, which has implications for time involved in processing applications.

It is fortuitous for Meldreth that this is the year the Parish Plan and the Parish Council's Quality status have come to fruition. The Parish Plan has identified a clear consensus on a range of issues, giving the village a strong foothold in terms of arguing a case or trying to rectify a problem. It also means that the Parish Council's views and decisions are probably viewed with an extra measure of respect, again putting the village on a stronger footing.

Cycling from Meldreth: the application under the Jointly Funded Minor Highways Improvement Scheme for a cycle link from Meldreth to Shepreth, allowing cycle access to Shepreth Station and the A10 cycle path to Cambridge, was turned down on the basis of cost. However, I have been advised to make known to the relevant County Officers the local support for this cycle link, since it could still be provided under South Cambs' cycle network programme with support from our County Councillor. The County/District Traffic Management Committee has agreed in principle to extend the A10 cycle path from Cambridge to Royston, which would benefit Meldreth but especially if we can access the A10. The County Cycling Officer, Patrick Joyce, is still very keen for a wheeling channel to be installed on the Meldreth Station Bridge.

Affordable housing - Whaddon Road project: outstanding issues have been addressed and work on site should begin soon consisting of 10 three-bedroom houses, 6 two-bedroom houses and 8 two-bedroom flats. Building of the Elin Way homes will commence after the Sheltered Housing Communal building is complete. Local residents interested in either scheme must make sure they are on the Housing Register. The number to call is 08450-450-500.

Traveller site provision in South Cambs: the District Council is fully aware of local views and re-opening the closed site would create a concentration of sites in a small area that would not benefit anyone. Residents of the Hawthorn Park site have put in a retrospective planning application for the mobile homes – this is due to growing families and the importance of providing separate quarters for teenage boys and girls. The reason for the increase in caravans during the winter was the visit of close relatives.

The Enforcement Officer is working on abandoned caravans along Mettle Hill.

Environment: the Ecology Officer at S.C.D.C. informs me that grants suitable for local conservation groups are available on a first come, first served basis and urges applications to be made.

A reminder that preventing a repeat of the rat problem we had in the ditch along the Recreation Ground two years ago depends on keeping the ditch clear.

Susan van de Ven
District Councillor

COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Since being elected last year, we have had an eventful and interesting time with Government initiatives coming thick and fast but Government funding slowing up. This has caused the County Council to have to make many cuts in its budget and also forced it to raise Council Tax by 5%, double the rate of inflation.

I congratulate the Parish Council on completing the Parish Plan – this has brought Meldreth to the attention of the County Council and illustrates to them, and others, what people in Meldreth really want.

I have had numerous enquiries regarding the derelict travellers site at Mettle Hill. The County Council has no plans to reopen this site. They would prefer to work with the Parish Council and residents in making a success of redeveloping the site.

When I was elected it was proposed that the Police presence would consist of one P.C.S.O. and one Community Beat Manager to look after 20 – 30 villages, including Meldreth. Working in conjunction with County Councillor Oliver of the Bassingbourn Division, we insisted on a meeting with the then Temporary Chief Constable Julie Spence, (appointment now confirmed) to say this arrangement was not good enough and totally unacceptable. This meeting changed minds and now we have a team of 5 working from Melbourn and making sure Meldreth residents can feel safe.

The County Council provided £2 million towards a new dual use sports facility in Bassingbourn. Although not scheduled to be built until next year, it will be there for all surrounding villages in the area, including Meldreth.

The Government has provided funding for a concessionary bus fare scheme to be operated through the County Council but you can only travel within South Cambridgeshire District Council free of charge – going to Royston or Cambridge will cost £1.80 return. The County Council has protested to Central Government and Gordon Brown is providing more money for a better scheme – but it will not start until 2008.

The County Council deals with many aspects of life and I am always open to requests from the Public. Roads, Education, Police, Social Services and the Fire Service all come under our umbrella. I welcome all enquiries and look forward to another year working with your Parish Council to help ALL people living in Meldreth.

David McCraith
County Councillor

COMMUNITY ACCESS POINT

This is the first report of Meldreth's Community Access Point (CAP), which was set up in July 2005 in the Elin Way Sheltered Housing Community Room, from funding provided by SCDC and the Parish Council.

The CAP has 2 desktop computers, complete with printers and scanners, and they are available, free to use, through a registration and booking system, to all members of the public.

Volunteers ran an Open Session Week in November and have arranged promotional publicity campaigns and Meldreth Matters' articles. A weekly Monday night Drop-in session from 7 - 8 pm allows anyone to come along and talk about their IT needs and sign up to use the facility.

We have currently 35 members on the books and there are 7 local volunteers with a wide variety of IT skills able and willing to give advice and tuition where needed.

The software available includes a full office suite, training programs for beginners, and a publishing program for those with advanced needs for leaflet or newsletter publication.

Access to the Internet is via a broadband connection via the SCDC mainframe installation.

In practice most of our members, as expected, are in the senior age ranges and want to learn how to use the technology for communicating with relatives and friends via email or to use the Internet for research, study, on line purchasing or leisure use. Members book one hour weekly sessions, either during the day or in the evenings when a volunteer is on hand to help or offer guidance when needed. At present we are running about 5 sessions per week.

The Government is keen to promote wider use of information and communication technology throughout the social spectrum. There are important convenience and cost saving factors for everyone in an increasingly busy and complex world and CAPs are a means to bring people and the technology together at community level. Hence CAPs were conceived for villages like Meldreth, without a library or a village college, and where public access computers would otherwise not be available. The new Communal Room for Sheltered Housing residents of SCDC is in the final stages of construction and should be ready for occupation towards the end of April. The CAP will then be moved to the new location and we believe this will improve the access opportunities for members.

In Meldreth, we were extremely fortunate in being able to recruit local skilled IT people who give their time freely to help in this project and to pass on their skills to folk who may not have had the opportunity to learn to use information technology at work or in school.

The CAP therefore provides a unique opportunity in the village for everyone and anyone needing convenient and free access to learning or enhancing their IT skills.

Graham Borgonon
Coordinator

CROQUET CLUB

Summary

The Croquet Club requested a grant from the Council of £200 in support of the costs of an electric fence to protect its lawn from rabbit damage. The total investment in the fence was a stock of electric fencing cables and other materials donated by the British Queen and a financial investment by the Club of £388.

The Club had last applied for a grant in 1999.

A donation of £150 was agreed and paid to the Club.

Details

Its members established the Club's full size Association Croquet lawn, behind the British Queen, in 1997 by the considerable task of cultivating rough pasture land. After establishing the lawn, the Club invested each year in treatments and lawn care in order to improve the standard. The lawn is now of a sufficient quality to enable the Club to host League matches as well as provide for normal club play and for village croquet events.

The lawn suffered damage from rabbits during the past year to a point where the Committee decided to erect battery powered electric fencing. With the consent of the landlord of the British Queen, and using reclaimed electric fencing materials provided

by him free of charge, an electric ribbon fence has been erected around the lawn. Some electric netting fence purchased by the Club augmented this. Tests using borrowed electrical equipment showed this to be effective at inhibiting the rabbits and the Club therefore decided to make this a permanent installation. Funding was requested to finance an electric pulse charger and two 12-volt batteries, together with some ancillary fittings. Without measures of this kind there was a very real risk that the Club would have faced closure.

These steps enabled the Club to protect the investment in the lawn. The Croquet Club has been in existence since 1991, with over 60 past and present members, and is an established village amenity. Apart from providing an opportunity to play croquet in the village, the Club has over the past several years raised a total of over £500 for local charities through its organisation of the Village Croquet Day, an event that brings together a number of village clubs and groups. These Village Croquet days are now an established part of the Club's calendar. The Club also fields representative teams in the local Croquet League and in the East Anglian tournament.

On behalf of the Committee
Meldreth Croquet Club
R. W. Goddin
Chairman

MELDRETH FOOTBALL CLUB

The season started very well with some good wins in three cups resulting in three quarter finals. We hope to finish about 4th in the Sunday League 4B.

With 18 members in the squad the lads have played well during the season. The benefit of regular training on Wednesday evenings is beneficial and is beginning to show on Sunday mornings field of play. A lot is down to the Managers.

Fundraising: a Christmas Draw and Dance and a weekly football card is a good funding source.

We will have a new sponsor next season.

We would like to thank our regular Sunday spectators. Also we thank the Parish Council for their support.

Joan Fallon
Hon. Secretary

MELDRETH MOBILE WARDEN SCHEME

Like many other groups in the area the Meldreth Mobile Warden Scheme was saddened by the sudden death of Mrs Pat Elbourn. Pat had been the inspiration behind the scheme since its beginning over 11 years ago. She had worked tirelessly to get the scheme going and had been its secretary ever since. Nevertheless the management committee is endeavouring to continue Pat's work.

There are 5 members at present who rely on the Warden, Mrs Eve Chamberlain, for regular visits and other help. A number of associate members depend on the scheme when their carers or relatives are away.

As Chairman of the committee I would like to pay tribute to our warden Mrs Eve Chamberlain for her dedication to her work with those who rely on her.

We are most grateful to the Parish Council for their generous financial contribution, which enables the scheme to help some of the more vulnerable people in the community.

Joan Gipson
Chairman, Meldreth Mobile Warden Scheme

MELDRETH & MELBOURN SELF HELP GROUP

We would like to thank the Meldreth Parish Council for the continued and steadfast support of the Melbourn & Meldreth Self Help Group.

We have cleared our waiting list and since the recent closure of the Melbourn Branch of the Over 60's Club, we have taken on more members and we serve 30 or more meals per week to a limit of 32.

At the end of the year Mary, our cook, is taking a well-earned 3 month holiday. We think that we have found a replacement cook who will charge more but we think we can manage the financing.

We hope to give all the customers an Easter Egg and an iced bun to celebrate the Queen's 80th birthday. There will be a free Easter lunch. All our drivers collect customers, free of charge, providing many with a break from their home. This is often

the only chance that some members have to leave their homes and chat with friends. We are most grateful to our volunteer drivers who provide free transport to the Club.

Sally Wright
Secretary

MELDRETH PRIMARY SCHOOL

This has been a very busy but rewarding year, with working parties leading a number of new developments, changes for class organisation, a revised curriculum and some major new initiatives from central government to build into our overall plan for school improvement.

Pupils

Two small intakes into the Reception classes of September 2004 and 2005 meant that the school had to reduce the number of classes from six to five in order to run a balanced budget. With over 150 children on roll this meant that class sizes were larger than they had been in previous years, with the largest classes of 34 pupils in the Juniors. The budget continued to allow separate year group teaching of maths and science across the Junior age-range, and we have also been able to run separate maths teaching for Years 1 and 2 during the Spring Term.

The staff spent a considerable time during the year in planning a new approach to the curriculum, based around enquiry questions. We have also tried to build in more visits, visitors and first-hand experiences for the children, to really engage and interest them in their learning. We began teaching the first year of the new curriculum cycle in the Autumn Term 2005 and have had very positive feedback from children and staff alike.

The children have also had opportunities to enrich their experience of school through special events, some lasting a day, others being extended over a week. One example was Decoration Day just before Christmas, which was again very successful and enjoyable. In March, teams of professional scientists from our parent community set up a range of exciting science activities for the children, as part of National Science Week, which was met with great enthusiasm by our pupils and their parents.

Residential trips are always very popular, with Year 6 spending a week in Derbyshire and Y5 three days at Grafham Water Centre.

The Home Challenges, established last year, resulted in even more imaginative and skilfully produced work this spring, from the fish collages made by our four- and five-year olds, to the full size chairs designed, made and decorated by Year 6 children.

Our class assemblies and school productions are very popular with parents. We have also held a Christmas Carol Service and Easter Assembly at Holy Trinity Church.

Staff

Two members of staff, Mr Hadley Banks and Miss Anna Donnelly, moved to schools out of county and we appointed Mrs Rebecca Pine to teach in our Year 4/5 class. Mrs Linda Popat was appointed as a Teaching Assistant to work with a child with special educational needs.

The stability of all the staff teams and their hard work and dedication to the children with whom they work is acknowledged to be major strength of the school.

Governors

The Chair is Mrs Rosamund Rhodes- Kemp and Vice Chair, Dr Chris Mannix. The full Governing Body meets at least once a term, with the two sub-committees meeting more frequently. The Governing Body is very well supported by the efficiency of the Clerk, Mrs Laura Elvin. This year we have been pleased to welcome three new governors; Mrs Debbie Wain, Mrs Caroline Maskell and Mr David McCraith.

Parent Teacher Association

The PTA continues to be very active in raising money to support school projects and arranging social events for the school community. Having refurbished the school library they are now fundraising for the development of the school grounds and also for the new build that is planned, through 'Buy a Brick'.

The Christmas Fair and Summer Fun Day were both very well organised and extremely successful events. We have also enjoyed discos, a family barbeque, a fashion show and family bingo.

Working Parties

This year we have established three working parties, comprised of staff, governors and parents. The Grounds Development group are drawing up plans for our spacious site and using it to further enhance the children's education; the School Meals group is looking at ways in which we can improve the standard of nutrition in school and the ICT group work to plan strategically for the future of ICT at Meldreth.

Premises

We have begun to redecorate the school with labour provided by parents, governors and staff during school holidays. Last summer the entrance lobby, main corridor and library area were painted and we hope to decorate a classroom or the hall this summer.

The feasibility study to build a staff room (thus freeing up room for a potential ICT suite) and new toilets is now at the stage of seeking planning permission. The plans will be submitted for tender later in the Spring, with the intention of beginning the build this year.

School Development Plan

We are currently reviewing the five target areas identified on the last plan, evaluating what has been successful and drawing up a new plan to take the school into its next stage of development.

Mrs Janet Rayment
Headteacher

MELDRETH TENNIS CLUB

Membership

The membership of the Tennis club is slightly down on last year so we have had to slightly increase the membership fees to:- Adults £37.50, Juniors/Students £17.50, Family £80 & Associate members stay the same at £5.

Matches

The Club again entered two teams for the CAMBRIDGESHIRE BUSINESS HOUSE LEAGUE, one Mixed and one Ladies.

Social/Fundraising

These fundraising events have again been well support by members. However it is becoming increasing difficult to know what different event we can do to raise money.

Maintenance

This is still very much an ongoing situation. We have had to have the restraining wires replaced on all four sides of the boundary fences. However the Village children keep cutting holes in the chainlink fencing to get onto the courts instead of using the gate. As the Parish Council are aware, the fencing on the car park end of the courts has been backed into, and this will mean that some of the posts will need renewing in the future. We have asked the Council if they will very kindly help with some of the expense towards the rewiring of the courts.

We have, at the moment, no large foreseeable expenses, but we will continue to raise money to keep the courts in good condition for the enjoyment of everyone.

Vivienne McCormick
Club Secretary

MELWOOD CONSERVATION GROUP

Our main activity this year has been to continue with the practical work of our Management Plan. Around 7 work parties were needed to carry out clearances, coppicing, maintaining safe access in the rides and paths and developing and monitoring our habitat constructs. We have in place 5 bird boxes, 3 bat boxes and several invertebrate wood piles.

Some plug-planting this year and last has not always been successful, however, results are being continually monitored.

Unfortunately, the wood has been subject to vandalism, the seat was destroyed in the summer and trees were damaged. There is always litter and this means we need to maintain constant vigilance. We have set up a monthly rota amongst the volunteers to monitor this.

During the year we obtained a useful grant from Cambridge Water's 'Awards for Life Fund' and this will go towards some essential tools needed for working in the wood. Up to now, volunteers have used their own garden tools and these are not always suitable for heavier woodland management work. The Group continued with its policy of arranging 1 or 2 annual events, appealing to a wider public and promoting interest in the wood and its wildlife.

We arranged:

- A Bird Walk in April, led by Doug Radford, the RSPB Warden at Fowlmere Bird Reserve. Attended by some 15 people, around 20 bird species were identified.
- An arts based summer event in June, of music and song by local people, organised by our Secretary Clare McPhee, to which 40 people came to listen and enjoy fine music, bringing along their drinks and cooking their food on the BBQ. Our title for this: 'In Tune with Nature' really said it all.

Those who participated deemed these events successful and we hope to plan similar items for 2006. Indeed, a date of 22nd April has already been fixed for another Bird Walk. This date co-ordinates rather better with arriving migrants than we were able to manage last year.

Throughout 2005, background work proceeded on our application for Melwood to be a Local Nature Reserve. As part of the process we gave work reports and received inspections from English Nature and the County's Greenspaces Officer. Formal LNR (Local Nature Reserve status was duly granted on 6th January 2006 and Melwood is now included in the dozen or so LNRs in the County.

LNR status gives Melwood valuable protection from any unsuitable development now or in the future and there is a statutory obligation on the County Council to maintain as a nature reserve.

From the outset, MCG was keen that the wood be an educational resource for local children, in particular the Primary School. Positive links were forged with the School, via the Deputy Head Teacher, Andrew Jones and we have also welcomed Stephanie Walters, Chair of the PTA to our Committee and to our band of practical volunteers.

Our vision, which the school shares, but is yet to be achieved, is to have some sort of secure bridge across the River Mel between the school grounds and the wood. A sort of medieval type draw bridge is envisaged. Already we have found some local engineers who may be interested in the project. However, the big challenge is to obtain funding and overcome the various health, safety and security issues. It's very early days on this one!

Through the Parish Council and Parish Plan initiatives, the Parish Paths Partnership has some 20 or so enthusiastic volunteers committed to maintaining the footpaths and bridleways of the village. More recently, riparian owners along the River Mel, have formed a group to enhance the river environment.

If we have a grouped vision it would be for all these bands of enthusiastic volunteers, including ourselves, to work together for environmental improvement in the parish, for the benefit of its inhabitants as well as for its wildlife.

Inevitably we have had losses – people have moved on or moved away for whatever reason. To survive, we need renewal. We need and would welcome new folk bringing practical and/or specialist skills as well as those happy to do committee work. There is something for all and for all ages so the message is: 'New volunteers are very welcome!'

Finally, our grateful thanks are owed to:

The Meldreth Village Association who generously supported us with a donation and the loan of essential event equipment and Bassingbourn Village College, Music Department and the Arts Manager of South Cambs. District Council for their valuable artistic involvement in our summer event, 'In Tune with Nature'. Without the help of these kind people we could not have staged this item.

Finally, I would like to give heartfelt thanks to volunteer colleagues who have contributed to a very successful year and, hopefully, will do so to the one to come!

Graham Borgonon
Chairman

TREE WARDEN

A word about the trees planted over the year on the edges of the village on Malton Lane, Kneesworth Road and trees and hedging on Whaddon Road. In spite of dry summers I am happy to say that they have all survived and are putting on satisfactory growth so that in a few years we shall see avenues!

The main effort of the Conservation Group has gone into Melwood and into Melmeadow next door. As you will know Melwood has advanced from the jungle I first viewed with alarm twenty years ago when I first persuaded the Parish Council to take on its management into an effective small woodland now with the Local Nature Reserve status. I was delighted to see the local officer of the Woodland Trust, Jonathan Plowe there in early March when Graham Borgonon and Tim Gane and I were able to take him over Melwood and listen to his comments and advice. Here at last we had someone with experience of managing woodland to accompany us. I was personally encouraged to hear that woodlands should have 20% canopy with plenty of open space between and that rotational coppicing led to healthy woods. I have always been in favour of coppicing to produce more light and healthier trees. We have, as you will see, been doing this along the school bank. It is to be hoped that more local residents will begin to understand that you will only see vibrant and attractive trees when like roses and other garden plants and shrubs cutting back gives them a longer life and prevents the excessive and spindly growth that is too often the feature especially with many hawthorns.

Margaret Hunter
Tree Warden

MELDRETH RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

The MRA would like to take the opportunity to thank the Parish Council for their efforts in helping GoCold prepare a plan to purchase the old disused travellers site in Kneesworth Road

We understand the County Council will require views from the village when this matter is discussed at committee. The MRA would be pleased to offer any support or assistance that is required, with the understanding that we represent about a 100 households in the village.

The MRA committee has met twice formally in the last year. Firstly to update David McCraith – the new County Councillor and secondly to discuss the implications for the proposed housing development in Whitecroft Road. Other than this, there has been no need for the MRA to campaign or meet.

Committee members of the MRA have joined other organisations to help with other more positive improvements in the village, namely the PPIT, Meldreth CAP and the River Mel Restoration Group and many other worthy causes in the village.

Once again we thank the Parish Council and would like to continue to offer our support and assistance should there be a need for us to do so.

Janet Grimwood

MELDRETH VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

Meldreth Village Association has continued to provide the village with activities covering a wide area of the community. Once again we supported Holy Trinity Church at their Fete in June.

We went on to hold the annual Quiz in October. This was well supported and some of the profits went towards Christmas trees for the Christmas tree festival. The rest went into the MVA funds so that other events can be held in the future.

In November we again arranged for the Arts on Tour New Perspective Theatre Group to perform a children's play called the 'Not Now Bernard Stories' it was very well supported.

At Christmas the usual tree was provided by the MVA and put up outside the Village Hall, with another placed in the station waiting room.

This year we are trying to get the Local History Group up and running. There has been renewed interest in this and it looks promising.

We are holding our AGM on Monday 24th April at 8pm in the Green Room in the village hall. Everyone welcome. We need lots of new ideas for village activities

We look forward to an active 2006/7. Thank you to the Parish Council for their support.

Joan Gane
Secretary

MELDRETH NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

New coordinators have joined us during the year which means that our coverage was at last able to be extended to Whitecroft Road.

The Melbourn Police Station whilst still being manned by civilian volunteers, now has a Neighbourhood Policing Team working from the station. This consists of our new Community Beat Manager, PC Adrian Stephenson, supported by Emma Green as Police Community Support Officer and both officers operate for Meldreth and the 9 other villages surrounding us. The Watch was able to meet PC Stephenson when he addressed our February meeting.

Still part of the Sawston sector, the team is newly managed from Sawston's Police Station by Sergeant Mark Kathro who has been working in the Cambridgeshire Constabulary after 21 years in the Met based in east London. The South Cambridgeshire Sector Commander remains Inspector Ormerod.

Many of our Coordinators have signed up for 'E-Cops': a new initiative launched this year which allows information to be passed to Street Coordinators direct from the police and for them to respond where necessary. However, it is rather too early to be able to evaluate this. 'E-cops is not just for registered NHW coordinators; its for anyone who has an interest in policing matters. There is an on-line registration form and I am happy to give further details to anyone on request.

Another new scheme in the process of launch, called Neighbourhood Panels is being piloted by Cambridgeshire Constabulary. It had its first airing in Histon and, is due to be rolled out to the Sawston area in the coming months. The idea is that schools, parish councils, youth groups etc., will have the opportunity to come together with the local police teams to work out what the priorities should be at area level rather than this being decided by the police alone.

These schemes are government backed and designed to bring communities and the police together in a working partnership though the success of these schemes will depend on not just the police but as much on how local communities actively involve themselves.

Both your NHW and the PPIT team have corresponded with the police on the matter of our shop raids but enquiries are still in progress and we have no more information than has appeared in the local press. However, at least the police are aware of our concerns as a community.

Residents may have noticed that our badly degraded village NHW signs, many in place for 20 years or more, have now been replaced by the Watch. A new sign was also placed at the beginning of North End, so all key parts of the village now have signs. The signs remain the property of the Police but have to be purchased so we are grateful to the Parish Council for providing the necessary funds. Fortunately, apart from the serious crime at the shop, incidents remain low both numerically and in their nature, averaging around 4 to 5 incidents per month.

In the last 12 months to date, the village has suffered 5 burglaries, 14 vehicle related crimes and 33 other incidents of other theft or criminal damage. The Watch continues to keep records of local reported incidents and is happy to give further information on request.

Graham Borgonon
Village Co-ordinator

MELDRETH VILLAGE HALL TRUST

Earlier in the year, Sherida Inman kindly took over as Administrator, when Jeanette Williams left the village.

Plans for the store extension were finally accepted by the SCDC Planning Department and work was completed in October. All the equipment used by the Pre-School Group and Mothers and Toddlers is now kept in the store.

New stage lighting controls have been funded by the MVA and installed by Nick Gane. Many thanks to Nick for carrying out this work.

Some revamping of the kitchen is taking place and work to improve the garden is in hand.

It was necessary to call in the Environmental Health Officer, following a noise complaint. The matter was resolved satisfactorily.

The hiring charges for the hall have been reviewed.

With many regrets, Muriel and Ken Singleton are retiring from their posts as Secretary and Chairman of MVHT after nine years

Ken Singleton
Chairman

MELDRETH YOUTH CLUB

Statistics: since one of our staff (Debbie) took over the leadership of the Club in September until the end of March, there have been 20 sessions. The total number of young people who have attended these sessions is 231 – male 186 and female 45.

Projects: the theme for the term from January to March was about Health. Debbie arranged with the young people for the following:

- Drink sense – a local organization who education young people on the effects of alcohol to visit the Club and talk with young people;
- Healthy Eating – making smoothies and milkshake
- Smoking Quiz and information evening – to coincide with ‘No Smoking Day on 8th March.
- Karaoke nights – to boost young people’s self confidence and self esteem.
- Currently forming a Youth Club Committee made up of members to enable the young people to make decisions about their Club and to give them a voice in their community.

Requests: the young people have asked for some equipment/things to do but funds are limited. The list is as follows: Playstation 2 and T.V, new Pool Table, Table Tennis Table, paint the Club, new carpets.

Amanda Barnard
Youth Work Manager

PARISH PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

The Team: Graham Borgonon, Mike Crome, Joan Fallon, Janet Grimwood, Alan Land, Paul Ray, Sally Wright. The team has met on three occasions to coordinate its efforts. Progress is published on the Parish Council website.

Successes so far:

Melbourn and Bassingbourn Village Colleges are very grateful for details of businesses that may provide work experience opportunities.

26 Households have volunteered as Pavement Wardens operating to the remit endorsed by the Parish Council. They will cover nearly all the village.

Footpaths. New volunteers have helped the Parish Paths Partnership get a lot done to maintain and improve our footpaths.

An initial audit of village signage resulted in early improvements. Another survey planned soon.

10 new Royston & District Community Transport drivers plus 17 willing to help Good Companions and Lunch Club. We have a data base of drivers willing to help with other lifts.

In progress:

Businesses have been alerted to the opportunity to advertise in the Royston Crow brochure. Business website entries will be progressed.

Awaiting response from Royal Mail on CB post coding.

Identifying “Champions” for bridleways and facilities for the very young.

Janet Grimwood and Joan Fallon are working on the project to improve the rec pavilion.

Alan Land is working on the project to make fuller use of village sports and recreation facilities for a wider range of activities.

Village organisations have been asked to consider their web site entries and the extent to which they are attracting Meldreth Manor staff and the young.

Information obtained from Directions Plus on help with disabled access (Holy Trinity have already provided a portable ramp to improve church access).

Disappointments:

Meldreth to Shepreth path/pavement cannot be funded in 2006.

We could make faster progress if more villagers joined the PPIT or were willing to help it!

Being tackled by other groups:

Streams and meadows – by the Melwood Conservation Group and Meldreth River Restoration Group

Resolution of the future of the Mettle Hill Traveller’s Site and provision of affordable housing – by the Parish Council

Police and the fear of vandalism – by Neighbourhood Watch

Publicity: we plan to continue to publicise via Meldreth Matters and by taking stalls at village events.

Paul Ray
Chairman

The meeting concluded with comments from members of the Public, which are included in ‘Extracts of Parish Council Meeting’, which followed this meeting. The meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.