

MEETING OF MELDRETH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes unApproved of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 6th April 2017 at 7.30 p.m. in the Green Room of Meldreth Village Hall.

Present: Cllr C A Land (**CAL**) - Chairman, Cllr N Pellatt (**NP**) Vice-Chairman, Cllr C J Fallon (**JF**), Cllr R Goddin (**RG**), Cllr A Keena (**AK**), Cllr D Lee (**DL**), Cllr R A Searles (**RAS**)

In attendance: J Damant (Clerk), Cllr S van de Ven (CCC) and Cllr P Hart (SCDC)

- 001/04/17** **To receive any apologies for absence:**
Apologies were received from Cllr Young (personal reasons)
- 002/04/17** **Councillors to disclose any Pecuniary Interests (disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) include interests held by a member's spouse, civil partner or similar) listed on the Agenda:**
There were no interests declared.
- 003/04/17** **Public Participation: [For up to 15 minutes members of the public may contribute their views and comments to the Parish Council - 3mins per item]**
There were 6 members of the public in attendance.
Concern was raised about some weed killing which appears to have taken place from the corner of Elin Way leading towards Howards Road along Whitecroft Road. The Clerk will make enquiries as to whether the grass cutter has carried this out or whether it is from the district council, if so Cllr Hart will make enquiries.

Concern was expressed about the proposal of installing 20's Plenty Signs (see item 022/04/17)

Meldreth Futures reported that they have had a meeting (see item 013/04/17) where they have given their recommendations. They also enquired if they could set up a separate web site which would be monitored but not sure by whom, they would also like to put in a regular article into Meldreth Matters explaining who the Meldreth Futures Group are and what they do.
- 004/04/17** **To sign and approve Minutes of meeting dated 2nd March 2017:**
The minutes were proposed by Cllr Pellatt, seconded by Cllr Searles all agreed. The Chairman then signed the minutes as a true record.
- 005/04/17** **Report from District Councillor:**
Appendix 1
Other items raised
Cllr Searles enquired if Cllr Hart was aware that the proposed planning application for 79 High Street had included the pre application advice from SCDC which outlined what SCDC would recommend. Cllr Hart was not aware of this, however she did report that this is also a speculative development.
- 006/04/17** **Report from County Councillor:**
Appendix 2
Other items raised
Cllr van de Ven explained that the Greenway concept is to also link villages to each other not just for them to be linked to Cambridge City.
Melbourn have had another large speculative development of 160 dwellings which will be near the Science Park, and another for 30 dwellings near The Moors.
The platform extension for Meldreth has been cancelled by Network Rail this is due to funding and that Network Rail do not want to waste tax payers money. However, the platform extensions to Shepreth and Foxton are still to go ahead. It has also been clarified by Network Rail that the extension to the platform in Meldreth was to only be by one carriage length and not the full length as was thought. Cllr van de Ven stated that it would be very unlikely that the platform would ever be extended at a later date. It was felt that Meldreth have not been given a clear guidance on the platform extension project.
It also links into the proposed closure of the railway crossing on footpath 6 (CO4No.20).

007/04/17

Parish Councillor Vacancy:

Following the resignation of Cllr D Stewart (*LGA 1972 s 87 (1)(b) and (c)*) the Clerk has notified SCDC and has placed a notice (seeking an election) on the notice boards, this has to be placed for 14 days. Once this period has passed and no one has requested that an election be held, SCDC will notify the Clerk that the Parish Council may now proceed with a Cooption. Clerk should be notified by the 10th April if there is to be an election or whether the council can go ahead and advertise for a co option vacancy.

008/04/17

Train Station:

Proposed platform extension being cancelled for Meldreth (see item 006/04/17). It was felt by the Parish Council that Network Rail have not been very helpful in this matter and have never explained not was it ever mentioned in any of the meetings which took place with the Rail Users Group what the actual length of the extension would be. They have now cancelled the whole project for Meldreth. Concern was raised about the confusion this may cause and if there would be problems with users who had bikes making sure they were on the correct carriage. The new trains will be larger and longer and passengers using Meldreth will have to make sure they are on the correct carriages.

Close meeting: 7.50

Public - Are the reasons to extend the platform still valid and if so then the reason should still stand?

Open meeting: 7.54

It was proposed by Cllr Goddin that the Rail User Group should place a FOI request to Network Rail to see how this decision came about, seconded by Cllr Land, all agreed.

Cllr Goddin will go onto the Rail User Group.

Action: RG

009/04/17

Proposed closing of the railway crossing on footpath 10:

Cllr Searles reported on the proposal to close the crossing. He had looked over the file and noted that there was nothing new in the report. The one benefit is that there would be a new grass footpath installed, as a good will gesture, however it would be asked that if this was to happen that an all weather footpath be installed. Cllr Searles enquired with Cllr van de Ven if the decision can be reversed as the deadline for the consultation is 23rd April. Cllr van de Ven stated that you need to restate all your original arguments stating that the re routing of pedestrians along Station Bridge is dangerous and that the footway does not meet current standards. Cllr Searles also reported that the industrial site is very busy and pedestrians would also be at risk. Cllr van de Ven also stated that the Rail User Group had also been looking into this and had noted that it has been documented about a proposal of putting in a one way system over the bridge. Cllr Searles will put together a response. **Action: RAS**

010/04/17

Matters arising: (no actions information only)

Clerk's appraisal: was not done after the planning meeting on the 16th February.

Roof height enquiry regarding 104-108 High Street:

Bus Service for the 128: possible new timetable for the 128 bus. Comments need to be in by 24th April.

Traffic speed reduction: from 60mph to 40mph along North End from Shepreth to Meldreth has now been completed.

011/04/17

Planning Extracts: Cllrs. Land, Searles, Fallon, Lee, Pellatt and Stewart (Full Planning Minutes are available via the Clerk, website or notice board).

Planning meeting held on 16th March 2017:

114 High Street, Court Stables, S/0700/17/FL - Construction of a single storey dwelling and carport within existing private garden with new driveway access off highway.

The Parish Council planning committee felt that they had no alternative than to recommend **REFUSAL** as the site was within an important PVAA with the considerations given above.

20 Fenny Lane, S/0821/17/TP - T1 Ash – crown lift to 3m over public footpath. Cut back 1 lateral limb, approx height of 6m, which is growing over road and power line back to upright mature regrowth. Heavy limb over power line, risk to power line.

The Tree Warden is happy with this proposed work. Parish Council noted the application but made no comment.

Planning meeting held on 6th April 2017: verbal report

Temple House, 27 High Street, S/0729/17/DC - Discharge of conditions 3,4 and 5 of planning permission S/1621/16/LB, INFORMATION ONLY. Noted with no comments.

61a High Street, S/0830/17/DC - Application for approval of details reserved by condition 4 (Arboricultural Implication Assessment and Tree Protection Methods) of planning permission S/1759/16/FL. INFORMATION ONLY. Noted with no comments.

- 012/04/17 SCDC Local Plan: Local Green Space**
 In 2013 the Parish Council put forward the following areas to be considered as green sites: Recreation ground, Land behind Jephson's Development, Melwood, Melmeadow (permission given by the landowner) and Flambards Green. Only the Recreation ground and Flambards have been agreed and will probably survive any further scrutiny from SCDC as these areas are accessible and used by the public. The other areas have been rejected. Melwood is a protected Local Nature Reserve and so will have protection already.
- 013/04/17 Meldreth Futures Working Group:**
 Following the update from Mrs Silver, Chairman of the Meldreth Futures Working Group, it was agreed that funding should be given the Melbourn Village College's enrichment programme for £1043.00. Proposed by Cllr Searles, seconded by Cllr Fallon, all agreed. However it was also noted by the working group that the application did not make it clear if the transport service was available for all students, Clerk to enquire. **Action: Clerk**
 The application from Royston District Community Transport is presently on hold, Mr Wherrell has been in contact and is presently working on how RDCT may help in filling in those gaps which the possible cancelled subsidised bus routes may leave. Clerk to let Mr Wherrell know that once he has the information to resubmit the request.
 It was suggested that the website would be a good idea and that Cllr Young should be the moderator. **Action: AY**
 The proposal for the bike racks is to be put on hold, for the time being, as it is part of the Marley/Eternit S106 list.
- 014/04/17 Church Wall:**
 See item 022/04/17
 It was proposed by Cllr Land that the Parish Council accept the quote for putting together the specification. Mr Llewellyn is a well respected architect who works closely with the Diocese, seconded by Cllr Lee, all agreed. **Action: Clerk**
- 015/04/17 Marley Eternit: Proposed development of 150 dwellings:**
 Cllr Hart reported that a meeting has taken place whereby the education requirement was discussed, both Cllr Hart and Cllr van de Ven were in attendance at this meeting with planning and the developers. The planning department have to look at all variables in these applications. It is expected that the application may go to Planning Committee on Wednesday 3rd May. It was also suggested that the Clerk contact Mr Kratz, land lawyer to see if he would be available to also attend. This to be discussed further at the planning meeting on 20th April. **Action: Clerk**
- 016/04/17 Playground:**
 Monthly Report from Cllr Fallon stated that all the equipment appears to be in good working order. The guard on the zip wire has been installed and that Mr Chappel will repair the wood underneath the rocking horse.
 Playground Quotes:
 Specifications have been sent out to three companies for the works required at the recreation ground (hedges and trees). Recreation working party to look over. As the birds are now nesting this work can not be carried out until after the nesting season.
- 017/04/17 Recreation Ground:**
 Legal advice from Mr Kratz from Birketts has been received; further discussion is needed with the recreation ground working party as to how to proceed legally.
 Clerk is presently looking at firms who can carry this type of work out, quotes to be sought, once these have been received further discussion on how the Parish Council wish to proceed. **Action: Clerk**
- 018/04/17 Pavilion Construction:** *(LGA 1972 s111)*
 Cllr Pellatt reported that Stage One and Two have now been completed. The contract with KTL did not price for plastering, however this was needed before the kitchen could be installed. Cllr Pellatt looked at three companies to carry these works out and due to the time constraints hired a company at a cost of £700. As this was not on the agenda it was agreed that the football club pay the invoice and that they be reimbursed. This was agreed in principal and to be finalised at next month's meeting.
- 019/04/17 Security for Pavilion:** *(Local Government and Rating Act 1997 s31)*
 Cllr Young had submitted to all councillors his proposal for installing CCTV in the pavilion. Cllr Searles thanked Cllr Young for a very comprehensive report. It was also suggested, that if possible could the cameras also be focused on the entrance to the tennis courts.

It was proposed by Cllr Goddin to accept the quote from Hikvision for a total cost of £917.32, seconded by Cllr Searles, all agreed. **Action: Clerk/AY**

020/04/17 Pavilion Management Programme:

Cllr Goddin reported that the final agreement is still being worked on by Cllr Young and will be presented to the Council at the next meeting. **Action: AY**

The articles for a cleaner and a pavilion overseer were agreed by all councillors, these will be sent to Meldreth Matters and the Clerk will also put up on the notice boards and see if a notice can be put in the shop. **Action: Clerk**

021/04/17 Football Club Rental Payments:

Cllr Pellatt reported that the Saturday Football Club are a separate team to the Sunday Football Club, though they use the Meldreth title there is only one player from Meldreth on their team. Cllr Pellatt to contact Craig Lewis, treasure of the Saturday Team to clarify rental payments and report at the next meeting. **Action: Clerk**

022/04/17 Correspondence and Clerk's Report:

Notes from the Legal Land training course have been circulated to councillors.

Planning training: Melbourn on Saturday 22 April (Andrew and Richard) are able to attend, Alan L has given his apologies. Is there anyone else wanting to go?

Dog Bin: Clerk has written to Stuart Hardwood Clark (SCDC) to try and get a location agreed for placing a new dog bin in the vicinity of Whitecroft Road and Station Road. Site meeting needed as the placement of the bin would need to be agreed so that it can be emptied by SCDC. A replacement dog bin to be ordered for the recreation ground to replace the damaged bin. **Action: Clerk**

Church Wall: A meeting took place on Monday 27th March with Celia Wignall (SCDC), David Llewellyn (Architect) and John Price (Church Warden) and the Clerk to look at the church wall. Ms Wignall spoke with Mr Llewellyn and it was suggested that what ever he puts forward that it is first shown to her in order to get SCDC approval. The original fee for putting a specification together was £572.00. Ms Wignall agreed that a good specification is important and would help everyone. Mr Llewellyn also stated that any good stone mason would be able to carry out the works but the cost would be what the Parish Council are prepared to pay, ie there is a lot of work which needs to be done on this wall and it depends on how the Parish Council decide on how to section the areas. It was also discussed that the wall around the tree can be taken away and replaced with a fence/metal railings thus allowing the tree to grow. Both Ms Wignall and The Clerk checked this with Ian Lorman (SCDC Tree Officer) who stated that the tree would not suffer by doing this. Mr Llewellyn also noted that the wall at the front of the church which is leaning into the footway, is also in need of repairing as it could fall over, but there are options on how this can be achieved. Ms Wignall was not happy about removing the buttresses as Highways may not allow them to go back up it would depend on the width of the footway and new regulations, it is no longer just a case of taking down and replacing. The front wall itself needs some attention to the brick work to stop any further water damage and the foliage to be removed. From SCDC perspective the less invasive strategies would be preferred.

Litter bin: The litter bin on the corner of Elin Way/Whitecroft Road needs repairing, Clerk to contact Mr Chappel to see if it can be repaired and painted, if this is not achievable a new bin to be purchased. **Action: Clerk**

Village Map – Mrs Gilmore as part of the Meldreth Futures Group has been looking at some of the village maps and has also purchased a map to look to see if it would be possible to convert the map to show many other village assets, such as dog bins, litter bins, drains, footpaths, so that there would be one major map that would show all the village amenities and assets. This is different from a Village Map that some villages have but it might be very beneficial for everyone to have one map showing everything.

Village Hall Break in: The VH Chairman reported to the PC that the Village Hall had been broken into on Monday.

MADS: recording equipment has now been received.

20's Plenty: Clerk has now received a response from Sharon Piper, Policy and Regulation Manager (Highways) who stated that they will not give consent to placing these signs. If the Parish Council wish to reduce the legal speed limit to 20 mph then that is a different scenario, but to place a speed limit sign which is not enforceable and is not therefore a legal requirement, they believe, causes confusion and those villages who have them will be asked to remove them. Cllr Young to speak with Sharon Piper. **Action: AY**

023/04/17 To receive details of cheques to be drawn on the Parish Council's account as detailed or amended by late payments. To approve payments:

LGA Local Government Act; TCA Telecommunications Act; OSA Open Spaces Act; PHA Public Health Act; PCA Parish Council Act

1. Cheques/internet payment for approval and signature including any additional payments (shaded):

Payments already made

	Gross	Vat		Power	
Staff	confidential	0	March Salaries	LGA 1972 s112	Bacs
Talk Talk	22.31	0	Broadband	TCA 1984	DD
D P Gardens	540	0	Grass cutting March	OSA 1906 s9/10	Bacs

Payments awaiting Approval

	Gross	Vat		Power	
Inland Revenue	Not known	0	PAYE/NI	LGA 1972 s112	2570
SMART pension	Not know	0	Pension contributions	LGA 1972 s112	dd
KTL Buildings Services	3200	0	Pavilion refurbishment Stage 2 (S106)	LGA 1972 s133	2571
Village Garden Services	35	0	Repair to zip wire	OSA 1906 s9/10	bacs
Hags-SMP	45.6	7.6	Chain sleeve for zip wire	OSA 1906 s9/10	Bacs
SCDC	535.9	0	Pavilion rates	LGA 1972 s133	Bacs
SCDC	51.84	0	Cemetery rates	LGA 1972 s133	Bacs
SCDC	1674	0	Office rent 2016-17	LGA 1972 s	Bacs
ARCO	49.5	8.25	Yellow High vis waistcoat for litter picker	LGA 1972 s133	Bacs
Home start	300	0	Donation from precept	S137 agreed	Bacs
34SP	71.4	11.9	Web hosting	LGA 1972 s133	Bacs
PWLB	3728.25	0	Loan repayment	LGA 1972 s133	DD
Eon	192.21	9.15	Electric for pavilion	LGA 1972 s133	Bacs
Stationery Cupboard	63.37	10.56	Office supplies and ink	LGA 1972 s133	Bacs
J Damant	56.18	0	Expenses and anti virus for office	LGA 1972 s133	BacsS

Deposits

Office rent	90
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All payments were proposed by Cllr Fallon, to be correct, seconded by Cllr Lee all agreed.

024/04/17 Trees along North End:

Cllr Searles reported that a site meeting had taken place with Mr Peter J Taylor (Highways), Cllr Searles and the land owner (Mr Pepper) to discuss who was responsible for the trees along this verge in North End. Mr Taylor produced a map dating from 1820 which shows an old ditch (now filled in) but because there was a ditch it shows that the riparian responsibility is with the landowner. Mr Pepper has already started work on removing one tree and has consulted a tree surgeon on making sure the other trees are safe.

025/04/17 Tree on Flambards:

A tree has fallen from the ditch along Flambards, near the High Street. In accordance with the Residents Association Agreement the, Parish Council who are the land owners, handed over all responsibilities to the Flambards Residents Association and this would include all Riparian responsibilities for this ditch.

- 026/04/17 Tree Survey:**
Clerk to put together an asset register of all trees that are owned by the Parish Council and a policy to be put together regarding the carrying out of surveys. It has been suggested that for good practice annual inspections should be carried out for trees on roadsides and every two years for all other trees. There is no legal requirement to do this, according to the response from the Tree Officer Ian Lorman at SCDC but following a legal training day it was advised that Parish Councils check trees more regularly. At the moment they should be inspected every three years. Mr Lorman along with CAPALC believe that this approach would be good practice. Cllr Keena has offered to assist the Clerk in carrying out a survey of all PC trees.
Trees identified so far are:
All trees which the Parish Council have planted and agreed to be planted.
Trees in the:
Cemetery, Recreation ground, along Fenny Lane, Chestnut at the Stocks, tree at the War Memorial, Churchyard – the latter belong to the Vicar but the Parish Council are responsible for their maintenance.
- 027/04/17 Clerk's salary:**
Second part of the overall increase in the National Salary Award 2016-18 and to be implemented as of 1st April 2017. Clerk is presently on LCP27, increase of 0.124 per hour. It was suggested by Cllr Searles that the Clerk's LCP grading be look at, to be discussed at the next meeting.
- 028/04/17 Clerk's office hours:**
Orwell Parish Council would like set hours, at the moment the Clerk is working 9-12 for Orwell Parish Council and 12-3.30 for Meldreth Parish Council, however this has to be flexible depending on the date, ie meetings take up more time in setting up, typing up ect and times may vary on some days.
- 029/04/17 Policies and Procedures:** To agree and sign off.
Standing Orders
Co option Policy with Declaration Document
It was proposed by Cllr Land to accept both policies, seconded by Cllr Searles all agreed.
- 030/04/17 Mettle Hill:**
Cllr Goddin gave an update on the Mettle Hill 'Policy Memorandum' at the present time there has been no response from a proposal to put in a light industrial estate on the land. The working group are to hold a meet later in the month, date not agreed yet. At the moment the front runners are Park Homes, Affordable Housing, leave as it is. Following on from the meeting that Cllr Goddin attended at SCDC it was agreed the a policy outlining what has been happening with Mettle Hill be produced, this has now been completed. It was proposed by Cllr Goddin that this now be a public document, seconded by Cllr Pellatt, all agreed.
Appendix 3
- 031/04/17 Annual Meeting of the Parish Council:**
Will be held at the next Parish Council meeting on 4th May
- 032/04/17 Annual Parish Meeting (village meeting)**
Will be held on the 18th May at 7.30pm in the main room of the Village Hall
- 033/04/17 Councillors' Reports:**
Cllr Land
A branch has fallen from the Chestnut tree at the stocks. Clerk to have a tree surgeon inspect the tree. The clerk also stated that the Chestnut tree at the cemetery also needs inspecting. **Action: Clerk**
- 034/04/17 Agenda items for the next meeting:**
Clerk's LCP grading

There being no further business to discuss the Chairman closed the meeting at 10.15pm.
The next meeting will take place on 4th May at 7.30pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____

**District Councillor Report
Meldreth Parish Council
April 2017**

Whiteacre, 70 Whitecroft Rd planning ref S/1073/16/OL

I am told by the owner of the property that it has now been broken into for the eight time, despite the erection of security fencing and windows being boarded up and notwithstanding there being nothing remaining inside the buildings.

I think we can all agree it is an eyesore, and as such an encouragement to anti-social behaviour both on and off site.

The planning application for nine houses on the site is held up in the council's legal department and, whatever the outcome, it is in the interests of Meldreth that a decision is reached. I have contacted the relevant officers to ask that this matter be concluded as a matter of urgency and ask that the parish council consider doing the same, despite your not supporting the application when it came before you.

Marley Eternit

I propose to update the council when this matter comes up on the agenda.

Planning matters

I attended a council briefing on the housing trajectory yesterday before also sitting on the planning committee. As I have said before the housing requirement for South Cambs for the period 2011-2031 is 19,500 dwellings which is a build out rate of 975 a year. The Council has not been able to demonstrate a five year housing land supply since June 2014 such that the current land supply is rated at 4.1 years. This is an improvement over the last time I reported to you when it stood at 3.7 years. One of the factors improving this figure is the council approving five year land supply applications - or speculative applications as they are also known. The Marley Eternit application falls into this category of application. Other ways in which the housing trajectory is being sought to be bolstered is the use of planning conditions to require build out to take place more quickly.

Recent planning appeal case at Over suggest that there may be a whole scale revision of the rural settlement hierarchy, changing the factors which feed into the assessment methodology depending upon how access to services are rated. Meldreth is currently a Group village, but that may no longer be held to be the case. For more information please see <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Village%20Classification%20Report>

South Cambs District Council new Chief Executive

Council members are meeting next week to be asked to approve the appointment of a new chief executive, Beverly Agass.

South Cambs Council magazine

I have had no response from residents about their not receiving their copy of the magazine, so thus far have reported that deliveries in North End and its spur roads have not taken place for some time.

Greenways cycling routes

The councillor representing South Cambs on the City Deal, Francis Birkett, has written to all councillors explaining the vision for cycle Greenways linking which is proposed to create a network of 12 routes for "non-motorised users" linking neighbouring villages to Cambridge City.

The councillor stresses that this proposal is at a very early concept stage but that a team has been put in place to explore the proposition further. If you would like to find out more please go to:

<http://www4.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20020/cycling/666/greenways>

Cllr Philippa Hart. cllr.hart@scambs.gov.uk

Meldreth and Shepreth Ward. 01763 261255 or 07811 323571

Meldreth Parish Council, 6 April 2017 County Councillor Report

Meldreth platform extension: At the March 14 Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group, Network Rail representatives announced that they will not be extending the platform at Meldreth. There will be no change at Foxton and Shepreth, where the Cambridge-bound platform extensions are happening. The reason given for excluding Meldreth was 'to save taxpayers money.'

This is concerning because contracts and all necessary planning – including bus replacement services – are in place. Footfall is growing at 10% per year and platforms will get more crowded. Meldreth would be the only station between London King's Cross and Cambridge without an elongated platform on the Cambridge-bound side of the tracks, and it is highly unlikely that adaptations would be carried out in the future as the cost would of doing just one station would be so much higher. I have written to the Network Rail Managing Director to ask if this decision can be reconsidered. Unfortunately, it seems the decision has now been taken.

Proposed closure of level crossing C04 No 20: Network Rail have announced that they still propose to close the rural level crossing south of the Station Road vehicle bridge. I met County officers, the National Farmers Union representative and local farmer on site this week. County and the NFU will object strongly on various grounds; the key argument against is that risk for pedestrians will increase by virtue of being rerouted over Station Road bridge, which has known and documented risks. The pavement doesn't meet current standards and the mouth of the industrial site receives a regular flow of industrial size vehicles, with no pedestrian provision. Therefore, the risk is transferred from the railway to the highway, with increased risk to the pedestrian.

Bus information evening: As you know there is a gradual shift happening on bus services, with ridership not strong and consolidation of routes on both commercial and council subsidized services. The Parish Council should have received a letter from the County Council about tweaking the 128 service for which the subsidy has been protected for one more year. In two years' time, government revenue support grant will have reduced to zero. On the commercial side, if Stagecoach decides to cut the 27 bus, one idea for supporting people who are caught out in nearby villages would be a shuttle link to join up with the 26 bus in Melbourn and/or Meldreth Station. A bus and community transport information evening will take place on 19 April, 7:30PM, at Elin Way community room.

Fairer funding for schools: The government's fairer funding programme for Cambridgeshire schools is panning out better for some schools than others. Schools in our area have clubbed together to provide guidance and suggested responses to the government consultation. Meldreth Primary School and MVC have posted the relevant information on their websites.

Out-of-hours GP services: The consultation has closed, but it looks likely that this service will move from Chesterton Hospital to Addenbrooke's. It's clear that this would be best from a clinical point of view; the main concerns are around transport and access. The County Council Health Committee will be delegating a councillor to join the NHS-based team to ensure a user's point of view and input.

Riparian responsibilities: the County Council is no longer applying discretion to deal with some riparian ownership issues – this is very frustrating to landowners who seem to bear all the burden of fall tree clearance and other maintenance issues.

Flood Avoidance Subcommittee: Highways suggested that another drainage walk is planned soon. I will help organize this.

Twigs and broken branches on, North End:

Residents at 22 North End have collected a large amount of twigs and branches off the verge, arising from Storm Doris, and would appreciate it if they could be collected.

MELDRETH PARISH COUNCIL

METTLE HILL, KNEESWORTH ROAD SITE

POLICY MEMORANDUM

March 2017

INTRODUCTION

This Memorandum sets out the current policy of Meldreth Parish Council with regard to the site it owns at Mettle Hill and the work so far carried out to develop that policy. It also specifies the further work needed before a conclusive decision can be reached. The document will thereby serve to inform anyone with an actual or potential interest in the Mettle Hill site of the Parish Council's likely intentions with regard to the future use of the site. Interested parties could include residents, planning officers, district councillors and anyone who otherwise might have an interest in the site as a potential user or developer.

This policy represents the Parish Council's current intentions and considerations for the site and the Parish Council will, as necessary, periodically reconsider any changes that might be required.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The recent history of the Mettle Hill site from inception in 1987 to the present day is complex and this section of the Memorandum summarises only the main events. There were many detailed discussions involving *inter alia* the Parish Council, CCC and SCDC and these are all documented elsewhere.

Cambridgeshire County Council ("CCC") purchased the land and planning permission was granted in January 1987 for a transit camp for gypsies and travellers, to provide a temporary stopping point for that community. Initially the site was provided only with hard standing. Criminal activity and violent and anti-social behaviour by the occupants led to the site being closed by CCC, following pressure from the Parish Council and the then District Councillor.

Meanwhile, responsibility for identifying and meeting travellers' needs had passed to South Cambridgeshire District Council ("SCDC"). They took the decision to establish a permanent site as they considered that this would be more likely to attract travellers with a better standard of conduct. The site remained in the ownership of CCC but SCDC became responsible for its management. In August 1992 planning permission was given for 15 plots, each with a bathroom and washing machine and all services and infrastructure. These facilities were provided in eight small buildings, constructed in brick and tile. Some hard surfaced roads into and on the site were provided as well as external lighting.

The site comprises approximately five acres, of which one half was granted planning consent for the intended use as a travellers' site. The remaining half, which is the area further from the highway, retained its designation of agricultural land.

There then followed a period in which there continued to be major ongoing tensions between the occupants of the site and the settled community in the village, with continuing allegations of criminal activity and violent and anti-social behaviour. This included the occupants and others allegedly inflicting considerable damage on the infrastructure. The buildings were very severely damaged and the manhole covers for the various services were removed. In September 1996, SCDC closed the site for a second time and constructed a bund wall along the highway boundary to inhibit any re-occupation. Following further representations by the Parish Council to Andrew Lansley MP, CCC gave assurances that the site would not reopen.

However, in 2012 SCDC announced without consultation or advance notice that they intended to purchase the site from CCC and reopen it as a permanent site for travellers. This followed a SCDC survey, conducted three years earlier as part of local plan for considering the needs of gypsies and travellers. This survey had in fact at the time concluded on various grounds that the site was not suitable for that purpose.

With the site having been left in neither a secure or safe condition, the Parish Council decided that it would be in the interests of the village community for the Parish Council to acquire the freehold of the site so that it might determine a useful long-term purpose for the site and exercise a greater degree of control over its current and future use. With finance arranged from the Public Loans Works Board ("PWLB"), the site was purchased from CCC for £125,000 in 2012. This followed a period of negotiation and discussion in which SCDC expressed an interest in acquiring the site from CCC but in the event decided not to compete with the Parish Council in bidding for the site.

LOCAL DISCUSSIONS AND CONSULTATIONS

A considerable effort has since been made by the Parish Council to seek and understand local opinions and during the whole of this period there have been many discussions about the future of the site, including a recent consultation conducted amongst village residents. It should be noted that opposite the site on Kneesworth Road there are two sites that are occupied by travelling showmen, who are members of the Showmen's Guild. A further distance from the site on the same side of Kneesworth Road, there is a site that is permanently occupied by members of the gypsy and travelling community. The Showmen have periodically expressed an interest in the site for their further use and SCDC have made it known to the Parish Council that there is an unfulfilled local demand for site capacity from that community.

In the most recent consultation it was clear that those residents responding were supportive of various schemes that would, to differing degrees, have the effect of securing a permanent and worthwhile solution to the issues of Mettle Hill. There was also an emphasis on ensuring a reasonable financial outcome for the community, given that the loan from the PWLB would take many years to repay and incurs an annual outflow of over £7,000 from village resources.

A further Mettle Hill Working Group (“MHWG”) was formed in June 2016 with the brief to examine all possible options for Mettle Hill against the background of public opinion expressed previously in surveys and consultations.

OVERVIEW OF MHWG METHODOLOGY

MHWG noted that several clear preferences were evident from the village consultation, both in terms of selected choices and the accompanying narratives. It was clear that there was no support for any further sites in the immediate area for travelling showmen, nor would there be any support for the site to revert to its former use as a gypsy and traveller site. The Parish Council therefore firmly determined that neither of these uses will be considered and this decision is now confirmed.

MHWG developed a set of criteria to be applied to all proposals. These are set out following and are intended to encapsulate all the key dynamics and variables into which any proposal could reasonably be broken down and were determined from the consultation responses and the underlying presumed rationale.

Amenity and community benefits – the extent to which a proposal is likely to provide a useful facility for people in the community, distinguishing between the three main age groups;

Diversity – the effect on the social mix of the village;

Local employment – the effect on work opportunities and economic activity in Meldreth;

Burden – a negative factor relating to the effect of issues such as traffic, visual impact, noise pollution, possible social problems;

Financial impact – the level of rentals returns and capital over a given time horizon;

Parish control – three main areas, namely fungibility (the extent to which the scheme is reversible or contains some clean-up or lock-in), sustainability (the extent to which the scheme is self-managing or requires management effort from the Parish Council), and Parish Council Control (over the use and future of the site); and

Feasibility – Ability to deliver, confidence that a developing organisation can deliver the project - this criterion being a critical barrier to entry for any further consideration.

The Parish Council endorses the approach taken by its Working Group in seeking to apply consistent criteria and standards against which proposals can be judged.

APPLICATION OF MHWG METHODOLOGY

MHWG applied its criteria to all the project areas identified in the consultation and other discussions with the result that the following were considered as not suitable for further consideration:

Travelling showmen site
Self-build housing and work/live options
Community projects (other than as part of larger mixed-use scheme)
Medical facilities

Proposals considered suitable for further research were

Park Homes scheme
Affordable Housing scheme
Industrial Units scheme

CURRENT STATUS OF SUITABLE PROPOSALS

Park Homes - detailed discussions have taken place with a leading manufacturer and park homes operating company. These indicate full site clearance and security, full infrastructure installation, rapid population of the site with a sustainable community of like-minded residents, a long operating and management lease between the operator and the Parish Council and an adequate financial return. Residents would be required to be over 55 years of age (a normal requirement in this sector) so there would be no impact on local education facilities. No further work is needed on this proposal at the present time.

Affordable Housing – there is a well-recorded shortage of affordable housing in the area with 48 names on the local list maintained by SCDC. This proposal would help to fulfill a major social need and would provide a conclusive long-term use for the site. More work now needs to be done to investigate the financial and operational feasibility of this proposal. There appears to be little prospect of other significant affordable housing schemes being brought forward in the area, including the Marley Eternit scheme although that remains to be determined at the present time (March 2017)

Industrial Units – such a project would offer local employment and economic activity but is at an early stage of investigation. It is currently not a buoyant sector and is likely to be a difficult project to organise and manage through to completion.

The Parish Council has instructed the MHWG to accelerate its work on investigating the Affordable Housing and Industrial Units proposals and to present recommendations as soon as practicable, noting meanwhile the need to stay abreast and take due account of other important local issues such as the determination of the development proposal on the Marley Eternit site.

PLANNING ISSUES

No formal approach has been made to SCDC for any of these projects but there have been informal discussions, which the Parish Council duly notes.

There may be concerns about the sustainability of the site for residential uses (whether Affordable Housing or Park Homes) by reason of the location of the site and its relationship to the core of the village. The Parish Council will contend that the site is closer to the village than the proposed development at Marley Eternit. It will also contend that in the immediate vicinity there are residential sites for travelling showmen, affordable housing at the Burtons site and the small former social housing estate at West Way. The Parish Council considers that the use of the site for affordable housing or park homes will therefore positively reinforce an existing and developing nucleus of residential occupation in the immediate area and help to build a sustainable and supportive group of local residents. It is accepted that affordable housing is likely to have an impact on the local school whereas the age restrictions on park homes will only affect local medical facilities. In this context it should however be noted that residents of park homes schemes often relocate from reasonably local permanent housing, in which case the effect on medical facilities would not be significant. The Parish Council therefore takes the view that the impact of any additional residential footprint will be marginal.

CONCLUSIONS

The policy of Meldreth Parish Council is to seek and deliver a use for the Mettle Hill site that meets local needs and wider social obligations, in ways securing the site for the longer term and providing a reasonable financial return for the commitment shown by the community. That commitment is evident not only in the purchase of the site but in all the research, discussions and investigations that have needed to be conducted.

The Mettle Hill site represents both a source of historic difficulties for the community and now an important opportunity to create a useful asset. The Parish Council therefore hopes that the SCDC Planning Department will want to work closely and constructively with the Parish Council in delivering a worthwhile outcome.

Meldreth Parish Council confirms that this Memorandum is an accurate statement of its Policy towards the site.