



ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

2011

To start, a few statistics for the year 2010/11:

Melton Parish Council has held 12 Full Council meetings with an average attendance of 80% and our four committees have held a total of 22 meetings with an average attendance ranging from 75% to 90%. Parish councillors give a lot of their time, unpaid, to keeping the village a pleasant place to live.

The Precept for 2011/12 is £52,000, up from £50,200, but the cost per band D property is £30.81, down from £31.36. This is due to new houses being occupied and the 58 properties we regained from Ufford when the boundary was redrawn.

Melton is bigger than most people think. The number of homes is over 2,000, housing around 5,000 people. There are also around 150 businesses, large and small, based in the village. A list of these can be found on our web-site.

The number of planning applications considered in 2010/11 was 54. Of these we supported 5, objected to 10 and raised no objection to the remaining 39.

In 2006, a huge amount of work was done to produce a Village Plan, a copy of which went to every home in the village. The plan is the framework for everything we do and will continue to be so until a new plan is produced.

For a village of its size, Melton has a large number of Planning issues.

In the past year, the applications we have objected to have included:

- the Girdlestones site, for which SCDC finally issued planning permission.
- the proposed development of a large warehouse on the Notcutts site just over the border in Ufford. This could have a serious effect on the traffic along Woods Lane, The Street and Yarmouth Road. The application was withdrawn and we are currently waiting to see if it is resubmitted.
- the conversion of the Horse and Groom, into two houses with a third to be built in the car park. This right in the heart of the conservation area. Now the Coach and Horses has closed and we must wait and see what is proposed for the site.
- the building of a new incinerator with the erection of a very tall flue at the Knackers Yard in Valley Farm Road.
- the change of use of the car showroom to a convenience store with long opening hours at the John Grose garage.

On Melton Park, there have also been problems with St Audry's House and the graveyard at St Audry's church.

We also were invited to make a submission to the SCDC Scrutiny Committee's investigation into their Planning Service and presented detailed evidence of the reasons for our unhappiness with the way the system works in this district.

Possibly our greatest asset, the playing field is very well used with football pitches and the tennis courts, the children's play equipment and the summer monthly car boot sales. On sunny days, there are often family groups playing games and having picnics and all year the woods and field are busy with dog walkers.

The field is looked after by our park warden, Keith Stebbings, who works tirelessly to keep it litter free and safe for everyone to use. We cannot thank Keith enough for the work he does.

During the year, we have considered various matters regarding the field:

- We applied for planning permission to redevelop the pavilion, which is little used now, to create a meeting room and new parish office. We got the permission but could not raise sufficient funds. We are going ahead with a minor upgrade of the lavatories this year but hope that grants can be found to proceed with the full redevelopment soon.
- A proposal was made to extend the path along the edge of the field and create a cycle path for children going to school. We were happy for the field to be used but due to problems with rights of way the costs escalated and the scheme was no longer practical.
- On behalf of Just42, we have submitted a planning application for a BMX track on the edge of the field, near Hutchison's Meadow, the only area that is dry enough and not already taken up by a football pitch.
- Last summer, Circus Tyanna visited the field and they will be returning this year. We have also agreed for the Community Fun Day to be held on the field for the first time this July.

We conducted an Affordable Housing Survey delivering a questionnaire to every house in the village. We have just received the results and will now work with other agencies to get more affordable homes built in the village for people with a strong link to Melton.

Due to a lot of work by our County Councillor, we finally have a much enlarged car park at Melton Station. This has only been open a few weeks but is already full most days.

It has been a bumper year for consultations. We have contributed (or are still contributing) to more than I can remember. A few worth mentioning:

- SCDC's Local Development Framework both core strategy and site specific allocations, something we have all met and discussed several times since 2007. We have since made various submissions, another two this year and now it is again on hold until the autumn.
- SCC New Strategic Direction invited comments but mostly on ways for the community to take on responsibilities and assets.
- Similarly, the Government's Localism Bill invites submissions on a wide variety of proposals, most of which are hundreds of pages long. We are doing our best but it is not easy.

The Parish Council has just reached the end of this four-year term and I should like to take the opportunity, on behalf of the whole community, to thank all the people who have served as councillors over the last four years for their dedication and hard work. I should also like to express my own thanks for the help and support I have been given in my year as chairman. These thanks also extend to our Clerk, Malcolm Green, and Assistant Clerk, Diane Linsley.

Their hard work supporting the administration of the council can easily be overlooked. They are based in the Parish Office in the bungalow at the Lindos Centre which is open to members of the public on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9am to 12 noon.

Five of our councillors are retiring and I am sure everyone will join me in wishing them all the best for the future. Also, in welcoming the new councillors who will take their places at the May meeting of the council. I am sure the new Council will face many challenges and will continue to do all it can to keep Melton a pleasant place to live and work in and I would ask you, the community, to give us your help and support over the next four years.

Councillor Katy Martin

Chairman

Melton Parish Council