



MELTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Councillor GK Butterwick

APM(08)P01

Chairman's Annual Report – 2008.

I'd like to welcome all those of you who have attended this annual meeting of the electors of the village and stress that this is **your** meeting, as residents of the village. It is **not** a parish council meeting. However, this is my report on the work of the council for the year.

This time last year, the Annual Report was presented by the then Chairman, Penny Warburg, who had decided not to stand for re-election to the Council, which she had chaired since 2005. In February this year, we were saddened to hear of her untimely death – a great loss to her family and friends.

Let me start by telling you what village facilities the parish council owns or is responsible for:-

- two Bus Shelters (Melton Street & Bredfield Road);
- the Playing Field on Melton Road, including 100 or so trees, the Pavilion & its contents, the Children's Play Equipment, the Five-a-Side Pitch, the two Tennis Courts and various items of maintenance equipment;
- Burkes Wood, with its and hundreds of trees and its Pond;
- various Public Seats;
- the Village Sign and the "green" on Melton Street;
- the Village Notice Board outside the Burness Parish Rooms;
- two historic Village Pumps;
- a leased Office and a range of Office Equipment.

The council also comments on behalf of the village to a wide range of consultations from county and district councils and NHS Trusts. Responding quickly (usually within 2 weeks) to planning applications and tree preservation orders accounts for most of this work. It is worth noting that the parish council gets no more notice of planning applications, no matter how large, than anyone else in the community. All this cost money to run, to insure, to maintain and to replace when it's worn out - we achieve this for a Parish Council Tax of £24 a year (just 46 pence a week!) for a Band D household, less than the average parish in the district.

Following the decision in March 2007 to hold monthly meetings, the full council met on 11 occasions between 1st April 2007 and 31st March 2008. A new council was elected on 3rd May 2007, when we said goodbye to 6 councillors who had decided not to stand for re-election. Seven existing councillors were re-elected, five new councillors were elected, and the one vacancy was filled by co-option at the first meeting on 9th May. Attendance at council meetings has averaged 82%, the highest for ten years.

The first meeting of the new council, on 9th May, was mainly taken up with administrative matters, but at the June meeting it was agreed to set up a number of council committees, which would meet in public and have the power to make decisions without the need to wait for the next meeting of the full council. The Planning Committee met on 12 occasions during the year (once in it earlier guise as a Working Group), with 90% attendance by councillors. 55 planning applications were considered. Objections made to 18 of them; 5 of these were subsequently either refused by the District Council or withdrawn by the applicant, whilst decisions are awaited on 7 of them.

During the year, the Employment Committee met on 3 occasions, with an 80% attendance record. The Finance & Risk Management Committee met on 5 occasions, again with 80% attendance. The Recreation Committee also met 5 times, with 84% of councillors attending - it has authorised much-needed spending on repairs and maintenance to the children's' play equipment, the pavilion, the tennis courts, the playing field and Burkes' Wood. The Village Plan Committee met on 6 occasions, with 80% attendance - it has promoted and monitored the steady progress being made towards implementing the Village Action Plan. Our Local Transport Representative has made regular reports on bus and train services and produced two printed editions of the Local Public Transport Guide and kept the website version even more up to date. We have had regular reports from our representatives on the Safer Neighbourhood Team Liaison Group, the Melton Community Youth Project, the Greenprint Forum and the Suffolk Association of Local Councils, as well as the trustees the council has nominated to the Burness Parish Room and The Melton Trust.

Our county councillor (Clare Aitcheson) and district councillors (Jim Bidwell and Michael Bond) attend as many meetings as they can - they each represent other villages as well as Melton. They keep us in touch with issues which concern us at the larger councils.

Over the course of the year, we have welcomed an increasing number of residents to meetings of the full Council and of Planning Committee. **All council and committee meetings are open to the public, and start with an Open Forum for residents to ask questions of their councillors and to raise matters of concern or interest in the village.**

Highlights of the past twelve months have included:-

- The long-awaited improvements to Pytches Road, including a zebra crossing, a footway along its complete length and a new bus stop were completed in *April*.
- The new primary school on Wilkinson Way opened in *May*. This strikingly modern, energy-efficient building is quite a change from the Victorian premises in the centre of Woodbridge which they left.
- I had the privilege of representing the village when the 23 Engineer Regiment (Air Assault) was presented with the Freedom of Woodbridge in *June*.
- We have watched the developing review of Local Government in Suffolk. First the bid for a stand-alone unitary council for Ipswich and the Pathfinder Bid for much closer working between the county, the remaining six districts and the many town & parish councils. Now that Ipswich's bid has been rejected, we have a range of proposals being developed for one, two or three unitary councils to replace county and district by 2010. There will be public consultation on this during summer 2008, and we will be keen to hear your views.
- Throughout the year, we have discussed the question of the 58 houses in Melton Park whose owners found they now live in Ufford. A survey of the residents affected was conducted jointly with Ufford Parish Council in *October*. The result that a majority were in favour of changing the boundary so that they return to Melton. We have now asked the District Council to ask the Boundary Committee to undertake a boundary review.
- In *February*, we had a presentation on the work of Suffolk Coastal Teen Voices and the Felixstowe Youth Forum - we agreed to investigate the possibility of setting up a Melton Youth Forum as a way of engaging young people more closely in community life. In *February*, we also regretfully accepted the resignation of Kim Tester after serving 3 years as a councillor.
- In *March*, we objected, and continue to object, to the decision to stop residents in a large part of the village from having their prescriptions dispensed by their GP Surgery - we believe this would cause real hardship to many. In *March*, we also received a petition signed by 175 residents objecting to the proposed mobile phone mast on the

hill above Valley Farm - a robust case was put to the District Council's Development Control Committee with the result yet to be decided.

- We have seen continued development of the Deben Mill site, with new offices and apartments being filled almost as soon as they were built. The old buildings at the slaughterhouse have been swept away and replaced by modern facilities, which we hope will eliminate complaints about unpleasant smells. Work has started on the new housing in the grounds of the former Melton Grange Hotel and its conversion into high quality apartments.
- We have been frustrated by the very slow progress being made in providing an enlarged car-park at the railway station. We are now told this may happen in 2009/10.

There were 100 crimes recorded in the 10 main categories in the Melton & Ufford Ward in the year March 2007 to February 2008:-

- Burglary 7
- Common Assault 6
- Criminal Damage 52
- Theft from Motor Vehicle 10
- Theft of Pedal Cycle 4
- Theft of Motor Vehicle 6
- Vehicle Interference 1
- Wounding 14
- There were *no* Robberies or Thefts from Person during this time.

This compares to a rather higher total of 152 offences in the year January to December 2006. Suffolk in general and Melton in particular, remain one of the safest areas in the country in which to live and that in any year most of us will not become victims of crime. However, it pays not to be complacent, so remember to keep valuables locked away from prying eyes, always lock your car and be alert to unknown callers at your door.

As I mentioned earlier, running the council and insuring, maintaining and replacing council assets does cost money. Regrettably, we found it necessary to increase the council tax precept to £36,000 for 2008/09 in order to do all this to an acceptable standard. Despite this increase, the council tax payable by someone living in Melton will still be less than the average, and Melton ranks 54th out of the 93 parishes in Suffolk Coastal in terms of the level of council tax.

This has been a year of great change for the council. I would like to pay tribute to the hard work and support of my fellow councillors, especially the Vice-Chairman and those who have taken on the responsibility of chairing the new committees. Last but not least, my thanks go to the Clerk to the Council, Malcolm Green, who has had something of a baptism of fire in his first year in post, with a new office, a new website, new councillors and the new committee system.

Geof Butterwick

Geof Butterwick
Chairman of Council
23rd April 2008

Appendix 1

List of Councillors:

Cllr Mrs Bryony Abbott eMail: cllr.abbott@melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk

Cllr Mrs Mary Addington eMail: cllr.addington@melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk

Cllr Mr Peter Brockett eMail: cllr.brockett@melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk

Cllr Mr Michael Bond eMail: michael.bond@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Cllr Mr Geof Butterwick [Chairman] eMail: cllr.butterwick@melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk

Cllr Miss Deborah Dann eMail: cllr.dann@melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk

Cllr Mr Tony Dunford [Vice Chairman] eMail: cllr.dunford@melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk

Cllr Mrs Jenny Eckersley eMail: cllr.eckersley@melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk

Cllr Mrs Pam Ferguson eMail: cllr.ferguson@melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk

Cllr Mrs Jane Hilson eMail: cllr.hilson@melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk

Cllr Mrs Lorraine Leonard eMail: cllr.leonard@melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk

Cllr Miss Katy Martin eMail: cllr.martin@melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk

Cllr Mr Mike Sherwen eMail: cllr.sherwen@melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk

District Councillors

Cllr Mr Jim Bidwell eMail: james.bidwell@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Cllr Mr Michael Bond eMail: michael.bond@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

County Councillor

Cllr Mrs Clare Aitchison eMail: clare.aitchison@councillors.suffolkcc.gov.uk

Appendix 2

Summary of Parish Council Accounts year ended 31st March 2008

	Year Ending	
	31-Mar 2007 £	31-Mar 2008 £
1 Balances brought forward	£ 69,376	£ 68,695
2 Annual Precept	£ 27,600	£ 27,600
3 Total Other receipts	£ 13,172	£ 9,890
4 Staff Costs	£ 12,646	£ 14,588
5 Loan Interest/Capital Repayments	£ 293	£ 293
6 Total Other Payments	£ 28,515	£ 41,593
7 Balances Carried Forward	£ 68,695	£ 49,711
8 Total Cash and Short Term Investments	£ 68,695	£ 49,711
9 Total Fixed Assets and Long Term Assets	£ 244,168	£ 244,944
10 Total Borrowing	£ 1,270	£ 1,092