



# MELTON PARISH COUNCIL



## **Melton Village Plan Update March 2011.**

The purpose of this report is twofold- it provides an update for Full Council on our progress with the Village Plan and as part of the Chairman's annual report it will be useful input to the new council to be elected in 2011. The new council may decide to carry out another survey at some pointing the future.

The Melton Village Plan was a survey of all households where we set the precept and we had a 50% return rate so that gave us a great start when the current Council was appointed in 2007.

It should be noted that the survey was a huge undertaking. Preparation and analysis of the forms took time and a willing band of volunteers contributed their skills and their time to the process, yes an example of the Big Society!

A number of key themes emerged from the process and items were grouped together under headings and delegated to relevant committees for action. This is a summary of our progress to date.

### **Theme: Environment**

Here in Melton we have a wonderful mix of different environments, both natural and man-made. The Parish Council has responsibility for wooded areas, riverbanks and green spaces. We will continue to protect and maintain them on behalf of local residents and we have been active in opposing inappropriate development in response to feedback in the plan.

We commissioned a professional survey of the woodland under our stewardship and this forms the basis for a management plan being prepared by the Assistant Clerk who is tasked with monitoring contracts and liaising with the local Arboriculturist.

We welcomed the District Council's establishment of a 'Supplementary Planning Document' for the Conservation Area in the centre of the village. This covers the area from the Coach & Horses up to (but not including) the old tollgate, together with parts of Station road and Saddlemakers Lane, and includes many historical buildings (many listed) such as well as the village pump and milestone, our village sign and the Horse & Groom. This has unfortunately failed as a public house and it is with regret that the local District Council gave the go ahead for conversion to residential housing despite the objections of the Parish Council.

We are represented on the local liaison group monitoring the Deben river conservation programme and flood risk.

### **Theme: Housing**

Affordable housing to enable local people to remain in the village was a key theme emerging from the village plan. We are currently undertaking a further survey to establish present needs, having earmarked potentially suitable sites for building in the Local Development Framework, although of course this is the decision of Suffolk Coastal District Council rather than the village. A mix of communities is preferred taking into account factors such as demographics, green belt, flood risk and preserving our green corridor running from Woodbridge along the back of the woods and fields and joining up with the Countryside.

### **Theme: Local Economy**

The village of Melton and surrounding area is popular with retired older people and there is a lower rate of unemployment compared to the average in the county.

Main area of industry is in Dock Lane and down Wilford Bridge Road. We have a range of small business units, light industry and small retail outlets such as 3 hairdressers!

The proposal for the Girdlestone's site will attract more commerce to Melton. The Parish Council objected to the size and scope of the planned development and succeeded in significantly reducing the scale of the development and its impact on our environment.

New development is proposed for the old Bentwaters airfield complex and we are remaining vigilant as to the size and scope of this and any likely impact on Melton.

### **Theme: Traffic Management**

Melton is the gateway to a popular designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and to reach it increasing numbers of people in their vehicles pass through the village via the A1152 over the crossroads and across the narrow railway crossing!

We have carried out our own professional traffic counts as part of our evaluation of the Girdlestone's development proposal and potentially this theme will have the biggest impact on our village. There is the hazardous railway crossing and the fact we have a Primary School next to the Melton traffic lights. A new 30mph speed limit was successfully introduced at Melton Park and we have submitted a proposal for a 30mph restriction on the busy rat run of Saddlemakers Lane and longer term we would also like to see a 30mph on the whole of Woods Lane.

Melton Parish Council has a Public Transport Representative and through his good offices we have regular updates on the situation with our buses and trains.

We will continue to monitor the Parking situation in the village with assistance from our local Community police presence. Outside the shop and especially on double yellow lines

and in Station Road (should really be re-named Church Road!!) in the light of the new development of the old pub.

### **Theme: Culture and Leisure**

Young people and their families- Despite our best efforts to encourage the involvement of young people in the village, we have been disappointed with the response and so we decided to invest in the provision of good quality outdoor facilities for young people and their families to enjoy. We have stewardship of the woods and playing field and we are committed to investing in the maintenance and upkeep of both and of course they were donated to the village by past benefactors so they are part of our heritage.

The playing fields are kept to a high standard through our contract with a local firm of ground-keepers, enabling the local football teams to play throughout the season. Doggie waste bins are provided for the use of dog walkers on the field and a dedicated 'park warden' is employed who does an excellent job of looking after the field on a daily basis. Play equipment is maintained to a high standard and the tennis courts were rebuilt with the help of a legacy and the Public Works Loans Board. These facilities generate a small income which helps to offset the loan.

Future plans include a proposed BMX track for the use of older children & young people and, in the longer term, the renovation of the Pavilion to bring it back into practical use.

Through the Safer Neighbourhood Team we monitor for vandalism and nuisance behaviours and we are fortunate that the village is a safe place to live and bring up families.

Melton Trust - we are represented by 2 Parish Councillors on the Melton Trust, administering the charitable endowment and part of the heritage of this village. Likewise the Burness Parish Rooms were given in trust to the parish and they have an active programme of classes and events taking place there. The Parish Council makes a grant to the help pay for improvements to the building.

Leisure and sports activities take place at the Lindos Centre and also at Melton Primary School.

Residents have access to Woodbridge Library where there are classes for older residents and activities for younger children.

### **Theme: Public Rights of Way**

This is the only theme where we have seen limited progress.

The attempt to establish a network of cycle paths for young people to travel safely to school was frustrated by land ownership issues and escalating costs, making it prohibitive in these straitened times. It was not for lack of trying and our County Councillor was very active on our behalf although at the present time we have no plans to pursue this aim.

Likewise we have made very limited progress with Footpaths and Rights of Way and this will need to be carried over to the new council. There is a programme underway which is dependent on advice from the County Council and goodwill of landowners where Rights of Way are not always clearly defined.

**Theme: Communication**

Responding to feedback about improving communications we have provided Noticeboards in strategic locations throughout Melton which are kept up to date by volunteers, we have invested in the website where our proceedings are in the public domain and the e-news system is developing and improving all the time. We also contribute to the Melton Messenger, an important village publication which has articles about our meetings and other news.

Cllr. Bryony Abbott  
March 2011