

**Response to Melton Neighbourhood Plan (pre-submission) DRAFT.  
Regarding MEL8 and MEL9 concerning the Village Hall and playing fields**

**General objection.** Our objection is that the NP draft is very misleading regarding the requirements for a Village Hall. The responses to the NP questionnaire and the replies did not specifically state that a Village Hall is required.

Melton Parish Council have worked very hard on the NP and have produced a document which will be very helpful in times to come if it is adopted. Unfortunately, it cannot be said that the contents are a true representation of 100% of the community as only a small proportion of Melton residents completed the first questionnaire.

Of those residents who returned their completed questionnaires, an unspecified number apparently expressed a wish for more social facilities when replying. The Village Hall subject developed after the NP questionnaire was evaluated, along with the MPC's requirement for permanent offices. The above was the basis of the proposed 'New Village Hall Plan'.

**NP Questionnaire.** The NP questionnaire and replies did not specify a new build Village Hall only a hub for village social activities and we already have the Burness Rooms, School, St. John's Church Hall and The Chapel. Note; since the closure of the Lindos Centre other equivalent facilities have become available 'The Room' Melton opening this month (March 2017).

Due to the above there is no requirement for a new Village Hall and we detail our concerns below.

**Item 1 –Policy MEL9 (section text is below).**

**POLICY MEL9: PROVISION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES AT THE PLAYING FIELDS, MELTON ROAD**  
The provision of the following community facilities at the playing fields, Melton Road, will be strongly supported:

- i. Removal of the existing pavilion and development of a new village hall, incorporating:
  - a main hall,
  - three meeting rooms,
  - an ancillary office, kitchen and WCs
  - an ancillary café,
  - changing room facilities
  - appropriate levels of on-site parking provision
  - the retention, where possible, of protected trees
- ii. Outdoor gym equipment suitable for the needs of people of all ages

**Comments on MEL9.**

Our main concerns are listed below about the proposal to build a Village Hall on the playing field in ref to the MEL9 bullet points.

- i. Removal of the existing pavilion and development at the playing fields.
  - 1. Building a 2 - story structure with expanded car park on a much valued and important green space is not necessary.
  - 2. The existing pavilion is currently located in an ideal position to serve as changing rooms, toilet facilities and a meeting room if the existing pavilion was renovated. The renovation would be far cheaper than building a new village hall.
  - 3. Note - Costs of such a large loan if needed and long term financial viability becoming a burden on present and future generations of Melton residents.

4. Staffing, general management and maintenance issues for such a large facility have not been considered.
- Main hall, and three meeting rooms.
    1. Lack of market research on facilities required by the community and their sustainability.
    2. No business plan to date with even approximate income/expenditure estimates.
    3. There are other venues available in Melton so is the proposed Village Hall really necessary?
    4. Potential noise and disturbance – wedding reception/party venue.
  - An ancillary office kitchen and WC's and café
    1. This could be incorporated in the upgrade of the existing pavilion
  - Approximate levels of parking and footprint of new facility.
    1. The footprint of the proposed new village hall and car park is far greater than the existing pavilion and car park.
    2. The football pitch on the north side of the playing field will be encroached by the proposed new Village Hall. Due to the stipulation that any building must be 15 meters from the northern boundary.
  - The retention where possible of, protected trees.
    1. All protected trees and other trees must be protected 'where possible' is not acceptable and sufficient statement to protect the trees.
- ii. Outdoor gym equipment suitable for the needs of people of all ages.
1. The existing pavilion and playing field could offer the above facilities.

**Item 2 – Policy MEL8 (section text is below).**

**POLICY MEL8: RETENTION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

Proposals that would result in the loss of community facilities, including small scale retail facilities (A-Class), will not be supported unless appropriate re-provision is made. Such re-provision will be required to demonstrate that the replacement facility is:

- At least of an equivalent scale to the existing facility; and
- is in a generally accessible location to the community of Melton;
- and is made available before the closure of the existing facility.

Proposals for new and/or improved community facilities will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- the proposal would not have significant harmful impacts on the amenities of surrounding residents and other activities; and
- the proposal would not have significant harmful impacts on the surrounding local environment; and
- the proposal would not have unacceptable impacts on the local road network; and
- the proposal would provide appropriate car parking facilities; and
- the proposal is located within or immediately adjacent to the physical limits boundaries as defined in Policy MEL1.

**Comments on MEL8**

A new Village Hall build could invalidate most of the bullet points in the above policy.

1. There will be noise to residents from a building of the proposed size and positioning (wedding, party venue).

2. The building would have a detrimental effect on the green space on the North boundary encroaching on usable football pitch area also when large car parking space is introduced.
3. Local road network, parking of cars on the road and overload of traffic regardless of size of car park.

**Item 3 - Comments on item 6.5 wording in the NP** (section text is below).

**Item 6.5 states.**

*Engagement with the community to inform the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan highlighted how much the community of Melton values the playing fields on Melton Road. This is a key hub providing open space for formal and informal recreation, children's play facilities **and a village hall***

The final sentence in Item 6.5 is a misleading statement and implies that a new village hall is a firm requirement developing from the NP questionnaire. Due to the above we require to have article 6.5 in the NP plan modified. To date there has never been a Village Hall on the playing field, only a pavilion which could be upgraded.

The questionnaire did not list the specific question of 'Do you require a village hall?' the proposal to build did not come out of the NP questionnaire process.

**Item 4 - Action to be taken in NP draft.**

1. The NP section 6.5 should be amended: deleting the words '**and a Village Hall**'.
2. We require the NP draft **Provision of community facilities** to be amended stating that a Village Hall requirement did not originate from the NP questionnaire. The NP also overstates the responses to the questionnaire regarding the requirements for a Village Hall.

**Item 5 - Update and background.**

The proposals for a Village Hall have moved on since the publication of the draft NP and give cause for concern in terms of the consultation process, location, scale, function, facilities, finance, management and staffing.

The initial MPC consideration was partly for an office for the Parish Clerk due to the loss of the Lindos Centre. The proposed plans for a village hall on the Melton playing fields far exceeds the initial requirements for just an office and a social hub for Melton.

We are all very aware that the playing field could be put to more use than at the present time but other solutions have not really been given a fair investigation. The proposed VH is estimated to cost upwards of £1.2 million. For a fraction of the cost the pavilion could be renovated and upgraded to provide a pleasing and useful building to provide facilities for simple catering, better toilets and a small meeting room. It is also positioned very conveniently and could provide a veranda area all around it for viewing games and also seating for parents and carers using the playground and possibly a meeting point. It would become a useful building, for minimal outlay and have an appearance more in keeping with its surroundings of a village green space.

**A Feasibility Study**, should be dedicated into looking into renovation the pavilion. There would not be any objection to public toilets in this area, unlike the covenant on the Northern boundary.

David & Elizabeth Whittingham, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017