

STRATEGIC PLAN: JULY 2022 TO APRIL 2027

Purpose: To ensure that the Parish Council continues to practise to the highest standards of professionalism and integrity in undertaking its duties and responsibilities

To achieve this goal by maintaining public confidence in the Parish Council through clear communication and actions, while ensuring that the views of the residents are understood and consequent action taken wherever practicable and possible.

This Strategic Plan to be consulted as a routine part of precept-setting each year

1. Openness, transparency, and engagement with the community.

- To continue to develop the annual Melbourn Awards and use these as a measure to make the Annual Parish Meeting a 'must attend' event.
- To re-design the website making it more user friendly, up to date and practical, with the aim of encouraging more residents to see this as the 'go to place' for information regarding the village.
- To encourage more residents to attend Full Council and Committee meetings, thereby engaging with the community for all aspects of the Council's business.
- To seek opportunities for public consultation on the plans of the Parish Council, especially where money is being spent on new public facilities (see section 6).
- To ensure that the needs of all demographic groups are properly considered when setting financial plans and increases to the precept.

Outcome: To develop further public engagement with the Council's business.

2. Ensure the Parish Council operates with integrity through monitoring all aspects of good governance

- Ensure that all Terms of Reference and Parish Council Policies are kept up to date and are reviewed on an ongoing regular basis.
- Continue to monitor the changing environment in which the Council operates. Ensure the Council remains proactive with respect to changing situations and ensuring a proportionate response.
- Continue to advertise for Co-option of new Councillors.
- Ensure all new Councillors have mandatory training within 3 months (or as soon as possible) after joining the Council.

- To publish in the local press and via the Parish website the minutes, recordings and general information that explains the work of Councillors and employees inside and outside of standard contracted tasks. Thus ensuring that residents value and are fully aware of the work of the Council.
- To be constantly vigilant that Councillors declare possible conflicts of interest and act accordingly to ensure the financial probity of public funds

Outcomes: To attract and fill as many vacant Councillor positions as possible during the life of this plan and to conduct all council business according to best practice.

3. Be a good employer.

- To employ staff with proper regard for employment law
- Ensure that staff are able to attend all relevant training courses applicable to their roles.
- To maintain clear employment documentation and contracts with conditions of employment that harmonise with local authority expectations of pay and benefits.
- To fulfil Health and Safety obligations through Risk Assessment of working conditions (both inside and outside work) and the implementation of preventative measures where these are needed.
- To fulfil pastoral obligations to staff through transparent access to line management and a regular supportive review and appraisal programme.

Outcome: A workforce that is clear about what the council expects and is confident to raise ideas, suggestions or complaints.

4 The Council through the appropriate committees and the RFO ensure that budgets for its annual spending fully reflect current and future needs while minimising the taxpayer burden.

- Maintain the level of reserves at an amount equivalent to the Council's 6-month spending obligations. In the event that reserves fall below the 6 months level, ensure that the 6-month reserves level is re-established at the earliest opportunity.
- Continue to review value for money in all the Council's activities, including ensuring contracts are competitive and fit for purpose.
- To seek ways of increasing the Council's income, including making grant applications.
- Continue to manage all general maintenance obligations through tendered maintenance contracts, where applicable.
- Differentiating clearly between assets owned by the Parish and assets maintained by the Parish, to ensure the information is openly available to residents.

- Ensure that the Parish Council's Asset Reserve Register is kept up to date and that there is a written and justified one, three, five and ten year maintenance program in place for key selected assets.
- Continue to build the Asset Reserve Fund to enable the Council to maintain all Parish owned assets through the Asset Reserve maintenance program.

Outcomes:

- **Parish Council with sufficient annual income to satisfy planned and unplanned expenditure, while minimising the tax burden on local residents.**
- **Parish Council that has a clear picture of its actual and committed spend at any point in the financial year.**
- **Parish Council that plans for and also carries sufficient asset reserves to ensure all key assets are secure and properly maintained or replaced when needed.**

5 To support and develop the Community Hub in partnership with the Hub Management Group.

- Maintain a reliable Hub Asset Register, supported by a costed maintenance and replacement plan.
- Propose benefits and services needed by Melbourn and the surrounding villages for inclusion in the Hub Business Plan, where these are consistent with the constraints of the business and its charter as a charity.
- To recognise the value and contribution made by the Hub to the shared objectives of both organisations and to protect the on-going Community Hub business model.

Outcome: To sustain, protect and develop the potential of this key parish asset, underpinning the delivery of benefits and services to the local community.

6 Become a Council with clear understanding of what its community wants, working to satisfy this through both targeted projects and by tactical investment in areas of established need

- To actively look for opportunities to learn more about the needs of key or vulnerable demographic groups such as young people, mothers with children and the elderly, ensuring steps are taken to support them when possible
- Continue to consult the community on where improvements to Melbourn are needed. To develop, publish and carry out consultation plans linked to proposed funded future objectives.
- Determine what is needed to best integrate all new homes into village life ensuring that the new developments become properly part of the village.

Continue to gather feedback from new residents by way of the questionnaire in the Welcome Pack.

- To develop and improve resources available to younger people in the area both in principle and through financial support. The scope of this will include support to organisations such as Melbourn Area Youth Development (MAYD), local football teams, cadets and scouts. Also to promote broader initiatives such as sustaining play parks for younger children and to target and develop other outside sports and activities by active engagement with local residents and organisations.
- To support the needs of the elderly and those with disabilities or mental health problems through positive decision-making, investment and through local organisations and groups.

Outcome: A tangible plan, supported by the public that protects and enhances the needs of all parts of local society

7. To constantly seek ways to protect and improve the natural environment and play an active part in reaching a net zero carbon footprint by 2050

- To encourage councillors, employees and residents to travel and conduct their lives in a way that minimises the carbon footprint.
- To promote opportunities to reduce and recycle waste.
- To provide support to initiatives that reduce food miles such as locally sourced produce and sustaining allotments in the village.
- To engage with the public on ideas and schemes that improve the natural environment such as tree planting, Greenways, cycling, use of rail and bus travel and protection of natural spaces such as the River Mel and the Stockbridge Meadows Nature Reserve
- To work with outside experts and organisations to help meet local objectives, such as the River Mel Restoration Group, The Wild Trout Trust, RSPB and Natural England.

Outcome: Council policies and project outcomes that clearly demonstrate protection of the natural environment



Document Approval:

(Chair to Melbourn Parish Council)

Date of Parish Council Meeting: 25 July 2022

Review Policy: Every three years.

*Plan to be consulted **each October** prior to setting the Precept*