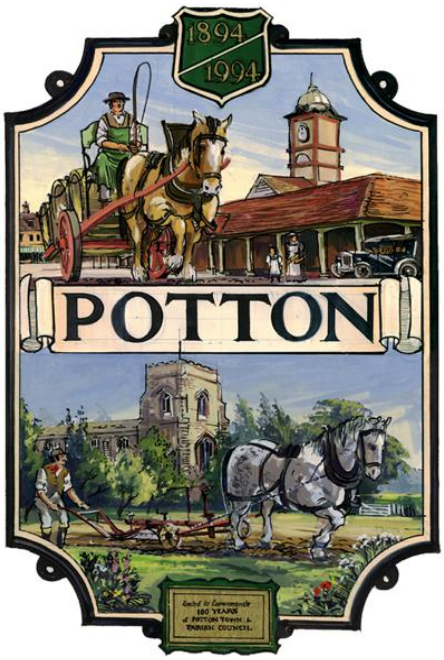
Potton Town Council



Community Engagement Strategy

Jonathan Whitehurst
Town Clerk

Adopted: September 2019

Review date: January 2026

Community Engagement Strategy

Aims and Objectives

Potton Town Council is an open and transparent council, which values the opinions of the community it serves. It undertakes at all times to continue to listen to the needs and concerns of the community, aiming to empower people, ensuring that everyone who wants to influence decisions can do so and will do everything within its power and financial constraints, to make the town of Potton a better place to live and work.

Defining the Community

Potton Town Council is keen to listen to, and engage with all members of the community who work or live in the town, with particular focus on 'hard to reach' groups which include, for example, young people, the elderly or those with a disability. It has links with local Church Groups, Potton Library, Potton History Society, Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, local schools and the many voluntary groups working for the good of the town, to ensure that as wide a cross section as possible of the community can have access to the Council, its Members, and the Clerk.

Provision of Information

Potton Town Council has many avenues through which it communicates with its community. These include:

- Publishing the contact details of all the Council Members, the Clerk and other members of staff on town council notice boards and website.
- Information about the work of the Town Council including meeting minutes, policy documents, financial statements and how to contact anyone associated with the Council on its website.
- Publishing agendas and other information on town council notice boards for all Council and committee meetings.
- Publishing agendas and minutes on the website for all Council meetings.
- The Potton Town Council quarterly newsletter, which is delivered free to every household in the town.
- The Town Council's involvement in the Annual Town Meeting and public meetings.
- The annual External Audit which offers the opportunity for questions to be asked about the latest Statement of Accounts. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is published on the Council website.
- Councillor surgeries.
- The Town Guide and quarterly newsletters contain information on the community and town council and are made available to all Potton residents; electronic versions can be found on the website.
- Social media including the Town Council's Facebook page and X (formerly known as Twitter) account.
- Local radio and press.

Opportunities for Community Involvement

Potton Town Council will make every opportunity available to the electorate to ensure excellent community involvement. These will include the following:

- Public participation at every Council meeting, where the electorate can raise issues in relation to the business on the agenda or request matters to be discussed at a subsequent meeting.
- The opportunity to report and discuss any issues at Councillor Surgeries.
- Attending Potton's Annual Town meeting and any public meetings.
- Expressing their views via surveys or questionnaires.
- Getting involved in focus groups or community workshops for specific topics or projects.

Opportunities for Formal Representations to the Council

The public has the opportunity to make formal representations to the Town Council. Issues received in writing, providing they are received before the deadline for closure of the agenda, are included as a stated item on the next agenda.

It is a target that correspondence received from a member of the public is at least acknowledged, wherever possible, within five working days.

Involvement in Partnerships

The Town Council encourages and supports public meetings organised by the police, the health authority, Central Bedfordshire Council and other organisations where they feel information should be made available to the residents of the Potton.

Role of Council Members and the Clerk

As an open and transparent town council, both Members and the Clerk seek to offer a high quality professional service to all whom they serve and are keen to maintain relevant Codes of Conduct in their roles.

Specific Areas for Community Involvement

Where there is a specific issue or a new project that the town council wish to consider, it is of value to the council to seek the views of the whole community who will be most affected. The residents of the Potton can have confidence that their "voice" will be heard, and that the Council will work with the community to reach a common goal.