

POTTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held on
Tuesday 6th January 2026 at 7.10pm at the Community Centre
following a meeting of the Planning Committee

Present: Councillors Dr C. Craig, Mr J. Day, Mr J. Dollin, Mrs V. Gwilliam (Chairman), Mr J. Hobbs, Mrs E. Horsfall, Mr G. Horsfall, Mr A. Inkersole, Mrs C. Leggatt, Mr A. Macdonald and Mr J. Price Williams.

Absent: Councillors Ms V. Leggatt-Mead, Mr D. Norman, Mr A. Rauf and Mr A. Zerny.

Also present: Mr J. Tizard, Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire. The Town Clerk and three members of the public.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Formal apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Leggatt-Mead, Norman and Zerny. Also CBC Ward Cllr Ms T. Wye.

2. **Declaration of Interest**

Councillors were reminded that they should declare an interest in any matter of personal or prejudicial interest to be discussed at this meeting.

The Chairman is a member of the Party on Potton committee and declared an interest for agenda item 10. i. d.

3. **Public Participation Session**

The Chairman asked if members of the public had any questions and if members had any questions from the public for the town council.

a. Antisocial behaviour

A representative of Potton Food Garden attended the meeting to report damage to and drug taking on the site, which has been reported to Bedfordshire Police. The Police advised that the tenants on the site are unable to report the damage and antisocial behaviour to them and that the landowner is required to do so.

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire arrived. The Chairman welcomed Mr Tizard to the meeting.

The representative of Potton Food Garden continued that the Police officer was very helpful and gave as much information as he could.

The Chairman advised that she will be attending a target setting meeting at Kempston Police Headquarters at the end of January and will report the issue to the Community Police Officers.

A member mentioned that he knows the landowner and would contact him to ask him for his assistance with the matter.

b. Bridge over Potton Brook – Tall Trees development to Sheepwalk Close

A member of the public asked if there has been any developments regarding the bridge over Potton Brook from the Tall Trees development to Sheepwalk Close, which was promised by the end of 2025.

It was **resolved** for the Town Clerk to request an update from Cllr Zerny.

c. Common Road – burnt out cars

A member advised that it has been brought to her attention that there are four burnt out cars on Common Road, which have been there since the end of November 2025.

It was **resolved** for the Town Clerk to report the vehicles to Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedfordshire Police.

4. Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire

The Chairman invited Mr Tizard to address the meeting.

Mr Tizard advised that when he was elected he committed to visit every town council at least once a year. Mr Tizard explained his role as PCC the public's voice in policing, holding the Chief Constable accountable, setting local police priorities through a Police and Crime Plan, managing the police budget (including council tax precept), and ensuring an efficient local police service.

Mr Tizard spoke about some of the key issues currently affecting the [Bedfordshire] police. Budgets and finance are a major challenge. Mr Tizard is currently consulting on the police element of the Council Tax for Bedfordshire and will be asking for the maximum 5.3% increase. Even with a 5.3% increase they are facing approx. £11.5M shortfall on funding in the next three years. Mr Tizard and the Chief Constable are determined to protect front line policing and neighbourhood policing.

Mr Tizard went on to mention the challenges in the county, particularly for Potton and that antisocial behaviour, bikes, on street drug dealing/taking are big issues right across the county in rural and small/large urban areas, which are being taken seriously by Community Policing.

The Chairman pointed out that there have been some changes to Potton's Community Policing team – PC David Lace has moved on to another part of the service, who they are struggling to replace. The Community Sergeant for the area met with the Chairman three or four months ago and at the time suggested that they were looking for some student officers to bolster the team. Most of our Community Policing work is being left to the Community PCSO, who is very good and adequate, but since PC Lace has moved on, there doesn't seem to be a police presence in Potton. This is something the Chairman will raise at the target setting meeting this month. Residents will question why they are paying more for the Police in the Council Tax, when the perception is that there is no police presence in the town.

A member mentioned Special Police Officers and whether any could be made available to Potton.

Mr Tizard responded that there are Special Police Officers, who are volunteers and bring other skills to the regular police force.

Mr Tizard mentioned that it would be helpful if the town council could encourage local residents to apply.

Another member mentioned that Potton no longer appears to be supported by the CBC Community Safety officers.

Mr Tizard recommended speaking to Cllr Zerny, but recognised that the Community Safety Team has reduced due to budget pressures.

The Chairman thanked Mr Tizard for attending the meeting.

Mr Tizard left the meeting.

5. Public Participation Session - continued (agenda item 3.)

The Chairman returned to the Public Participation Session and asked if there were any further questions from members of the public or if members had any questions from the public for the town council.

d. Bedford and District Amateur Radio Club (BADARC)

A representative of BADARC asked if the town council would be interested in being kept informed about a small volunteer-led community resilience messaging trial that would operate at no cost to the council and would place no operational responsibility upon it. Separately, and purely on an exploratory basis, the town council were asked if they would be willing to make an informal enquiry to Anglian Water to see if they might be open to discussing the hosting of a small, self-contained radio node managed entirely by volunteers.

The representative went on to explain the reasons behind the request.

A member mentioned that the initiative could be included in the town council's Emergency Plan.

The Chairman asked the representative to submit a proposal to the town council for consideration at the next meeting on 3rd March. Once the proposal has been considered, the town council will consider contacting Anglian Water for their permission to install a radio node on the water tower on Hatley Road.

The BADARC representative was invited to attend the next meeting of the town council on Tuesday 3rd March.

6. Deepdale Trees (agenda item 16.)

This additional item was requested by Cllr Leggatt.

Members noted that Cllr Leggatt and Mr Ellison had recently met with David Baker-Dugmore (Production Manager at Deepdale Trees).

The Chairman invited Cllr Leggatt to give an update.

Cllr Leggatt reminded members that Deepdale Trees look after the town's Christmas tree during the year and install it for the switch-on event. They also provide the Merlo for putting up and taking down the Christmas lights.

At the meeting, Mr Baker-Dugmore had mentioned that Deepdale Trees would like to make Potton a town full of trees.

Mr Ellison said that the image they created was based on a sister-company they have in The Netherlands (<https://www.smithsbv.nl/en/contact>). Trees are planted on every road and all the public spaces, and the company ensure they have the right trees in the right places and they maintain them.

Deepdale Trees wants to grow their business and want to employ more people. They currently employ approx. 85% [of staff] from Potton and Biggleswade and the rest are local if not within those two areas. They understand that as their business grows increasing vehicle movements will

impact Potton, and they want to be seen as a company which is committed to and gives back to the town.

Cllr Leggatt advised that the trees that Deepdale Trees proposes to plant would be semi-mature.

The Chairman suggested that Deepdale Trees should work with the Environment Committee with respect to planting.

Cllr Day advised that Deepdale Trees would need to work with Central Bedfordshire Council Highways officers when planning where to plant the trees in highway verges..

It was **resolved** for **i.** Cllr Day to have a discussion with Mr Baker-Dugmore from Deepdale Trees at the Potton Community Orchard Wassail on Saturday 10th January. **ii.** Cllr Day to report back to the next Environment Committee meeting.

7. Minutes of Potton Town Council (agenda item 5.)

The minutes of the previous meetings held on 11th November 2025, which had been previously circulated, were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

8. Town Council Committee Minutes (agenda item 6.)

Town Council accepted and adopted the minutes and all recommendations contained from the following Town Council Committees:

- Planning Committee – 11th November and 16th December 2025 – approved.
- Potton Youth Council – 17th November 2025 – approved.

9. Reports from Central Bedfordshire Councillors (agenda item 7.)

Cllrs Wye and Zerny were not present.

The January 2026 Independent Update from Cllrs Zerny and Wye was emailed on Saturday 3rd January.

10. Central Bedfordshire Council HGV Ban Petition (agenda item 8.)

Cllrs Wye and Zerny were not present.

Members noted Cllr Zerny's reminder that at the last meeting on 11th November 2025 he had mentioned that the next step would be for CBC to do traffic checks in the new year. Results will be available by February to then be considered at the next meeting of the CBC Traffic Management Committee.

11. Sandy Road Crossing Speed Check Data (agenda item 9.)

At the town council meeting on 11th November 2025, it was resolved to ask Potton's Ward Cllrs to chase up the speed check data for the town council to review.

Cllrs Wye and Zerny were not present.

The Town Clerk mentioned that he has contacted CBC for the information and awaits a response.

12. Finance (agenda item 10.)

i. **Grant funding from the General Power of Competence (GPC)**

Members were reminded of the current grant funding spend from the GPC. It was noted that the budget remaining in the GPC is £4,000.

a. Gamlingay Youth Club

Members were asked to consider if they wish to make a donation to from the GPC following a request for funding received from Gamlingay Youth Club.

It was noted that the town council had made previous awards to Gamlingay Youth Club of £3,500 per year until it ceased in July 2024.

Members noted the Town Clerk's proposal for Potton Town Council to provide a Youth Club in its own town.

It was **resolved** not to make a donation to Gamlingay Youth Club.

b. Potton Good Neighbour Scheme

Members were asked to consider if they wish to make a donation from the GPC budget following receipt of a grant request of £500 in 2026 from the Potton Good Neighbour Scheme.

Members noted that £500 was awarded to Potton Good Neighbour Scheme in April 2025 and the Town Clerk's recommendation to delay sending funds until April 2026 so that only one award is made per financial year.

It was **resolved** to award £500 of GPC monies to the Potton Good Neighbour Scheme in April 2026.

c. Beds & Herts Emergency Critical Care Scheme (BHECCS)

At the last meeting of the town council on 11th November 2025, members were asked to consider a request for grant funding from BHECCS from the GPC budget.

Members noted the information received following the Town Clerk's request for the Charity to provide data on how many people they have treated in Potton.

Members noted the Town Clerk's recommendation that that council does not make an award to BHECCS as it has already made a significant award to Community First Responders.

It was **resolved** not to make an award to BHECCS as the town council has already made a significant award to Community First Responders.

d. Party on Potton – The Big Weekend

Members noted the financial information from Party on Potton (POP) to support their funding request for a contribution in Q1 2026 (Town Council Q4 2025/26 financial year).

Members considered the Town Clerk's recommendation to award the £4,000 remaining in the GPC budget to POP and increase the 2026/27 GPC budget so that the town council can make an award of £6,000 to POP in the financial year 2026/27; a total award of £10,000 to POP for The Big Weekend.

Members also considered the Town Clerk's recommendation that the town council has a further £5,000 in reserve (contingency), although part or all of the £5,000 will only be paid to POP if the worse scenario (reduction in ticket sales and / or increased expenditure) does happen and that POP provides full accounts to corroborate by 30th September 2026.

It was **resolved** **i.** to award the £4,000 remaining 2025/26 in the GPC budget to POP. **ii.** Increase the 2026/27 GPC budget so that the town council can make an award of £6,000 to POP in the financial year 2026/27; a total award of £10,000 to POP for The Big Weekend. **iii.** That the town council has a further £5,000 in reserve.

ii. **Verify Bank Reconciliations against statement 1st October – 31st October 2025.**

Members proceeded to go through the Bank Reconciliations.

It was **resolved** that the Bank Reconciliation for 1st October – 31st October 2025 be approved.

iii. **To receive an income and expenditure by budget heading report showing progress against the budget 2025/2026 at the end of October 2025.**

Members proceeded to go through the detailed statement of income and expenditure against budget.

It was **resolved** to approve the detailed statement of income and expenditure against budget for the period to 31st October 2025.

iv. **Verify Bank Reconciliations against statement 1st November – 30th November 2025.**

Members proceeded to go through the Bank Reconciliation.

It was **resolved** that the Bank Reconciliation for 1st November – 30th November 2025 be approved.

v. **To receive an income and expenditure by budget heading report showing progress against the budget 2025/2026 at the end of November 2025.**

Members proceeded to go through the detailed statement of income and expenditure against budget.

It was **resolved** to approve the detailed statement of income and expenditure against budget for the period to 30th November 2025.

vi. **To receive the interim internal audit report for the year 2025/26.**

Members noted the internal auditor's report for the year 2025/26.

It was **resolved** to accept the internal auditor's report for the year 2025/26.

The town council thanked the Town Clerk.

vii. **Everton Road Allotment Track**

Members noted that the work to remove the middle section of the main allotment track has been carried out at a cost of £400.

viii. **Potton Hall for All Financial Losses**

Members noted that it is unlikely that the town council will recover the financial losses of £74,669.81 incurred due to Kier/Tilia Homes Ltd not providing services prior to commencement.

The Town Clerk clarified that it may be possible to recover approx. £30,000 of the overall amount.

It was **resolved** for the Town Clerk to submit information to Untypical so that as much money as possible can be reclaimed.

ix. **Current Earmarked Reserves (EMR)**

Members noted the list of the current EMR.

x. **Budget and Precept**

It was noted that on 20th November 2025, the government published its local government finance policy statement, setting out proposals for the 2026-27 to 2028-29 multi-year Local Government Finance Settlement, and that the key element for Potton Town Council is that there is no council tax referendum principles for parish and town councils in 2026/27.

The Chairman mentioned that the government has cut CBC's funding by £17 million, which will affect the town council's precept.

Members noted the Town Clerk's recommendation that a transfer monies from the following Ear Marked Reserves to the General Reserve.

Amount	Ear Marked Reserve
£810.00	339 EMR Basketball/Netball - HSPF
£500.00	346 EMR Warm Spaces
£9,020.23	377 EMR Millennium Path
£10,330.23	Total

It was **resolved** to approve the transfer of a total of £10,330.23 from the Ear Marked Reserves to the General Reserve as recommended by the Town Clerk.

Members noted the Town Clerk's recommendation that a transfer of monies from the General Reserve to the following Ear Marked Reserves.

Amount	Ear Marked Reserve / Project
£5,000	320 Community Centre
£500	322 Brook
£5,000	325 Cemetery
£5,000	326 Cemetery Extension
£2,000	328 Churchyard
£10,000	360 Skatepark, Replacement Saving+
£2,500	362 Public Conveniences
£2,500	367 Training
£10,000	368 Legal Fees
£5,000	370 Election (May 2027)
£15,000	375 Trees
£62,500	Total

+ Sport England on awarding the grant in 2017, required the town council to save for a replacement (Funds saved were used to reduce size of the loan for the Potton Hall for All).

It was **resolved** to approve the transfer of a total of £62,500 from the General Reserve to Ear Marked Reserves as recommended by the Town Clerk.

Potton Hall for All

Members noted the financial information provided by Potton Hall for All to support the funding request for an additional amount of £3,887 above the £32,000 included in the business plan, which would be required for staff.

The Town Clerk mentioned that the additional monies may not be required, as it will depend on the increased usage of the building.

It was **resolved** that the additional £3,887 for staff should be placed in an Ear Marked Reserve.

A member mentioned the lack of facilities for ladies in the toilets at the Hall for All and the lack of cleaning between bookings.

A member mentioned that the car park space markers at the Hall for All are causing punctures.

It was **resolved** for the Town Clerk to contact Watson & Cox about the markers in the Hall for All car park.

Potton Youth Club

Members noted the Town Clerk's suggestion for the town council to provide a Youth Club in Potton and the proposal from the provider.

It was suggested to request to see copies the provider's policies to ask what strategies they would use in certain circumstances.

The Town Clerk mentioned that he has already advised the provider of the demographic in Potton.

The Chairman mentioned that it has been made apparent that there are far more children in the community that need support than the town council were first aware of, and having a youth club could well be an outreach and support for the more vulnerable children in the community.

The venue for the youth club needs to be in a central location.

A member suggested that it wouldn't be unreasonable to ask for an upfront joining fee (e.g. £10 per year), which would mean a 'members only' youth club.

A member mentioned that the poor behaviour by youths in the town is not down to only one community group.

It was **resolved i.** to support the proposal for a Youth Club in Potton in principle. **ii.** for the Town Clerk to request copies of the provider's policies.

Second draft budget

Members proceeded to go through the second draft budget for Potton Town Council for the year 2026/27, which is based on an increase of 5% in Band D.

It was noted that Band D Council tax for 2025/26 was set at £188.37 with the tax base being 2,344 and this gave a Precept of £443,611. The Tax Base for 2026/27 is 2,407 this being an increase of 52 compared to 2025/26.

The Chairman proposed that the percentage increase in Band D should be raised to 6%. The average across the county is around 7%.

It was **resolved** to set the town council budget for 2026/2027 with £520,581 income, £520,581 expenditure and to meet this to increase the precept by 7.3% to £476,081 and the Band D council tax increases by 5% from £188.37 to £197.79 per year.

13. Cemetery gate padlock code (agenda item 11.)

Members noted the request from a member of the public to be issued with the padlock code for the side vehicle gate at the cemetery to allow his elderly and disabled relatives to tend a grave in H Section.

It was **resolved** not to issue the padlock code for the side vehicle gate at the Cemetery to the public.

14. Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Consultation now open (agenda item 12.)

Members noted the correspondence advising that the public consultation on the draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan is now open and runs until 5pm on Friday 30th January 2026.

15. Infrastructure Working Group (agenda item 13.)

Members noted that the Infrastructure Working Group has been set up to consider Potton Section 106, and will report to the Management Committee.

The Working Group has met twice and the notes from the meetings were noted.

It was **resolved** to adopt the Terms of Reference for the Infrastructure Working Group.

Cllr Emma Horsfall volunteered to join the Working Group.

16. Items for the next meeting agenda (agenda item 14.)

Members were asked to consider items for the next meeting agenda, and provide them to the Town Clerk two weeks in advance of the next town council meeting.

17. Date of the next meeting (agenda item 15.)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Town Council is on Tuesday 3rd March 2026 following a meeting of the Planning Committee which starts at 7pm in the Community Centre.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Signed: Date:
Chairman

Mission Statement

The aim of Potton Town Council is to serve the people of this town to the best of its ability.