

# Cotton End Parish Council

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Cotton End Parish Council held on Thursday, 15 January 2026 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

**Present:** Councillors A Merel (Chairman), A Stimson, A Murray, L Seymour, A Simpson.

Also Present : V W Hislop (Clerk).

### 26/001 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

- i. Apologies were received from Cllrs Bangher and Watts.
- ii. Both members' grounds for absence were approved.

### 26/002 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

### 26/003 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2025 were confirmed as a true and accurate record, and signed by the Chairman. The Clerk reported that Barclays were due to open a Business Premium Account imminently.

### 26/004 PUBLIC SESSION

No resident or member of the public was present.

### 26/005 UNITARY AUTHORITY REPORT

Cllr Coombs had sent his apologies, so no report was available. Cllr Murray questioned how long it had been since Borough Cllr Gallagher had attended a meeting, and the Clerk was asked to make contact with her to determine if she may attend going forward.

**Action: the Clerk.**

### 26/006 PLANNING

- i. New applications: 25/02559/FUL extension to front, 159 High Road. The Council had no objection or comment to make on the application.
- ii. Applications decided by Bedford Borough Council: none.

### 26/007 FINANCE AND RELATED MATTERS

- i. To receive the bank reconciliation: it was **agreed** to receive the report. Cash at the bank was £34,144.80
- ii. To approve accounts for payment: the following were **agreed**:  
 HMRC - PAYE & NIC - £247.38  
 Andy Muskett Ltd - Inv 6106 - £71.40  
 Andy Muskett Ltd - Inv 6126 - £1,512  
 Tollers LLP - £1,207.20  
 CPM Playgrounds Ltd - Inv 5678 - £156  
 Blue Parrot Payroll Services - £18

(Additional to the report, Simpkins Garden Services - £65)

iii. To consider and agree the Budget for 2026/27. The Clerk presented a draft budget based on income and expenditure in 2025/26. It was **agreed** to set the budget as reported. Members discussed the making of budget provision for a village event, which would be debated at the February meeting.

iv. To agree the precept for 2026/27. It was **agreed** to set the precept at £25,500, the same precept level as in 2025/26.

v. To agree the appointment of an internal auditor for the 2025/26 accounts. It was **agreed** to appoint Lynn Lavender to undertake the internal audit for 2025/26.

**26/008 CRIME STATISTICS**

These had been distributed previously and the most recent incident was noted. The Clerk was asked to follow up the current serviceability of, and data for, the speed cameras. **Action: the Clerk.**

**26/009 REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS, AND PLAYING FIELD AND VILLAGE HALL MATTERS**

i. To receive any update re. the fence in Trow Close. Cllr Seymour had established that the fence is the responsibility of 2 Trow Close. It was **agreed** that the Clerk should visit the site and write to the resident. **Action: the Clerk.**

ii. To consider the recent play area inspection reports and any estimate, received before the meeting, for necessary repairs and maintenance. No estimate had been forthcoming from CPM Playgrounds Ltd; the Clerk was tasked with chasing the matter up. **Action: the Clerk.**

**26/010 HIGHWAYS RELATED MATTERS**

To receive any update/progress on the road safety issues reported to Bedford Borough Council Highways. Officers of Bedford Borough Council had taken no apparent action to progress any road safety survey/inspection. It was observed that some form of periodically halting traffic heading north could alleviate the issues associated with vehicle egress from the School's car park. It was **agreed** that Cllr Merel would attempt to make contact with Andrew Prigmore by 'phone, and the Clerk would email him. **Action: Cllr Merel and the Clerk.**

**26/011 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

i. Land transfer from the former Eascotts Parish Council - update. Cllr Merel reported that he had spoken to Simon Chambers of Tollers Solicitors, who was expecting a wait of three months, but had referenced that the unusual circumstances may require specialist input from Land Registry staff, which could delay matters significantly, perhaps up to twelve months.

**26/012 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

12 February 2026.

The meeting concluded at 8.10pm.

Signed by the Chairman..... 12 February 2026