

Cotton End Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cotton End Parish Council held on Thursday, 9 April 2026 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Present: Councillors A Merel (Chairman), A Murray, L Seymour, A Simpson and K Watts.

Also Present : V W Hislop (Clerk).

26/040 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

- i. Apologies were received from Cllrs Bangher and Stimson.
- ii. Both councillors' reasons for absence were approved.

26/041 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

26/042 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2026 were confirmed as a true and accurate record, and signed by the Chairman.

26/043 PUBLIC SESSION

None present.

26/044 UNITARY AUTHORITY REPORT

Cllr Coombs had sent his apologies. The Clerk read aloud Cllr Coombs' written report, which is at Annex A to these minutes. No report had been received from Cllr Gallagher.

26/045 PLANNING

i. New applications:

26/00581/FUL 23 Wood Lane: single storey front extension to main house, and single storey front and side extension to form annexe.

Members noted that the front extension mirrored the adjoining property's, and that boundary requirements had been satisfied.

However, it was **agreed** to object on the basis of requirements set out in the Neighbourhood Plan, such as wrap around, side extensions being set back, and various stipulations in the Plan's Design Code.

Cllr Murray would let the Clerk have the detail. **Action: Cllr Murray and the Clerk.**

ii. Applications decided by Bedford Borough Council: 23/01833/FUL 161 High Road: erection of 8 dwellings - this had been refused, as had

25/01689/PIP Wood Lane self-builds (notified this day). Members welcomed the refusal decisions in both cases.

26/046 FINANCE AND RELATED MATTERS

i. To receive the bank reconciliation: it was **agreed** to receive the report. Cash at the bank was £29,490.10 The Clerk noted that 50%

of the 2026/27 precept would be received by BACS on 13 April.
ii. To approve accounts for payment: the following were **agreed**:
Clerk's net April salary (increment pending) - £425.85
Andy Muskett Ltd Invoice 6175 - £71.40
R F Lane Invoice 10058 (hedge cutting) - £138
CPM Playgrounds Ltd Invoice 5714 - £1,176
HMRC PAYE - £123.69
Glasdon UK Limited (park bench) - £1,398.47
Local Councils Insurance Policy renewal - £986.09*
(*Post-meeting Note: the Clerk has identified an error in his report in that the insurance renewal was approved at the March meeting, and had been paid already, on 17 March 2026.)

26/047

CRIME STATISTICS AND SPEED CAMERA DATA

The latest crime statistics had been distributed previously. The reported crimes were discussed and noted. No speed camera data had again been received despite the Clerk chasing.

26/048

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS, AND PLAYING FIELD AND VILLAGE HALL MATTERS

i. To note any update on the installation of a new bench - this, together with a plaque, was on order following receipt of a donation of £2,000 from Chris Potter of the High Road.
ii. To consider a request for an additional dog waste bin - this was debated but not agreed at this time.
iii. To consider the latest playground inspection reports and take any necessary action (distributed previously) - it was agreed to ask CPM to undertake all of the works under 'Comments' other than for Trow Close, which Cllr Merel would perform. **Action: the Clerk.**

26/049

HIGHWAYS RELATED MATTERS

i. To receive any update/progress on the road safety issues reported to Bedford Borough Council Highways - nothing further had been heard from Messrs Prigmore or Simons since the site meeting. Cllr Merel agreed to email Mr Prigmore. **Action: Cllr Merel.** Cllr Watts offered to research the availability, etc. of competitively priced speed indicators. **Action: Cllr Watts.**
ii. Amberleigh Gardens' prompt response to the Clerk's letter was noted, and the initial signs were encouraging, although there may not have been any recent events to cause the gravel to be disturbed.

26/050

COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk's recent email exchange with Mrs Thacker was discussed. It was **agreed** to include the opportunity of becoming a trustee for the Cardington, Cople and Eastcotts Charity in a forthcoming newsletter. **Action: Cllr Merel.**

26/051

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr Watts mentioned a fundraising based group that wished to hold a

picnic in the grounds of the village hall, which would be responded to once a formal request is received, but there would be no objection provided the necessary insurances are in place.

Cllr Murray again highlighted the refusal of the Wood Lane planning site, and Cllr Merel would include this information in his next newsletter

Action: Cllr Merel.

Cllr Murray referred the meeting to his email about likely changes to the Planning System's governance arrangements, which were of concern to all.

It was noted that the Annual Parish Meeting would take place immediately before the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, at 7.00pm on 14 May 2026.

26/052 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

14 May 2026.

26/053 NEED FOR EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Pursuant to s.1(2) of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, The Council **resolved** in respect of **Agenda Item 26/054** that the public, including the press, should be excluded from the meeting on the basis that it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if a member of the public were present during the item there would be publicity prejudicial to the public interest by reason of its confidential nature.

26/054 GRASS CUTTING

[REDACTED]

The meeting concluded at 8.37pm.

Signed by the Chairman..... 14 May 2026

ANNEX A TO
PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES
OF 9 APRIL 2026

Borough Report for Cotton End Parish Council.

April 2026, Cllr Leigh Coombs

I wanted to share a short update on a few recent Bedford Borough Council matters that may be of interest to residents in and around Cotton End.

Bus services

There continues to be uncertainty around some local bus services, with indications that routes across the borough may be reviewed or reduced. This could particularly affect residents who rely on buses for access to Bedford and nearby areas. Any formal consultation should come forward in due course, but residents may wish to keep an eye on updates here:

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/public-transport/bus-travel>

Food waste collections

Food waste collections are now being rolled out across the borough. Some households have new collection days and there have been reports of missed or unclear notifications. Residents can check their collection arrangements using the council's online tool:

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/collections>

Telecare and personal alarm charges

A weekly charge of £4 has been introduced for Telecare and personal alarm services, unless residents qualify for financial assistance following assessment. This may be particularly relevant for older or vulnerable residents who were not previously charged. More information is available here:

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adult-social-care/telecare>

Adult social care

Recent inspection findings have highlighted areas where adult social care services require improvement, including delays and service pressures. While this is a borough-wide issue, residents who rely on these services or support family members may wish to be aware of this and seek advice if needed:

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-and-health>

Roads and highways

Road condition and potholes continue to be a concern across the borough. Residents can report issues directly to the council using the online reporting system, which helps prioritise repairs:

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/roads-and-pavements/report-a-problem>

I hope this is helpful. If residents have concerns on any of the above, I would encourage them to raise them early so they can be properly logged and followed up.