

Appendix 12 – Draft Recommendations for Potto Parish Council

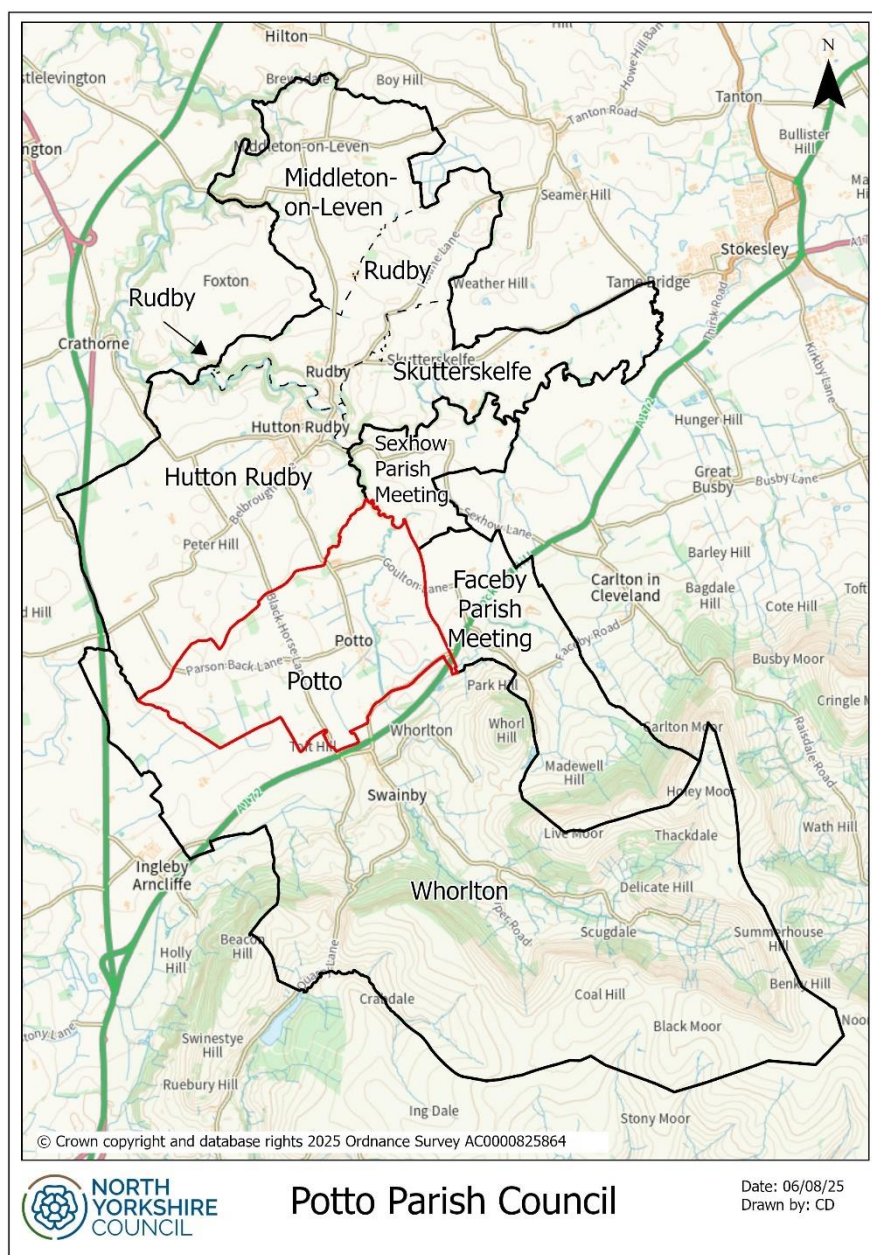
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1.0 Current governance arrangements and history of the area

Current governance arrangements

- 1.1 Potto Parish Council is situated within the Hutton Rudby and Osmotherley division and is part of the Richmond and Northallerton parliamentary constituency. The parish is comprised of the village of Potto.
- 1.2 Potto parish currently has 250 electors and 125 properties.
- 1.3 Potto Parish Council has 4 neighbouring parish areas as shown in the map below including Faceby Parish Meeting, Rudby grouped Parish Council, Sexhow Parish Meeting and Whorlton Parish Council.



- 1.4 Potto Parish Council is comprised of 5 elected parish councillors. In order to meet and take decisions at least 3 councillors must be present. Parish Councils must hold an annual meeting and at least 3 other meetings each year. There are currently no vacant seats on Potto Parish Council.
- 1.5 Parish councils can raise a precept to raise monies for spending for the benefit of the parish. Potto Parish Council raised a precept of £9,000 for the 2025/26 financial year.

History of the area

- 1.6 In November 2024, North Yorkshire Council (NYC) was contacted by the Potto Parish Council Chair, who requested that Potto Parish Council be dissolved and a Parish Meeting be created in its place. Potto Parish Council was advised that a Community Governance Review (CGR) would be required to dissolve the parish council and create a parish meeting.
- 1.7 A parish meeting does not elect councillors or hold parish council meetings. Parish meetings must assemble annually between 1 March and 1 June and on at least one other occasion during the year. These meetings are open to the public but only registered electors of the parish can speak and vote.
- 1.8 In June 2025, Democratic Services contacted Potto Parish Council to confirm that the request for a CGR still stood, which it did.
- 1.9 After consultation with Democratic Services, it was suggested that a CGR be carried out for Potto Parish Council. Following the Standards and Governance Committee on 20 June 2025, Full Council approved the terms of reference of the 2025/26 Community Governance Review, which included Potto Parish Council on 16 July 2025.
- 1.10 Given that the request to dissolve Potto Parish Council was submitted by the parish council itself, and that dissolution can only be effected through a CGR, it has been agreed that a CGR will be undertaken.

Five year electorate forecast

- 1.11 The electorate and 5 year electorate forecast for Potto parish is as follows:

Parish	Electorate (2025)	Electorate prediction (2030)*	Predicted electorate increase
Potto	250	256	6

2.0 Assessment of consultation responses for Potto Parish Council

2.1 The following table shows the number of households written to, with the number of consultation responses received, and response rate.

Households sent CGR consultation letter	125
Consultation responses received	55
Response rate	4.4%

2.2 Consultation letters were sent to households in Potto parish as following the CGR request made by Potto Parish Council to dissolve the parish council and create a parish meeting, Potto was the area under review.

2.3 As the CGR also included the option to combine Potto Parish Council with a neighbour, Faceby Parish Meeting, Rudby grouped Parish Council, Sexhow Parish Meeting and Whorlton Parish Council were also invited to respond to the consultation.

2.4 A copy of the consultation survey can be found at Annex 12A. A summary of consultation responses received can be found at Annex 12B.

2.5 For the avoidance of doubt, the free text comments received through the consultation process reflect the views of the individual respondents alone. These comments do not represent the views of North Yorkshire Council and should not be construed as being endorsed by the Council.

2.6 The response rate in the table above was calculated by comparing the number of consultation responses with the number of households directly consulted by means of a letter sent to all properties in the area under review. The total number of responses for Potto Parish Council was 55.

2.7 Of the 55 respondents, 40 reported that they lived in Potto. 3 respondents were residents of a neighbouring parish; one was from Hutton Rudby and the other two did not specify which neighbouring parish they lived in. 7 respondents used the “other” category to indicate further details about themselves. 5 respondents did not supply any details to describe themselves.

2.8 37% (19) of respondents were in favour of dissolving Potto Parish Council and changing to a parish meeting, as detailed in the table below.

Option	Number	Percentage
Dissolve the parish council and change to a parish meeting	19	37%
Combine Potto Parish Council with one of the neighbouring parish councils by dissolving the parish	21	40%

council and forming a grouped parish council		
Combine Potto Parish Council with one of the neighbouring parish councils by dissolving the parish council and merging with a neighbouring parish council to form a single parish council, which could be warded	1	2%
Retain the parish council in its current form	6	12%
Other suggestion, please describe below	5	10%
I am unsure	0	0%
Total	52*	100%

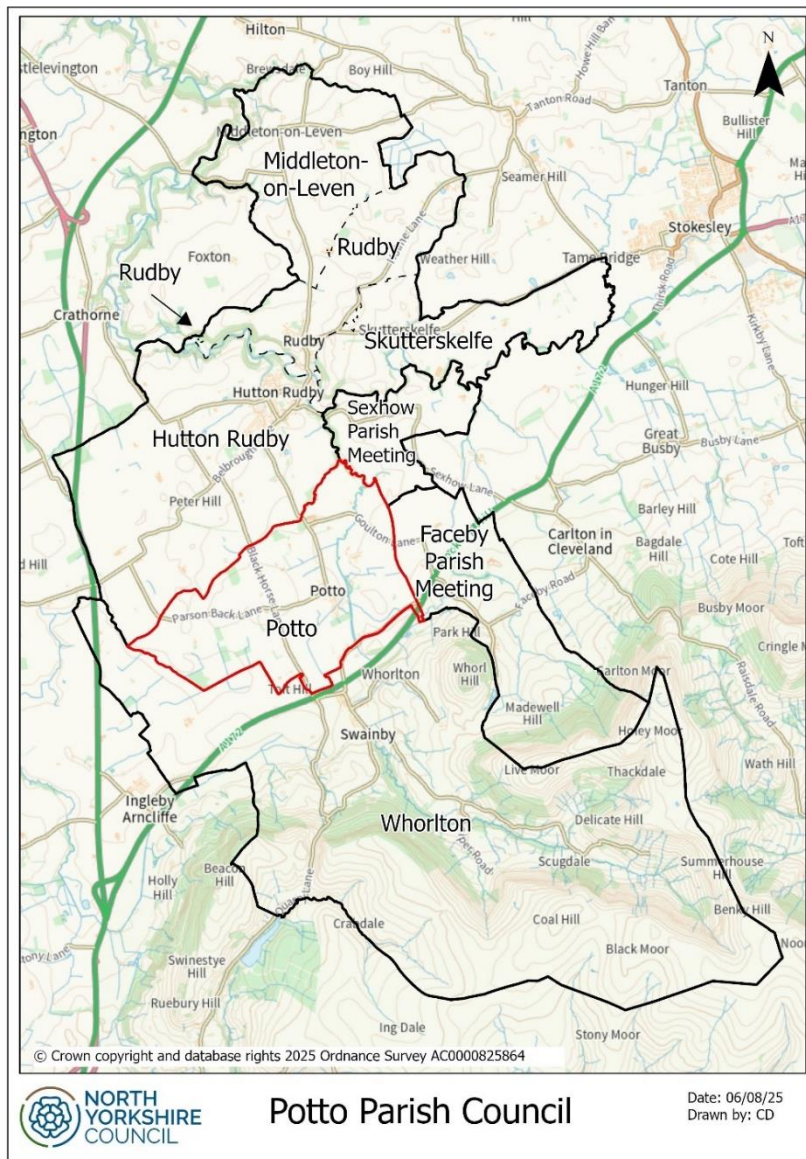
* 3 respondents out of the 55 did not answer this question

- 2.9 Annex 12A summarises at page 2 the suggestions individuals gave for the option “other suggestion, please describe below”. All of the 5 respondents suggested retaining the parish council in its current form. One of these respondents commented that whilst wishing to retain the parish council, they were not against changing to a parish meeting as Potto is a small parish council and the demands on its members have increased in recent years.
- 2.10 Of the 22 respondents who wanted to combine Potto with a neighbour, to create either a single parish council which could be warded or a grouped parish council, 20 were in favour of Potto being combined with Rudby Parish Council and two were in favour of Potto being combined with Whorlton Parish Council.
- 2.11 Annex 12B summarises at page 2 the reasons people gave for their preferred option. The most popular reason for the choice to dissolve Potto Parish Council and create a parish meeting was cost savings, which was referenced by 11 respondents with some respondents specifically referencing high annual governance and audit fees. Another popular reason to dissolve Potto Parish Council and create a parish meeting was that less administration and resource would be required, compared to a parish council. Some respondents mentioned that the parish council had received numerous complaints over recent years, which took up a lot of resource. 4 respondents felt that Potto parish was too small to have a parish council, suggesting that a parish meeting would better serve the community.
- 2.12 The most popular reason for the choice to combine Potto Parish Council with Rudby Parish Council to form a grouped parish council was that a grouped arrangement would enable the Potto parish name to be retained with councillor representation. Other respondents highlighted that grouping with Rudby Parish Council would create a larger parish council, which Potto would benefit from and would also be “the best value for money” option. Another respondent felt that Potto parish was too big to create a parish meeting.

- 2.13 Of the two respondents that preferred combining Potto Parish Council with Whorlton Parish Council, one respondent who lived in Potto felt that Potto was more in line with Whorlton. The other respondent did not specify a reason for their choice.
- 2.14 Of the 6 respondents who chose to retain Potto Parish Council in its current form, all commented that the parish council was well run and ought to stay as it is. One respondent commented *“The parish council works very well for Potto, all members are approachable and I feel they work for the best outcome for the village. The village is well informed about the affairs being dealt with. I most certainly would like Potto Parish Council to stay as it is”*.
- 2.15 Of the 5 respondents that chose an alternative option, which included retaining the parish council as it was, some respondents expressed the view that the existing parish councillors should be replaced with new members, rather than the parish council itself being dissolved. Such concerns relate to the membership of the parish council and should be addressed through the parish council election process.
- 2.16 Potto Parish Council submitted a consultation response in support of dissolving the parish council and creating a parish meeting. The reasons for this response were that Potto is a small parish council, and considering that other neighbouring parishes have parish meetings, it was felt that a parish meeting would be better suited to meet the needs of the community.
- 2.17 Rudby grouped Parish Council submitted a consultation response via email advising that they did not support combining Potto Parish Council with Rudby Parish Council. The reasons for this response included the potential costs and disruption involved in taking on Potto Parish Council, with no benefit to the residents of Rudby Parish Council. Rudby Parish Council also requested that they be removed from the scope of the CGR at the end of the Stage 1 consultation.
- 2.18 Additional comments about the CGR included some residents being unaware of the proposed changes to the governance of Potto Parish Council prior to the letter they received, with one respondent requesting an open forum to discuss the details of the CGR. Another respondent raised concerns about the cost implications of the review. Some comments included concerns in relation to the current appointed members of the parish council, although as stated previously any matters of this nature should be addressed through the parish council election process.

3.0 Final assessment and draft recommendations

- 3.1 Only 37% of responses indicated support for dissolving Potto Parish Council and creating a parish meeting. Whilst 40% of responses were in favour of combining Potto Parish Council with one of the neighbouring parish councils by dissolving the parish council and forming a grouped parish council, neither Rudby Parish Council or Whorlton Parish Council have shown a willingness to take on Potto parish.
- 3.2 It is not recommended that Potto Parish Council be dissolved as paragraph 120 of the Government Guidance on Community Governance Reviews states that support for abolition needs to have been demonstrated over at least a period equivalent to two terms of office of the parish councillors (i.e. 8 years). Given that only 37% of responses indicated support for a change to a parish meeting, there does not appear to be sustained local support for the parish council to be dissolved.
- 3.3 It is therefore proposed that no changes are made to the governance of Potto Parish Council.
- 3.4 A map of the continuing parish is shown below identified by a red boundary.



3.5 A list of recommendations can be viewed below:

Recommendation 1 – that Potto Parish Council is not dissolved and changed to a parish meeting and that the area should not be altered

3.6 As no changes are recommended, a Stage 2 consultation will not be required.

Annex 12A – Consultation survey

Annex 12B – Summary of consultation responses