



Potton Town Council

Potton Town Council, Town Council Office, The Community Centre, Brook End,
Potton SG19 2QS Tel: 01767 260086

Email: pottoncouncil@btconnect.com Web: www.pottontowncouncil.co.uk

Spring Newsletter 2015

This Newsletter and the previous Newsletter has been delivered to over 99% of properties for free by your Town Councillors.

Employment Vacancy - Caretaker

15 hours a week (Job Share Considered), £7.07 - £7.45 per hour and overtime for additional hours.

This is an ideal opportunity for a responsible person, who has pride in their work, conscientious attitude towards work duties, be able to maintain a high standard of work and would like to work for the local community.

Contact the Town Council for an application form and further information, closing date for applications is noon on Tuesday 7th April 2015.

Potton – Partnership Community Defibrillator

Potton Town Council has arranged for a Partnership Community Defibrillator to be installed on the outside of the Library in Potton, following permission from Central Bedfordshire Council.

Funding to purchase the Defibrillator unit is a scheme funded jointly from Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Central Bedfordshire Together.

Potton Town Council has agreed to fund the following with regard to the unit, installation of the unit, community awareness training, support service costs from The Community Heartbeat Trust for servicing the Defibrillator unit.

The defibrillator unit comprises of Cardiac Science defibrillator; secure locking cabinet, signage, a ready kit (pack containing scissors, small towel, razors and a one way breathing mask).

The defibrillators will be key-locked for security, with access given by Ambulance Service Control only on receipt of a 999 call. Ambulance crews will also be despatched to the scene.

Bedfordshire's Chief Fire Officer Paul Fuller said: "In the same way that you don't need to be a fire fighter to use a fire extinguisher; you don't need to be a paramedic to use a defibrillator. The important thing is that they help to save lives."

Installation of the Defibrillator unit on the outside of Potton Library was the town council's preferred location as this is a central location and it is a requirement that the unit is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Community Awareness Training will be delivered by Community Heartbeat on Monday 23rd March at 7pm in the Community Centre, Brook End.



THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE - COUNCILLOR PETER J. LANGRIDGE

Spring is sprung, the grass is ris, I wonder where the birdies is? Yes the dark cold wet days are behind us again and it's time to look forward to the bright early warm mornings when so much more can be achieved in the day.

The best Christmas light display in the area has been put away again for another year thanks to all those willing volunteers.

Some things have settled and been sorted, but some others are still in the air; subjects like the possible expansion of the existing traveller site in Potton. It is good that our Central Bedfordshire representation keep us informed of the current thinking on this subject within Central Beds so we can be prepared.

Which brings me to the subject of the forthcoming elections in May. There will be elections for our two Central Beds representatives, but we may also have elections for Potton Town Council if there are sufficient candidates. Potton Town Council has for some time now relied on co-option to maintain the numbers. Some people have expressed an interest in standing but have never come forward to be nominated. I strongly urge anyone who would like to serve on the town council to put their names forward. In these difficult financial times an election will cost the town money but it would be well spent if it means democracy in action and the people of the town make their own choice on who represents them.

Speaking of money and Central Bedfordshire Council, leads to the council tax precept. As predicted Central Beds has again this year withheld grants to the town council that Central Government says should be disbursed to town and parish councils within its area. Potton Town Council have had to have a larger percentage increase to try and maintain the current level of service.

We try to be a forward looking council with ideas to improve our town and community. We all know these cost money but no-one wants to stand still at best, or fall back on things for the town. At times this may only be an extra £1 per household per month but it can make all the difference.

It would appear that we have some mindless morons in our midst who can ruin some things for others. A short time ago the seat on the children's zip wire in the park was vandalised by someone's dog. At our expense we replaced the seat and now a few weeks later it has happened again. Those people allow their animals to ruin facilities for everyone. I would urge everyone to be vigilant when in the HSPF or Mill Lane park and I would urge everyone to report any anti social behaviour they witness to the police. Remember it is your money they are wasting when we have to repeatedly clean up after these people.

We are already grateful to the Potton Consolidated Charity who have been very generous to the town when it is possible. Such things as play equipment in both parks. With that in mind I would take the opportunity to remind everyone that the still fairly new town agent Andrea MacAdam (**0300 555 5949**), who is partly funded by the Potton Consolidated Charity, is now fully operational.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find information on the services that are the responsibility of Potton Town Council or Central Bedfordshire Council, and contact details. Please contact any town councillor if you need help or information. Even if it is ultimately the responsibility of Central Beds we will assist you any way we can.

If you have any ideas on improvements, questions or need help do not hesitate to contact the clerk's office on **260086**, or any Town Councillor whose number is advertised in this newsletter or in the window of the community centre.

Have a good season to come. Peter J. Langridge, Chairman, Potton Town Council

Never let your morals get in the way of doing what is right. -Isaac Asimov

POTTON TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET 2015-16

This has been a particularly difficult year for budget setting with Central Bedfordshire Council again choosing to not pass Council Tax support funding to its town and parish councils despite government guidance that it should do so. The loss to the Town Council from Central Bedfordshire Council withholding the funding is nearly £15,000.

As advised in the Winter 2014/15 Newsletter unfortunately Potton Town Council will now have to increase its proportion of the Council Tax to maintain services.

The Town Council on 7 January 2015 decided to increase the charge for a band D property by £1 a month. The charge for a band D property will now be £90.05 a year.

This is still less than £1.75 per week per band D household for all the functions, projects and services that the Town Council provides.

Vandalism to Aerial Runway

In December, due to recent deliberate and repeated acts of vandalism, the seat for the Aerial Runway at Henry Smith Playing Fields was removed, in the interests of public safety. This is the second time that the aerial runway seat has had to be removed. Side is a picture of the aerial runway seat that had to be removed in December 2014 and a new seat.



The damage seems to have been caused by dogs biting and pulling on the seat of the aerial runway. Replacing the seat on the aerial runway costs Potton Town Council (You in the form of Council tax) in the region of £250 each time. We would ask that residents are vigilant and to report any acts of vandalism that they see to the Police on the non-emergency 101 number:

Alternatively, if you wish to remain anonymous you can contact Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111** (free from a fixed line, mobile charges may vary).

The aerial runway seat was replaced in December 2014 and we were hoping that it would be used as intended, for the enjoyment of children in the area. Unfortunately the Aerial Runway seat in Henry Smith play area looks like it has been chewed by dogs again, less than six weeks from when the seat was replaced.

Side is a picture of the seat removed in January 2015. The damaged seat has been removed as it could have caused a serious injury to a child using the piece of play equipment as intended. At this stage a replacement seat has not been ordered.



Allotments

The Town Council has an allotment site with over forty plots (half and full size), if you are interested in an allotment plot at some stage in the future please contact Mrs Sarah Williamson **Email: pottontowncouncilbookings@btconnect.com** or **Tel: 260086** about being added to the allotment waiting list.

The waiting list for an allotment is currently very small, unfortunately we are unable to advise when a plot will become available. Please don't be put off by the waiting list as people's circumstances often change and some people always leave the waiting list or no longer want a plot when they are offered one.

NEWSLETTER DELIVERY

The Town Council plans to produce four Newsletters each year and these are delivered to every household in Potton. As mentioned at the beginning of this Newsletter "This and the previous Newsletter has been delivered to over 99% of properties for free by your Town Councillors."

The Town Council has asked Community Groups if they would be interested in delivering the Newsletter as a fundraiser, though none of the Groups are currently in a position to deliver the Newsletter:

The Town Council is now looking at paying 13 – 18 year olds to deliver the Newsletter. 13 – 18 year olds need a permit from Central Bedfordshire Council, see link for more information <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/learning/schools/pupil-support/child-employment.aspx>
Any 13 – 18 year olds interested in delivering the Newsletter, please contact the Town Council Office.

Town Council Information

For enquiries regarding the following:

Cemetery, Allotments, Henry Smith Playground, Mill Lane Playground, Recreation Fields, Public Conveniences, Brook End Car Park, Pavilion and Community Centre.

Councillor contact details:

		Peter Langridge (Chairman)	260362
Ruth Burmo	260712	Alan Leggatt	260001
Denis Ellison	261925	John Lewis	260726
Geoff Emery	261710	Angus Macdonald	262006
Andy Gibb	260067	Paul Rogers	260977
Richard Harris	262596	Chris Temple	262535
Les Ivall	261559	Rex Whitfield	262246
Roger Jordan	261143	Adam Zerny	261319

Officers:

Jonathan Whitehurst - Town Clerk

Sarah Williamson - Clerical Assistant

Office opening hours:

Monday	9.30am – 12.30pm
Tuesday	9.30am – 12.30pm
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	9.30am – 12.30pm
Friday	9.30am – 12.30pm

Central Bedfordshire Councillors

Doreen Gurney	680395	Adam Zerny	261319
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For enquiries regarding the following:

Libraries, sports & arts, elections, education, waste & recycling, housing, planning, building control, trading standards, council tax, grants, benefits, buses, blue badges.

Central Bedfordshire Council

Tel: 0300 300 8000

Email: customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

For enquiries regarding Highway issues including roads, potholes, street lighting, pavements, hedge cutting.

Central Bedfordshire Council Highways

Tel: 0300 300 8049

Email: highways@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Central Bedfordshire Councillor's Report - Cllr Doreen Gurney

Broadband I am supporting Central Bedfordshire councils funding for additional rural broadband. There is also public funding secured for a minimum of 2.25M£. I am able to report we will have a purse of private funding, without this addition there would be no possibility, of the outlying villages in the Potton ward, having their broadband upgraded. Some of these outlying villagers are on an at risk list, the private funding now puts them in a positive position.

Housing My feedback from the older population is they prefer to remain independent, in their own home for as long as possible. I feel that Parish and Town councils should take up, social housing schemes where possible. In Everton where I live, this has allowed younger families, and older residence the option of staying in their preferred surroundings.

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCILLOR'S REPORT - CLLR ADAM ZERNY

Roads Potton should benefit from a large chunk of Highways funding in the near future.

Central Beds Council has committed to introduce a 20mph zone across the centre of the town in the coming months. Initially this will just be 20mph signs but I'm seeking further funding during the next year for what they like to refer to as 'compliance measures' i.e. anything that encourages motorists to stick to the limits. I am disappointed the council have elected not to include Sandy Road, Bury Hill, Hatley (past the church) and other outlying areas, but will be seeking extensions to the zone once it's in place.

There will also be funding for 'real time bus time displays' in Market Square to show when the next bus is due. However, this has been heavily delayed due to technology issues and the council is still trying to confirm they can make the displays 'talk' to the buses themselves as they are on two separate systems!

The council has also agreed to extend the no-parking lines on the junction of Biggleswade Road and Blackbird Street from where they currently end, opposite the Royal Oak, all the way up to the BP garage. The work is likely to take place in the spring. I have urged them to be wary of further issues with parking and road speeds that may be unwanted side effects.

Broadband I've discovered that only one company – BT – will bid for a £7.5m council contract to supply superfast broadband across our area, a project which shows a number of areas will potentially be excluded from the upgrade.

In December 2013, Central Beds announced its superfast broadband plan, with Cockayne Hatley, Tempsford and parts of Eyeworth, as well as many other areas of Central Bedfordshire, shown as not getting superfast broadband.

However, there have even been big problems with some of the areas that were supposed to be getting super fast broadband, such as Dunton (where delays are occurring after disagreements between BT and Central Beds, over whether it's viable).

Plenty of negative comments were made about the level of coverage provided, so in an attempt "to rollout superfast broadband coverage further" the council held what it called an 'Open Market Review' to see what broadband providers thought commercially viable. They received a number of complaints from the public over the areas left out, and also received feedback from a broadband provider. Central Beds Council refuse to let me see the feedback from the provider.

The council received extra government grants towards areas not thought commercially viable, so the eventual sum of money available for superfast broadband is £7.5m (to cover Central Beds, Luton, Bedford and Milton Keynes). To tender for a provider, the council has opted to go via the BDUK procurement framework but it has come to light that Fujitsu have stated they intend not to bid for projects, so BT are likely to be the only company who will tender.

Despite concerns raised, Central Beds insist "the council and BDUK will be undertaking extensive value for money analysis of any tenders received to ensure best value is achieved".

The tender was due to end at the beginning of February but the council has already intimated it may extend the deadline.

Lots more on this on my website, www.adamzerny.co.uk

My newsletter goes out monthly, by email. If you'd like to know what is going on at the council and what might affect Potton, please drop me an email, to let me know - adamzerny@hotmail.co.uk - My next surgery is in Potton Library on 28th February from 10am to midday.

COUNCIL ELECTIONS

In May 2015 a local election of all fifteen places on Potton Town Council will take place. Potton Town Councillors will come to the end of their 4 year term and so will either re-stand or step down. So there is an opportunity to become a Councillor and contribute to your community. Should there be more than 15 residents wishing to stand as a Councillor; then an election will be held. If fifteen or less people come forward, they will automatically be 'elected' with no voting taking place.

So if you want to vote for the members who will represent you for the next four years, we need to have more than fifteen nominated candidates.

Initially, you may have little knowledge of Council work but this will come, along with experience and confidence. As a new Councillor you will bring to the Council fresh enthusiasm, new ideas, a care for your community and a willingness to learn.

A candidate for the Town Council is qualified if at the time of nomination they are: –

1. A British subject or Irish citizen
2. 18 years of age
3. Either on the list of electors for the town or during the last twelve months you:
 - Occupied land or property in Potton as owner or tenant
 - Had your principle place of work here
 - Lived in, or within three miles of Potton.

Town Councillors are unpaid and give their time for free to the community on a voluntary basis. Their job is to represent the interests of whole community.

Hall Hire – Availability at the Community Centre and Mill Lane Pavilion

There is a large hall at the Community Centre in Brook End with a kitchen. There is also a carpeted upstairs hall 5 meters square with kitchen facilities. The upper hall is suited to smaller meetings and group events. There are a number of vacant sessions during the day time and at weekends at the Community Centre, give Mrs Williamson a call during office opening hours to see if either of the halls would be suitable for your group or function. The centre is near to Potton Market Square for the bus route and shopping and a free car park is very nearby.

The Pavilion at Mill Lane has a large 9 metre square hall and kitchen, there are facilities for people with disabilities and a baby changing unit. The floor may not be suitable for dance groups. We have a large free to use car park. If you are planning your child's Birthday party, the Pavilion at Mill Lane may well be the ideal location.

Please contact Mrs Sarah Williamson to check on availability and make a booking **Tel: 260086** or **Email: pottontowncouncilbookings@btconnect.com**.

Hourly Charges for Use of Town Council Facilities COMMUNITY CENTRE

	Up to 5pm Weekdays	5pm to 10.30pm Weekdays	Weekends / Bank Holidays
Main Hall	£7.50	£9.50	£12.00
Upper Hall	£5.00	£6.50	£7.50

MILL LANE PAVILION

	Up to 5pm Weekdays	5pm to 10.30pm Weekdays	Weekends / Bank Holidays
Pavilion	£8.50	£12.00	£16.00

Non- regular commercial and outside users – an additional charge of £4 an hour

There is a one and a half hour minimum charge of the premises for non-commercial users and a two hour minimum charge for commercial users.

Bookings will only be accepted in half hour blocks subject to the above condition.

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POTTON COMMUNITY AGENT NEWS

Calling all pensioners! Are you claiming all the benefits you are entitled to? Every year around £5.5 billion of benefits goes unclaimed by older people. In particular, many older people aren't claiming Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. This could add up to thousands of pounds of unclaimed benefits individuals are missing out on every year. Call Andrea MacAdam, your Potton Community Agent on **0300 555 5949** to find out if you are eligible.

Future plans include setting up a Community Tea Room at the Community Centre, opening twice a month on a Thursday afternoon where people can play scrabble, bring their knitting, their computer tablets or simply sit and chat over tea and cake. Anyone who can spare a couple of hours a month to help out, whether it be to bake a cake, pour teas and coffees, or even wash up please give Andrea a call on **0300 555 5949**.

Spring may be in the air, but there are still a few remaining free Winter items to give to Potton residents who are over 60 and have a health issue. Items include carbon monoxide alarms, wind-up torches and warm sleep socks. Contact Andrea for more details.

Andrea will have a stand at the Four Seasons Market on Saturday 21st March, but in the meantime, if you have an issue you can't find any information on or perhaps you don't want to discuss with your relatives, then please call Andrea, Potton Community Agent, in confidence on **0300 555 5949**.

Potton Hall for All

There has been a desire for a new large community Hall in Potton for a number of decades which was reflected in the Potton Town Plan 2009-19. We now have the best opportunity to achieve this having been allocated the land (together with all the services) on the new development east of the Biggleswade Road. This development, which currently has outline planning permission, consists of around 150 residential houses, the Community Hall, a light industrial area and some community greenspace along the brook.

The new Hall for All steering committee has been working hard with the local community to bring this forward during the past two years. With your help, they have raised money to fund a Feasibility Study and instruct an architect to produce an initial design based firmly on feedback and consultations with local people and community groups.

They are now trying to raise funds to cover the design and other costs to get the project to full planning permission. The residential site developers will, through section 106 monies agreed with Central Bedfordshire Council, contribute towards the Hall build costs in stages as the houses are sold. However, other monies will be required to complete the project which will be raised through a combination of individual donations, grants and foundations etc. Once built, this larger community facility will host arts, sports and community activities as well as wedding receptions, conferences and family celebrations.

You can follow our progress on our Web site www.pottonhallforall.co.uk or on Facebook www.facebook.com/PottonHallforAll or contact me through the Town Council.

Geoff Emery, Town Cllr and Chairman Potton Hall for All (Charity Reg: 1158751)

Potton Show – Plant Sale

Each year Potton Show Committee has a plant stall on the Market Square in order to raise money towards the cost of the Show which is held in September.

The stall this year will be held on the morning of Saturday 16th May, where we will also be selling homemade cakes and holding a raffle.

There will be a wide range of plants available at very reasonable prices so please come along and buy your plants ready for the summer:

DATES FOR THE DIARY

March

Sat 21st Councillor Surgery 10am – 12 noon – Library (Cllr Jordan and Macdonald will be in attendance)
Sat 21st Seasonal Market - Potton Market Square 9am – 1pm
Mon 23rd Defibrillator Training – Community Centre, Brook End, 7pm

April

Tue 14th Annual Town Meeting – Mill Lane Pavilion 7pm.
Sat 25th Councillor Surgery 10am – 12 noon – Library (Cllr Emery and Whitfield will be in attendance)

May

Sat 16th Potton Show plant stall - Potton Market Square

June

Sat 20th Seasonal Market - Potton Market Square 9am – 1pm

Council and Committee Meetings

All meetings are usually held in the Main Hall of the Community Centre unless otherwise stated and the first meeting of the evening starts at 7pm. Press and public welcome to attend.

March

Tue 3rd Town Council followed by Planning Committee
Tue 17th Finance Committee followed by Planning Committee - Mill Lane Pavilion

April

Tue 7th Town Council followed by Planning Committee
Tue 21st Finance Committee followed by Planning Committee followed by Playing Fields, Allotments and Burials Committee

May

Tue 5th Finance Committee followed by Planning Committee
Tue 19th Town Council followed by Planning Committee

June

Tue 2nd Town Council followed by Planning Committee
Tue 16th Finance Committee followed by Planning Committee

Ivel Sprinter

Weekly visit to Cambridgeshire continues on a temporary basis.

Potton Town Council's Ivel Sprinter representative Mr Charles Belcher has advised that the Ivel Sprinter is prepared to trial a monthly direct service to Bedford, if there is likely to be sufficient demand. Please complete and return the cut out section below if you are interested in using a monthly direct service to Bedford. The details are - third Monday of the month departing Potton at 08.55, arriving Bedford at 09.55 and returning at 13.00 from Bedford arriving into Potton at 14.00. Bus passes will be accepted as well as cash fares.



I would / wouldn't like to have a monthly direct bus service to Bedford on the 3rd Monday of the month.

Name Tel. Number

Address

..... Postcode

Cut out to be returned by Monday 30th March 2015 to Mr Charles Belcher, Potton Ivel Sprinter Bus Representative, Potton Town Council, The Community Centre, Brook End, Potton. SG19 2QS.