



POTTON
TOWN COUNCIL

News

Winter Edition 2016/2017

www.pottontowncouncil.co.uk



Christmas Lights

The work to put up and take down Potton's Christmas lights is undertaken entirely by volunteers on behalf of the Town Council, if you think you can provide assistance and would like to join the team then please contact the Town Council office. This work is usually carried out on three Sundays in November. We avoid working on Remembrance Sunday.

Some new lights have been purchased for this year display and we are sure that Potton's reputation for one of the best displays in the area will continue.

The big switch-on will take place on with many stalls and organisations participating, a funfair and shops staying open late.

Activities start at 6pm with Father Christmas switching on the lights at 7pm.

Put the date in your diary and come and join us together with the hundreds of people from Potton and beyond



Chairman's Message



Hello and welcome to the winter edition of the newsletter. There are a number of great events that have taken place since the last newsletter and these include **Party on Potton, Potton Show, Potton Apple Day, Civic Service** and **Remembrance Sunday** and all these events show how Potton has a thriving community spirit.

On 16th October 2016 the town held its annual civic service in the Parish Church of St. Mary the Virgin, the service was attended by the Queen's representative Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire Col. Colin Mason O.B.E. and also in attendance were other dignitaries from Bedfordshire and representatives from local organisations. A wonderful musical interlude provided by the choir of Potton Lower School was very well received by all in attendance. They sang five songs and were a credit to both their school and their parents.

As I mentioned in my article in the autumn newsletter the skate park is shortly coming to the end of its life. The town councillors met with a number of users of the skate park in October to discuss about a replacement. It was fantastic to see so many of the youth of the town that use the park coming to get involved.

Also in October two community events took place a further litter pick organised by Carol Leggatt and conservation work of the Paddling Pool (lots of people know as the Carrot Wash) organised by Hannah Bartram.

In November volunteers have installed Potton's Christmas Lights and once again we look to be envy of neighbouring towns when they are switched on **Friday December 2nd at 7pm, with activities starting at 6pm.** The usual countdown of Santa switching on the lights.

The Potton Town Council website has been brought up to date and this will become your focal point for news, events and interaction with the town council. www.pottontowncouncil.co.uk

Please have a look at the website and forward us any comments or items you would like to be considered to be included.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter.
Best wishes

Angus

Cllr Angus Macdonald



Civic Service



Litter pick



Carrot Wash

Town Council Information

For enquiries regarding the following: Cemetery, Allotments, Henry Smith Playground, Mill Lane Playground, Recreation Fields, Public Conveniences, Brook End Car Park, Mill Lane Pavilion and Community Centre.

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

If you want to see a specific member of the team please ring ahead to make an appointment.

Tel: 01767 260086

E: pottoncouncil@btconnect.com

W: www.pottontowncouncil.co.uk

Councillor contact details

Denis Ellison	261925	Jonathan Lean	262404
Geoff Emery	261710	Alan Leggatt	260001
Andrew Gibb	260067	John Lewis	260726
Richard Harris	262596	Angus Macdonald	262006
John Hobbs	260710	Chris Temple	262535
Les Ivall	261559	Rex Whitfield	262246
Roger Jordan	261143	Adam Zerny	261319
Peter Langridge	260362		

Town Council Meetings

Held in the Main Hall of the Community Centre starting at 7pm.

Tuesday 6 th December 2016	Tuesday 3 rd January 2017
Tuesday 7 th February 2017	Tuesday 7 th March 2017
Tuesday 4 th April 2017	

Councillor Surgeries

Held in the library starting at 10am - 12 noon.

Sat 10th December	Cllrs Gibb and Lewis
Sat 14th January	Cllrs Lean and Whitfield
Sat 11th February	Cllrs Ellison and Macdonald
Sat 18th March	Cllrs Gibb and Jordan
Sat 8th April	Cllrs Langridge and Leggatt

Mosaic Heritage Trail

Central Bedfordshire Regeneration Fund has granted £100,000 to run 'Story in Stone', which is a Mosaic Heritage Trail through Potton, Sandy and Biggleswade. Story in Stone will tell of the histories of all three historic market towns and bring these histories out of the archives and onto the walls for everyone to see. The project is being led by Carolyn Blake and the mosaics will be designed by Oliver Budd one of the finest mosaic artists in the UK. For more details about the project www.storyinstone.org.uk



Mosaic designed and made by Oliver Budd for J.S.Sainsbury for the Sainsbury's Biggleswade store.



Dates for the Diary

December

Fri 2nd	Christmas Lights switch-on - Potton Market Square	6pm onwards
Sat 10th	Seasonal Market - Potton Market Square	9am - 1pm

March

Sat 18th	Seasonal Market - Potton Market Square	9am - 1pm
Tue 28th	Annual Town Meeting - Mill Lane Pavilion	7pm

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Potton Neighbourhood Plan update

Vision

In consultation with the Community, the established vision for Potton is as follows:-

- Potton remains a small Georgian Market Town with a vibrant market square that has a variety of shops and services that meet the needs of the Town and its residents.
- There has been Medium Scale, managed, proportionate and uniform growth over the period of the Plan with sustainable development that meets the needs of the Town and its residents and is in conformity with the CBC Local Plan.
- Small and medium sized businesses have been developed in the the Potton Parish and have promoted local employment.
- The community infrastructure meets the needs of the Town and has the capacity to support future growth.
- Leisure facilities meet the needs of the whole Town.
- Potton has a high quality natural environment that protects wildlife.
- A Green Wheel has been developed within the parish.
- Footpaths and cycle-ways link major areas of the Town which encourages pedestrians and cyclists and has associated Environmental and Parking benefits.
- Managed parking throughout the Town.

The achievement of this Vision will ensure that Potton remains a thriving and prosperous community that delivers a high quality of life for all residents.

Emerging Issues

The consultations and questionnaire has also identified a number of emerging issues that the Neighbourhood Plan needs to take forward:

- Uncontrolled Housing growth in Potton.
- Development must meet the housing needs of the residents of Potton. The questionnaire has indicated that there is a need for more housing, particularly 1 and 2 bedroom properties and retirement / sheltered homes.
- Concern that community infrastructure will not support future growth.
- Unacceptable waiting times for medical consultation.
- The provision of public transport is unsatisfactory.
- There is a need for more employment opportunities in Potton, particularly small businesses employing less than 10 people.
- There is a need for more community facilities.
- Parking is a problem and will get worse with new developments in Potton.
- Road capacity needs improvement.
- Broadband cannot cope with current demand.
- It is essential to retain, enhance and protect our green infrastructure.

We will hold future consultation events to seek solutions and devise an action plan to address these issues. We now have a website:

www.pottonneighbourhoodplan.co.uk where we will keep you up to date on our progress in developing the Potton Neighbourhood Plan. We will also use our Facebook page, 'PottonNP' and also on the 'We Love Potton' page to update you.

Memories from Party On Potton Big Weekend 2016



**Where to start?!! What a weekend!!
And what fine weather we had too.
Potton people came out in their droves
to party with the orange-clad crew.**

We had plenty of old favourites and some new things to 'see how it goes'.

Like donkey rides, inflatable games, the scarecrow trail and hungry hippos!

It all started with a fabulous disco upon the Friday night and finished with the 'Wizard of Potton', an absolute delight.

The day started with a Car Boot sale and ended with heavy rain!

Monday saw a huge turnout for the bike ride and 5K run.

Saturday kicked off with the carnival and led into 'Community Day'.

The Dog Show was simply crazy but would we have it any other way?!

Sunday was all about Arts & Crafts and posh picnics in the main.

Everyone loved the team games and general sport themed fun.

Kid Zone rocked, the Story Tent amused and the high ropes were a resounding hit.

We hope no-one got too lost in the maze or too tangoed in the orange sand pit!

Big Band night was a sell-out again, as was the Panto too.



Never have we seen, in Potton, such a long and winding entry queue!!

Casino & Cabaret night on the Sunday saw the return of Regina Dwight.

And Eva Iglesias of #BGT fame certainly sang with all of her might!

But we couldn't have done it without YOU, the lovely People Of Potton.

Your help and support is what has made this weekend, one to not be forgotten.



Potton Town Council thank everyone who was involved in making Party on Potton's Big Weekend such a success.

Central Bedfordshire Councillor's Reports – Cllr Adam Zerny

Central Beds to cut bus services to Potton by 50%

In April I highlighted how Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) had created a half-hearted 'consultation' as a precursor to cutting Buses around Potton and the nearby villages by 50%.

The council also wanted to prevent the elderly from using concessionary bus passes before 9.30am.

But when the public didn't think much of these plans when we were consulted. More than 1,500 people responded and only 1/3 were supportive of the proposals.

So CBC paid a market research company **£9,000** to ring **500 people** up hoping they might be more in favour of CBC's efforts if the questions were phrased in the right way. I got hold of the script:

- The opening line states ***"The council currently spends over £3½ million each year on bus subsidies and discounted fares"***

My concern is that by highlighting the cost of the buses up-front rather than mentioning the benefits provided, this gives the impression that the rational person would see the need to cut costs.

- Another section begins ***"Currently 53% of bus services are subsidised by the Council and this costed tax payers about £1.2 million last year. The Council believes this is no longer affordable and is rethinking how bus transport is provided"***.



The implication is the council believes this to be no longer sustainable and that any rational person should agree with them.

- The same section continues ***"Subsidies are provided for bus routes which are no longer commercially viable for bus companies to run. A single journey can cost the Council up to £17.50. The Council is not obliged to do this, but historically they (sic) have chosen to. This is no longer affordable"***.

By saying this is no longer affordable it strongly suggests the interviewee would be a fool to disagree! Also, the mention of £17.50 is not explained. It sounds very much like the worst case scenario but the interviewee is given no information on how often this full subsidy is actually required.

- The section on Community Transport (i.e. subsidised transport predominantly used by the elderly) begins

"These services are popular with people living in rural areas, older and disabled people; and, many have indicated they would be prepared to pay more for these services"

There is no evidence people would happily pay more and there is certainly no evidence of how that question might have been phrased to them. It would be invalid if people had been asked if they'd 'pay more as an alternative to losing it?'

- This section continues ***"The Council are (sic) proposing to introduce a competitive tender process for community transport providers whilst still providing financial support. They (sic) believe this will increase the number of voluntary and community services, as well as reduce the costs to the Council."***

It sounds very much like the council is attempting to spin it's own decision to the interviewee.

- The final section states: ***"The Travel Aid scheme enables unemployed people to travel on buses at a discounted price. Under the proposals, the Council will no longer fund the scheme, although some bus companies may choose to offer discounted fares. The estimated saving is around £5,000 each year."***

This is misleading because the council knows it is extremely unlikely a bus firm will offer discounts it doesn't have to provide.

Of course the script offers no ideas of other methods by which CBC could cut costs instead e.g. staff costs or publicity.

And funnily enough, **83%** of respondents were supportive of the council's proposals. What a surprise!

By comparison here are some of the comments the public made to the original consultation:

- Present bus service are poorly run and promoted so not well used. Need improving not cutting **19.7%**
- Proposals could seriously impact or cut off rural communities **17.7%**
- Elderly and vulnerable rely on bus services - cutting them will impact them severely **14.2%**
- Proposals will block me/other commuters from being able to get to work/access job opportunities **12.7%**
- I/we rely on bus services/concessions - please don't take them away **11.8%**

So what's happening now?

Despite the comments from the public, CBC voted to cut services to the Potton area (and many other areas of Central Beds) by 50%. They have decided to call our buses 'secondary' routes because it sounds better than second class. CBC have however backed down on preventing the elderly from using their bus passes before 9.30am.

article continues...



How can CBC justify this?

CBC cites cutting costs of course and also says bus use has declined (**apparently 65% of the local population didn't use buses in 2014 and this has now risen marginally to 68%**). But CBC acknowledges it has only consulted a tiny proportion of the population.

And crucially, CBC doesn't understand the reasons why people aren't using buses.

- Could it be that tickets are too expensive?
- That buses don't tie in with trains?
- Maybe because timetables are not widely circulated?
- Maybe buses don't go where people want them to go?
- Or the buses don't run early enough to get people to work or late enough to get them home?

The truth is **WE JUST DON'T KNOW** because the consultation didn't ask people.



And yes, the cuts will affect services along Sandy Road in Potton where CBC has just approved 90 new houses, and Biggleswade Road, Potton where 150 houses are currently being built. And no you won't be offered a Council Tax rebate to take account of the reduced services you are to receive from now on.

The final page of CBC's proposal finishes with its strapline, **“Central Bedfordshire, a great place to live and work”**

Just as long as you don't need to rely on a bus for either.

For more on how you might be able to fight these cuts please read my email newsletter in the coming months - if you'd like to sign-up, email me at adamzerny@hotmail.co.uk

Cllr Adam Zerny (Independent Central Bedfordshire Councillor)

Housing development in Potton

Potton residents could be forgiven for thinking they are being targeted by developers. In September an application for 90 houses on Sandy Road has been approved by Central Beds Council, despite opposition from me, the town council, the RSPB, CPRE and hundreds of local residents. Further applications have gone in for land to the west of Biggleswade Road and also Myers Road, with proposals on land by Old Bedford Road-Mill Lane and Sandy Road-Deepdale likely to become applications in the months to come.

All in all over 630 houses are proposed, at application status, or being built in Potton. This despite a lower school approaching capacity and a surgery bursting at the seams. It seems remarkable that Central Beds could even conceive of this number of houses for a settlement with 1,900 houses.

Central Beds is creating a major development plan for some 30,000 homes across Central Beds - the so called 'Local Plan' - but is apparently happy to allow developments like Sandy Road to take place without waiting for this Local Plan which is designed to take into account infrastructure, education and healthcare needs across the region.

I have asked the government to review Central Beds' decision but this is by no means guaranteed and they declined the opportunity to do so when Dunton residents opposed a traveller site next to their village, this summer.

However, all is not lost and at the time of writing a residents action group has been formed and intend to fight these applications potentially through legal means. Again, Dunton may be the way

to look here as in this village residents are pursuing a Judicial Review against Central Beds.

The Potton residents group have a facebook page:

www.facebook.com/groups/PottonResidentsvsDevelopment/ or you can email them at **pottonresidentsvsdevelopment@gmail.com**. They would really appreciate your support.

To read about all the latest planning applications, please go to my facebook page **www.facebook.com/adamzerny** or email me **adamzerny@hotmail.co.uk** to receive my monthly email update.

Central Beds are also doing a consultation on their Local Plan. The document can be seen here: **www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/planning/policy/local-plan/shaping-central-beds-consultation.aspx** and I would recommend everyone takes a look as it gives the opportunity to tell the council what you think of its plans for our area. The consultation document appears designed to prevent you having your say but for more information on what you might want to say, please visit my facebook page and see my post from 30th September.

For more on this please read my email newsletter in the coming months - if you'd like to sign-up, email me at adamzerny@hotmail.co.uk

Cllr Adam Zerny (Independent Central Bedfordshire Councillor)

Potton Apple Day



Visitors to Potton Apple Day 2016 enjoyed another (mostly) sunny afternoon at St Mary's Church field. Many sacks of apples were turned into delicious fresh juice by all the children helping out.

Winner of the best cider in show was once again 'Apple Dayze', made with the apples juiced at last year's Potton Apple Day, by fellow organiser Andy Gibb. Meaning the apples of Potton make excellent cider of which we can all be proud.



The trophy (made by potter Eve Carroll) was once again kindly sponsored and awarded by Geoff Emery, Chairman of Potton Hall for All. Lookout for

the cider at local venues, all profits go back into the events themselves.

As well as stalls, real cider and live music, visitors could have their own apples identified by the East of England Apple

& Orchard Project. The Community Tree Trust and other conservation groups were also on hand with advice.

Lots of visitors were interested to hear about the new Potton Community Orchard. Thanks very much too all the helpers on the day, too numerous to mention but all very much appreciated.



Potton Library

At the library, we had a terrific summer, with a very successful 'Big Friendly Read' reading challenge which this year featured Roald Dahl & his many books. The children really enjoyed the activities we organised, and a record number of children received a medal as part of the challenge.



In July we celebrated the library's 60th birthday, with events over the week, a commemorative badge, and a birthday party too. Our events were a great success, and we are very grateful to those who helped us organise our celebrations, and to all that attended. In August we were invited to take part in Party on Potton, holding a stall and craft activities over the weekend.

From September, we have started a regular Story Time session. Please call in for further details. We are also interested to hear from those wishing to help us with story time events - please contact the library for more information.

We now have new computers installed. These are available for 2 hours free per day, with facilities to print on A4. We can

provide help for those who wish to learn or extend their IT skills, or need assistance to access our online services. Please contact us for more information. We also offer free WIFI in and around the library building by logging into 'CBC_PUBLIC'.

Our regular events include a stall at the seasonal markets, book sales, a craft group that runs 1st & 3rd Mondays 2 -3.30pm, regular opportunities to borrow and swap jigsaw puzzles, craft activities for children, and Lego club which runs Fridays during term time and in school holidays.

Information regarding our events and activities can be found on our outside noticeboard, in the village section of the Biggleswade Chronicle, or online.

Potton Community Agent News

Supporting the over 60s in Potton

Tel: Andrea on 0300 555 5949 mobile: 07590 359 630 (working Tues, Weds, Thurs only)

In September, regular attendees of the Potton Friendship Group went on an outing to Cambridge and enjoyed a fish and chip lunch on a riverboat cruise. If you would like the opportunity to be included in the next trip come and join us every week at the Potton Friendship Group.



Potton Friendship Group – gathers every Thursday morning 10-12 at the Community Centre, Brook End. Have a game of carpet bowls, Scrabble or cards or simply sit and chat over tea and homemade cakes. All are very welcome. £1.50 entry.

New Year's Party – Potton Friendship Group will be holding a January Jolly Party on **Thursday 26th January 2017**, to help beat the winter blues. Tickets cost **£3 each** and includes a hot lunch. Call Andrea for details.

Warm Home Discount Scheme – the government scheme for winter 2016/7 is open to new applicants. A discount of £140 on your electricity bill is applied if you meet your supplier's criteria. Funding is limited, so if you are on an income of less than £16K and claim certain benefits, call Andrea to check if you may be eligible.

Keep safe this winter – Andrea has a limited number of carbon monoxide alarms and lamp timers for Potton over 60s residents. A lamp timer ensures that you never come home to a dark house, makes you feel safer and also less likely to trip or fall in the dark.

Power Cut Hotline – in the event of a power cut, call 105 from your landline or mobile to report a power outage or get further information. 105 will connect you with your electricity network operator who can tell you what's happening in your area.

Don't forget, if you have any forms that you need help filling in such as Attendance Allowance, Blue Badges or Council Tax Reduction/Housing Benefit or any other issue, then please call Andrea, Potton Community Agent, in confidence on **0300 555 5949**. Please note working days are Tues, Weds and Thurs. I am only funded to support Potton residents and unfortunately cannot help people who live outside of the area.



Progress with Potton Hall for All,

but we need your help

The Potton Hall for All Steering Committee has made great progress with the project to build a multi-purpose community hall in Potton.

The biggest advancement has been with the initial design concepts for a hall that meets the many different uses Pottonians have requested. Dan Jones of Civic Architects – who created Gamlingay's EcoHub – has designed a truly multi-functional building. There will be facilities for sports clubs, society meetings, music and drama groups, and even for wedding receptions.

Our Trustees met with Central Bedfordshire Council for a Pre-Planning Application appraisal consultation to get feedback on the concepts. We are delighted with the response and plan to submit a full planning application this financial year. If you would like to see the designs please visit our website at

www.pottonhallforall.co.uk. You can also contact us via the website to provide feedback or to register your support.

We are planning a fantastic, self-financing, community hall to support Potton as our great town grows. But we need help! We need people to join our Committee and there's scope for all sorts of talents: building professionals, project managers, planners, communicators, fundraisers, for people to help at events and to bake cakes too.

For more information please contact us via email at hall4allpotton@btinternet.com or at [facebook.com/pottonhallforall](https://www.facebook.com/pottonhallforall)

Geoff Emery - Chairman of the Hall for All Steering Committee





Young people at Potton Youth Club teamed up to create graffiti art

Four young people from Potton Youth Club have created a large-scale graffiti artwork together to display in the centre that demonstrates their individual personalities.

Over the course of four weeks, the young people worked as a team to build their idea and study the art of graffiti by learning how to use a spray can, including which nozzles provide different paint effects. One young person in the group had previous experience in graffiti art, so she was able to provide peer education on the subject. The young people also learnt about the potential dangers of using spray paints and what protective equipment they needed to wear, like masks and goggles.

In the graffiti art itself they decided to have a multi-coloured backdrop and then use stencils to add detail to the piece. The young people blended different colours to create the multi-coloured background, and then carefully cut out card stencils that they attached and sprayed to add detail to the artwork.

Overall the project was a great success as the young people worked as a team to learn new skills and create a piece for everyone to enjoy. The canvas is now displayed on the wall of the youth club in Potton Pavilion, where sessions are run by Groundwork Luton & Bedfordshire every Thursday from 5pm to 7pm.

For more information please contact
Lisa Steeples Lead Youth Worker on 07702 941440
or lisa.steeples@groundwork.org.uk

www.groundwork.org.uk/beds

 [@gwklutonandbeds](https://twitter.com/gwklutonandbeds) #PottonYouthClub

 [Potton Youthy](https://www.facebook.com/PottonYouthy)

