



POTTON TOWN COUNCIL

Newsletter Spring 2014

Incorporating Annual Report
2013-2014

The 2013 /14 financial year has been another busy one for your town council dominated again by the Central Bedfordshire Council draft Gypsy and Traveller local plan. I will summarise some of the key activities that we have been engaged with.

In April an outline planning application was lodged with CBC for 151 dwellings and an employment area east of Biggleswade Road. Public consultation had highlighted various concerns which had been given consideration. The Town Council continues to monitor this proposal very closely to ensure the best possible outcome for Potton.

The town plan committees under the chairmanship of Cllr.Ian Clements have continued to be active. The Seasonal Markets continue to be successfully run on a quarterly basis and attendance levels remain good weather permitting.

The environmental group produced a colourful walks leaflet which maps out four local walks in and around the Potton area. Work has continued around the brook in HSPF to improve the environment for wildlife. A feasibility study for the proposed Potton to Sandy cycleway was produced and the scheme moves forward. Work on the first phase could start later this year.

The Youth Club continues to function on a weekly basis and the council is kept apprised by its co-ordinating representative Cllr. Paul Rogers. Members of the club have been engaged to provide user input to the requirements for a new replacement skatepark, the original one coming towards the end of its useful life.

Highways, traffic and parking are still contentious issues in the town and a roads and transport committee has been set up under the town plan to provide focused effort to the problems. This committee is then reportable to the town council for ratification of recommendations and proposals.

The community safety committee has been expanded to include a cold calling champion who together with trading standards will seek to identify traders who target vulnerable households.

The CBC draft Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan which was scheduled to go before the secretary of state's independent planning inspector last summer was pulled following criticism over an application for a new site near Leighton Buzzard which charged CBC with underestimating need. This led to CBC looking again at the draft strategy and a revised plan was considered by the overview and scrutiny committee, the executive committee and full council at three

meetings in January. Although the proposed site 58 at The Heath was removed from the plan, to counter this it is now proposed to expand the existing Common Rd. site by up to 13 pitches and to increase by 50 % the number of pitches proposed for a site on Dunton Lane from 10 to 15 and also to move it closer to Dunton. The town council made strong representations against these proposals at all three meetings but to no avail and the draft plan was nodded through. Our independent planning consultant has been tasked to respond during the final consultation period with a view to making a formal representation to the planning inspector later in the year.

Regular meetings of the council's sub-committees took place throughout the year. These comprise Playing Fields, Allotments and Burials committee, Planning, and Buildings and Facilities. My thanks go to the respective Chairmen who have the responsibility for running these meetings. They are Angus MacDonald, John Lewis, and Paul Rogers.

My thanks also go to Peter Langridge who chairs the Finance Committee which alternates fortnightly with the town council meetings.

The last year has seen the loss from the council of two major contributors. In July Cllr. Mrs. Jean Way retired after more than thirty years of commitment and service and then earlier this year came the sad loss of Cllr. Anita Lewis, another long term member of this council as well as having served on both Mid Beds District Council and Central Bedfordshire Council. Their inputs and knowledge will be sorely missed.

My thanks go to Val our clerk and assistant Sarah who keep us in order and provide us with the expertise and advice we need to function and also to her entire staff who do such an excellent job of maintaining our facilities. These include the cemetery, the Community Centre and Mill Lane Pavilion halls, the public toilets, the bus shelter and many other general maintenance activities around the town. This will be the last year that Val will minute the annual town meeting as she has decided to retire at the end of April. Val has done an excellent job for us over the last nine years and we wish her well in her future endeavours.

The next year will again be challenging. The failure of CBC to pass down to town and parish councils their allocation of council tax support grant means there will be a shortfall in our budget precept this year in order to minimise the level of increase we impose. If this situation is maintained in future years then inevitably there will have to be above inflation increases to maintain services at the level we have today.

Potton Town Council will continue to serve the residents of Potton to the best of its ability.

POTTON TOWN COUNCIL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2013-2014

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Cumulative Fund Balance | 31.3.2014 |
| Balance brought forward | 146529 |
| Add Total Income | 211045 |
| Less Total Expenditure | 170666 |
| | 186908 |

CASH RECONCILIATION AS AT THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON 31.3.14

| | | |
|------|--|---------------|
| | Premier Interest Account | 169756 |
| | Current Account | 17152 |
| | | 186908 |
| | Less cheques drawn but not debited to bank account at close of business on 31.3.14 | 150.00 |
| ADD | DEBTORS | 2539.53 |
| LESS | CREDITORS | 1360.57 |
| | TRUE FUND BALANCE | 187037 |
| | Additional investment fund | |
| | COIF Fund | 891 |

Borrowings:

At the close of business at 31st March, 2014 there were no outstanding loans to the Council.

Debts Outstanding 2013/2014

At 31st March, 2014 there were debts of 2539.53 outstanding.

Capital Reserves:

The Town Council had 63615.74 Reserves at 31st March, 2014

S137 Payments:

The Limit of spending under S137 of the Local Government Act 1972 for this Council to 31st March, 2014 was 26838.00

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Payments made under LGA 1972 S137 | |
| Royal British Legion | 50.00 |
| Magpas | 50.00 |
| Payments made under LGA 1972 S145 | |
| Potton Music Festival | 100.00 |
| Potton Show | 100.00 |
| Payment made under LGA and rating Act S26-29 | |
| Link a Ride | 100.00 |
| Payment made under LGA 1972 S142 | 125.00 |
| CAB Outreach Service | |
| Total | 525.00 |

Balance sheet as at 31st March 2014

| | | Actual at 31.3.14 £ |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------------------|
| COIF Fund | 891 | |
| Long Term Debtors | | |
| LONG TERM ASSETS | | 891 |
| Current Assets | | |
| Debtors | 2539.53 | |
| Payments in advance | 0 | |
| Cash in Hand | | |
| Current acc | 17151.92 | |
| Deposit acc | 169756.30 | |
| Total Current Assets | | 189447.75 |
| Current Liabilities | | |
| Creditors | 1360.57 | |
| Uncleared cheques | 150.00 | |
| Total current liabilities | | 1510.57 |
| Represented by: | | |
| Fund Balance | | 187937.18 |

Potton Sports Day - 31st May 2014 10am - 4pm

Shortly after becoming a councillor, I was approached by the family of a promising local athlete who were seeking help with funding for travel and training. It made me think that while our town is fortunate enough to have organisations like Potton Consolidated Charities who can assist on such occasions, there is always more that can be done to highlight this help, particularly with regard to getting more people - particularly youngsters - involved in sport.

We are really lucky to have such a wide variety of sports clubs and other organisations keeping people active in our area; the beginning of this year, I got in touch with as many as I could and suggested we run an event to raise the profile of all the local groups and hope to get people involved in sport and maybe even win the clubs a few new members.

There was a great deal of support and it then became possible to get Central Bedfordshire Council to run the event and provide instructors for the adult gym on the day.

Taking part on the day will be Potton United Football Club, Potton Cricket Club, Potton Colts, Potton Bowls Club, Jodie Robertsons Dance, Lisa Hillier Zumba, Potton Karate, The Barns Gym, Simon Desborough Boot Camp, Sandy Sports Centre, Biggleswade Athletics Club, Biggleswade Swimming Club, Sandy & Shefford Hockey Club. Party On Potton are supporting with food and drink.

It will take place on Saturday 31st May in the Henry Smith Playing Fields, Potton, by the adult gym.

On the morning of the event, I will be doing a sponsored run to raise money for Potton Consolidated Charities.

Many of the clubs are putting-on activities especially for the event so it would be fantastic to see as many of you as possible down there to support them. It should be a great day and one of which we can be truly proud.



Adam Zerny

adamzerny@hotmail.co.uk

POTTON TOWN PLAN

Mr Ian Clements the Town Plan Chairman's Report March 2014

This is my second annual Town Plan report, having taken over the role in January 2013.

The Town Plan is a document that lays down the aspirations of the population of Potton. Ideas that come from the residents, to enhance the lives of the residents. The Plan is split into committees who guide and facilitate these ideas through to fruition. This is what has been achieved in the last 12 months.

Shopping Committee

The aim is to encourage people to the town to shop. To make it a place that people want to spend time in and to that end the Market Square saw some major changes a few years ago. Along with these aesthetic changes, the Shopping Committee created the Four Seasons Market held quarterly, roughly in line with the change of season. Since the first one in 2009 they have seen the market grow significantly and have built on the success by attracting new stallholders selling a wide range of high quality produce. Almost all the stallholders return to the next market keen to retain their pitch. The Market is also a great place to meet up with friends and neighbours in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere. Many local groups like Party on Potton, the Scouts, the Hall For All and the Potton Ladies' Group advertise their events at the market keeping the momentum of activities going throughout the year. It is through the efforts of the Shopping Committee that Potton has gained and retained the status of a Fairtrade Town.

Those of you, who came to the December market last year, could not have missed the increase in stallholders and that the market was busier than it has been before. Introducing a theme, introduced interest. Several stalls were offering home made crafts and Christmas gift ideas.

The spring market last weekend included The Potton Community Safety Road Show, which attracted even more people, seeing some stallholders selling out before the end.

The Road Show itself brought the Fire Service, the Police, Neighbourhood Watch and Trading Standards into one exhibition with the key objective of safety in the home. The Fire Service were offering to supply and fit smoke detectors in homes, the Police were chatting with residents about home security and each had the opportunity to get to know each other. Neighbourhood Watch and Trading Standards, with their Cold Calling Initiative, gave residents advice about reporting strangers in their streets.

Environment Committee

Most people are interested in their own environment and we all like to see Potton looking pretty, but sometimes The Council just does not have the resources to attend to the little things that make the difference. This is where the Environment Committee excels. A couple of years ago they planted dozens of daffodil bulbs in the verges and it's a delight to see them burst into life in the spring.

One of the biggest projects that this committee is involved in is the Potton to Sandy cycle-way. For a few years now they have been working hard to establish a route and to obtain funding. The committee has resolved to continue to negotiate with Charitable Organisations, Local and National Government Departments to obtain the necessary resources to see this project through to a successful conclusion.

The committee is pressing Central Bedfordshire Council to attend to the footpaths especially the rights of way in Pegnut Wood and is urging them to repair, as a matter of urgency, the two paths in the wood that are their responsibility.

The committee continues to put pressure on the Internal Drainage Board to clear the Potton and Horse Brooks of vegetation and rubbish. However, the floods of last year and early this year saw the Board's efforts diverted to other areas.

We are hoping to have the young people of Potton fully involved over the next 4 years with the commemoration activities for the centenary of WW1. We have asked the schools to help us with this.

Community Safety Committee

Originally set up to promote Neighbourhood Watch Schemes across the town and link them to a common 'web' the committee has now also taken up the mantle of Cold Calling Watch representatives. The aim this year is to promote the need for a coordinated Watch Scheme to prevent any increase in burglaries and petty crime by reporting suspicious activities, ensuring our streets and homes remain safe, and showing the opportunist thief and rogue trader that Potton is not a place for them.

The committee has resolved to liaise with local Police patrols, attend meetings and attend training courses organised by them. It is through the committee that last weekend's Community Safety Road Show took place. We would encourage any member of a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme or anyone who would like to set one up, to contact the committee through the Town Clerk.

Sports, Leisure & Young People Committee

During the last year we combined the Sports & Leisure and Young People committees into one. This new committee will continue to investigate both the funding for, and location of, a new Multi Use Games Area, which is an all weather astro-turf surface. This committee will also be continuing their work to investigate the possibility of enlarging and improving the skate park.

Last year we introduced 'sports taster sessions' in the school holidays which gives children an introduction to sports they wouldn't normally play, for example, girls playing cricket and boys playing netball. We started with tennis in October and it was a great success so, in April, we are going to do tennis again along with cricket. Already we have received a number of applicants for places.

Grateful thanks go to Potton Tennis and Cricket clubs at the Hollow for the free use of their facilities. All of this is made possible by professional sports coach Gary Richardson.

The Youth Club at the Mill Lane Pavilion has had some changes in staffing this year and this had a small impact on the numbers attending on a regular basis but they are now recovering. They have a full programme for the next few months including trips to Dunstable for skate boarding. The finances are healthy and there seems to be a good atmosphere.

Late last year I started negotiations with The Citizens Advice Bureau to see if we could introduce a Bureau into Potton. I am pleased to say that during May we will see a C.A.B. open in the Community Centre on a part time basis. This will give all our residents, especially the older ones, somewhere to go to get free professional and impartial advice about a range of problems that are faced today.

As the YOU POTTON Face Book page becomes more popular, (750 friends registered so far), the one dominant conversation is related to traffic. It was therefore agreed that The Town Plan should resurrect the Traffic committee and called it The Road and Transport Committee.

Roads and Transport Committee

The committee decided that it would deal with issues that relate to the use, abuse and condition of the road, bridle-way and footpath network in the parish of Potton.

The committee has prioritised all of the issues raised on Face Book and has recognised that speeding and parking are the most important to the population. As a result the committee has, through CBC Cllr. Adam Zerny and the Town Council, asked the CBC Highways department to reduce the speed limit to 20 MPH through the centre of Potton.

Working very closely with the police, we have set up the Potton Speed Watch Group which was launched by The Police Commissioner for Bedfordshire, Olly Martins, at the Potton Community Road Show last Saturday. Those of you who were in the Market Square had the opportunity to see Speed Watch in action and you will see the group and equipment around Potton in the next few weeks.

The idea of Speed Watch is education not prosecution. However, those who speed can expect a letter from the police or even a knock at their door, by an officer.

To keep our roads safe, we need more volunteers to help man Speed Watch. Anyone interested in joining the group can email me at potton.speedwatch@yahoo.com

In conclusion I would like to give you my: -

Chairman's Comments

Since my involvement with the Town Plan, I have been inspired by the dedication of the Teams. They have raised money and given up their time to provide the residents of Potton with the facilities and environment that other towns could only dream about.

We could do more and we could do it more quickly if we had some more help. If anyone has a few hours a month that they can spare please get involved. Contact us through the Town Clerk at the Brook End office, [Twitter@PottonCouncil](https://twitter.com/PottonCouncil) or potton.speedwatch@yahoo.com

REPORT FROM CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL: Ward Councillor Mr A. Zerny gave the following report:-

Mr Zerny thanked everyone for giving up their time to attend the meeting.

He outlined the stages of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Local Allocation Plan which had taken up much of his time. He had voted against this but the motion had been carried and will now go to the Public Inspector.

Mr Zerny spoke about the Council Tax Support Grant which had been designed to pass down to local Town and Parish Councils although Central Bedfordshire Council had refused to do so. The Government had asked Central Bedfordshire Council to explain why. It was for this reason he had voted against the budget.

Mr Zerny was pleased that Amey, the Highways contractor, had found where Pottton was situated. A number of road works had recently been completed and parking restrictions were now in place on the Biggleswade Road. He had been complaining about speeding since summer 2011 and 9 months ago the Local Area Transport plan agreed funding for a 20MPH zone in Pottton to be implemented in 2014/15.

Mr Zerny had been asked to help to find training facilities for a young swimmer. This had led to the formation of a Pottton Sports Day on 31st May 2014. Central Bedfordshire Council had been unable to fund the event but could give staff time. There would be representatives from all the local sports clubs with opportunities to try a range of sporting activities.

Mr Zerny spoke about the recent instance of people power with regard to objections stopping the recent parking restrictions at Tesco.

He said that Pottton was now safer, fitter and wiser and looking healthy as a community which he had enjoyed representing. Mr Zerny thanked the Clerk and Chairman for their patience and support.

Council Web Site

Contacts Information Page

If you are a manager or secretary for a local organisation please have a look at the contacts page on the Pottton Town Council website and let us know if there are any changes we need to make to the published details for your organisation. www.pottontowncouncil.co.uk

The original page was produced from the Town Guide which was published a long time ago. If you would like the details of your community group to be placed on the site please let us know.

There will soon be a new page on the web site with a community diary to prevent double bookings – watch this space.

Town Council Information

Town Council Office, The Community Centre, Brook End, Pottton SG19 2QS

Town Clerk Jonathan Whitehurst

Telephone 01767 260086

Email

potttoncouncil@btconnect.com

Web site www.pottontowncouncil.co.uk

Office opening hours:

| | | |
|-----------|--------|-------------------------|
| Monday | 9am | to 12.30pm |
| Tuesday | 9am | to 12.30pm |
| Wednesday | Closed | |
| Thursday | 9am | to 12.30pm - 2pm to 4pm |
| Friday | Closed | |

REPORTING PROBLEMS

The Town Council looks after the Cemetery, the Allotments, the Henry Smith Playground, the Mill Lane Playground, the Recreation Fields, the Public Conveniences, the Brook End Car Park, the Pavilion and the Community Centre. For problems or enquiries about these facilities please contact the Clerk at the Town Council Office, Brook End. **01767 260086**
pottoncouncil@btconnect.com

A large number of highways and other problems are currently being reported to the Clerk which the Town Council has no power to overcome.

If your problem is about refuse collection, environmental issues, recycling, or street cleaning please contact:-

Central Bedfordshire Council 0300 300 8000
customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

If your problem is about safety on the roads, pot holes, problems with the pavements or hedge cutting please contact:-

Central Bedfordshire Council Highways 0300 300 8000
highways@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Potton Town Councillors

| | | | | | |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|-----------------|--------|
| Ruth Burmo | 260712 | Eric Jakes M.B.E. | 260779 | Angus Macdonald | 262006 |
| Denis Ellison | 261925 | Peter Langridge | 260362 | Paul Rogers | 260977 |
| Andy Gibb | 260067 | Alan Leggatt | 260001 | Rex Whitfield | 262246 |
| Richard Harris | 262596 | John Lewis | 260726 | Adam Zerny | 261319 |

Mr P. Langridge - Chairman of the Town Council

Mr A. Macdonald - Vice Chairman of the Town Council

Mr J. Lewis - Chairman of Planning Committee

To be elected ...

Chairman of the Finance Committee

Chairman of the Buildings and Facilities Committee

Chairman of the Playing Fields, Allotments and Burials Committee

Chairman of the Town Plan

The Town Council meets on the first Tuesday of every month except August. Meetings are usually held in the main hall at the **Community Centre**, Brook End, starting at 7pm.

Other Council Representatives for Potton

Central Bedfordshire Councillors

| | | |
|---------------|--------|--|
| Doreen Gurney | 680395 | doreen.gurney@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk |
| Adam Zerny | 261319 | adamzerny@hotmail.co.uk |

HALL HIRE - AVAILABILITY AT THE COMMUNITY CENTRE AND THE 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 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 car park is very nearby.

The Pavilion at Mill Lane has a large 9 metre square hall and kitchen and there are facilities for people with disabilities. The floor may not be suitable for dance groups. This hall has some space for weekend functions.

Please contact Mrs Sarah Williamson to check on availability and make a booking 01767 260086

Hourly Charges for Use of Town Council Facilities Community Centre, Brook End, Potton as at 1st September 2013

| | Up to 5pm Weekdays | 5pm to 10.30pm Weekdays | Weekends/ Bank Holidays |
|------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Main Hall | £7.30 | £9.30 | £11.40 |
| Upper Hall | £4.70 | £6.20 | £7.30 |

Mill Lane Pavilion, Mill Lane, Potton

| | Up to 5pm Weekdays | 5pm to 10.30pm Weekdays | Weekends/ Bank Holidays |
|----------|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Pavilion | £8.30 | £11.40 | £15.50 |

To check availability please contact Bookings Clerk Mrs S Williamson 01767 260086

Potton Library Opening Hours

| | | |
|-----------|-------------|------------|
| Monday | 2pm to 6pm | |
| Wednesday | 2pm to 6pm | |
| Friday | 10am to 1pm | 2pm to 6pm |
| Saturday | 10am to 1pm | |

- Free Wireless Internet transmitting 24-7
- Daily and weekly newspapers are available
- The librarian, Gillian, will be happy to answer any queries on 0300 300 8063