

POTTON TOWN COUNCIL  
Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held on  
Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021, 7.30pm via Zoom.

**Present:** Councillors Mr A. Gibb, Mr R. Harris, Mr J. Hobbs, Mr L. Ivall, Ms L. Kitchener, Mr J. Lean (Chairman), Mrs C. Leggatt, Mr A. Macdonald, Mr J. Price Williams, Mr V. Watson and Mr A. Zerny.

**Absent:** Councillor Mr J. Day.

**Also Present:** CBC Cllr Ms T. Wye, the Town Clerk, Clerical Assistant, Admin Assistant and two members of the public and two co-option candidates.

**1. Apologies for absence**

Councillor Mr J. Day.

**2. Declaration of Interest**

Councillors were reminded that they should declare an interest in any matter of personal or prejudicial interest to be discussed at this meeting.

The Chairman advised he was going to alter the order of the agenda as members of the public are present and would arrange for various items to be considered in the public participation session to allow members of the public to speak.

**3. Public Participation Session**

A member of the public advised that the coronavirus page on the town council website needs updating to provide all the symptoms of coronavirus.

The Chairman asked the Clerical Assistant to update the coronavirus page on the town council website.

**4. Minutes of Potton Town Council**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020, which were previously circulated, were approved.

**5. Reports from Central Bedfordshire Councillors**

Cllr Wye advised that Potton Community Help Group are meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

Cllr Zerny advised that CBC have started a budget consultation.

**6. COVID-19**

Further national lockdown started on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

Potton Community Help Group meeting tomorrow to discuss the new lockdown. A further one thousand was raised just before the Christmas.

Christmas lights will be switched off on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021, the lights will not be taken down until later in the year.

## 7. Development in Potton

### 7.1 Planning application considered by the Planning Committee on 17th December 2020 for recommendation at the next Town Council meeting.

**Application No:** CB/20/02906/FULL

**Location:** 3 Acorn Mews, Potton, Sandy SG19 2NL

**Proposal:** Erection of a single storey front extension.

**Weblink:**

<http://cbstor.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicportalviewer/publicViewer.html?caseID=CB/20/02906/FULL>

The Planning Committee resolved to recommend no objection.

It was **resolved** no further comment.

### 7.2 Planning applications considered by the Planning Committee on 5th January 2021 for recommendation at the next Town Council meeting.

**Application No:** CB/TCA/20/00701

**Location:** The Lilt, 33 Horslow Street, Potton, Sandy SG19 2NS

**Proposal:** Works to a Tree in a Conservation Area: fell Sycamore Tree.

**Weblink:**

<http://cbstor.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicportalviewer/publicViewer.html?caseID=CB/TCA/20/00701>

The Planning Committee resolved to recommend no objection.

It was **resolved** no further comment.

**Application No:** CB/20/04641/FULL

**Location:** 3 Orchard Close, Market Square, Potton, Sandy SG19 2NT

**Proposal:** Single storey side extension with rear bi folding doors.

**Weblink:**

<http://cbstor.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicportalviewer/publicViewer.html?caseID=CB/20/04641/FULL>

The Planning Committee resolved to recommend no objection, providing the tree is cut back and not removed.

It was **resolved** no further comment.

**Application No:** CB/20/04672/FULL

**Location:** Land to the South of The Ridgeway, Potton, Sandy SG19 2PS

**Proposal:** Full Planning Application 97 residential units and 0.5ha of allotments together with associated infrastructure on Local Plan allocation HA9.

**Weblink:**

<http://cbstor.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicportalviewer/publicViewer.html?caseID=CB/20/04672/FULL>

The Planning Committee resolved to recommend to object to the application, based on the following comments.

As a result of analysis of this proposed development using the Neighbourhood Plan checklist, the following are the reasons why Potton Town Council should object to the development.

## **Objections relating to Potton Neighbourhood Plan, access, traffic etc**

1. The Potton Neighbourhood Plan (NP) supports Medium Scale development (from 50 to 500 dwellings) over the lifetime of the plan (2016-2035). Approval of this application would result in a total increase in dwellings of 552 therefore exceeding the NP supported growth.
2. Although this site was awarded PPA in the CBC Local Plan, this was before planning consent was awarded to 85 dwellings in Biggleswade Road West (the adjacent area) and so we believe that there is no justification for a further 97 dwellings.
3. When PPA was initially awarded it was planned that access to the site would be from the Biggleswade Road. This is not now possible because of the subsequent development known as Market Reach.
4. Split access through The Ridgeway and Paddocks is totally inappropriate. Both The Ridgeway and Paddocks are cul-de-sac with 46 and 85 dwellings respectively. Both roads have considerable on-road parking which is particularly acute at The Ridgeway. This parking is not only from residents of The Ridgeway but also from non-residents. See point 5 below. The addition of having to provide through access for a further 56 dwellings would lead to an unacceptable increase in traffic on this congested road.
5. We also question some of the assumptions made regarding the Parking Assessment. It is not valid to assume that existing residents of The Ridgeway will now park their cars in garages or on driveways thus relieving congestion on the road. The Transport Assessment now acknowledges that residents of The Ridgeway 'raised concerns regarding access off The Ridgeway due to the number of cars that currently park along the carriageway'. These are not only from residents of The Ridgeway but also from nearby streets who do not have the benefit of dedicated parking spaces or on-street parking opportunities directly adjacent to their properties. This is an issue which has been exacerbated as a result of a loss of on-street parking due to the Tall Trees development. The solution of restricting access to only 56 dwellings still doesn't resolve this issue and probably adds a second issue in The Paddocks.
6. On-street parking in both The Ridgeway and The Paddocks is likely to remain high because of the increase in people working from home. This will not only be during the restrictions imposed due to the pandemic but also because working from home has become a more acceptable alternative to daily commuting. This will increase the restrictions to traffic flow in both of these residential streets after construction, and also in Sutton Mill Road where access is required for large construction vehicles and machinery during construction.
7. The Neighbourhood Plan Vision B states: 'There will be controlled, proportionate and uniform growth over the period of the Plan with sustainable developments that meet the needs of the Town and its residents'. Following the substantial growth over the past 3 years, in order to comply with this vision statement, even if the PPA is retained, any development should not be considered until at least 2030 in the last five years of the Plan.

8. Transport Policy – Traffic Flow. No consideration has been taken regarding the increased vehicular activity at the junction of The Ridgeway and Biggleswade Road. Biggleswade Road is already very busy and an additional potential 112 cars (2 per household) using this junction is considered excessive and potentially dangerous. This junction is also close to the junction of Biggleswade Road and Station Road which incorporates a pedestrian crossing. It is not uncommon for traffic to be queueing past The Ridgeway junction at busy times. The addition of at least 82 vehicles from The Paddocks onto the Sandy Road roundabout will also add to traffic congestion at this location. This roundabout is also on the Potton Federation School run.
9. The transport Assessment makes judgements on the Central Bedfordshire 2011 Census, which are not applicable to a small (growing) market town. There is limited local employment and buses beyond Biggleswade or Sandy are extremely limited (weekly in some cases).
10. The Green Travel Plan paragraph 5.20 states that 2.2% of residents use buses to commute which is significantly less than the national average of 8.2%. This is principally because the bus service in Potton is wholly inadequate and unsuitable for commuters. It is therefore not possible to use buses for commuter connections at the railway stations of Biggleswade and Sandy. Hence, commuters, and those working in surrounding towns, will need to travel by car significantly increasing the traffic congestion on the surrounding roads. This is underplayed considerably in the Transport Assessment.
11. It is already a fact that the Healthcare provision in Potton is severely overstretched. Recently, a wait of up to 6 weeks has been experienced to achieve a doctor's appointment. The population increase resulting from this development would exacerbate this problem.
12. There are 29 proposed affordable housing units which meets the agreed 30% requirement. However, this does not take into account the demolition of 8 units to gain access to the site through The Paddocks. Therefore, the nett number of affordable units is 21 which is less than 22%.
13. There is no evidence / reference to the Neighbourhood Plan Housing Design Guide or Green Infrastructure Design Guide in the submitted RDC Development Consultants Design & Access Statement.
14. Reference to the covering letter from Kier to the CBC Head of Planning:
15. Development Access page 1. This paragraph suggests that the provision of a secondary access was suggested by Adam Zerny and was agreed to. This is not the case. This proposal came solely from Kier as a means of mitigating the objections to access solely through The Ridgeway.
16. The number of dwellings should not be exceed the minimum of 90 suggested by CBC.
17. The revised set of house drawings (I presume it means those included in the Design & Access Statement) does not show how Kier will meet the Potton Neighbourhood Plan Design Guides.

18. Using the Potton Neighbourhood Plan requirements of a minimum of 5% bungalows, there should be a minimum of 5 bungalows on this development.
19. The provision of open space around the perimeter of the development cannot be described as 'larger' and does not compensate for the loss of acid grassland.
20. Page 4 headed Potton Town Council. This section suggests that these 7 points are what PTC required in order to support the application. This needs to be challenged and clarified to CBC.
21. S 106 – proposals.
22. Affordable housing 30% does not take into account the fact that 8 units will be demolished in The Paddocks to facilitate access.
23. Outdoor sports contribution for improvement works to The Hollow – OK.
24. Indoor sports contribution for Saxon Pool LC changing room refurbishments – not acceptable. There are worthy schemes in Potton: Tennis club move, Green Wheel footpath improvements, other GI Plan projects etc.
25. Off-site play area contribution to enhance Mill Lane – why Wingfield Drive and Henry Smith Play areas?
26. Education contribution (for early years and primary education) – details?
27. Refuse bin contribution - details?
28. Improvement works to the footpath link to Sutton Road – details?

### **Objections relating to Environmental issues**

We would like to object to the above application for reasons of ecology, landscape and surface water drainage, for the following reasons:

#### **Ecology**

29. In the original planning application CB/19/04009, the Ecological Impact Assessment CSA/3937/02, September 2019 it stated a 0.7ha area of quality Priority Habitat Lowland Acid Grassland would be lost to the development. The ecological mitigation plan provided an area of 0.55ha this was not sufficient mitigation and would result in a Biodiverse Net Loss. In order to deliver Net Gain there must be a 10% increase in the habitat.

In the latest re-submitted application CB/20/04672/FULL, and revised Ecological Impact Assessment CSA/3937/02, dated November 2020, adjudges the 0.41ha area as Priority Lowland Acid Grassland. Thus the Habitat Classification Definitions identifies this as g1a Lowland dry acid grassland. The Biodiversity Metric advises '*losses to be unacceptable*' and would '*require bespoke compensation*'.

This does not include the Biodiversity Metric values of the remainder of Field 2, Fields 1 and 3. The effect of the overall loss leading to a negative biodiversity score. The proposed 0.55ha ecological mitigation area in Field 3 is not sufficient and will fail to provide a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain.

30. The original application CB/19/04009, and Ecological Impact Assessment CSA/3937/02, September 2019, notes there to be a locally important population of common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*. A proposed mitigation plan described methodology to translocate the population to another nearby site. This donor area is the site of a previous poorly executed and failed attempt to translocate lizards within a development. The unsuitability of this site and proposed mitigation was raised against the previous application CB/19/04009. In this re-submitted application CB/20/04672/FULL, the same proposal has again been put forward despite the remaining unsuitability of the site.

The common lizard is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Schedule 5 1a intentionally killing or injuring and 1b taking. Therefore, to **take** lizards and relocate them to an inappropriate site resulting in their being **killed** or **injured** could technically constitute an offence under the Act.

31. The reptile survey is two years old and out of date. It has only been augmented by casual observation during site visits in 2019 and 2020. A repeat survey should be undertaken, and the mitigation plan revised in light of the unsuitability of the proposed donor site.
32. The assessment of trees for bat roost potential was undertaken in 2018 and is out of date. Changes could have taken place in the elapsed time <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Advice-Note.pdf>
33. The static and transect bat surveys have reported Barbastelle bat *Barbastella Barbastellus* using the site - 26 passes in the static surveys. The Transect survey map does not appear to show registration points for Barbastelle or Serotine *Eptesicus Serotinus*. Both are scarce species and careful consideration needs to be given to their needs and to guard against any negative effects in respect of forage habitat, roost potential and lighting.
34. Barbastelle bats are sensitive to lighting which affects their ability to forage. The guidance produced by the Institute of Lighting Professionals and Bat Conservation Trust advise no lighting where Barbastelle foraging occurs. A thorough understanding of how Barbastelle bats are using the site should be taken into consideration in respect of any lighting being considered. <https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting>
35. It is noted from the Hard Landscape plans submitted, that an insufficient number of integral swift nest bricks have been specified. The number of bricks should equate to the same number of housing units. The acknowledged guidance recommendation is that 2-4 boxes are fitted into gable ends of a selection of houses. For example, on this development 32 houses each with 3 bricks would deliver the required 1:1 ratio. Ideally, the majority of bricks should be located toward the north and north east area of the site closest to the town where the core swift colony lives.

36. Similarly, for bats it noted on the submitted Hard Landscape Plans that the number of integral roosts to be installed is just 11. This should be increased to at least 24 bricks, located on aspects from south east, through south to south west and in accordance with the lighting guidance available from Bat Conservation Trust and section 5.23 of the Ecological Impact Assessment report.
37. It is noted that hedgehog highways will be included in garden fencing. It is important that all gardens are adequately connected. There should be at least one highway between a garden to every other garden and outside space it shares a boundary with.

### **Landscape proposal observations**

38. It is noted that locally distinctive plants Elm *Ulmus Glabra* and Cherry plum *Prunus Cerasifera* have been specified. This is in accordance with the Potton Neighbourhood Plan Green Infrastructure Design Guide, Annex F. However, their proportions should increase to 20% and 10% respectively to improve their effectiveness.
39. Two plants listed in the schedule are noted as a critical risk of invasion on the Natural England Horizon Scanning list. Those species: *Ligustrum Ovalifolium* and *Lonicera Nitida* should be substituted for appropriate non-invasive species of high value to pollinating insects. For example, *L vulgare* (native wild privet) which is a locally distinctive plant in Potton and *Escallonia spp* or *Ceanothus spp* respectively.
40. Furthermore, *Hypericum Calycinum* is susceptible to rust. Serious infestations leave planting areas looking very untidy. A more suitable substitute of greater wildlife benefit would be Lavender spp.

### **Drainage Strategy**

41. We note from the drainage strategy plan 18129-POTT-5-101 E and Hard Landscape plans, they do not meet the requirements of the Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) guidance set out in the Potton Neighbourhood Plan Green Infrastructure Design Guide, Annex F.
42. The Neighbourhood Plan Green Infrastructure Design Guide '*requires all new developments to implement source control as a priority in order to provide a high value aesthetic amenity landscape for the community. Implementation of source control features as referenced by Step 4 in the CBC Design Code must include in combination, any or a number of the following: green roofs and walls, permeable road surfaces, drives and pavements, rain gardens, kerbside bio-retention beds and filter strips*'.
43. The proposal for yet another featureless oversize detention basin is of no aesthetic value to future residents. There is ample opportunity to improve placemaking, public amenity and wildlife value to the site. Utilising paths alongside the road network and appropriately located traffic calming chicanes for well-landscaped bio-retention beds would meet the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan. Such measures would reduce or minimise the need for expensive piped surface water run-off and the requirement for such a deep detention basin.

44. It is also noted from the series of hard landscape plans that there appears to be no permeable surfaces specified for this development. We would again like to draw attention to the above requirement of the Potton Neighbourhood Plan Green Infrastructure Design Guide, Annex F which requires the use of permeable surfaces in all developments as part of SuDS source control in conjunction with other features described.
45. We can also find no reference to the use of water harvesting (water butts) as required by the Potton Neighbourhood Plan.

It was **resolved** no further comment.

## **8. Minutes of Town Council Committees and groups where a Cllr(s) is(are) appointed by the town council**

The Town Council accepted and adopted the following minutes and all recommendations contained from the Town Council Committee:

- Hall for All Steering Group – 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020.
- Planning Committee – 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 and 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020.
- Infrastructure Committee – 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

## **9. Potton Federation**

Correspondence from Sarah Pryer, Chair of Governors at Potton Federation with regards to the retirement of the Headteacher, Cathy Smart.

It was suggested to send a letter to the Headteacher, Cathy Smart to thank her for the last ten years.

It was **resolved** to send a letter to the Headteacher, Cathy Smart to thank her for the last ten years.

## **10. Street Naming**

Correspondence from Central Bedfordshire Council, Building Control with regards to name for a road which will be located off Brookfields and it was noted that the developer has suggested Hollies for the road name.

It was **resolved** to accept the developer's suggestion of The Hollies for the road name.

## **11. Bedfordshire Crime Stats**

The Bedfordshire Crime Stats were noted. The number of incidents in Common Road were discussed.

## **12. Antisocial behaviour**

Correspondence from a member of the public who is asking for help with regards to antisocial behaviour in the alleyway between Horslow Street and Chapman Close was noted.

It was **resolved (i)** the town council support the removal of the soil, by contacting Central Bedfordshire Council. **(ii)** the member of the public would need to check whether the removal of the soil would compromise the wall. **(iii)** that the town council were concerned if a further litter bin was installed it could be used to assist illegal entry to the member of the public's garden. **(iv)** the member of the public would need to speak with the planning authority about what permission may be needed to install a fence.



### **13. Potton Youth Club**

Correspondence from Groundwork with regards to no longer wanting to deliver Potton Youth Club was noted.

It was **resolved (i)** that if Central Bedfordshire Council and Violence Exploitation Reduction Unit (VERU) via Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner require the town council to deliver a youth club as per the contract, the youth club is delivered until 31st March 2021. **(ii)** that if Central Bedfordshire Council and Violence Exploitation Reduction Unit (VERU) via Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner are willing to accept a refund of part of the funding the youth club ends immediately.

### **14. Finance**

#### **i. To approve the list of payments.**

Members noted the list of payments.

It was **resolved** that the payments up to the 31st November 2020 be approved.

#### **ii. Verify Bank Reconciliations against statement 1st October – 31st October 2020.**

Members proceeded to go through the bank reconciliation.

It was **resolved** that the bank reconciliation for 1st October – 31st October 2020 be approved.

#### **iii. To receive an income and expenditure by budget heading report showing progress against the budget 2020/21 at the end of October 2020.**

Members proceeded to go through the detailed statement of income and expenditure against budget.

It was **resolved** to approve the detailed statement of income and expenditure against budget for the period to 31st October 2020.

#### **iv. Verify Bank Reconciliations against statement 1st November – 30th November 2020.**

Members proceeded to go through the bank reconciliation.

It was **resolved** that the bank reconciliation for 1st November – 30th November 2020 be approved.

#### **v. To receive an income and expenditure by budget heading report showing progress against the budget 2020/21 at the end of November 2020.**

Members proceeded to go through the detailed statement of income and expenditure against budget.

It was **resolved** to approve the detailed statement of income and expenditure against budget for the period to 30th November 2020.

A member noted to this point the sum authorised for the purchase of mobile phones and laptops has not yet been drawn down and I would like to encourage the Town Clerk to progress this.

### **15. Community Safety**

The correspondence from the Safer Communities & Partnership Officer @ Central Bedfordshire Council with regards to Community Safety virtual drop ins was noted.

The Chairman volunteered to attend the Community Safety virtual drop ins

**16. Councillor Vacancies**

The Chairman welcomed Dr C Craig and Mrs V Gwilliam who had applied for co-option and was in attendance.

The Clerk confirmed that four applications had been received for co-option. Unfortunately, two candidates had not joined the meeting, but in line with the Council’s Co-option Policy the process would continue, and Members would need to base their decision on the candidate’s application form. Members were reminded that a candidate needed a proposer and seconder to move on to a vote.

Dr C Craig and Mrs V Gwilliam were invited to speak if they had any further to add to their application for Co-option to the Council.

Dr Craig and Mrs Gwilliam advised they had no further information they wished to add in support of their applications.

Each of the four candidates received a proposer and seconder to move them on to the vote.

Members moved to vote on the proposed candidate.

The first vote took place and Mrs V Gwilliam received an outright majority of more than 50% of the votes and was therefore co-opted to fill the first vacancy on the Council.

The second vote took place and Dr C Craig received an outright majority of more than 50% of the votes and was therefore co-opted to fill the second vacancy on the Council.

The third vote took place and Mr M William received an outright majority of more than 50% of the votes and was therefore co-opted to fill the third vacancy on the Council.

A discussion about the mentor / buddy system. It was suggested that the existing cllrs each speak at the beginning of the next council meeting to introduce themselves, who we are, why we are on the council.

The Chairman suggested that in advance of the town council meeting that a discussion between the new cllr and the buddy about the upcoming meeting takes place.

The Chairman and Cllr Macdonald volunteered to be a buddy (mentor) for the new cllrs.

**17. To note the date of the Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Town Council has been arranged for Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Signed: ..... Date: .....  
Chairman Mission Statement

The aim of Potton Town Council is to serve the people of this town to the best of its ability.