

POTTON TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held on
Tuesday 1st November 2022, 7.10pm held in the Community Centre, Potton.

Present: Councillors Dr C. Craig, Mr J. Day, Mrs L. Fox, Mr A. Gibb, Mrs V. Gwilliam, Mr J. Hobbs (Chairman), Mr A. Inkersole, Ms L. Kitchener, Mr J. Lean, Mrs C. Leggatt, Mr A. Macdonald, Mr D. Norman, Mr J. Price Williams and Mr A. Zerny.

Absent: All present.

Also Present: CBC Cllr Ms T. Wye, Mrs L. Smith, Potton Hall for All, Mrs K. Gutteridge, Potton Hall for All, two members of the public and the Town Clerk.

1 Apologies for absence

All present.

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 would alter the agenda to allow item 41 Potton, Willow Road Development to be considered next, as members of the public are present for this item.

3 Public Participation Session

The Chairman asked if members of the public had any questions and if members had any questions from the public for the town council.

A member of the public advised that they are the owner of the Biggleswade Road, Garage and Cllr Zerny had contacted him in September as there might be an issue with regards to the front of the garage. Subsequently received correspondence from Central Bedfordshire Council's enforcement team and he is led to believe that the issue was initially raised at a meeting of the town council, so I am attending today to seek clarification of what is wrong.

A members mentioned that there is no markings indicating where the pavement is across the front of the garage, where traffic drives in both directions at the same time passed the front garage, the vehicle driving nearest to the garage is driving on the straight-line of the two footpaths outside the garage curtilage and it has been suggested about the need for delineation with a white line.

The Town Clerk advised that the Management Committee of the town council considered about the need for delineation of the highway and pavement in front of the garage at their meeting on the 18th October 2022.

The Chairman of the Management Committee the resolution at the meeting was to request Central Bedfordshire to delineate the highway and the pavement.

The member of the public advised they met with an Rob Page from CBC Highways a year ago and Mr Page advised everything is fine. If Highways want to install a white line to show motorists and pedestrians where the road stops, that would be fine with him.

Cllr Zerny advised that the planning permission shows a pavement and I am going to ask to meet with CBC, the resident and ward cllrs.

4 Minutes of Potton Town Council

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 6th September 2022, which had been circulated was approved.

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

The Chairman mentioned that several of the minutes shouldn't be coming to full council and should go to the relevant committee.

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

- Planning Committee – 6th September 2022, 27th September 2022 and 11th October 2022.
- Environmental Committee – 13th September 2022.
- Potton Youth Council – 3rd October 2022.

A query was raised with regards to reporting by committees to the Management Committee and it was advised that the other committees don't report to the Management it is an opportunity for the Chairman of the other committees to give an update.

A query was raised with regards to the recommendation for Gamlingay Forward and the Youth Club with regards to £3,500 being included in the draft budget. This money is going to area outside of our town and they suggest that the request is moved to Potton Consolidated Charity for them to consider, the town council previously ran a youth club and we should look at that, secondly no public bus service for children to get to Gamlingay and this means it is not inclusive as you have to be taken to the venue.

A discussion about the previous Potton Youth Club which ceased following the outbreak of Covid-19.

It was mentioned that the youth club would benefit the children from Potton who go to school in Gamlingay, though we then won't be offering anything for the Potton children.

- Management Committee – 18th October 2022.

6 Meetings Scheduled

The Chairman raised concerns about future schedules, the sub committees and sub groups report to a committee. The timings of the sub committees and sub groups need to be before the committee and committees before the town council so that the speed of decision making can be appropriate. Request that the Chairman of the various committees when they look at future meeting schedules that they build them around the town council meetings.

The meeting schedule was noted.

7 Reports from Central Bedfordshire Councillors

Cllr Wye had nothing to report.

Cllr Zerny had nothing to report.

A query was raised with regards to whether an update is available with regards to the land grab by Daimler Benz, is their update.

Cllr Wye advised that CBC have opened an enforcement case. An old photo of the area even showed a fire hydrant and this no longer appears to be present.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Wye and asked that the town council be kept updated.

8 Station Road, Potton

It was noted that Cllr Zerny had requested this item.

Correspondence between a resident and Cllr Zerny was also noted.

The Chairman invited Cllr Zerny to speak about the item.

Cllr Zerny advised that the resident was unable to attend this meeting. By the junction of Biggleswade Road, Station Road and Blackbird Street, a small group of properties have no off road parking and that is true for several properties in Station Road and Blackbird Street. The resident has complained that he can never park his car on Chapel Street and would suggest residents only parking. Advised the resident that the town council is not keen on resident only parking for various different reasons.

It was mentioned that lack of parking is town wide. The resident must have been aware when they moved in to the property and they knew there was no parking and you park where you can.

Chairman advised we can summarise by we understand the issue but parking permits is not the answer.

The Chairman advised that the agenda would be altered as we have representatives from Potton Hall for All present.

9 Potton Hall for All (Agenda item 15)

It was noted at the 6th September 2020 town council meeting it was resolved that at the November 2022 meeting of the town council, the town council considers the Councils support for the hall, with regards to whether the council continues to support Potton Hall for All or do we look for an alternative plan.

The Chairman asked Cllr Gwilliam, Chairman of the Potton Hall for All Steering Group to introduce the item.

Cllr Gwilliam introduced the item, since the 6th September town council meeting the Joint Steering Group has met three times and has contacted the three parties and they have all been given the same brief which was as follows:

'Can they deliver a scheme which meets identified user requirements, which can be designed, costed and planning obtained, in time to present a fully costed and approved scheme to CBC for no later than August 2023 (for Section 106 funds).'

Cllr Gwilliam handed out revised designs from Woods Hardwick.

Cllr Gwilliam advised that the Steering Group had received and considered the responses from the three organisations and then proceeded to give a brief update about the responses received from the three organisations.

Organisation A

£1.476m without meeting rooms, £1.57m with meeting rooms constructed to watertight state, £1.682m for meeting rooms complete.

They stated they could deliver a building with a 225m² main hall to a ceiling height that meets user requirements for acoustics and indoor racket sports – site plan, elevations and floor layout provided.

They could offer a phased construction subject to funding.

However, they have been ruled out due to:

Needing to tender for the project – their costs were offered without market pricing and based on a cost plan.

Their response times, engagement and understanding of the project requirements and specification are questionable.

Organisation B

£1.35m to £1.45m; £1.8m with landscaping

They supplied designs and whilst the modular construction appeared appealing, with faster construction time and fewer parties involved, their price had a significant number of exclusions, particularly hard and soft landscaping. Their ceiling height does not meet user requirements and they have declined to offer a design for them.

Organisation C

£1.5m to £1.7m based on Organisation A's revised design

They are making assurances that they can provide what we need in the time frame that we have to our budget however there may be a gap between their concept and ours. They have provided a project delivery programme and there will not be a fixed price at the outset. The total project cost will be under review at every stage to confirm costs are within limits; they have not itemised any costs at this stage. They have exclusive contracts which negates the need for tendering process. Using Organisation A's revised design, the proposed building meets key user requirements.

They are based in Northamptonshire and have completed similar and other projects nearby:

Edward Peake School
Orchard Community Centre
Silsoe Community building
Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.

Based on the information received from the three organisations the Steering Group recommend that the Town Council continue to support the Potton Hall for All and Organisation C (Watson & Cox) be appointed for the next phase of the works and this being up to item 34 on their delivery programme for a maximum cost of £10,000 and that goes to the end of stage 1 (with a planned completion to this stage by early 2023) which provides an outline cost plan and planning submission.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Gwilliam.

Cllr Price Williams added about cost over-runs for the indicative plan, reviews will be carried out at regular stages as the project has no more money.

Cllr Gwilliam advised that the contractors didn't add a contingency in to their guide prices.

The Chairman opened the item up for discussion by the town councillors.

A question about the roof and the drain pipes, with regards to long-term problems due to water collecting on a slope.

Cllrs Gwilliam and Price Williams advised that the plans at this stage are indicative.

A question about other costs.

Cllrs Gwilliam and Price Williams advised that costs for planning and independent project manager are not included in Organisation C's guide price.

A question about current and future spend from the Ear Marked Reserve.

Cllr Gwilliam advised that approximately £30,000 has been spent from the

Ear Marked Reserve and one outstanding invoice for part payment of the revised design carried out by Organisation A has just arrived. If the town council approve the recommendation for Organisation C a further spend of £10,000.

Cllr Gwilliam mentioned about the borrowing costs for the loan and the town council needs to be aware that the rates are fixed for the length of the loan, though the rates are set twice daily.

A question about obtaining a fixed price contract.

Cllr Gwilliam advised that once the delivery plan has reached item 34, with planning permission approved and design specification agreed, Organisation C can then give an exact cost plan.

A question will they (Organisation C) give a fixed price at that point.

Cllr Gwilliam advised that is the aim to obtain a fixed price.

Comment once a fixed price has been gained any loss or inflationary cost is borne by the builder. The only danger is changes in the requirement / specification and this is when costs can escalate.

Cllr Gwilliam and Price Williams advised that we must ensure that the fixed requirement meets the users' needs and we cannot then change the requirement.

A question about affording the fixed requirement for all the users.

Cllr Gwilliam and Price Williams advised that there is an element of compromise in certain areas and principle users requirements have been checked.

A comment about base rate's increasing and inflation increases. Suggest that the Potton Hall for All Alternative is properly costed, so that an alternative is ready to proceed if needed.

It was **resolved (i)** to continue to support the Potton Hall for All and Organisation C (Watson & Cox) be appointed for the next phase of the works and this being up to item 34 on their delivery programme for a maximum cost of £10,000 and that goes to the end of stage 1 (early 2023) which provides an outline cost plan and planning submission. **(ii)** that the Potton Hall for All Alternative project(s) is properly costed if the Potton Hall for All project is unable to proceed.

10 CBC Cllr Dalgarno (Agenda item 9)

Cllrs Craig, Gwilliam and Leggatt met with CBC Cllr Dalgarno on Sunday 11th September 2022. During the discussion Cllr Dalgarno was invited to visit Potton to look at local highway issues as he is the Chair of Traffic Management at CBC.

CBC Cllr Zerny spoke about King Street at the last town council meeting and since then we (Cllrs Wye and Zerny) have spoken to Highways about roadside parking, flowing traffic and one way traffic which Highways have advised is not feasible. CBC are carrying out a Freight Strategy next year, they (Highways) will consider whether changes can be made with regards to HGV's, HGV bans in an area and a petition launch for HGV's ban. Suggest that Cllr Dalgarno is invited to visit Potton once a HGV's ban petition is launched.

A member mentioned that Cllr Dalgarno was present last week at the Potton Community Action Day and Cllr Dalgarno observed an articulated lorry driving the wrong way in the Market Square.

11 Changes to bus services (Agenda item 10)

Correspondence received from Central Bedfordshire Council with regards to changes to bus services was noted.

CBC Cllr Zerny advised that he is contact with the Place department of CBC about the changes to bus services and this includes the increase in bus fares.

CBC Cllr Wye advised that Cambridge are carrying out a consultation with regards to a congestion charge in Cambridge and if the congestion charge is approved it is planned to improve bus services and this will include a bus from Cambridge to Potton and Biggleswade.

12 Councillor Surgeries (Agenda item 11)

a) Surgeries since the last meeting surgeries have taken place as follows;

Saturday 17th September 2022 – Cllrs Day and Gwilliam

The Chairman asked for a report.

Cllr Gwilliam advised that they were approached about criminal damage at Mill Lane, anti-social behaviour and drug dealing.

Cllr Craig advised that the Police have started a project for Mill Lane Recreation Ground.

Cllr Day advised about a complaint about bus service disappearing.

Saturday 15th October 2022 – Cllrs Fox and Price Williams

Nothing to report.

The Chairman queried about surgery frequency and suggested after the January surgery we consider only holding surgeries at Seasonal Markets only.

A discussion about engaging with the public and publicising the councillor surgeries.

It was **resolved** that Cllr Surgeries and ways to reach the public is considered at the January 2023 town council meeting.

b) Surgeries scheduled are as follows;
Saturday 5th November 2022 – Cllrs Hobbs and Lean
Saturday 10th December 2022 – Cllrs Craig and Inkersole
Saturday 14th January 2023 – Cllrs Leggatt and Zerny

13 Finance (Agenda item 12)

i. External Auditor – Audit for the year end 31 March 2022

The Town Council noted the correspondence received from the Town Councils External Auditor. A copy of the annual return which had been returned by the External Auditor was presented to the town council in the council papers.

It was **resolved** to approve and accept the Annual Return including the external auditor's certificate which was presented to the town council for year ended 31st March 2022, following its return by the External Auditor now that they had given an audit opinion.

ii. Appointment of Internal Auditor 2022/2023

Members discussed about the appointment of the internal auditor. The Town Council undergoes an internal audit on an annual basis. The council reviewed the appointment of an internal auditor.

It was **resolved** that Haines Watts Chartered Accountants be appointed as Potton Town Council's internal auditor for 2022/23.

iii. Review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit

Members had been provided with a copy of the town council's review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit for them to carry out a review of its effectiveness. Members then discussed and reviewed the effectiveness of the Internal Audit.

It was **resolved** to approve the review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit.

iv. Financial and Management Risk Assessment

Members had been provided with a copy of Potton Town Council's Financial and Management Risk Assessment for them to carry out a review.

The Chairman mentioned Potton Town Council's Financial and Management Risk Assessment assessing the probability and impact of each risk identified. Moderate risks loss of key personnel, implement the appraisal policy to reduce risk of losing staff, action taken by staff unsatisfactory appraisal policy objectives and reviews and training needs to mitigate risk. Review of the health and safety policy. Pensions enrollment legislation and process.

It was **resolved** to approve Potton Town Council's Financial and Management Risk Assessment.

14 Remembrance Sunday (Agenda item 13)

It was noted that the Chairman of the Commemorations and Celebrations has requested this item.

It was also noted that the Chairman of the Commemorations and Celebrations would usually speak at the Remembrance Sunday service in the Market Square, introducing people etc. The Chairman of the Commemorations and Celebrations is unable to carry out speaking this year.

The Chairman asked for a volunteer to speak at the event.

The Chairman advised that Mrs Hobbs would be happy to volunteer.

It was **resolved** that Mrs Hobbs carries out speaking at Remembrance Sunday service.

15 King Street (B1040) – Traffic Survey (Agenda item 14)

It was noted at the town council on the 6th September 2022 it was resolved (i) that a traffic survey is carried out on King Street (B1040) to establish a baseline for traffic. (ii) that the Town Clerk investigates the cost for a traffic survey.

It was also noted that the Town Clerk had obtained information with regards to the cost for a traffic survey.

It was mentioned about not proceeding with a traffic survey at this stage as we could ask CBC to carry out a survey if King Street is considered at Traffic Management.

16 Warm Spaces

It was noted that Cllr Gibb had requested this item.

The Chairman invited Cllr Gibb to speak about the item.

Cllr Gibb advised that Warm Spaces in Potton started on Monday 31st October 2022 a leaflet has been produced, printed and delivered to all households in Potton.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Gibb.

It was mentioned that Tesco's had made a donation to the Warm Spaces project.

CBC Cllr Wye advised that CBC has a cost of living grant available for groups.

17 Tall Trees – Public Open Space

It was noted at the 13th September 2022 Environmental Committee meeting it was resolved (i) that an inspection of the Tall Trees Public Open Space is carried out on Wednesday 14th September 2022. (ii) that Kier Homes (Tilia Homes) is contacted to ask when they will be ready for an inspection of the Public Open Space. (iii) that KH (TH) is contacted to chase payment for the work organised by Sally Wileman which was paid for by Potton Town Council.

It was also noted that the large area of Public Open Space including the Community Orchard forms part of the Section 106 agreement and the Town Clerk has been in liaison with representatives from Kier Homes (Tilia Homes) about an inspection and adoption of the large area of Public Open Space including the Community Orchard and excluding the play area and Kier Homes (Tilia Homes) have advised they are ready for an inspection. Tilia Homes have also asked the town council to advise of the Solicitor who would be acting on behalf of the town council and the Town Clerk has been in contact with Woodfines Solicitors enquiring about them acting on the town councils behalf with regards to the adoption of the Public Open Space.

It was then noted that Sally Wileman has previously mentioned to the Environmental Committee about adopting the triangle area adjacent to the Community Hall land / Electric sub-station which contains three large trees. Correspondence from Simon Temporal, Aftercare Manager of Tilia Homes about the small triangle near the substation which is owned by Linxcroft Developments Limited (LDL) as LDL have enquired if Tilia Homes could transfer the triangle area of land at the same time as Tilia Homes transferred the Community POS area.

Members spoke about the advantage and disadvantage of adopting the triangle area adjacent to the Community Hall land / Electric sub-station which contains three large trees.

Members were asked to confirm whether they want to instruct Woodfines to represent the town council with the transfer of the Public Open Space excluding the play area and the triangle area adjacent to the Community Hall land / Electric sub-station which contains three large trees.

It was **resolved** to instruct Woodfines Solicitors to represent the town council with regards to the transfer of the Public Open Space excluding the play area.

18 Community Safety

The Crime Stats for September 2022 were noted.

A Community Action Day had taken place in Potton on Wednesday 26th October 2022.

It was suggested that a Traffic warden visit Everton Rd by the school at end of the school day.

19 EV Charging Points

It was noted that the Town Council has discussed EV Charging Points at several meetings and this includes the town council meeting 7th September 2021 at which members had suggested the following locations for EV Chargepoints:

- Brook End car park
- Library (Market Square)
- Steve Highland Garage
- Pavilion Mill Lane
- St Mary's Hall
- The Hollow

Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) are planning to have eight charging points in the Market Square, initially four of the car park spaces will be for EV vehicles charging only and CBC have suggested that a separate Traffic Regulation Order be put in place for charging EV vehicles so that they can park as long as six hours.

Members raised concern about the loss of car parking spaces in the Market Square.

Correspondence from CBC with regards to having eight charging points in the Mill Lane Pavilion car park which would need to be all day every day was noted. It was also noted that the Town Clerk has sent correspondence to the landowner of Mill Lane Pavilion car park (Potton Consolidated Charity) to ask them to consider whether they agree to having eight charging points at Mill Lane Pavilion car park and a response from PCC awaited.

The car park for Mill Lane Pavilion in recent years has been locked overnight and at weekends unless the facility is hired. A trial is currently underway, with regards to leaving the gate unlocked.

Cllr Macdonald who is also PCC trustee advised he would raise the issue of CCTV at Mill Lane Pavilion with the PCC with regards to them installing CCTV.

A member advised that there are two EV charging points as you enter the Market Reach development (Blane Place off Biggleswade Road).

20 Mill Lane Recreation Ground and Pavilion

It was noted that the town council has a lease with Potton Consolidated Charity for Mill Lane Recreation Ground and Pavilion and for more than five years the town council has been trying to progress a licence for Potton History Society.

Cllr Macdonald who is also PCC trustee advised he would raise the issue of the lease and licence at the next meeting of the PCC.

21 Potton, Gamlingay and Everton - Inter Parish/Town Council Liaison meeting

It was noted that Cllrs Craig and Norman have requested this item following the Management Committee resolution that Cllrs Craig, Hobbs and Norman attend the meeting on the 28th November 2022.

Members suggested the following:

- Horse Brook water abstraction.
- Windmill on the Ecohub with regards to the amount of energy it generates and the initial cost.

The Chairman asked members to send any items they would like included on the agenda to the Town Clerk by Friday 4th November 2022.

22 Items for the next agenda

The Chairman asked if members had any items for the next agenda.

Travellers liaison like Leighton Buzzard following discussion at the Potton Community Action Day between CBC Cllr Ian Dalgarno and Cllr Craig.

It was mentioned that an Extra-Ordinary meeting will be called by the Chairman to allow for a meeting to consider the budget.

A question was raised about the borrowing approval for the loan for the Potton Hall for All project.

The Town Clerk reminded members about the response received from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities and this included when the town council are in a position where they are ready to borrow to contact the parish borrowing team at DLUHC with information on the current position, what has changed and DLUHC will have some questions.

23 Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Town Council is booked for Tuesday 3rd January 2023.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

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.