



POTTON
TOWN COUNCIL

News

February 2023 Edition

www.pottontowncouncil.co.uk



Horse Brook

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Chairman's message

Hello and welcome to the February 2023 edition of the Town Council quarterly newsletter.

Potential Housing Development on Sandy Road

At the town council meeting on the 3rd January 2023 town council met with a developer who outlined their plans to build up to 178 homes. The councillors at the meeting made it clear any prospective application is not supported under the Neighbourhood Plan as stated on pages 17 and 18 of Annex A Site Assessments www.pottontowncouncil.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Potton-NP-Annex-A-Site-Assessments-Version-3.pdf. You can share your views by visiting the consultation website sandyroadpottonconsultation.co.uk or email comments/questions to sandyroadpotton@marrons-planning.co.uk. Cllr Adam Zerny has provided more information about this in his article on pages 10 and 11.

Remembrance Sunday Service

Again, I was privileged to lay a wreath on behalf of Potton Town Council at our annual Remembrance Sunday Service. Potton turned out in huge numbers, and I would like to thank everyone who attended the service, especially our younger residents in our uniformed organisations, who joined the parade and laid wreaths and crosses to remember those Potton servicemen and service women who lost their lives in the two World Wars. It made me very proud to be a Potton resident and to lead our Town Council. I'd also like to thank everyone involved in organising this event, especially Denis Ellison and Christian Cowell.



Winter Seasonal Market

Despite the cold weather, Potton turned out in good numbers to support our annual Christmas Market. Father Christmas returned to Potton and invited visitors to his Grotto in the Community Centre. He was invited by a group raising funds for Keech Hospice Care, and I'm pleased to report that they raised £719 for this worthy cause!

Father Christmas tour

Father Christmas made his third visit to Potton on 11th December, just before the snow and freezing weather arrived. He toured the town, ably supported by his faithful elves, providing fun and entertainment to the many people who cheered him on his way.



Christmas lights switch-on

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Council's Christmas Lights Committee, ably led by Cllr Carol Leggatt and Denis Ellison, for providing such an excellent display and turning-on ceremony. I would also like to thank the many volunteers who helped to make it such a successful event, together with the local organisations and businesses who added to the occasion. See article on page 9.

Tysoe's wins a national award in the Bira Christmas Display Competition

Congratulations to Tysoe & Son on winning the British Independent Retailers Association (Bira) Christmas Display competition. Every Christmas we are treated to an excellent window display, as well as for all other special events throughout the year. Thank you Paula, you deserved this accolade!



Festive Greetings from Potton's Twin Town in Germany



Festive greetings were received from Bernhard Wolf, Ortsbürgermeister [Mayor] of Langenlonsheim. *'We would like to thank you for the good cooperation in the past year. For the year 2023 we wish you and your families good luck, above all success and health. Greetings to all friends in Potton and I hope to meet you again soon.'*

Potton Consolidated Charity supporting Potton families

Potton Consolidated Charity (PCC) funded a campaign to provide support to Potton residents during the current cost of living crisis. Working with our Community Agent, Andrea MacAdam, they have provided 'keep warm' bags and Tesco vouchers to 36 residents in the run up to Christmas. Again, this is an example of the generous nature of the PCC and reflects on the caring nature of the town.

Andrea has worked extremely hard in recent months to give advice and guidance to residents who are struggling, and I'd like to thank her personally for all that she does.

Updates

A diary of upcoming events will be kept in the library from January 2023. This is a return to something that we used to do and is an attempt to avoid a clash of dates for future events. The onus will be on organisers to check that the proposed date is free and to then note the date in the diary. It's better to check and avoid any clashes.

Future events

Potton's Spring Litter Pick is scheduled to take place on **Saturday 11th March 2023**. For further details, see page 12.

The annual Potton Civic Service will be at **3pm on Sunday 12th March 2023** at St. Mary's Church, Potton. I have invited all clubs and organisations to attend and to provide some photos of their highlights of 2022. We will then have a display of all of the wonderful events in Potton throughout 2022.

Four Seasons Market






Sat 18th March
9am - 1pm

For more information visit
pottontowncouncil.co.uk/four-seasons-market

The Coronation of King Charles III and the Queen Consort is being held on **Saturday 6th May 2023**. For further details on how Potton plans to celebrate, see page 8.

Have a great Spring!

John

Cllr John Hobbs

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.

If you wish to contact a member of staff, please email pottoncouncil@btconnect.com or call **01767 260086** and leave a message. You can find lots of information on the Town Council website www.pottontowncouncil.co.uk or [@PottonTownCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/PottonTownCouncil) or [@pottoncouncil](https://www.instagram.com/pottoncouncil)

Town Council Meetings

Dates of Town Council meetings starting at 7pm. Visit www.pottontowncouncil.co.uk/agendaminutes/ for more information.
Tuesday 7th March 2023

Councillor Surgeries

Held from 10am – 12noon outside the Library or inside the Library if bad weather.
Saturday 18th March 2023
Cllr Dan Norman
Saturday 15th April 2023
Cllr Charles Craig

Town Councillors

Charles Craig	260047	Lindsay Kitchener	260486
John Day	07986 124440	Carol Leggatt	260001
Leane Fox	07806 593650	Angus Macdonald	262006
Andrew Gibb	260067	Dan Norman	260643
Vicki Gwilliam	07958 981602	Jonathan Price Williams	07981 350359
John Hobbs	07972 906040	Adam Zerny	261319
Andrew Inkersole	261966		

For more details on each of the councillors, please visit www.pottontowncouncil.co.uk/who-we-are

Central Bedfordshire Councillors

Tracey Wye	261319	Adam Zerny	261319
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Get your local news into the Town Council Newsletter

If you would like information to be included in our next newsletter, please email: pottoncouncil@btconnect.com

Please be aware that the Town Council reserves the right not to include articles and images. Potton Town Council, The Community Centre, Brook End, Potton SG19 2QS



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Potton Town Council Elections 2023

In May 2023 a local election of all 15 places on Potton Town Council will take place. Potton Town Councillors will come to the end of their four-year term and will either re-stand for election or step down. So, there is an opportunity to become a Councillor and contribute to your community. Should there be more than 15 residents wishing to stand as a Councillor, then an election will be held. If 15 or fewer people come forward, they will automatically be 'elected' with no voting taking place.

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

A town Councillor is unpaid and gives their time for free to the community on a voluntary basis. The role of a councillor is to bring local issues to the attention of the council and help it make decisions on behalf of the local community.

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

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

Potton Town Councillors, on taking office, agree to abide by the town council's adopted code of conduct which is consistent with the Nolan principles of;

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

The diversity of the town council is its strength. Diversity often arises because councillors have different backgrounds, enthusiasms and interests. Councillors have different skills and attitudes; for example, some work with ideas while others are very practical; some like accounts while others prefer reports. The town council needs a range of skills to work as a team.

For anyone interested in standing as a town councillor, nomination papers will be available from the Town Council office from 1st March and will also be available from Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands SG17 5TQ.

Nomination papers need to be returned by hand to Central Bedfordshire Council at the above address, between 14th March and 4pm on 4th April.

More information is available at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/32/electoral_registration_and_elections/1303/elections_4_may_2023 or by emailing electoral.registration@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk.

Budget 2023-2024

This is always a very important time of year for the Council as it is traditionally the period in which the Council agrees its annual budget and precept. The precept is the council tax element, raised by the town council to undertake its functions across the town. The law requires Town/Parish councils to set a precept that is a 'balancing figure' known in legislation as the 'council tax requirement'. The precept should be set to the amount of money required to balance the accounts after deducting 'other estimated income'.

For the financial year 2023-2024, Potton Town Council's 'Precept' will be £368,620. If you live in a Potton Band D property, you will pay an annual



charge of £159.30 to Potton Town Council. This remains the same as 2022-2023.

The town council are volunteers and give of their time free to support Town life and make Potton a great place to live. We are fortunate to have a strong community spirit in Potton and we look forward to working together with residents to help to build on this further.

Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III Potton will be celebrating!

Author: Denis Ellison



Potton is planning an extravaganza of a celebration for the King's Coronation.

Discussions are at an early stage with various organisations, clubs and societies including St Mary's Church, Salvation Army, Potton schools' PTEA, Potton Club and Potton Town Council.

These are some of the possible activities being discussed: **Live screening • BBQ's • Afternoon Teas • Live Music Proms in the Park • Evening live bands Picnics • Skatepark open sessions Magicians, Princes and Princesses parade • Bell ringing**

If you, as an individual or your club or organisation have not been involved so far and would like to volunteer, please contact Potton Town Council by telephoning 01767 260086 or emailing pottoncouncil@btconnect.com

Please visit www.pottontowncouncil.co.uk/coronation for up to date information. Details will also be posted on the Potton Town Council's Facebook page www.facebook.com/PottonTownCouncil

Potton's Christmas Lights

Author: Cllr Carol Leggatt and Alan Leggatt

The Christmas Lights Switch-on event has been a major annual feature of Potton's busy calendar of community activities since its inception.

Back in the early 1980's, Potton Christmas lights consisted of a string of lights around the library with 'Merry Xmas' in polystyrene. Cllr John Hobbs and local electrician Tony Joel decided to improve things, so they collected donations from local businesses and set about adding strings of lights to the trees and to buildings around the Market Square. This was carried out by a team of volunteers using ladders where required. Eventually, the display was good enough to have an official switch-on, so Judi Hobbs set about making this happen.

In the late 1990's the Town Council agreed to pick up the baton to deliver the Christmas Lights for the town with the help of Carol and Alan Leggatt who have been involved now for over 20 years. This enabled the establishment of a dedicated Christmas Lights Committee who were briefed to identify ways of upgrading and improving the displays. This has been achieved gradually over many years using annual grants from Potton Consolidated Charity, donations from the public via collection buckets in many of the town's shops and hostelrys and a modest

budget from the town council. All our lights are now super-efficient and robust LEDs. There have been additions to the display nearly every year, this year we had new lanterns on the lamp columns and large motifs of a Christmas Pudding and Father Christmas which were designed by Potton children.

Installation and taking down of the displays is still undertaken by volunteers who do not receive any payment other than a sausage sandwich and a couple of drinks at the end of the day in recognition of their unwavering support. Special mention needs to be given to Deepdale Trees who provide our wonderful Christmas tree and the industrial machinery that enables us to quickly put up the festoons at no cost.

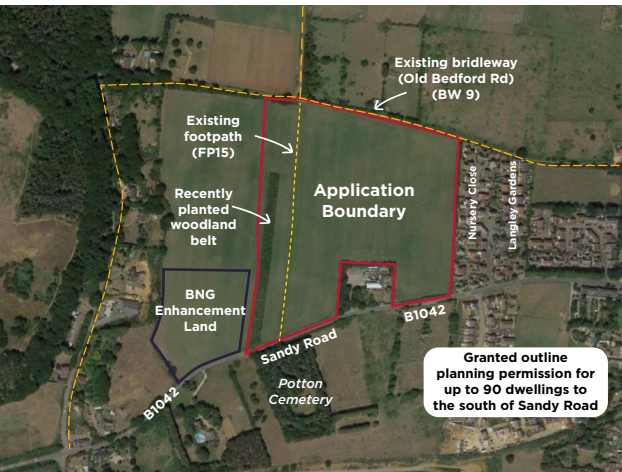
Given the above, the ongoing costs of putting on our display is kept to a minimum, saving many thousands of pounds each year.





Update from Central Bedfordshire Councillors Adam Zerny and Tracey Wye

Developer planning to build 180 houses next to Potton



Developers are once again plotting to build houses in the fields between Potton and Deepdale. No application has yet been received by Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) but the developer attended a Potton Town Council meeting in January and made its intentions clear.

In February 2017, CBC received a planning application for a huge 186 house estate to be built on the north side of Sandy Road, Potton, filling much of the gap between the town and Deepdale. It received more than 130 objections and was eventually withdrawn in July 2018.

While the reasons for the applicant withdrawing were not made public, it is often the case that they are withdrawn after the council has told the applicant they will be refused.

Since then CBC has approved a Local Plan for development which runs until 2035 and this site is not on the list. Neither is it part of the town's Neighbourhood Plan. In theory this makes it unlikely a development would be welcomed by CBC but with planning, nothing is certain. And none of this stops a developer putting in a speculative planning application.

The developer attended the January Potton Town Council meeting and spent 20 minutes outlining its plans. They sounded much like the ones proposed back in 2017. Despite plenty of pledges about what they would do for the local environment it was clear they were promising only to fulfil their legal planning obligations. The developer provided the town council with these maps.

A number of town councillors made it clear any prospective application in this location would be unlikely to be supported by the town council.

As soon as an application is received by CBC, Cllr Tracey Wye and I will make this public and at that point you will get the opportunity to comment.

Potton has had significant development in recent years and we will strongly oppose a development of this size in our area.

To find out more on this and any other developments planned for the town, please send me an email to get our monthly email newsletter at: adamzerny@hotmail.co.uk



Reporting Pot Holes

This winter has seen a dramatic deterioration of our roads with some deep potholes opening up around town. And things are just as bad across the county.

The snow and frost before Christmas started the erosion just when many highways officers took time off for the holiday. This left the roads vulnerable to water getting in the cracks and holes and the rain in the new year has made things worse. While some roads remain in a poor condition I have been successful in getting some of the worst holes filled as urgent jobs.

You can help as well by reporting potholes via www.fixmystreet.com (or download the app) and Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) will take this into account to understand where the worst issues are. So, either add them to the map or alternatively drop me an email at traceywye@icloud.com and we'll add them to the list already sent to CBC.



Tracey Wye

Community Safety

Author: Cllr Charles Craig



The safety of Potton residents and visitors is important to all. This is why a 20mph zone has been put in place for roads leading into the centre of Potton. This speed certainly feels slow – and it is. However, it is also a safer speed than (say) 30mph. It certainly saved the life of a child who ran out in front of me some time ago. I was able to stop in time.

It is estimated that car accidents occur 40% less often at 20mph than at 30mph (approx. 5% reduction for every 1mph).

However, in addition to preventing accidents, reduced speed also reduces the potential for injury or death. There is a 20% chance of killing someone if you hit them while travelling at 30 mph. Therefore, it is very important to observe the lower speed limit! Of course, careless or dangerous driving can be reported to police (<https://www.beds.police.uk/tua/tell-us-about/soh/seen-or-heard/>) or CrimeStoppers (<https://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information/forms/give-information-anonymously>)

Finally, I thank residents for their concern for my health at seeing me wandering around with cans and wrappers of potentially unhealthy repasts. I would reassure everyone that these really aren't mine. They had been discarded carelessly by others who don't appear capable of finding waste bins, although these are usually within easy reach. On a serious note, discarding waste on our streets and parks can be dangerous to our pets and wild-life and attracts vermin (e.g. rats) – so please use the bins provided.



Your meeting. Your town.



Annual Town Meeting Tuesday 18th April at 7pm

The Annual Town Meeting will be held by Potton Town Council at the Community Centre, Brook End on **Tuesday 18th April at 7pm**. It is a chance for residents to talk to their town council about issues of concern in Potton.

Chairman, Cllr John Hobbs, will speak about what has been achieved in the year, what is planned for the future and answer questions.

Representatives from Potton Federation and Potton Hall for All have been invited to speak.

Members of the public may address the meeting and raise any issues they feel should be considered in the future. If you wish to participate, please contact the Town Clerk at **pottoncouncil@btconnect.com** by 9am on Monday 17th April giving your name and address.

So come along, meet the people who represent your views and tell them how well you think they are doing and what you feel should be their next priority.

This is **your meeting** about **your town**. Please join us!

Potton Community Agent News

Supporting the over 60s in Potton



Tablet training



Christmas Party



Tel: Andrea mobile: 07590 359630
(working Weds & Thurs only)

Or email: andream@bedsrcc.org.uk

Benefit forms assistance – don't be put off trying to fill in complicated forms such as Attendance Allowance, Blue Disabled Parking Badge, Carer's Allowance, Pension Credit or Council Tax Reduction/Housing Benefit. Andrea can home visit to assist you.

Carbon monoxide alarms – it is important to ensure your home has a working carbon monoxide alarm. If you do not have one and cannot afford to purchase one, then please contact Andrea who has a few to give away.

Tablet Training Group – if you would like to learn how to use a Samsung tablet and can commit to attending drop in sessions on Wednesday mornings (10am

to 12pm) at the Community Centre then please get in touch for further details. We have 3 tablets remaining for those interested.

Thursday Friendship Group – is held at the Community Centre, Brook End, 10am to 12pm. The Friendship Group welcomes all for a coffee, cake, a game of cards or dominoes and a chat every Thursday morning. Entry is £3 for unlimited coffee and cake. A Christmas party at the Community Centre and an outing to Wicksteed Pavillion took place in December where a show and Christmas lunch was enjoyed by all those attending. Outings and events scheduled throughout the year.

If you have any issues you need advice or help with, please contact Andrea in confidence. Kindly funded by Potton Consolidated Charity and Potton Town Council.

Refugee Response Potton Group

In a previous newsletter, we reported that a cross-community group - Ukraine Response Potton (URP) - had been formed to help support evacuees arriving in Potton from war-torn Ukraine and their hosts. More recently, a family from Myanmar has joined our community. They are supported primarily through a partnership with CBC and the King's Arms Project. The URP has also offered local assistance to this family and as a result, they have changed their name to the Refugee Response Potton (RRP) to reflect their objective to assist all refugees that shelter or settle in Potton.

The RRP offers support with integration into the Potton community. It helps to have a friendly contact when navigating

through bureaucracy and issues that arise with day to day living in a new country. This is especially the case when families have been uprooted from their country unexpectedly with little or no time to organise or plan.

The initial intense period of settling in – learning English, transport, registering with different organisations and joining the library – all takes time and gradually things start to fall into place, confidence builds resulting in greater independence.

In December a small festive gathering was held to welcome our new arrivals as well as our more established Ukrainian guests, their hosts and all who are involved with supporting the families.



It has been very humbling to witness the willingness of our new guests to contribute to our community. In addition, the very positive response from Potton residents and local businesses reinforces our reputation as a friendly town.

Useful links for further information and to find out how you can offer support:

www.pottontowncouncil.co.uk/refugee-response-potton

www.facebook.com/groups/386204392998831

Potton Youth Council Update

Author: Sam



My name is Sam and I am 11. I joined the Youth Council over a year ago. I like having an input on what happens and being part of the discussions of what will be done next in Potton.

We sold cookies and salt dough Christmas tree decorations at the Christmas Lights Switch-on. We raised £66 for our chosen charity and received £50 donation from Harris Amusements.

We are planning to install a youth shelter with a table and seating in Henry Smith Playing Fields by the end of April 2023.

I would recommend the Youth Council to children who would like an input to what happens in our town. If you would like to apply, visit www.pottontowncouncil.co.uk/potton-youth-council



Veg Box Donation Scheme (VBDS)



The VBDS recently used the Mill Lane Pavilion to pack their Christmas Day Meal boxes. With the funding they had received (a £500 grant from Sainsbury's, two other personal donations of

£100, and a large donation from Deepdale Trees in Potton) they were able to provide a Christmas Day Meal box for 77 people. The box contained a turkey roast for each family, as well as all the ingredients for a Christmas breakfast and dinner. MyFresh Prepared provided us with presents for the children from their Secret Santa collection.

The recipients included a homeless man in temporary accommodation, a family living in a hostel in Sandy, a few families with disabled or autistic children, and many other households in financial need.

The VBDS had 13 volunteers (including three children and two teenagers who enjoyed it immensely) helping them pack and deliver the Christmas boxes in Potton, Gamlingay, Sandy and Biggleswade.



Please contact Sharon Mey on vegboxdonations@gmail.com, mobile **07944 730565**, or 'Like' us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/vegboxdonationscheme.