

POTTON TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held on
Tuesday 7th March 2023, 7.12pm held in the Community Centre, Potton.

Present: Councillors Dr C. Craig, Mr J. Day, Mrs L. Fox, 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: Councillor Mr A. Gibb.

Also Present: CBC Cllr Ms T. Wye, two members of the public and the Town Clerk.

1 Apologies for absence

Councillor Mr A. Gibb.

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.

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.

Cllr Leggatt advised that she had received correspondence from Andy Bargery, Potton Group Scout Leader and then proceeded to read out the correspondence with regards to St George's Day Parade and requesting that the town council close the Brook End car park to traffic.

It was mentioned that closing the car park off would not be feasible.

It was **resolved** to suggest that the young people attending the event meet in Henry Smith Playing Fields.

The Chairman advised he was going to alter the order of the meeting to bring forward item 14 Potton Hall for All.

4 Potton Hall for All

The Chairman invited Cllr Gwilliam, Chairman of the Potton Hall for All Steering Group to speak to give the town council an update with regards to progress and the Community Information event.

Cllr Gwilliam advised that the main hall is now 225m² and this was the main priority. Watson & Cox are planning to submit the planning application during week commencing 13th March 2023. The building would then be available to use in early to mid 2024.

Question – Does the money in the budget allow for solar panels.

Answer – The budget does not allow for solar panels, the building is being built so that solar panels can be installed retrospectively if funding can be

found.

It was mentioned that the Community Energy Working Group could assist with applying for funding for solar panels.

Question – Does the budget allow for the installation of the heating system.

Answer – The building will be fitted out and useable and will include a heating system and all other services. Tables and chairs won't be provided in the build budget. The building will be positioned to allow for the building to be extended at a later date. Construction methods of either Steel and cladding or Steel and brick and block are being investigated with regards to which option is more appropriate to allow the building to be extended in the future.

It was mentioned about solar panels will work better if a bio-solar roof is installed.

It was mentioned that after planning has been achieved that Watson & Cox would be able to provide a fixed priced cost and after that it would be Watson & Cox's liability if prices increase.

Question – On what the opinion of local residents is with the Potton Hall for All building.

Answer – Residents have expressed opinion about the Potton Hall for All building with regards to security and construction traffic.

The Chairman mentioned that we may need to have an Extra-Ordinary meeting of the Town Council to progress the project.

5 Minutes of Potton Town Council

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 3rd and 31st January 2023, which had been circulated were approved.

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

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

- Planning Committee – 3rd January 2023, 17th January 2023, 31st January 2023 and 21st February 2023.
- Management Committee – 17th January 2023.
- Potton Youth Council – 23rd January 2023.

The Chairman expressed his concern about the comments that the Potton Youth Council has raised about Community Safety.

The Chairman of Community Safety has been in contact with the Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner about the items raised by the Youth Council and the theft of catalytic convertors and residents coming across the criminals.

7 Reports from Central Bedfordshire Councillors

The Chairman invited Cllr Zerny to give a report.

Cllr Zerny advised about a petition for HGV's - Secondary Freight routes for the local area.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Zerny.

Question – How long will the petition run for?

Answer – Usually about six weeks and for this to be taken to committee, 100 signatures would be needed and likely 1,000+ signatures will be submitted in the six weeks.

The Chairman invited Cllr Wye to give a report.

Cllr Wye had nothing to report.

The Chairman thanked Cllrs Wye and Zerny.

8 Councillor Surgeries

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

Saturday 14th January 2023 – Cllrs Leggatt and Zerny

The Chairman asked for a report from Cllrs Leggatt and Zerny.

Cllrs Leggatt and Zerny gave a verbal report and advised that residents wanted to talk to both Cllrs.

Cllr Leggatt suggested to Cllr Zerny that he attends / holds Cllr Surgeries.

Thursday 23rd February 2023 – Cllr Leggatt

The written report from Cllr Leggatt was noted.

Bad Parking was spoken about and it was mentioned about logging incidents with Parking at Central Bedfordshire Council.

Electric Charging Points and the change to park restrictions for two bays which will be increased from two hours to six hours was mentioned.

It was **resolved** that the items raised in the report are reported to the appropriate authorities.

b) Surgeries scheduled are as follows;

Saturday 18th March 2023 – Cllr Norman

Cllrs Fox, Gwilliam and Leggatt volunteered to join Cllr Norman at the March Cllr Surgery.

It was **resolved** that Cllrs Fox, Gwilliam and Leggatt join Cllr Norman at the March Cllr Surgery.

Saturday 15th April 2023 – Cllr Craig

Cllr Gwilliam volunteered to join Cllr Craig at the April Cllr Surgery.

It was **resolved** that Cllr Gwilliam joins Cllr Craig at the April Cllr Surgery.

Community Safety and a Special Constable for Potton was mentioned and it was suggested about including an article in the newsletter for Community Safety and volunteering.

It was **resolved** that Cllr Craig writes an article with regards to Community Safety and volunteering.

9 Appointment of Internal Auditor 2022/23

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.

10 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.

11 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.

Members discussed and reviewed Potton Town Council's Financial and Management Risk Assessment assessing the probability and impact of each risk identified.

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

12 Finance

a) Verify Bank Reconciliations against statement 1st December – 31st December 2022.

Members proceeded to go through the Bank Reconciliation.

It was **resolved** that the Bank reconciliation for 1st December – 31st December 2022 be approved.

b) To receive an income and expenditure by budget heading report showing progress against the budget 2022/23 at the end of December 2022.

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 December 2022.

c) Verify Bank Reconciliations against statement 1st January – 31st January 2023.

Members proceeded to go through the Bank Reconciliation.

It was **resolved** that the Bank reconciliation for 1st January – 31st January 2023 be approved.

d) To receive an income and expenditure by budget heading report showing progress against the budget 2022/23 at the end of January 2023.

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 January 2023.

13 Section 106

It was noted that the Chairman had requested this item.

The Chairman spoke about the Central Bedfordshire Council report for Section 106 and Planning Obligations for Potton, in which sums of monies of differing amounts from various developments for infrastructure are included ranging from Education to Health.

The Chairman asked CBC Cllr Zerny what is the CBC process with regards to CBC making sure the allocations are spent so that the money doesn't return to the developer.

Cllr Zerny explained that CBC has to follow government guidance with regards to allocations of monies for projects. The monies are paid to CBC once trigger points have been met. No central Section 106 department at CBC, the monies are spent once the relevant body is ready to spend the money on an appropriate project.

Cllr Inkersole requested that the school (Potton Federation) is an item on the next town council agenda and this will include Section 106 for Education.

The Chairman queried what projects are with regards to various items listed in the CBC report for Section 106 and Planning Obligations for Potton as the details are very brief and not specific.

Cllr Zerny advised that CBC will spend the monies on projects when they are needed within the spend dates agreed for the Section 106 agreements. The

details are brief and not specific to allow an element of flexibility on what the monies can be spent on.

Comment was raised about Section 106 monies for Potton being spent at the Gamlingay Doctors surgery.

It was suggested that spend from Section 106 on projects is listed, so that the public are aware what the monies have been spent on.

The small amounts of money allocated for Cemeteries in the CBC report was noted. Potton Cemetery and various other cemeteries in Central Bedfordshire Council are nearly full. It was mentioned that several years ago that the Town Clerk had submitted a fully costed project for a Cemetery Extension to the relevant Section 106 Officer, though to date an amount(s) of money has not been allocated to a Cemetery Extension via Section 106 (Planning Obligations) agreement.

Cllr Zerny asked that the Town Clerk sends him details about the request for Section 106 to be allocated to a Cemetery Extension and that he would then make contact with the relevant officer(s) at Central Bedfordshire Council.

It was **resolved (i)** that the Town Clerk sends details about the request submitted for Section 106 (Planning Obligations) for a Cemetery Extension to CBC Cllr Zerny. **(ii)** that Cllr Zerny corresponds with the relevant officer(s) at Central Bedfordshire Council with regards to Section 106 for a Cemetery Extension.

It was suggested that the Town Council need to consider when the new council starts in May what they want to achieve in their term of office and whether what they want to achieve requires Section 106 (Planning Obligations).

14 Planning Applications for recommendation at the meeting of the Town Council on 07.03.2023

Application No: CB/23/00595/OUT

Location: Land East of Sutton Road, Potton, Sandy, SG19 2DS

Proposal: Outline Application: Development of up to 29 dwellings, comprising entirely entry-level exception homes, with all matters reserved except for access, along with all ancillary works.

Weblink:

<http://cbstor.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicportalviewer/publicViewer.html?caseID=CB/23/00595/OUT>

The Planning Committee resolved to recommend to strongly object to the proposed development with the following comments:

Potton Town Council (PTC) is strongly and fundamentally opposed to this proposed development.

We strongly agree with all the points made in the letter from Annabel Robinson dated 12th January, 2022 addressed to Mulberry Land concerning the pre-application for this development reference CB/21/04712/PAPC which

also does not support this application.

The principal reasons for PTC's objection to the application are as follows:-

1. The site is outside the Settlement Envelope as defined in the CBC Local Plan and also the adopted Potton Neighbourhood Plan (PNP).
2. The site is separated from other developments in Potton and does not form a natural extension. It is remote from the town and there is no easy and safe pedestrian or cycleway access to the town and its facilities such as shops and schools.
3. The proposal would result in a significant and harmful loss of open countryside and agricultural land which would detract from the rural character and appearance of the town.
4. The PNP states that it will support appropriate 'Medium Scale Development' which is defined as being up to 500 dwellings. An additional 29 dwellings would result in an increase in dwellings of 499 since the start of the Potton Neighbourhood Plan in 2016 and therefore close to exceeding the PNP supported growth during the lifetime of the Plan which runs up to 2035.
5. The number of dwellings increase in point 4 above does not include the 97 dwellings on land to the South of the Ridgeway in Potton ref CB/20/04672/FULL. This application was approved on an appeal to the Secretary of State by the Planning Inspectorate.
6. The PNP also stipulates 'controlled, proportionate and uniform growth over the period of the plan'. Meeting the total supported growth with more than 13 years left on the plan period clearly contravenes the PNP. It would also put undue stress on the already over-stretched infrastructure of the town.
7. The PNP will only support 'Rural Exception Housing' schemes provided the evidence at the time supports the requirements for the development. This proposal is not one of them.
8. PTC has concern about the Flood Risk Management/SuDS and would particularly support points 5-8 under this section in the letter dated 12th January 2022. However, on page 10 of the letter in the section on 'Sustainable Growth' we would urge stronger wording where it states that 'SuDS are recommended where ground conditions allow'.
9. PTC is also concerned about the lack of control over resale of dwellings that are sold initially as 'First Homes'.
10. PTC has concern about the access and egress from the site on to Sutton Road.
11. The development is not a natural extension to the Settlement envelope. At a pre-planning advice meeting earlier this year with regards to an application also on the east of the Settlement envelope (which is a lot closer

