

## POTTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held on  
Tuesday 5th September 2023 at 7pm at the Community Centre  
following a meeting of the Planning Committee

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

**Absent:** Councillor Mr D. Norman.

**Also present:** CBC Ward Cllr Ms T. Wye. The Town Clerk and seven members of the public.

### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Mr D. Norman.

### 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.

The Chairman welcomed Potton's Speedwatch Co-ordinator, residents from Sutton Mill Road and the business owner of #mechanic.

The Chairman invited the Potton Speedwatch Co-ordinator to speak to the town council.

#### Potton Speedwatch

The Potton Speedwatch Co-ordinator shared some observations with regard to Speedwatch in Potton.

Speedwatch volunteers have observed that the 20mph zone signage needs to be improved in order to be impactful to drivers in Potton, who regularly exceed the 20mph speed limit. It was suggested to have larger 20mph signs at the entry points into Potton and use emotive language, e.g. 'Drive carefully. Don't kill a child.' The speed table on Biggleswade Road has improved the speed of drivers, however the road signage should be moved as it seems to cause confusion.

It was mentioned that the 20mph sign at the bottom of Bury Hill is not visible as it has been obscured by hedges for some time now. This has been reported several times on the FixMyStreet app, but the hedge has still not been cut.

The excessive speed of traffic on Royston Street going up Bury Hill was mentioned, which is very dangerous for drivers exiting the junction at Brook End on to Royston Street.

It was mentioned to have more traffic calming measures, for example pedestrian crossings, reducing the number of lorries driving through Potton to allow for additional speed humps.

It was **resolved** that speeding and Speedwatch are considered at the next meeting of Community Safety.

It was suggested that the Potton Speedwatch Co-ordinator becomes a member of the Community Safety Working Group.

The Chairman thanked the Potton Speedwatch Co-ordinator for attending the meeting.

The Chairman advised he would be halting the rest of the public participation item and altering the order of the agenda as a representative from #mechanic was in attendance for item 12 Hogs Hill, Brook End.

#### **4. Hogs Hill, Brook End (Agenda Item 12)**

It was noted that #mechanic had requested that the town council consider drainage with regards to the installation of a soakaway on Hogs Hill, Brook End.

The representative from #mechanic mentioned that driveway in front of #mechanic is not in the best condition and affects the business to an extent. What they have noticed is that end of the alleyway at the top of the slope on Hogs Hill, Brook End (between Tysoe's and Jardine's Pharmacy) quite often fills with water and can almost become impassable. #mechanic is currently looking at costs and implications to improve the driveway in front of the business premises, and is seeking financial help (from the town council) to address the standing water and the affected pathway.

A member asked who is the landowner of Hogs Hill? The Town Clerk advised that the alleyway is not on Rights of Way as a footpath or bridleway and is therefore most likely an unadopted road.

A member asked if Hogs Hill can be adopted by (CBC) and what the normal adoption process would be?

Cllr Zerny advised that the normal adoption process would be that the management company for any development would approach CBC. In this situation it would be the responsibility of the residents and businesses that are currently paying for its upkeep to contact CBC. CBC would consider it based upon the likely potential cost of upkeep in future years.

It was **resolved** for the Town Clerk to initially contact Central Bedfordshire Council Highways to investigate the drainage issues on Hogs Hill, Brook End.

It was proposed i. that #mechanic should continue with its cost enquiries and bring to the budget amount to the town council 2024/25 budget meeting, ii. the town council contacts CBC Highways with regard to who owns Hogs Hill, Brook End, and iii. find out if CBC will adopt Hogs Hill, Brook End as a right of way if not as a formal roadway.

It was **resolved i.** that #mechanic should continue with its cost enquiries and bring the budget amount to the town council, so that the town council can consider at its 2024/25 budget meeting, **ii.** the town council contacts CBC Highways with regard to who owns Hogs Hill, Brook End, and **iii.** find out if CBC will adopt Hogs Hill, Brook End as a right of way if not as a formal roadway.

The Chairman thanked the representative from #mechanic for attending the meeting.

## 5. Public Participation Session, continued (Agenda Item 3)

The Chairman invited residents from Sutton Mill Road to speak about the potential development at The Ridgeway.

A resident expressed their concerns about traffic coming down Sutton Mill Road and asked is there any pressure [the town council] can put on CBC to have the access to the development looked at again.

Cllr Zerny advised that there is a law known as revoking planning permission, which has been used three times nationally since 2009. The one example found related to a very minor planning permission (an extension). If a local planning authority was to seek to revoke planning permission, it would then have to publicise that it was doing so, giving anyone the opportunity to object to it. At that point it would go to the Secretary of State to consider, and if the Secretary of State decided that it was appropriate to revoke the planning permission, the local planning authority would have to pay compensation to the developer. Cllr Zerny mentioned he has asked CBC what it believed compensation would amount to. They are also checking to see whether this is applicable where the local planning authority has been overruled (as is the case with this application, because it was the planning inspectorate that approved the application) with an appeal. Cllr Zerny has also asked CBC to provide some examples of where revocation has been successful before.

A member asked based on the current plan the developer has submitted for accessing the site, if the condition is not discharged, what can the developer do next?

Cllr Zerny mentioned that the developer can appeal to the planning inspectorate.

A member asked if access to the site could go via the Market Reach development?

Cllr Zerny mentioned that a strip of land is owned between the Market Reach development and the Sutton Mill Road / Ridgeway development.

Members of the public spoke about the discharge of conditions for the Sutton Mill Road / Ridgeway development.

It was **resolved** to write to CBC as they haven't discharged the condition for access.

Cllr Leggatt requested to mention three items, as follows:

1. There has been a request to have a dog waste bin on Biggleswade Road by the roundabout at the Tall Trees estate.

It was **resolved** for the Town Clerk to make enquiries about having an additional dog waste bin on Biggleswade Road by the roundabout to the Tall Trees estate.

2. Potton received a visit from Ellen Lemmer, a member of Langenlonsheim Town Council, on 24th July. Ellen brought postcards to give to all those who were involved in bringing the mosaic to Langenlonsheim.

3. Greensands Medical Practice has announced that from 1st September 2023, there will be significant changes to the way general practice is funded via the Integrated Care Boards (ICBs). The changes are complex and out of our control, but in real terms this means the Practice will no longer receive the same amount

of funding for its phlebotomy services. We aim to continue our phlebotomy service for our most vulnerable patients or where clinical need dictates, but those who are able to travel to Bedford Hospital may be asked to do so. Blood tests will only be taken if requested by a GP, practice nurse or clinical pharmacist.

The Practice appear to being selective on who can have blood tests at the surgery and residents should be aware of this.

Cllr Inkersole requested to make a statement on behalf of the [Potton Primary] School Governors. Potton Primary School is now open and works were completed on time for the start of the new term.

The Town Clerk mentioned that there have been a lot of items requested to be discussed by cllrs during the public participation session as they were not on the agenda. Cllrs were reminded that they should have contacted the Town Clerk as per Standing Orders so that they can request items to be included on the agenda.

Cllr Hobbs spoke about the Potton Green Wheel launch which is on Sunday 17th September at 10am. The Chairman asked for councillors to go along to support the opening.

**6. Minutes of Potton Town Council (Agenda Item 4)**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 27th June and 29th August 2023, which had been previously circulated, were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

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

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

- Management Committee – 18th July 2023 – approved.
- Planning Committee – 27th June and 18th July 2023 – approved.

**8. Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Environmental and Management Committees (Agenda Item 6)**

Members were asked to consider the ToR for the above committees, which Cllr Gibb was tasked with preparing.

Cllr Gibb prepared a draft for the Management Committee, which was circulated to Cllr Price Williams.

It was **resolved i.** to defer the item, and **ii.** for Cllr Gibb to circulate the ToRs when they are at a suitable point to all Committee members for review.

**9. Reports from Central Bedfordshire Councillors (Agenda Item 7)**

The Chairman invited reports from Potton's Central Bedfordshire Councillors.

Nothing to report.

**10. Finance (Agenda Item 8)**

**i. Verify Bank Reconciliations against statement 1st June – 30th June 2023.**

Members proceeded to go through the Bank Reconciliations.

It was **resolved** that the Bank Reconciliation for 1st June – 30th June 2023 be approved.

**ii. To receive an income and expenditure by budget heading report showing progress against the budget 2023/24 at the end of June 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 30th June 2023.

**iii. Verify Bank Reconciliations against statement 1st July – 31st July 2023.**

Members proceeded to go through the Bank Reconciliation.

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

**iv. To receive an income and expenditure by budget heading report showing progress against the budget 2023/24 at the end of July 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 July 2023.

**11. Planning Applications for recommendation at the meeting of the Twon Council on 05.09.2023 (Agenda Item 9)**

The following application was considered at the meeting earlier this evening.

**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:**

<https://cbc.aifusion.io/planning/publicViewer.html?caseID=CB/23/00595/OUT>

Updated Indicative Masterplan.

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. Although the number of dwellings proposed has been reduced from 44 to 29, the reasons for objection are unchanged.

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 PTCs 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). The site is totally

disconnected to the Potton Settlement Envelope, thus forming an isolated extension to the town.

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. The pedestrian access from the site crosses the busy Sutton Road, close to the Bury Hill/Wrestlingworth Road junction, onto a narrow, overgrown footpath which is not suitable for regular use by families with prams, dogs etc. This is a country footpath, not a pavement.

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 484 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, which has been given approval at appeal and will commence shortly.

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. The pedestrian access from the site crosses the busy Sutton Road, close to the Bury Hill / Wrestlingworth Road junction, onto a narrow, overgrown footpath which is not suitable for regular use by families with prams, dogs etc. This is a country footpath, not a pavement.

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 to the settlement envelope), this was raised by the Planning Officer.

12. Potton Town Council urge Central Bedfordshire Council to reject this application.

It was **resolved** to accept the recommendations of the Planning Committee.

## 12. Councillor Surgeries (Agenda Item 10)

- i. Cllr Norman reported that he did not receive any questions from the public at the councillor surgery on Saturday 5th August.
- ii. Members noted the date of the planned councillor surgery on Saturday 16th September and that Cllr Craig has volunteered to attend. Cllr Gwilliam advised she is now available again on 16th September and volunteered to attend the surgery with Cllr Craig.

A member mentioned a discussion with the Town Clerk about how the councillor surgeries can be advertised to attract more members of the public.

It was suggested that councillor surgeries could be considered by the Events Committee.

It was **resolved** for councillor surgeries to be considered by the Events Committee.

It was suggested that surgeries could be held at the Potton Show and Potton Apple Day. Cllr Leggatt advised she is waiting for a response from Potton Scouts as to when she can visit them to carry out a cllr surgery.

- iii. Members were asked to consider if they would like to set dates and volunteer for surgeries October up to and including February 2023.

It was **resolved** to defer setting dates and nominating volunteers for councillor surgeries to the Events Committee.

## 13. Potton Hall for All (Agenda Item 11)

The Chairman invited Cllr Gwilliam to give an update on the current progress on the Hall for All.

Cllr Gwilliam advised that Planning permission has been granted and the Town Clerk has submitted correspondence to CBC with regards to having the funding in place and CBC releasing the S106 monies.

Borrowing approval via the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) is still outstanding. The Town Clerk has chased DLUHC. The town council hasn't yet applied for the loan.

On Friday 1st September, the Town Clerk, Cllr Norman and Cllr Gwilliam met with a Quantity Surveyor (QS) from a practice based near Olney. He was asked to attend as there are certain things that will need to take place during the construction of the Hall for All, which will need to happen to protect the town council who will be signing the contract with the builder. The QS will draft the contract on the town council's behalf with Watson & Cox, and there are other measures that need to be put in place to help protect the town council should Watson & Cox go out of business (a document called a Performance Bond). The QS will act as an agent on behalf of the town council, and will attend site regularly and ensure that Watson & Cox are building to the drawings and everything is being done to specification. The QS will make sure that, when Watson & Cox are applying for payments, the work carried out is to the required standard before paying them. It is important that the town council has someone of his expertise on board when drawing up the contract.

Cllr Gibb asked if the QS responsibilities will cover the town council's clients and duties under CDM?

Cllr Gwilliam confirmed that the QS responsibilities will cover the town council's clients and duties under CDM.

A member mentioned that comparative pricing should be obtained.

It was **resolved** to obtain two further quotes.

Cllr Gwilliam is keen to work with this QS as he has previously worked with Watson & Cox, he is very experienced, he has previously carried out different community-based projects and he sits on his own local parish council. He was also a trustee of a local charity (similar to Potton Consolidated Charity). He is also independent of Potton Hall for All Charity and will work only for the town council.

This exercise is being carried out for town council, as in all likelihood the town council will sign the contract and is applying for most of the money. The town council needs to prove it acted with due diligence in how it spends public money. The building will ultimately be owned by the town council, leased back to the [Hall for All] charity.

A member asked that if the building is a town council asset, does the town council want someone else to be managing it? The town council has previously requested an updated business plan to consider at the town council 2024/25 budget meeting.

It was **resolved** to devolve the responsibility of choosing and accepting a Quantity Surveyor to the councillors on the Hall for All Sub-Committee.

A member asked if there was a previous resolution with regards to the business plan. There is a historic business plan based on the previous plans for the Hall for All.

The Town Clerk advised the borrowing approval did not require the business case, CBC required the business case with respect to S106 funding.

It was suggested that the business plan with respect to the current Hall for All building plans should be in place for review by the town council.

It was **resolved i.** to defer the responsibility to the Hall for All Sub-Committee to get the business plan in place for review by the town council, and **ii.** the business plan should be available to consider before the town council 2024/25 budget meeting.

Once borrowing approval is received, there will be a final meeting of the town council to accept the loan, the amount of loan to be applied for and whether the building goes ahead. Contracts from Watson & Cox are expected in October and an Extra-Ordinary meeting will be called for the town council to make its decision.

#### **14. Play area at Langley Gardens, Potton SG19 2QF (Agenda Item 13)**

Members were asked to consider correspondence from Persimmon Plc proposing the town council's adoption of the play area at Langley Gardens, Potton.

It was proposed to contact the developer to suggest they should consider having the whole development adopted and to contact CBC to ask them to adopt it.



It was **resolved** for the Town Clerk to contact Persimmon Plc to suggest they should consider having the whole development adopted and advise them to contact CBC to ask them to consider adoption of all the items, including the highway and play area.

**15. Site 8 Potton Neighbourhood Plan (Agenda Item 14)**

Members noted the correspondence with regard to land on Site 8 Potton Neighbourhood Plan (HAS43 Sandy Road, Potton).

The land on Site 8 Potton Neighbourhood Plan is now up for sale.

The town council accepts that this would be the last site in the town that is going to be developed.

The landowner was Mrs Manning, who owned before her death Chigwell House, which includes the set of trees [discussed at the beginning of the meeting]. She donated to the National Trust on her death, she was a National Trust gold medal holder because of the amount of donations she had made to the trust over the years. Site 8 is possibly the last piece of land owned by Mrs Manning. She owned the cottages to the left of the land and also donated the land to the bowls club.

**16. Bedfordshire Association of Town & Parish Councils (BATPC) AGM 2023 – Venue and County Committee Elections (Agenda Item 15)**

Members noted the correspondence from BATPC, and were asked to consider if they would like to attend.

**17. BATPC Training Programme (Agenda Item 16)**

Members were asked to consider the training programme for BATPC and advise if they wish to attend any of the courses listed.

**18. Items for the next meeting agenda (Agenda Item 17)**

Members were asked to consider items for the next meeting agenda.

The Chairman asked members to email any items for the next meeting agenda to the Town Clerk and reminded councillors of the Town Clerk's comments that the town council should only discuss items on the agenda.

**19. To arrange a date of the next meeting (Agenda Item 18)**

It was **resolved** that the date of the next meeting will be on Tuesday 7th November following a meeting of the Planning Committee which starts at 7pm in the Community Centre.

Cllr Macdonald gave his apologies for the meeting on Tuesday 7th November.

**20. Confidential – Staffing Matter**

The Chairman passed the following motion:-

That, in pursuance of staffing matters, members of the public are asked to withdraw from the meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.45pm.

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.