

POTTON TOWN COUNCIL  
Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held on  
Tuesday 18th June 2024 at 7.20pm at the Community Centre  
following a meeting of the Planning Committee

**Present:** Councillors Mr J. Day, Mrs V. Gwilliam, Mr A. Inkersole, Mr G. Horsfall, Mr B. Kett, Mr D. Norman, Mr J. Price Williams (Chairman), and Mr A. Zerny.

**Absent:** Councillors Dr C. Craig, Mr J. Hobbs, Mrs C. Leggatt and Mr A. Macdonald.

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

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Formal apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Dr C. Craig, Mr J. Hobbs, Mrs C. Leggatt, and Mr A. Macdonald.

**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. Hogs Hill, Brook End**

Members were asked i. to consider the three quotations for works to be carried out at Hogs Hill, Brook End, which were obtained by the proprietor of #mechanic, and ii. what the town council is willing to contribute towards the overall cost of the work.

The Chairman invited the proprietor of #mechanic to speak. The proprietor checked that the three quotations had been received, and gave a precis of the work to be undertaken to rectify the flooding which currently occurs on Hogs Hill, Brook End.

Members were reminded that i. the town council paid £5,400 towards the 2024 Big Weekend via the 2023/24 General Power of Competence budget, and ii. the budget for GPC in 2024/25 is £6,000 of which £3,600 is allocated to the 2024 Big Weekend leaving £2,400 in funds available.

Members also noted that the town council had made contributions of £500 each to Potton Show Committee and the Good Neighbour Scheme via the 2024/25 General Power of Competence budget at its meeting on 7th May, leaving £1,400 in funds available.

The Chairman asked members if they would be willing for the town council to make a contribution, and if yes, how much?

The proprietor of #mechanic advised that the cost of the work would be split evenly between #mechanic, G&S Hutchinson (rear of bakery), G Tysoe & Son, and the owner of land behind Jardine's Pharmacy, which would equal approximately £3,000 each without a contribution from the Town Council.

It was proposed that the town council contributes a sum of £1,400 towards the overall cost of the work, with certain caveats attached. Those caveats would be i. the town council is supplied with copies of all supplier invoices before any payment is made, and ii. that the work is completed, invoices are received, and the town council's contribution is paid before the end of the 2024/25 financial year.

It was **resolved i.** to contribute £1,400 towards the overall cost of the work, **ii.** that the town council is supplied with copies of all supplier invoices before any payment is made, and **iii.** that the work is completed, invoices are received, and the town council's contribution is paid before the end of the 2024/25 financial year.

The Chairman suspended Standing Orders so that a member of the public, who was present at the meeting, could speak about the Station Road road closure (agenda item 15).

#### **4. Station Road road closure** (Agenda item 15)

Members noted that the Town Clerk had contacted CBC Highways with suggestions of other ways to help with the issues mentioned with respect to the planned ten day road closure on Station Road. The dates of the closure have now been changed to take place during the Summer holidays (between 22nd July and 2nd August), to try to reduce the traffic load.

The Chairman asked CBC Ward Cllr Zerny if he had any additional information. Cllr Zerny asked if the member of public could comment first.

The Chairman invited the member of public to comment.

The member of the public voiced his concerns that signage for the road closure will be ignored, and that large vehicles will try to divert down Chapel Street, Horslow Street and Bull Street. Residents' properties and vehicles have sustained damage by lorries that divert down Bull Street, Chapel Street and Horslow Street, without compensation.

Cllr Zerny responded that he has advised Central Bedfordshire Council that, despite signage for the road closure, they will not be able to stop vehicles going down Bull Street, Chapel Street and Horslow Street, and that pressure should be put on the contractor and developer to be making checks and making sure that vehicles don't ignore the signage. Cllr Zerny advised that CBC has been made aware that there are concerns, but cannot do anything more legally, and it will come down to a pragmatic approach at the time.

A member asked if it would be possible for CBC or the developer to put temporary cameras up in the roads during the road closure?

Cllr Zerny responded that CBC can't put cameras up because it's not in the budget, or legally force the contractor to put them up. With a concerted effort by CBC Ward Cllrs and residents, major issues can hopefully be prevented. It is right to be careful and wary, but not to panic at this stage.

A member clarified that a cable will be installed under the road for services for the new development [Tilia Homes], but asked if it would be possible to do half the width of the road at a time and leave the other half of the road open?

Cllr Zerny advised that CBC cannot turn down a closure; if the contractor wants to close the whole road because it is cheaper for them, CBC can't prevent them from doing that. There is not enough width in the road to only close half the width of the road.

The member of the public asked for clarification of who should be contacted if on a particular day during the road closure there is a problem with a lorry that decides to come through?

Cllr Zerny advised to contact CBC Ward Cllrs, the town council office – any member of the town council can contact CBC Highways. Failing that, there is the Highways emergency number on the CBC website.

The Town Clerk advised residents to contact CBC Streetworks, who have contact with all the contractors.

**5. Four Seasons Market Petition** (Agenda item 4)

Members noted the petition, and that it will be considered at the September town council meeting, when it is hoped that the lead petitioner will be able to attend to speak about the petition.

Members also noted comments from one of the cllrs:

*'My only comments, which you could ask the Chairman to convey is the petition seems to be misleading in terms of the title – we are not reducing the number of seasonal markets from 4 to 3 as stated on the returned petition. We are moving it to the Christmas lights switch on. May I also remind the Council that we asked for volunteers to continue the Market Committee, who used to manage the Seasonal Market, and had no interested parties. The petitioner wasn't interested in doing anything at that point in time.'*

**6. Public Participation Session** (Agenda item 5)

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

Question 1:

The Chairman mentioned he was approached by a member of the public who commended the council on the new Millennium Path. They did ask if the town council would consider putting in disabled access down from the path which is a nice, smooth easy access for people who are less able bodied to some of the benches which look out over the park.

The Chairman advised that funding is not available in this financial year having just paid for the improvements to the Millennium Path, and suggested adding disabled access from the path to two of the benches to the Neighbourhood Plan list of projects to be considered for S106 funding.

It was **resolved** to add disabled access from the Millennium Path to two of the benches in Henry Smith Playing Fields to the Neighbourhood Plan list of projects to be considered for S106 funding.

Question 2:

Cllr Gwilliam advised that she has received complaints from residents regarding Potton footpaths which are overgrown and in some cases impassable by people who are less able. The residents have tried to report the overgrown footpaths to CBC via FixMyStreet, but FixMyStreet does not recognise footpaths.

Cllr Zerny advised that CBC is aware; CBC pays for two cuts per year for a contractor to maintain footpaths around the town. There are some footpaths that residents believe are CBC's responsibility when they are actually the responsibility of housing associations. If there is any area which is particularly bad, contact the CBC Ward Cllrs who will ask CBC to prioritise it, but it will happen eventually.

The Chairman asked Cllr Zerny, if it is the responsibility of the housing association, whose responsibility is it to remind them to maintain their footpaths?

Cllr Zerny advises Grand Union who are always happy to take action, and anyone can contact Grand Union to report areas which are their responsibility to maintain, for example the area around Carters Lane.

A member mentioned that overgrown footpaths can be reported via the CBC website on 'Reporting issues on a right of way'

[https://forms.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/officeforms/Reporting\\_issues\\_on\\_a\\_right\\_of\\_way.ofml](https://forms.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/officeforms/Reporting_issues_on_a_right_of_way.ofml)

The Town Clerk mentioned that he had had recent correspondence with Rights of Way Officer, Chris Dorow who advised to report overgrown footpaths via FixMyStreet, but rights of way footpaths do not exist on FixMyStreet. The Town Clerk has been trying to report FP22 (footpath from Myers Road to Jacobs Close), and FP30 (Carters Lane footpath), which are both impassable, especially when it has been raining as the foliage hangs lower.

Cllr Kett mentioned that he was out with Chris Dorow a couple of weeks ago looking at issues related to the Green Wheel. Mr Dorow informed Cllr Kett that normally Potton has three cuts per year, but because of funding restraints they have been reduced to two. So there is a combination of all of the weather conditions and also funding cut backs.

Cllr Zerny advised that this is on Public Rights of Way and not a cut back as such, but CBC were not able to allocate more funding for it.

The Town Clerk mentioned that there were two CBC Environmental Services Officers who the town council could rely on to help, but one officer has retired and the other is on secondment, and unfortunately the service received has now deteriorated.

Question 3:

Members noted correspondence that the Town Clerk shared with regard to Cemetery fees. The correspondence requests that the town council consider granting discounted fees for an additional inscription to a headstone for a former resident of Potton. The deceased moved away to Norfolk as a child, but was interred in Potton Cemetery in August 2023. The family paid full fees for the burial, and use of the Chapel. The family has recently contacted I.R. Quince Memorials to arrange the additional inscription to the headstone, and are unhappy that they are expected to pay full fees.

It was mentioned that the Cemetery fees were addressed by the town council 12 months ago, and the decision was taken then that if someone was living outside of Potton and wanted to be buried in the Cemetery, they would have to pay full fees.

A member asked for a reminder of what was resolved with regard to Cemetery fees.

The Town Clerk advised that it was resolved that a non-resident at the time of death who has previously lived in Pottton for 30 years or more receives a 75% discount, a current resident of Pottton for 10 years or more before death receives a 75% discount, and a current resident of Pottton between 0 and 10 years at the time of death receives a 25% discount. Anyone living in Pottton for less than thirty years before moving away pays the full non-resident fee, and only one discount applies.

It was **resolved i.** to not grant discounted fees for the additional inscription, and **ii.** for the Town Clerk to respond to the family accordingly.

**7. Minutes of Pottton Town Council** (Agenda item 6)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th May 2024, which had been previously circulated, were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

**8. Minutes of Town Council Special Meeting** (Agenda item 7)

The minutes of the Town Council Special meeting held on 7th May 2024, which had been previously circulated, were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

**9. Town Council Committee Minutes** (Agenda item 8)

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

Planning Committee – 7th May, 21st May and 4th June 2024.

Youth Council – 13th May 2024.

Employment Working Group – 21st May 2024.

Management Committee – 4th June 2024.

**10. Planning Applications for recommendation at the meeting of the Town Council on 18.06.2024** (Agenda item 9)

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

**Application No:** CB/24/01340/FULL

**Location:** Land South of Hutchinson Rise, Pottton, Sandy SG19 2DZ

**Proposal:** Erection of a care home (Class C2) and 8 residential dwellings (Class C3), with associated parking, landscaping and development.

**Weblink:**

<https://cbc.aifusion.io/planning/publicViewer.html?caseID=CB/24/01340/FULL>

The Planning Committee resolved to recommend i. support of the erection of a care home, ii. to object to the 8 residential dwellings, and iii. replace the 8 residential dwellings with light industrial units.

The response to Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) to include Cllr Day's Ecology Report and comments from the Hall for All Trustees.

Cllr Gwilliam commented with regards to the Hall for All. There is potential in the planning permission that was granted that noise from the Hall for All and any further planning permission in the area could be restrictive to the use of the hall and its intended purposes.

The Hall for All is a community asset. The planning condition for noise for the hall is already very strict, and anything further would affect a significant amount of income by not being able to make a reasonable level of noise.

The Hall for All Trustees are going to put objections forward independently to those which will be put forward by the town council.

Cllr Zerny suggested it might be worth the Hall for All Trustees using their extensive mailing list to urge their supporters to consider commenting on the application.

The Chairman mentioned that the Planning Committee accepts the erection of a care home because it is in line with our requirements and needs in the town, but objects to the 8 residential dwellings and proposes that those dwellings are replaced by light industrial units. The committee is not objecting to building, but the area was originally classified as light industrial before CBC decided to change it into residential. There is some extra information coming from the Hall for All Trustees which will be passed to the Planning Committee to include in their response.

A member asked if CBC has reclassified the land or would the developer need to apply for a change of use?

Cllr Zerny responded that CBC has not reclassified the land, and the fact that the site is not going to be light industrial is why it needs a full planning application now.

Cllr Wye mentioned that she had made the point to the planning officer that the land was originally classified for light industrial units in Potton's Neighbourhood Plan, not housing. The planning officer responded that the Local Plan overrules the Neighbourhood Plan, and it was not in the Local Plan as light industrial.

Cllr Zerny confirmed that the Local Plan does overrule the Neighbourhood Plan and does not classify the land for light industrial units.

Cllr Wye reiterated to the planning officer that the Neighbourhood Plan does say light industrial, and it is absolutely ludicrous to put housing next to the Hall for All after we have spent 25 years trying to get the hall, for residents to move in and complain about the noise.

The Town Clerk mentioned that the original planning application with regards to the S106 for the whole site, showed it as employment land.

Cllr Wye suggested that the Planning Committee should object to the whole planning application.

It was **resolved** to agree with the recommendation of the Planning Committee.

## **11. Reports from Central Bedfordshire Councillors** (Agenda item 10)

The Chairman invited reports from Potton's CBC Ward Councillors.

Cllr Wye advised that she has also been reporting overgrown footpaths. In the meantime, Cllr Wye suggested getting an action group together to cut the Carters Lane footpath.

The Town Clerk advised that all the cuttings will be collected by CBC if it bagged and placed by a CBC bin. The group can borrow tools from the town council.

Cllr Wye advised she had forwarded the Town Clerk's email regarding the EV chargers for the Hall for All, and there is now a response to pass back to the Steering Group.

Cllr Wye advised that the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) has the power to remove the road bridge between Sheepwalk Close and Yew Tree Close, which has caused the delay in taking forward the creation of Potton Footpath no. 21 (pedestrian bridge), and the adoption of the Public Open Space.

Yew Tree Close has not been adopted by CBC, and it appears there is a need for legal clarity over the access between Yew Tree Close and the Tall Trees development over the Public Open Space so that CBC can adopt the highway (Yew Tree Close). This is to cover residents in the event that the bridge is removed or falls down (for example).

The Chairman thanked Cllr Wye for her report.

Cllr Zerny mentioned that the HGV ban (agenda item 16) is reliant upon the freight strategy being carried out by CBC at some point later this year.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Zerny for his report.

Cllr Wye mentioned that she has been asked if lights are going to be installed in the new Millennium Path.

The Town Clerk confirmed that lights will be installed in the Millennium Path.

## **12. Finance** (Agenda item 11)

### **i. To receive a report from the internal auditor for the year 2023/24.**

Members noted the Internal Audit took place on 13th June 2024.

The council went through the internal auditor's report for the year 2023/24.

It was **resolved** to approve the final internal audit report including implanting any recommendations for the financial year 2023/24.

### **ii. To approve the accounts for the year 2023/24.**

The council went through the accounts for the year 2023/24.

It was **resolved** to approve the draft unaudited accounts for the financial year 2023/24.

- iii. **To approve the annual return comprising the statement of accounts and the governance statement for the year 2023/24.**  
The council went through the annual return comprising the statement of accounts and the governance statement for the year 2023/24.

It was **resolved** to approve the Annual Return for the financial year 2023/24 comprising the internal audit section, section 1 annual governance statement, section 2 accounting statement and to ask the Chairman and Town Clerk to sign the return and submit it to the External Auditor with any necessary additional papers.

- iv. **Verify Bank Reconciliations against statement 1st April – 30th April 2024.**

Members proceeded to go through the Bank Reconciliation.

It was **resolved** that the Bank Reconciliation for 1st April – 30th April 2024 be approved.

- v. **To receive an income and expenditure by budget heading report showing progress against the budget 2024/2025 at the end of April 2024.**

Members proceeded to go through the income and expenditure against budget for the period to 30th April 2024.

It was **resolved** to approve the detailed statement of income and expenditure against budget.

- vi. **Verify Bank Reconciliations against statement 1st May – 31st May 2024.**

Members proceeded to go through the Bank Reconciliation.

It was **resolved** that the Bank Reconciliation for 1st May – 31st May 2024 be approved.

- vii. **To receive an income and expenditure by budget heading report showing progress against the budget 2024/2025 at the end of May 2024.**

Members proceeded to go through the income and expenditure against budget for the period to 31st May 2024.

It was **resolved** to approve the detailed statement of income and expenditure against budget.

- viii. **Public Works Board Loan – Potton Hall for All**

Members noted the report and recommendation from the Town Clerk.

The Town Clerk is recommending that the town council borrows £192,875. The suggested first loan payment would be in November.

The Chairman suggested taking a £200,000 loan to give a bit more contingency.

The Town Clerk advised that up to 28th September, the town council has the option to take additional funds up to the amount that was approved on the borrowing approval (£254,357).



A member suggested that the town council could review the option to take additional funds at the meeting on 3rd September.

A member clarified that with the first loan payment in November, it would be the only payment this financial year. When would the loan start to accrue interest?

The Town Clerk advised that the interest will accrue from the first day the loan is drawn down.

The Chairman asked when the loan would need to be drawn down?  
The Town Clerk advised that the loan could be delayed until September.

The Chairman asked what the Town Clerk's recommendation would be in taking the loan?

The Town Clerk advised that he would suggest delaying, but there is a General Election on 4th July and there is uncertainty surrounding interest rates.

The Chairman asked if the interest rate would be fixed if taken now?

The Town Clerk recommended taking a fixed rate loan.

It was proposed that the town council takes a £200,000 loan by 1st July.

It was **resolved** for the town council to take a £200,000 loan by 1st July 2024.

A member mentioned that it should be kept in mind that the interest is £1,000 per month.

The Town Clerk confirmed that there is money within the town council budget to cover the interest.

### **13. Tall Trees Public Open Space (POS) (Agenda item 12)**

Members were asked to consider a request from the Environment Committee for the Town Council to meet with Tilia Homes, so that a senior representative(s) of Tilia Homes can explain the reason(s) for the delay in the transfer of the ownership of the POS to the town council.

At the last meeting on 7th May, it was resolved for the Town Clerk to invite a senior representative(s) of Tilia Homes to the next town council meeting on Tuesday 18th June 2024.

Members noted the correspondence between the Town Clerk Simon Temporal, Tilia's Aftercare Manager.

It was also noted that following the correspondence, Cllr Day and Sally Wileman were contacted to ask if they still require senior representatives of Tilia Homes to attend the meeting on 18th June, and that Cllr Day advised that there was possibly no value to be gained from a Tilia representative attending a future meeting for the time being.

The Town Clerk mentioned that there is a potential site meeting taking place on Thursday 27th June at 3pm to look at the tree works for the electric cables and landscaping for the site, and that Sally Wileman is aware of the meeting.

**14. Hall for All update** (Agenda item 13)

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

Cllr Gwilliam reported that there are now foundations, and building up to the damp proof course with services in place, and the steel frame for the main part of the hall.

There have been a couple of snags with respect to ventilation and noise (sound transmission). The mechanical and electrical (M&E) sub-contractor has under-quoted for air source pumps. The building needs two air source pumps now instead of one, so the M&E sub-contractor is now having to foot the bill for their error for the amount of £10,000.

There has been some discussions with Watson & Cox regarding the ventilation of the hall. They have had to change to have mechanical ventilation instead of natural ventilation, by means of turrets in the roof, which need to reduce the amount of sound that is emitted from the building.

The Chairman mentioned that CBC has put planning condition no. 13 in place, which says that nearby properties should not be able to hear noise from the building. So, if a party or wedding was held in the hall, the current sound level - as calculated by a professional sound engineer - coming out of the turrets would exceed the levels that CBC has set, which are unrealistically low. It has been suggested by CBC that the Watson & Cox sub-contractor looks at sound attenuated ventilation turrets. The Watson & Cox sub-contractor tried to make the town council accept open turrets, but at the site meeting with them they were told that this is a Design & Build, the issue is the contractor's problem; they have been given the sound emission requirements and they must make sure it works.

Cllr Gwilliam mentioned that the policy from CBC for installing EV chargers, exceeds the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by a long way. CBC is trying to offset future requirements for EV chargers. The planning application included for two EV chargers, but CBC requires six EV chargers at £7,000 per pair, which will require an increase to the incoming electric supply to 120kVa, and an increase to the total costs.

The Town Clerk advised that the surface water drainage has been delayed by two weeks because of the electric cable, and works will not start until July.

Otherwise, the build is slightly ahead of the build programme.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Gwilliam for her update.

**15. Henry Smith Playing Fields (HSPF) power and water services**

(Agenda item 14)

Members were reminded that at the last meeting, the town council resolved to take up a local resident and business owner's offer to provide free of charge, the installation of permanent power and water services in HSPF for use for Party on Potton and other events.

It was noted that a survey of the field was carried out on Friday 10th May, and a marked up drawing, risk assessments and method statements were promised to be provided by Friday 17th May.

The Town Clerk advised that he hasn't received any further update.

Cllr Gwilliam advised that the project is currently on hold, because Bedfordshire Fire Service need to ensure that the power supply for Potton Fire Station is never interrupted. The issues need to be resolved by Bedfordshire Fire Service and CBC. The Party on Potton Committee has accepted that the power and water services will not be installed in time for the 2024 Big Weekend.

**16. Potton 3G Community Football Pitch** (Agenda item 17)

Members noted the correspondence received on 12th June.

The Town Clerk mentioned that Potton 3G Community Football Pitch now has two location options; The Hollow or Potton Primary School.

Cllr Inkersole, a governor of Potton Primary School mentioned that the school management and governors are very supportive of community projects and welcome the football pitch at the school. It would need to be totally accessible to the public, and there would be a separate access from the school.

**17. Potton Hall for All Treasure Hunt & Picnic** (Agenda item 18)

Members noted the correspondence from the Chairman of the Potton Hall for All Trustees asking for permission to use a small part of Henry Smith Playing Fields to start and end a treasure hunt with picnic on Sunday 14th July between 1.30pm and 4.30pm.

It was **resolved** to give permission for the Potton Hall for All Trustees to use Henry Smith Playing fields on Sunday 14th July for their treasure hunt and picnic.

**18. Items for the next agenda** (Agenda item 19)

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 by 9am on 27th August.

**19. To arrange a date of the next meeting** (Agenda item 20)

It was **resolved** that the date of the next meeting will be on Tuesday 3rd September 2024 following a meeting of the Planning Committee at 7pm in the Community Centre.

**20. Confidential item – Employment** (Agenda item 21)

The Chairman passed the following motion, that in pursuance of an employment matter, members of the public were asked to withdraw from the meeting.

There being no further business, 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.