

POTTON TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held on
Tuesday 3rd September 2024 at 7.20pm at the Community Centre
following a meeting of the Planning Committee

Present: Councillors Mrs H. Cairns (Minute 4 onwards), Mr J. Day, Mrs V. Gwilliam, Mr J. Hobbs, Mr A. Inkersole, Mr B. Kett, Mr A. Macdonald (Minute 7 onwards), Mr D. Norman, Mr J. Price Williams (Chairman), and Mr A. Zerny.

Absent: Councillors Dr C. Craig, Mr G. Horsfall, Mrs C. Leggatt and Mr A. Macdonald (for first part of meeting).

Also present: CBC Ward Cllr Ms T. Wye, Mr J. Barnes, Assistant Planner – Marrons, and Mrs E. Smith, Potton Hall for All Chairman. The Town Clerk, and seven members of the public.

1. Apologies for Absence

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

Cllr Macdonald submitted his apologies to advise that he may be late arriving for the meeting.

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. Co-option of a Town Councillor

Members were asked to consider an application from an elector to join Potton Town Council.

It was **resolved** to elect Mrs Hannah Cairns as a councillor of Potton Town Council.

The Chairman invited Cllr Cairns to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and join the meeting.

4. 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.

Members of the public present were attending the meeting with regard to agenda item 10 CB/24/02185/OUT.

There were no other questions from the public or councillors on behalf of the public.

The Chairman altered the agenda to bring forward the planning application to immediately follow the Public Participation Session.

5. Planning Application for recommendation at the meeting of the Town Council on 03.09.2024 (agenda item 10)

At the meeting of the Planning Committee earlier in the evening, it was resolved to defer the following application to the Town Council.

Application No: CB/24/02185/OUT

Location: Land North of Sandy Road, Potton, SG19 2QQ

Proposal: Outline Application: Outline planning permission is sought with all matters reserved for future determination, save for the means of access via Sandy Road, for: up to 125 dwellings (Use Class C3, comprising market and affordable dwellings, including bungalows), site access and highway works, green infrastructure including sustainable drainage, ecological habitats, children's play areas and amenity green space, and ancillary works.

Weblink:

<https://cbc.aifusion.io/planning/publicViewer.html?caseID=CB/24/02185/OUT>

The Chairman allowed members of the public to speak.

Members discussed the application at length.

Cllr Zerny mentioned that he believes there is a petition against the application which has been put in businesses in the town, and advised that Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) will look at the number of objections that have been received and that the petition will be counted as one objection by CBC. All those people who have signed the petition should be encouraged to put in objections.

It was **resolved** to object to the application for the following reasons:

- i. Not in the Local Plan;
- ii. Not in the Neighbourhood Plan;
- iii. In Central Bedfordshire Council's Important Countryside Gap CG20 on the Greensand Ridge;
- iv. Extension of the town into open countryside, removing the countryside gap on the west of Potton;
- v. Unsuitable due to infrastructure available in Potton;
- vi. Outside settlement envelope;
- vii. Site is within the Greensands Ridge Nature Improvement Area;
- viii. Effect on footpaths and bridleways, loss of views;
- ix. Dangerous road for access and egress;
- x. Distance of the development from the town.

6. Four Seasons Market Petition (agenda item 5)

- i. Petition – The lead petitioner was present at the meeting and the Chairman invited him to speak.

The market stall holders are asking [the town council] to not make changes to the Winter/Christmas Four Seasons market, and keep it at its original Saturday morning date and time as it has been for years and to not combine it with a completely separate event.

It was mentioned that the market stall holders were consulted, and those who responded said that the combined markets would not work for them. In their opinion, despite being in the same location, the Four Seasons market and the Christmas Lights Switch-on market are very different events with completely different demographics and attendees, not to mention the different times and days they are on.

The customers that regularly attend the Saturday morning Four Seasons market are buying 'farmers market' produce and they come for a relaxed local shopping experience. Whereas the Christmas Lights Switch-on is a much busier, crowded, late afternoon/evening event with crowds including a majority of young people in an altogether closed-in quite cramped affair with little room to move around the Market Square, let alone trying to visit the stalls.

It was mentioned that while it [the Christmas Lights Switch-on event] works well, and is certainly profitable for stalls selling things like hot chocolate, BBQ and mulled wine, it unfortunately does not work for regular market stall holders especially those selling fresh produce such as fish, bread and cheese.

Cancelling the Winter Four Seasons market was seen by the stall holders and those attending that market as a completely unnecessary move with many stall holders saying that the Winter market was always their most profitable.

Since those who wish to can also book a stall at the Christmas Lights Switch-on event, it was also seen as unnecessary because if you want to attend as a stall holder you can.

Time was taken to speak with local businesses and prominent people around Potton, who all agree that more markets and community events in our beautiful Market Square rather than fewer.

The town council was asked to listen to the strength of those responses, the number of signatures on the petition, and to reverse the decision that was made. Keep the [Winter] Christmas Four Seasons Market this year and moving forward because without it, it is not a **Four** Seasons market.

The Chairman thanked the lead petitioner for his explanation.

The Chairman asked members if they had any questions or comments.

- ii. Markets – A member asked if there was a specific reason why it was decided to combine the Winter Four Seasons and Christmas Lights Switch-on markets, and what was the logic behind it?

Cllr Gwilliam explained that the reason was because there are so many events that go on in the town around Christmas-time, it is about the staff and volunteers of the town council who have a huge workload. The intention was never to cancel the Winter Four Seasons market, merely combine the two events.

A member agreed that the two events are totally different; the Saturday morning market is much different in format to the Christmas Lights market. The decision by the Events Committee took into account the workload for staff and volunteers of the town council, but since then an application has been received from someone who is prepared to take on the organisation of the Four Seasons market. The reason why the town council took on the organisation and administration of the Four Seasons markets was because the original team of volunteers subsequently resigned.

It was suggested that the town council could trial reinstating the Winter Four Seasons market, and for the event to be managed externally of the town council to reduce town council's and volunteers' workload.

The Chairman asked members to make a proposal with respect to reversing the resolution to combine the Winter Four Seasons and Christmas Lights Switch-on markets.

It was proposed to reverse the resolution to combine the Winter Four Seasons and Christmas Lights Switch-on markets in 2024.

It was suggested that the Events Committee should be given the opportunity to take on the strength of feeling if there is time to do that.

The Town Clerk advised that there is not time to do this as the next full council meeting is not until 5th November.

It was **resolved** to not combine the Winter Four Seasons and Christmas Lights Switch-on markets in 2024.

The Chairman suggested that the Events Committee looks at how the [Four Seasons] market moves forward and how the market is managed at the next Events Committee meeting, with the understanding that for any management of the market externally of the town council, the town council will set the rules of engagement.

It was **resolved** that the Events Committee **i.** looks at the management of the Four Seasons markets at its next meeting on 16th September, and **ii.** makes a recommendation for the management of the Four Seasons markets going forward to the town council at its next meeting on 5th November.

iii. Petitions Policy – Members were asked Petitions Policy.

A member suggested that the fourth bullet point on page 2 of the Petitions Policy should be amended to read 'Have a minimum of 20 of the ward population valid signatures;' deleting 'or 10%'.

The Chairman had also suggested some minor amendments to the Town Clerk.

With the suggested amendments, it was **resolved** to approve the Petitions Policy.

7. Minutes of Potton Town Council (agenda item 6)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18th June 2024, which had been previously circulated, were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

8. Town Council Committee Minutes (agenda item 7)

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

Planning Committee – 18th June, 2nd and 16th July 2024 – approved.

Youth Council – 8th July 2024 – approved.

Events Committee – 8th July 2024 - approved.

Environment Committee – 16th July 2024 - approved.

9. Reports from Central Bedfordshire Councillors (agenda item 8)

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

Cllr Wye reported that she wrote a stern letter to CBC about the temporary no waiting restriction proposal on The Paddocks and Sutton Mill Road, which seemed to have worked as the proposal has not been approved.

Cllr Wye also mentioned that she had been liaising with the Town Clerk with reference to the collection of rubbish from the recent work carried out by the Community Payback team.

The Town Clerk advised that the rubbish had been collected, but was unsure by whom as he hadn't made a request to CBC.

Cllr Wye mentioned her ongoing work with Cllr Day on the Glyphosate-free Town Policy that Potton Town Council has promoted. Cllr Wye is trying to arrange a meeting with CBC and PAN UK (Pesticide Action Network) to get some advice.

Cllr Wye gave her congratulations on the completed Millennium Path.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Wye for her report.

Cllr Zerny mentioned that CBC is trying to get some feedback from the Government on housing and new towns (Temptford is sited as a potential new town).

Cllr Zerny has been talking to Universal Destinations and Experiences who are exploring a potential theme park and resort project near Stewartby, and CBC has been publicising the new Local Plan consultation, which is ongoing until 23rd September.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Zerny for his report.

10. Proposed Temporary Waiting Restriction – The Paddocks, Potton – Ref: CBC 10200 (agenda item 9)

Members noted that the proposal for a temporary no waiting restriction on The Paddocks, Potton which was planned to commence on 1st November 2024 has not been approved by CBC.

11. Finance

i. **Verify Bank Reconciliations against statement 1st June – 30th June 2024.**

Members proceeded to go through the Bank Reconciliation.

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

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

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

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

iii. **Verify Bank Reconciliations against statement 1st July – 31st July 2024.**

Members proceeded to go through the Bank Reconciliation.

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

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

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

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

v. **Public Works Board Loan – Potton Hall for All**

Members noted the loan information provided by the Town Clerk.

vi. **Forward Gamlingay! Youth Club Closure**

Members noted the correspondence from Sarah Groom, Chair of Forward Gamlingay!, and the Town Clerk's comments that the £1,000 contribution was a fair amount to cover the youth club's running costs and that the town council should not seek to recoup any funds.

It was **resolved** that the £1,000 contribution was a fair amount to cover Forward Gamlingay! youth club's running costs from April to July 2024.

vii. **Magpas Air Ambulance – Request for funding**

Members were asked to consider if they wish to make a donation from the General Power of Competence (GPC) following receipt of a request for funding from Magpas Air Ambulance.

It was noted that the Town Clerk suggested to transfer the remaining £2,500 funds awarded to Forward Gamlingay! to the GPC budget.

It was **resolved i.** to transfer the remaining £2,500 funds awarded to Forward Gamlingay! to the GPC budget, and **ii.** to award £250 of GPC monies to Magpas Air Ambulance.

12. Review of draft Potton Town Council Financial Regulations

Members reviewed the draft Potton Town Council Financial Regulations.

A member asked if regular back-up copies are made of council computers which are stored either on-line or in a separate location from the main computer (point 2.7 of the Financial Regulations)?

The Town Clerk confirmed that regular back-ups are carried out.

The Chairman asked the Town Clerk if the town council has a formal recognised Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery (BC/DR) plan?

The Town Clerk advised that the town council does not have a BC/DR plan.

It was **resolved i.** for the Town Clerk to produce a BC/DR plan for the town council, and **ii.** to approve the Potton Town Council Financial Regulations.

13. Councillor Surgeries

The Chairman invited reports from the councillor surgeries which took place on 15th June and 24th August.

Cllr Hobbs advised that one resident highlighted the pothole problems in Royston Street and Sun Street at the surgery on Saturday 15th June. The potholes have since been repaired. A second resident reported a van that appeared to be abandoned on Bury Hill, however this has now been removed.

Cllr Macdonald reported that the surgery held at the Party on Potton Community Day on Saturday 24th August was busy. Various people signed up for the Dog Watch. There were a lot of happy people, with positive feedback on the Millennium Path, lots of questions around Community Safety, and no complaints.

The Chairman thanked Cllrs Hobbs and Macdonald for their reports.

14. Hall for All update

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

Cllr Gwilliam reported that the build is proceeding well and ahead of programme. The only issue is to do with acoustics for the building. There is an ongoing discussion on how the roof turrets are attenuated, as there is a very strict sound transmission planning clause.

There is also the proposed development of the residential care home and other dwellings on land next to the Hall for All development. The discharge of conditions for the Hall for All need to be finalised before this planning application [[CB/24/01340/FULL](#)] goes through.

The Hall for All Steering Group is working on the terms of the lease and how it will work. The Steering Group proposed that they negotiate and transact the lease.

A member mentioned that the town council regularly asks to see a business plan for the Hall for All. Cllr Gwilliam advised that the business plan remains unchanged.

The Chairman mentioned that there needs to be an establishment of rules of engagement, etc for the lease. The general feeling between the Hall for All Trustees and the town councillors on the Joint Steering Group is to sort the lease and then recommend it to the town council.

A member asked if the business plan and the lease go hand-in-hand?

The Chairman advised that the lease is independent of the business plan. The lease will cover how many years, who is responsible for what, who is responsible for maintenance and insurance, etc. The business plan is related to the management and running of the business, which is separate to the lease.

The Chairman asked if Mrs Smith would like to add anything?

Mrs Smith mentioned that the build should be finished by the end of 2024, there will be a short time for work on fit out and furnishing, but hoping to be in a position to book the hall out by February/March 2025.

The Chairman said that a realistic date of when the building will be available for hire needs to be decided.

A member asked if there will be a formal opening?

The Chairman said that it is planned to have a formal opening, that a date needs to be set for the opening, and to invite Deputy Lieutenant Chris Kilroy to the event.

The hall needs to be ready for the Chairman's Community Celebration on Monday 28th April 2025.

The Chairman mentioned that the President of Sandy Rotary Club will be contacting the Town Clerk directly to discuss a donation/contribution to the defibrillator for the Hall for All.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Gwilliam for her update.

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

Members noted that the work to install the power and water services has still not begun.

16. Items for the next agenda

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 21st October.

Members were reminded that the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire, Mr John Tizard, will be in attendance at the next meeting of the town council.

It was suggested to advertise that the Police and Crime Commissioner will be attending the town council meeting on 5th November, and if any councillors or members of the public have any questions that they can submit them in advance, or come along to the meeting.

17. To note the date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting will be on Tuesday 5th November 2024 following a meeting of the Planning Committee at 7pm in the Community Centre.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Cairns and Macdonald.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.50pm.

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.