



POTTON
TOWN COUNCIL

News

February 2025 Edition

www.pottontowncouncil.co.uk



Photo credit: Matthew Ayres

Highlights of this edition:

Pages 2-5

Chairman's message

Page 13

**Design a Christmas
Light Competition**

Page 6

**Your newly co-opted
Town Councillor**

Page 17

**Potton Hall for All
nearing completion**

Pages 8-9

**Managing Potton's
Trees**

Page 24

Potton Youth Council





Chairman's message

Hello and welcome to the February 2025 edition of the Town Council quarterly newsletter.

Happy New Year!

Another year has passed and, to be fair, an eventful one it has been for both the council and the country. We have had every season in every order and not quite as we hoped; the rather wet weekend for Party on Potton that didn't dampen the spirits of those who organised and attended, and a few storms and flooding in local areas. We also had a general election and change of government, which will have some local effects due to the budgetary changes made, which I will come to later.

Town Councillor resignations

Bob Kett has stepped down as a Councillor of Potton Town Council after 14 months. I would like to thank Bob for his tenure, and for his contribution to such projects as the Potton Neighbourhood Plan and Potton Green Wheel Working Groups of which he was a member for a number of years.

Hannah Cairns also resigned as Councillor in January after only a very short tenure having been co-opted in September 2024.

Welcome to our new councillor

A warm welcome to our new councillor, Cllr Emma Horsfall who was co-opted to the Town Council in January. **Read more about Cllr Horsfall on page 6.**

The Town Council has three councillor vacancies to fill. **Find out how to apply on page 6.**

Christmas lights



Photo credit: Matthew Ayres

More recently the Christmas lights were put up by the Events Committee and volunteers and I think they're much appreciated by all in the town. The Switch-On event was a success and really well attended, the weather being kind on the day, bar a few minor glitches with the sound system, note to Cllr Carol Leggatt make sure you corral all the gremlins next year! **Read the Christmas Lights article on page 12.**



Father Christmas goes away for another year

Hall for All



Another success last year was the Hall for All build generally, which did unfortunately run in to an issue caused as a result of the site's power supply not being where it was supposed to be according to the plans, and a delay due to bad weather and the need to reschedule contractors as a result. Somehow the power was never installed from the substation to the site. This has been resolved and as of 2nd January the building has a power supply, so the work can be rescheduled and as things move

forward, we hope it'll be complete and ready for occupation by the end of March. An official opening will take place on Friday 28th February. A date for local groups and residents to explore this impressive new facility is to be confirmed. Thanks must go to Watson & Cox (Construction) Ltd, for working with us to deliver a hall that will become a valuable asset to the community.

Read more on page 17.

If you'd like to volunteer and get more involved just email **hall4allpotton@gmail.com** to find out more.



Photo credit: Chris Miles

The Four Seasons Markets

The Four Seasons Markets have always been a feature of the town's calendar appreciated by many. In recent years the council staff have been managing the market with a reliance on volunteers, so we decided to employ a part-time Market Superintendent, whom many of you will probably know. I would like to welcome Mike Francis-MacRae and congratulate him on his appointment and wish him well in his post. Any ideas about the markets, and any developments and/or changes should be directed to him in person or via pottoncouncil@btconnect.com.



The Four Seasons Markets
Photo credit: Matthew Ayres

Events

Events are now being planned for this coming year including **VE Day 80 on Thursday 8th May** and **PottonFest on Saturday 21st June**. There will be more information in our next newsletter.



Local Plan

Something I feel I must bring to your attention is the review of the Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) Local Plan, as this potentially DOES affect everyone directly. The plan defines the areas that are considered by CBC as acceptable for development, for industry and housing, and calls for sites to be nominated for consideration. So, if you have views on this please do keep your eyes open for any consultation on the sites and respond. I'm sure our Ward Councillors Adam Zerny and Tracey Wye will promote/publicise these and be able to answer any questions you may have.



As a council we have a neighbourhood plan which will be impacted by any outcomes of this process and the council's neighbourhood plan group will be looking at any proposals. Here with the views of the new ministers we have to be realistic and understand that it is likely that some development may come our way. This being the case, we as town need to ensure that any substantive development is built in the most acceptable place, with Section 106 developer contributions being to Potton's direct benefit rather than somewhere else in the county that will not benefit Potton directly.

Budget

Lastly, as we all know the price of everything has gone up, and this is the case for the council as well particularly the costs related to employment as a result of the budgetary changes made by the Government. Last year we had to increase Council Tax by 10%, but we do not intend to repeat this. This year to be able to maintain the services we provide to you we have calculated that there will have to be an increase to Council Tax by 7.5%, which in monetary terms is nominal compared to the rise that CBC are likely to be levying to make their budget work. **Read more on page 16.**

Best wishes

Jonathan

Cllr Jonathan Price Williams

Four Seasons Market





Saturday 15th March
9am – 1pm

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



Help clean up our streets

Join the Great British Spring Clean



SATURDAY 22ND MARCH 2025
The Community Centre, Brook End, Potton SG19 2QS

FROM 10AM-2PM
[#GBSpringClean](https://twitter.com/GBSpringClean)

Your newly co-opted Town Councillor

Cllr Emma Horsfall was co-opted on to the town council at a meeting on Tuesday 7th January 2025.

'I moved to Potton in 2004 with my husband Guy and two then, very young children from Welwyn Garden City because I wanted my children to grow up in a country environment as I had; they have since grown up and have their own careers away from Potton, but both are still involved with the local community here.

Whilst the children were growing up I was involved with pre-school and school committees, St Mary's Church and 1st Potton Scouts, the children being involved with far more in the local community.

I have worked as a project manager since returning to full-time work in 2007, currently for a company in the food logistics industry, and I now also run the Potton Brewing Company with my husband.

I am passionate about sustainability, the environment and living a healthy lifestyle and hope that my experience and passions can be of benefit to the town, from which I have benefited for the last 20 years.'

I am very much looking forward to representing a town such as Potton!

Emma

Cllr Emma Horsfall



Vacancy for Potton Town Councillors

Visit: <https://www.pottontowncouncil.co.uk/vacancies/> to find out how you can apply to be a town councillor and have the opportunity to be a part of your community.

If you require any additional information, please contact the Town Clerk either by email pottoncouncil@btconnect.com or phone **01767 260086**.

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, or 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 [f @PottonTownCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/PottonTownCouncil) or [t @pottoncouncil](https://www.twitter.com/pottoncouncil)

Town Council Meetings

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

Tuesday 4th March 2025
Tuesday 6th May 2025

SCAN THE QR CODE
FOR MORE INFO



Town Councillors

Charles Craig	260047	Andrew Inkersole	261966
John Day	07986 124440	Carol Leggatt	260001
Vicki Gwilliam	07958 981602	Angus Macdonald	262006
John Hobbs	260710	Dan Norman	260643
Emma Horsfall	07957 534688	Jonathan Price Williams	07981 350359
Guy Horsfall	07957 319520	Adam Zerny	0300 300 8540

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

Councillor Surgeries

**To be held inside the Community Centre with the Potton Youth Council
Fundraising Coffee Morning on Saturday 15th March 2025.**

Cllrs Charles Craig and Dan Norman (10am-12pm)

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



Please recycle this newsletter
when you've finished reading it by putting it in your green recycling bin.

Managing Potton's Trees

Authors: **Cllr John Day and Jill White – Environment Committee**

There are many trees throughout the town, but just over 300 of them are the responsibility of the town council. These are located on land which the town council has responsibility for maintaining, namely Henry Smith Playing Fields, St Mary's Churchyard, Sandy Road Cemetery, and Mill Lane Recreation Ground.

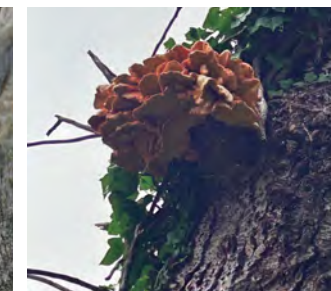
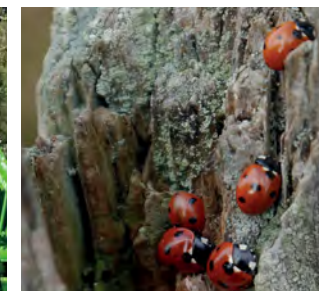


Most trees bordering public highways and public footpaths are the responsibility of the highways or rights of way teams at Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC). The remaining trees are on private property and their management is the responsibility of the householder or landowner.

There are approximately 670 trees throughout the town (on both public and private land) which are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), protecting them from unsolicited removal or damage. Remedial work

or removal due to disease requires application to and permission from the local planning authority, not the town council.

Generally speaking, the town council only carry out active management of the trees they are responsible for if the tree is diseased, dangerous or damaged. Every three years, an arboriculturist report is produced on behalf of the town council for their trees. The report assesses the health of each tree, any safety risks posed to the public, and advises a programme of



remedial actions required to maintain the tree in a safe condition.

In addition to its safety obligations, the town council has conservation objectives requiring it to retain trees with certain defects such as hollows and a certain amount of standing dead timber. Decaying timber on standing trees is of very high wildlife value. It is home to some of our rarest invertebrates who are entirely reliant upon it, as also are many kinds of fungi, lichens and mosses. It also provides a source of food to many

specialist birds as well as nest and roost sites for birds and bats. However poor the condition of a tree, it is expected remedial work will only be necessary when there is a clear perceived risk to life or property which cannot be adequately reduced or eliminated by other means. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) states that duty holders should not be encouraged to fell or prune trees unnecessarily.

The town council will be looking for future opportunities in time to plant more trees in the town.



Potton Recycling

Author: Jill White



There have been a number of changes to the Potton Recycling scheme over recent months as a result of manufacturers withdrawing from sponsorship of some schemes. Please be aware that we can no longer accept coffee pouches, toothpaste tubes or packaging from crisps, nuts, pretzels and popcorn, although we do still take toothbrushes, electric toothbrush heads and packaging from biscuits, crackers and cakes. We also accept lots of other things including boxes from Ferrero chocolate, rubber gloves, plastic lunch boxes and water bottles and Pringles tubes. We've also recently started accepting packaging from bakery products, including Warburtons wax wrap, so please save your bread bags for us!

Changes can sometimes take place at quite short notice and we apologise for this, but we are subject to which

schemes Terracycle, the company which recycles the waste, is able to run at any given time. On a positive note, however, much of the soft plastic packaging which we can no longer accept in our local scheme can now be taken to most large supermarkets and deposited along with plastic bags in their dedicated recycling bins.

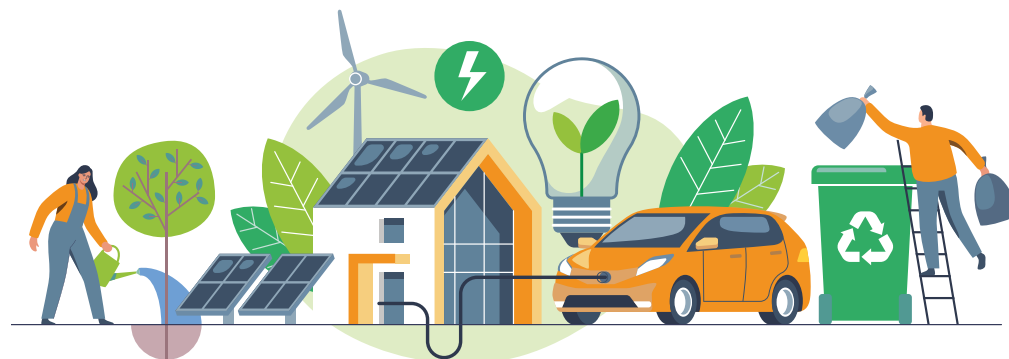
Please see the Potton Town Council Website at pottontowncouncil.co.uk/recycling for a complete list of everything we accept at any given time and always double check the bin labels before depositing your waste as they are always correct. The bins can be found opposite the public toilets on Brook End and all money raised goes to the Potton Hall for All. If you'd like to know more about the scheme, please contact the town council office on **01767 260086** or pottoncouncil@btconnect.com.



Bins are located near the Community Centre on Brook End

Community Energy

Author: Cllr Charles Craig



By way of an update, the Potton Town Council Community Energy Working Group is continuing as a town-council affiliated group. However, a Community Benefit Society has now been set up to cover the local region including Biggleswade, Potton and Sandy.

The group is called River Ivel Community Energy (RICE - <https://riverivelcommunityenergy.com>). The group is a cooperative dedicated to helping local communities cut their heating bills and transition to renewable energy. RICE is a new group supported by Central Bedfordshire Council and Community Energy South. Although just set up last year, the group is making rapid progress, taking on-board training in the various powering up (sustainable energy generation) and powering down (improvements to housing insulation) such that we can now access advice from local Energy Champion volunteers.

For Potton, we are hoping to have Energy Champions visit the Friendship Group on a Thursday morning (date

to be arranged) at the Community Centre in Brook End to present on the Powering down approach - which might help residents reduce their energy bills through using less gas or electricity! In addition to Potton residents, the Community Agent is keen to include residents from out-lying villages and we will be contacting parish councils with details.

Any Potton residents, and residents from the local area, interested in joining the RICE group (membership £1.00), or indeed, the Potton Community Energy Working Group, please contact me (260047) or email pottoncouncil@btconnect.com.

Christmas Lights

Author: Cllr Carol Leggatt

The Christmas Lights were a great success again this year according to the responses from local people. They felt that our display was one of the best in our surrounding area. The new Father Christmas illumination was certainly a talking point. He was either loved or scary.



The Switch-On event and market was well attended and supported both on the Market Square and in the Community Centre, and hopefully this year there will be more lights to make it even brighter in Brook End.

Stallholders who wish to attend the 2025 Switch-On market are welcome to get in touch now to reserve a pitch. Please contact me via the town council office pottoncouncil@btconnect.com.

I would also like to say a big THANK YOU for the support we receive from the local businesses, from supplying food, and a lorry, to having a collection bucket on their premises. It makes a huge difference, and enables us to put

on our event at a fraction of the cost compared to other local towns.

At the wash-up meeting after the lights were all down, I was asked if I could make people aware of the amount of work that goes into this occasion, how the costs are kept to a minimum and that all the lights actually belong to the town. It is all taking place due to a few committed people. Would you like to get involved?

This also includes Father Christmas going round the town. I know we do not go to every street, but I think we cover the vast majority and one only has to walk to a nearby street to see him. He is certainly not going about the town in a silent fashion. Alternatively, go to the Market Square to meet him personally. An interesting fact is that the Elves do 20,000 steps on that night.



Potton is a great community to live in and we welcome support from all ages at any of our events.

Competition

Potton Town Council's 'Design a Christmas Light' competition is back this year. This is an opportunity for Potton children to design a Christmas light which will be installed ready for the 2025 season.

You can take inspiration from our previous winners below:



The rules are:

1. You can enter a maximum of one design.
2. The design must be on A4 paper.
3. The competition closes on 31st March.
4. Children of all ages can enter, if they live in or attend a school in Potton.
5. Entries to be submitted to the town council office at the Community Centre, Brook End, or pottoncounciladmin@btconnect.com.

Community Safety

Author: Cllr Charles Craig



The Community Safety Working Group continues to liaise with Bedfordshire Police and Central Bedfordshire Council's Safety Communities Officers on local criminal activities.

One problem identified is the reluctance of residents to report incidents. Several different routes for reporting incidents are listed below. This includes a fully confidential route independent of police – using Crimestoppers. If reported, police might investigate your specific incident (subject to resource), but they also register the incident on police records, which feeds into policing strategy and the potential for increased local policing. In addition, local series of crimes might have been stoppable had reports been made after the first incident. Note also that it is possible to report dangerous driving (make, colour and registration). Furthermore, local antisocial behaviour (ASB) could be reduced greatly if reported to police. Timely reporting can help to reduce this inexcusable expense to us all.

Police: In emergency phone 999!
If not or if emergency situation passed:
Phone 101 OR Online:
www.beds.police.uk
(report / crime tab) OR

Crimestoppers: 0800 555111 or
on-line: <https://crimestoppers-uk.org>
(Fully anonymous; Independent of police).

Additional contacts:
Central Bedfordshire's Community
Safety Partnership (CSP) <https://safercentral.org/#reportaproblem>

Potton Town Council: Email to
pottoncouncil@btconnect.com;
OR write to: The Community Centre,
Brook End, Potton, Bedfordshire, SG19
2QS; OR speak with a town councillor.

**FACEBOOK DOES NOT
ADD TO POLICE STATISTICS**

Finally, as a local dog walker, I have noticed a significant increase in deposits of dog mess around the town. **DOG OWNERS, PLEASE LIFT YOUR DOG'S MESS** – don't leave this mess on the streets for children to play in as well as for prams, buggies, wheelchairs and shoes to become contaminated for later distribution! The town council does provide dog waste bag dispensers in various locations in the town, with over 20,000 bags being used every year!

Brook End Car Park

At the meeting of the town council in March 2025, the charging and enforcing of Brook End Car Park will be considered.



Potton Town Council (PTC) currently operates the free to use Brook End car park despite Central Bedfordshire Council charging the town council over £4,000 per year in rates.

Following a Town Benchmarking survey in 2017 the need for additional parking in the town to support our key services and shops was identified. Parking was seen as the largest single factor likely to deter people from using local shops and services. The town council therefore proposed the extension of the current car park given that space and land is at a premium in the centre of town. We hoped the extension, which was completed in 2019 and cost nearly £100,000, would alleviate parking issues and make it easier for people to access the shops and the local surgery.

The town council regularly receives complaints about the lack of parking and

the fact that many cars parked in the car park never move.

The town council carries out regular checks on vehicles parked in the car park, and will display notices for the following reasons:

- No Tax or MOT
- Parked in a disabled space without displaying a blue badge
- Not parking in a designated space
- Parking for a lengthy period which prevents maintenance of that space being carried out, e.g. cleaning drains, removal of leaves etc. (Town council staff will sometimes put cones on parking spaces at the end of the day so that maintenance can be carried out the next morning.)

Town Council Budget

The Town Council is funded through a small portion of the Council Tax known as a precept and by income it generates.

The town council does not receive any funding from central government, and following the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Autumn Budget to Parliament on Wednesday 30th October 2024, salary costs will increase.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) advised the town and parish sector in November 2024:

'I wanted to reach out following the Budget increase in Employer National Insurance contributions and what it means for parish and town councils. We are conscious that this will impact the finances of town and parish councils, and have been discussing the implications of these changes with colleagues at the Treasury. I'm writing to confirm that town and parish councils will not be included in a package to compensate public sector bodies for this rise.'

The policy set by the Chancellor is to compensate those who are direct public sector employees funded out of public money. Parish councils are not directly funded by central government and so do not fall into this category.

We recognise that this will require town and parish councils to make some difficult financial decisions, and in particular that many may need to raise their precept, and that some may need to make staffing cuts in order to meet these new costs.'

On Tuesday 7th January 2025, Potton Town Council held a meeting of the full Town Council, where the 2025-26 budget and precept was set. It was voted to increase the council tax by 7.5%, to ensure a fiscally responsible budget. Potton Town Council increased Band D by £1.10 per month or £13.14 per year. We are committed to maintaining our existing services to support Potton residents.

The total Council Tax bill in Potton will provide for Central Bedfordshire Council, Potton Town Council, Bedfordshire Police and Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.



We are nearly there!

Author: **Liz Smith**

Registered Charity number 1158751

We had hoped that the building would be complete by the end of 2024 with a few weeks of final fit out. Inevitably there were a few delays in the build, the most significant being the delay in getting electricity into the site. By the end of 2024 our builders, Watson and Cox, had completed everything they could do on the building without the installation of electricity and were forced to halt work to wait for that to happen.

I am delighted to tell you that the electricity was connected on 2nd January and so now it is all systems go. Work is now going ahead to complete the inside of the building and the final fit out and furnishing.

We will be taking bookings from March this year. If you are interested in hiring the hall for private events or for your clubs, societies or businesses please contact us via our email account **hall4allpotton@gmail.com**.

If you would like to be part of the team making Potton Hall for All a great venue for all your events in Potton, please get in touch.

The Duke of Gloucester will officially open the building on Friday 28th February. Keep an eye on **<http://pottonhallforall.org.uk>** and social media for more details.



Photo credit: Chris Miles

Update from Central Bedfordshire Councillor Adam Zerny

Potton Ward Councillor and Leader of Central Bedfordshire Council



(L-R) Adam Zerny, Leader of Central Bedfordshire Council, The Baroness Taylor of Stevenage OBE, Local Government Minister and Marcel Coiffait, Chief Executive, Central Bedfordshire Council

Government pushing hard for devolution - what will it mean for us?

The government has published a White Paper on 'Devolution' and wants local authorities to come together as groups, with a mayor. This could mean the loss of some local control but the government says in exchange these 'Strategic Authorities' will get extra powers on planning, transport and employment skills.

In England there are 317 councils; a mix of unitaries (e.g. Central Bedfordshire Council), counties (e.g. Cambridgeshire County Council), districts (e.g. South Cambridgeshire District Council), boroughs, metropolitan districts (e.g. Birmingham City Council) and London boroughs. They have different powers,

sizes and funding; some areas have three or even four tiers (e.g. Cambridgeshire) whereas we have just two. The government is eager to reduce the number of tiers and says it wants a "shift of power away from Whitehall".

The government wants to bring groups of councils together as 'Strategic Authorities', each with a mayor who will get extra powers. It's important to note this is not about merging existing councils to create one really big council, but about giving specific powers to a mayor who would sit above a group of other councils. These powers might include:

- Co-ordination of buses, roads and rail policy across a region.
- Powers over sustainable energy, work skills and employment strategy.

- Involvement in health and policing (perhaps even doing away with Police & Crime Commissioners).
- More powers on planning decisions across a region and greater influence over new infrastructure.

The White Paper also mentions financial benefits which have accrued for other areas such as "£30.5 million of funding" achieved for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, but of course none of this can be guaranteed for other areas.

These plans are not just about extra devolved powers though; the government clearly wants to reorganise how councils work, and I suspect it's also about easing the passage for major housebuilding.

I have met with the Leaders of the councils in Bedford, Luton, Milton Keynes, West Northants and North Northants, and we were in agreement that we need to understand more about what the government is proposing. Conversations will certainly continue with these local authorities, in light of this government report.

In a 35,000 word White Paper, the word 'referendum' gets not one mention. My understanding is instead of a public vote, there will be a consultation after which the government will make a decision.

While there is every indication the government wishes local authorities to come to arrangements about who they group with, the document says legislation

"will allow the creation of those Strategic Authorities where local leaders have, after due time has been allowed, not been able to make progress."

I recently put forward a motion to all of the Central Bedfordshire councillors over whether they wished to investigate what devolution would mean for Central Bedfordshire residents, and this was passed unanimously.

I have since met with Local Government Minister Baroness Sharon Taylor to discuss further and there will be ongoing discussions in the months to come with the government and with our neighbouring local authorities.

My feeling is we need to learn more about what deal the government is prepared to offer and make a final decision only when we know what is on the table.

My primary concern is whether devolution will be for the good of the residents of our area.

Adam Zerny

Independent Central Bedfordshire councillor for Potton

Tel: **0300 300 8540**

adam.zerny@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Tracey Wye

Independent Central Bedfordshire councillor for Potton

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Potton Community Agent News

Supporting the over 60s in Potton

Are you new to the community?

If you are looking for groups and activities to get involved in but not sure what's available then contact Andrea who can help you find something suitable.

Benefits Support

There are still around 750,000 people who are entitled to Pension Credit, but are not claiming it. You may be entitled to Pension Credit if your total weekly income (state pension and private pensions) is below £218.15 if you are single, or £332.95 if you are a couple. You must both be over State Pension age if you live as a couple. Andrea can also help with Blue Badges and Attendance Allowance applications.



Friendship Group Christmas Party 2024

Tablet Training Group

Were you given a tablet, iPad or smart phone for Christmas? Not sure how to use it? We can help! We can support you in sending emails, making phone calls, using WhatsApp etc. If you don't have a tablet but would like one, and can commit to attending drop in sessions on Wednesday mornings from 10am to midday at the Community Centre, then we can provide you with a Samsung tablet and teach you how to use it. Please get in touch for further details.

Thursday Friendship Group

Held at the Community Centre, Brook End, SG19 2QS from 10am until midday. The Friendship Group welcomes all for tea, coffee, soup, cake, a game of cards or dominoes, and a chat every Thursday morning. Entry is £3. So why not come and make some new friends?



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. Tel Andrea mobile: **07590 359 630** (working Weds & Thurs only) or email: **andream@bedsrcc.org.uk**

News from the Benefice

Author: David Tall

In addition to providing a full programme of well supported Christingles, Carol Services, Concerts, Midnight Masses and Christmas Day Services throughout the Benefice, especially the one held in St Mary's where 5 of our 9 readers came from the town, we were pleased to support the town's Christmas Lights Switch-On

We will continue our regular services throughout the year. Details of these services can be found in our fortnightly, Benefice-wide, free, newsletter, The Link. You can be added to the list of Link readers by contacting **benefice.com@gmail.com**. Meanwhile, in the run up to Easter we shall be running six, weekly sessions under the Start! banner, which will last about an hour to help everybody explore their faith. Please visit our website **<http://www.pottonparishchurch.org>** for details.

Our Open the Book Team visited Potton Primary School to read and perform to the children, and we are thrilled that our monthly Family and Friends service continues to provide such a wide variety of activities. Friends and Family services are held on the first Sunday of every month except for August and January.

We are well into our monthly free venture called The Link Cafe holding get togethers from 10am to 1pm on the last Saturday of the month. It has been a joy to see so many people supporting it.

Our magnificent Events Team have great plans for 2025 and these are posted regularly on our website **www.pottonparishchurch.org** (Calendar), or **Twitter@StMarysPotton**.



Photo credit: Matthew Ayres

We are here for you. Need support? Please contact **alex.wheatley.lector@gmail.com** or call **01767 764062**. Please also remember you do not need to be a church goer to ask for any help.

We ask that you please keep the troubled areas of the World in your prayers.

Party on Potton

Looking back to summer 2024

As we make our way through the winter months, what can warm us up more than a look back at last summer? August 23rd to 26th 2024 saw another hugely successful Party on Potton Big Weekend, with thousands in attendance, and we'd once again like to thank all the community for supporting the event.



The rain on the Saturday didn't dampen our spirits and we were able to set up Community Street in the marquee until things dried up later. The marquee also provided shelter for Freeman of Potton, Carlton Avison, and the llamas, goats and ponies he was able to walk through the Market Square!

Sound Express sounded as brilliant as ever on Saturday night, with their audience refusing to let them leave the stage without several encores.

Sunnier weather on Sunday and Monday let the Arts & Crafts Day, Posh Picnic and Sports Day all provide great entertainment, alongside a great roster of local live music that performed throughout on the new large outdoor stage.

Our comedy night on Sunday saw the marquee bursting with laughter, headlined by the fabulous Marcus Brigstocke and compered by the brilliant Laura Lexx. The Big Fat Quiz of Everything on Monday evening was once again a really popular way to close out the festivities, with a marquee full of teams competing to show their talent for trivia.

A special thank you to all our volunteers, sponsors and supporters who gave so generously of time, money and equipment to help bring this fantastic event about. We couldn't have done it without you.



Since the 2024 Big Weekend

The new committee for the Big Weekend 2026 is now in place following the October 2024 AGM. The team is comprised of a mixture of many faces from the 2024 committee, a returning committee member from a previous Big Weekend and new committee members who are already bringing new ideas to the party. If you'd like to get involved as a volunteer as we prepare for the next Big Weekend, please get in touch by email to committee@partyonpotton.org.uk.

Our vision for Party on Potton is to unite all aspects of the community, bringing together people from all walks of life to participate in events that showcase and support local charities and organisations.

You may have also seen the team at the 2024 Potton Christmas Lights, where for the first time we ran a bar alongside our BBQ at this event. Given how busy we were there is every chance you did! We've also been at the Autumn and Winter Seasonal Markets.

We've also been privileged to provide our bar service on several occasions, to help local people celebrate a special event. If you are planning a celebration or event, and would like our support with a bar service and/or BBQ, please contact bar@partyonpotton.org.uk and we'll be delighted to talk to you about your requirements and how we can help. Our bars are staffed by our friendly volunteers and all proceeds go towards the next Big Weekend.

Looking ahead

Of course, you'll also see us at regular events in 2025 such as the Seasonal Markets and Christmas Lights switch-on. Do come and say hello!

We are excited by the plans, covered elsewhere in this newsletter, for the Town Council's Events Committee's summer PottonFest event in June 2025. We'll be there, providing a full bar service and helping Potton to party once again to the live music on offer.

And then of course, in Autumn 2025, attention will start to turn more fully to the Big Weekend 2026.

Wishing you all a great 2025!

The Party on Potton Committee



Fundraiser Coffee Morning

Potton Youth Council will be holding a fundraiser coffee morning in the Community Centre on **Saturday 15th March 2025 from 9.30am.**

We will be selling tea, coffee, and cakes, with gluten free options available.

We are raising money for a basketball hoop in Henry Smith Playing Fields.

Come in for a chat and a drink!



New Youth Councillor, James

What's it like being a New Youth Councillor?

James has recently joined Potton Youth Council and says...

'I joined the Youth Council because I want to be an active member of my community and a voice for young people, ensuring their perspectives are heard. I am passionate about our open spaces and wellbeing, and hope to bring about positive change by addressing issues that benefit everyone. Over the next year and beyond, I look forward to contributing ideas, creating connections, and helping to create a nicer community.'

Vacancies for Potton Youth Councillors

We believe that young people are the future of our communities and we feel it is important that we as a town council invest in them. Potton Town Council supports Potton Youth Council in achieving the following objectives:

- To develop a culture of participation in the democratic process and to develop an awareness of citizenship.
- Be empowered to take decisions and actions to improve the community they live in.
- Form partnerships with local and national organisations.
- Promote respect for each other and the community.
- Encourage all young people to have a voice and believe their views are valued.

If you would like to be a part of this exciting adventure you must fulfil the following criteria:

- Potton resident and/or attend a school and/or organisation in Potton.
- School Year 5-13.
- Have consent from a parent or guardian.
- Commit to attending meetings.

If you can satisfy all of the criteria and are interested, please complete the application form along with the parent/guardian consent form, which you can download from: <https://www.pottontowncouncil.co.uk/vacancies/>

Please send the completed form to:

Mrs Claire Massey, Clerical Assistant, Potton Town Council, The Community Centre, Brook End, Potton, Bedfordshire SG19 2QS

or email to: pottoncounciladmin@btconnect.com

We look forward to hearing from you!