

## **POTTON TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held on  
Tuesday 4th March 2025 at 7.20pm at the Community Centre  
following a meeting of the Planning Committee and Special meeting of Town Council

**Present:** Cllrs Dr C. Craig, Mr J. Day, Mrs V. Gwilliam, Mrs E. Horsfall, Mr G. Horsfall, Mr A. Inkersole, Mrs C. Leggatt, Mr A. Macdonald, Mr D. Norman, Mr J. Price Williams (Chairman) and Mr A. Zerny.

**Absent:** Cllr Mr J. Hobbs.

**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 Cllr Hobbs.

### **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.

The Chairman reminded that it is a legal requirement for new councillors to submit their registerable interests within 28 days of taking up office.

The Town Clerk advised that any amendments to councillors' interests must also be registered within 28 days.

### **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.

A member of the public attended the meeting on behalf of Potton Town Cricket Club to speak about the damage sustained to the fence between the cricket club and the Hall for All/Community Orchard when the orchard's mower was stolen from their container. On checking, the member of the public was advised in writing that the section of fence in question is now the responsibility of the town council.

The Chairman advised that the orchard land has not been signed over to the town council, only the plot of land that the Hall for All sits on, and therefore the boundary fence is not the responsibility of the town council.

The member of the public mentioned that a local fencing contractor had looked at the damage to the fence following installing the security fencing around the [cricket club] pavilion, and was going to contact the Town Clerk to arrange the fence repair believing it was the town council's responsibility. The member of the public said that he was happy to report back that the fence is still the responsibility of Tilia Homes.

The Chairman reiterated that Tilia Homes has not signed over the public open space area which includes the orchard land.

It was suggested for the existing gate between the cricket club and the orchard to be moved to create a path [once the bridge is built across Potton Brook] to allow pedestrian access through from the Hall for All to the Hollow and the café.

#### **4. Minutes of Potton Town Council**

The minutes of the previous meetings held on 7th and 15th January 2025, which had been previously circulated, were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

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

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

- Planning Committee – 7th and 28th January and 11th February 2025 – approved.
- Potton Youth Council – 20th January 2025 – approved.
- Events Committee – 20th January 2025 – approved.
- Management Committee – 28th January 2025 – approved.

#### **6. Reports from Central Bedfordshire Councillors**

The Chairman invited reports from Central Bedfordshire councillors.

Cllr Wye advised she didn't have any significant updates other than helping residents and organisations navigate Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) and keeping an eye on planning, etc.

Cllr Wye congratulated the Hall for All and mentioned that the Open Days on 1st and 2nd March were well attended and well received around the town.

Cllr Wye also thanked Jane and Peter Singleton for the amazing service they have given to the community whilst running Potton Post Office for over 25 years, and that they will be sorely missed.

Cllr Zerny mentioned his newsletter which was circulated on the weekend of 1st March, and that most of the recent effort has been focused on the CBC budget.

Cllr Zerny has written to the Health Secretary highlighting that the local NHS ICB [Integrated Care Board] needs far greater clarity when it comes to funding for health community facilities (GP surgeries, health hubs etc), and is awaiting a response.

The Town Clerk mentioned Cllr Zerny's newsletter article with regards to the BLMK [Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes] ICB, the £250,000 section 106 money for healthcare and Potton's GP surgery and the fact that parking is limited in the town, and suggested that Greensands Medical Practice could spend some of the S106 money to create parking for their staff to free up spaces in Brook End car park. The Town Clerk is aware that the S106 money is controlled by the NHS following the article in the February 2024 edition of the town council's newsletter, and asked if Cllr Zerny would be the appropriate person to encourage CBC to work with the NHS.

Cllr Zerny responded that the ICB is always consulted with planning applications, which gives the ICB an opportunity to say that a development will have an impact on NHS services and request S106 for those purposes. The ICB will then consult with the Potton's GP surgery and ask them what they want. It is understood that the present position is that they believe Potton surgery's capacity is at its limit, and hence any future money will go on increasing capacity at the surgery in Gamlingay. However, the car parking at Gamlingay surgery is equally limited.

Cllr Zerny mentioned that he has written to Greensands Medical practice following his post, making himself available if they would like to talk about any of the implications.

The Town Clerk mentioned that the town council tried to engage with the doctors surgery, but unfortunately the surgery does not ever seem to want to engage.

The GP Surgery, while under the auspices of the ICB, is an independent private practice.

The Chairman asked if, in the longer term, CBC could encourage the doctors surgery to move and have a larger premises in a more suitable location (e.g. Bury Hill side of Potton Brook) using S106 money. It could be funded as a local health centre.

Cllr Zerny advised that CBC has no more or less power over the doctors surgery than the town council, and any overall health plan comes from the ICB. The Town Council is for the people who live within the community and knows the issues the town faces better than CBC. If the town council makes an informal approach for discussions with the surgery, Cllr Zerny would gladly take part. If the surgery was happy to enter into discussions with the town council, CBC could then be approached to consider a potential plan to expand healthcare facilities within the community with S106 money.

Cllr Wye mentioned that CBC built a healthcare centre in Dunstable, but local GPs didn't want to move in. GP surgeries are private businesses funded by the NHS, so unless they wish to engage, there is no point in CBC getting involved.

A member mentioned that he emailed the ICB over a year ago to complain about how impossible it is to get an appointment at the surgery. Eventually, after chasing up the ICB on and off all last year, a response was received at the end of November 2024 saying that *'a member of their estates team has visited Greensands to support their ideas on how to make the building work more effectively. The ICB subsequently arranged for a surveyor to carry out a feasibility visit and provide a report of where improvements could be carried out to increase the clinical capacity to benefit the practice's patients and staff. This has been shared with the practice and meeting dates have been offered to plan the next steps.'*

It was proposed to approach the surgery and the ICB in order to promote the idea of improved patient parking.

It was **resolved** to approach the surgery and the ICB in order to promote the idea of improved patient parking.

## **7. Development in Potton**

Members noted the planning applications considered by the Planning Committee at a meeting earlier in the evening.

**Application No:** CB/25/00193/FULL

**Location:** Warren Farm, Carthagen Road, Sutton, Sandy SG19 2NQ

**Proposal:** Conversion of an agricultural barn to a dwelling, erection of a detached home office, associated parking and landscaping (Retrospective).

**Weblink:**

<https://cbc.aifusion.io/planning/publicViewer.html?caseID=CB/25/00193/FULL>

**Application No:** CB/25/00241/FULL

**Location:** Warren Farm, Carthage Road, Sutton, Sandy SG19 2NQ

**Proposal:** Erection of agricultural building, installation of ground mounted solar array, formation of pond, erection of tank barn and construction of operational hardstanding and access ways (part retrospective).

**Weblink:**

<https://cbc.aifusion.io/planning/publicViewer.html?caseID=CB/25/00241/FULL>

It was resolved to recommend to object to the applications based on the fact that the town council has objected to retrospective applications that are within the town boundary. Other applications received for speculative changes to property which later have been converted to residential accommodation.

**Application No:** CB/25/00268/FULL

**Location:** Potton Hall for All, Hutchinson Rise, Potton, Sandy SG19 2DZ

**Proposal:** Installation of surface water drain connecting the proposed development with the existing chamber.

**Weblink:**

<https://cbc.aifusion.io/planning/publicViewer.html?caseID=CB/25/00268/FULL>

It was resolved to recommend to object to the application. The current surface water drain will not cater for additional rainwater. The Bedfordshire and River Ivel Internal Drainage Board has given Potton Hall for All permission for discharge. This application will result in an increase in discharge.

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

## **8. Market Square Disabled Bay Waiting Restriction**

Members were asked to consider the Market Square disabled bay waiting restriction scheme which Central Bedfordshire Council are consulting on.

A member mentioned that there is one particular vehicle that appears to be permanently parked in the Market Square and asked if the owner be restricted to three hours even if a blue badge is displayed?

The Town Clerk confirmed that this vehicle and all other vehicles parked in disabled parking bays will be restricted to three hours and that CBC's parking enforcement officers will police it, although they only visit the town on one day twice approximately two hours apart.

The Chairman suggested that the only way of changing parking on the Market Square to enforce the two hour parking limit would be to institute an unpopular and expensive parking restriction scheme for example APNR cameras. The town council doesn't have the budget to put such a scheme in place.

Cllr Zerny mentioned that whenever people have asked him when parking enforcement have patrolled the town, there are always lots of recent examples of when they did and therefore they do visit more than we think.

In the past five years or so, CBC has struggled to fill positions for parking enforcement officers, and there are fewer officers to cover the Central Bedfordshire area. The council will be outsourcing the service to a third party in the coming months so there will be more traffic wardens patrolling the area.

The Chairman asked if the third party traffic wardens will be over aggressive?

Cllr Zerny was unsure what the rules will be in respect of the third party, and was not sure if they will keep all the fines or if the fines come to CBC.

Cllr Wye suggested that CBC could work with the town council to help support its policy of walking and cycling rather than driving.

It was suggested that the town council would welcome the change, but queried why CBC is proposing 'to amend the current unrestricted parking for disabled blue badge holder only to limited waiting for three hours Monday to Sunday', when the rest of the Market Square is Monday to Saturday?

It was **resolved** for the Town Clerk to respond to CBC to advise that the town council would welcome the change, but queried why CBC is proposing 'to amend the current unrestricted parking for disabled blue badge holder only to limited waiting for three hours Monday to Sunday', when the rest of the Market Square is Monday to Saturday?

## **9. Future management of Brook End Car Park**

Members were asked to consider the management of car park charging and enforcement at Brook End Car Park.

The Town Clerk mentioned that he has contacted CBC and other private companies with respect to enforcing and charging for the use of Brook End car park. If the town council charges people to use the car park, it will probably remain empty and parking on the roads will become worse, and what the town council receives in income probably won't cover the cost of the enforcement company.

It was suggested to wait and see if there are more visits to the town by traffic wardens once the service is outsourced by CBC.

A member asked if there is a process for clamping or removing untaxed and uninsured vehicles on private land?

The Town Clerk advised that only abandoned vehicles can be removed, but the process takes a long time.

It was suggested to investigate to what the town council is legally allowed to do in terms of enforcing the parking in Brook End car park.

## **10. War Memorial cleaning**

Members considered the quote received from Wrighton & Barker for £1,200 excluding VAT to steam clean the war memorial and repaint the letters black.

It was **resolved i.** to accept the quotation for £1,200 excluding VAT, and **ii.** instruct Wrighton & Barker to clean the war memorial and repaint the letters black.

## 11. Charges

Members considered and discussed the Responsible Financial Officer's (RFO) report with regards to charges for Allotments, the Cemetery, Football, Room Hire and the Four Seasons Market.

### Allotments

It was **resolved** that the charges for the allotments from 25th September 2025 are £55 per year for a half plot and £65 per year for a full plot. The late payment admin charge will remain the same at £20 per year.

#### i. Cemetery

It was **resolved** to increase the Cemetery charges by 7.5% as per the draft Potton Cemetery – Regulations and Charges.

#### ii. Football

It was **resolved** that the charges per match for the 2025/2026 football season are £8 for Mini/Junior, £20 for Youth and £86 for Adult.

#### iii. Room Hire

It was **resolved** to accept the RFO's recommendation to wait to review the charges until later in 2025 in order to assess the Hall for All usage.

#### iv. Four Seasons Markets

It was **resolved** to not increase the pitch charges for the Four Seasons Market.

## 12. Potton Hall for All

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

Cllr Gwilliam was pleased to announce that the Hall for All build is now complete and was handed over to the town council on 21st February 2025. The official opening by the Duke of Gloucester took place on Friday 28th February 2025.

There are two planning applications being submitted for the landscaping and for the acoustics.

The final acoustics report was received recently and apparently the building just 'scrapes by'. The report has been submitted to CBC to discharge the condition.

Moving forward, a Hall Management Committee needs to be set up with representation from the town council, Hall for All Trustees charity and various other stakeholders. Lots of other criteria in terms of running the hall, bookings and cleaning etc, still needs to be established.

Cllr Gwilliam proposed that the Hall for All Joint Steering Group is dissolved at the end of the municipal year and a new committee is convened for the management of the Hall for All. Cllr Gwilliam announced that she would be stepping away from the management of the Hall for All.

It was **resolved i.** that the Hall for All Joint Steering Group is dissolved at the end of the municipal year, and **ii.** a new committee is convened for the management of the Hall for All.

A member asked if there is any interest from groups and organisations to book the Hall for All?

Cllr Gwilliam confirmed that the Hall for All Trustees have received interest from groups and organisations, there is an email address for booking enquiries ([hall4allpotton@gmail.com](mailto:hall4allpotton@gmail.com)), however the internal processes to book the hall have yet to be established.

A member asked what town council presence is required on the Hall for All Management Committee?

The Chairman said that the suggestion is that there should be three town councillors on the Management Committee, and a trustee is also a town councillor [four councillors in total], with a number of other trustees plus the interest groups who are going to use it. Once established it is expected that within six months the committee will dwindle down to a core membership.

A member asked if a cap should be set on the number of councillors that are on the committee?

The Chairman advised that membership of the committee is not up to the town council to define. It will be agreed and defined between the two parties [town council and Hall for All Charity trustees]. The Joint Working Group Agreement is currently being written, and once available will be considered by the town council to ensure that there is a balanced representation on the Hall for All Management Committee.

The Chairman mentioned that at a recent meeting of the Employment Committee it was mentioned that because the town council has more venues, it was pointed out by the Town Clerk that it would be appropriate to have someone who is responsible for managing town council facilities. It was proposed to have a change in the structure which involves having the Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk, a Facilities Manager and other staff. The town council now has more to manage, and it is unrealistic to expect the Town Clerk to manage staff and facilities and all the other duties he has.

The Town Clerk advised that town council will possibly soon be managing another facility in the town in addition to the Hall for All; the allotment site on the Tilia Homes Brook Gardens development.

A member asked when will bookings be able to commence if there isn't a Management Committee and have hire charges been set?

The Chairman advised that all enquiries should be directed to [hall4allpotton@gmail.com](mailto:hall4allpotton@gmail.com). There is already a draft list of charges. It has been suggested that the town council manage facilities (i.e. buildings and land, etc.), and the Hall for All Charity manages usage focusing on making sure the hall is being used, advertised and promoted, but not be involved in management the facility. This will give the town council the ability to maintain the facility in the appropriate manner going forward.

A member asked that if the Hall for All Trustees are managing the bookings for the Hall for All, they will be able to promote the other town council buildings if the Hall for All is not available?

The Chairman said that the town council runs the booking system for the Community Centre and Mill Lane Pavilion, but it would be reasonable to expect the Hall for All Trustees to promote the other venues in the town if the Hall for All was not available or suitable for a prospective hirer's needs, which would be a sensible, co-operative and pragmatic approach for them to take.

### **13. Finance**

i. **Verify Bank Reconciliations against statement 1st December – 31st December 2024.**

Members proceeded to go through the Bank Reconciliations.

It was **resolved** that the Bank Reconciliation for 1st December – 31st December 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 December 2024.**

Members proceeded to go through the detailed statement of income and expenditure against budget.

It was **resolved** to approve the detailed statement of income and expenditure against budget for the period to 31st December 2024.

iii. **Verify Bank Reconciliations against statement 1st January – 31st January 2025.**

Members proceeded to go through the Bank Reconciliation.

It was **resolved** that the Bank Reconciliation for 1st November – 31st January 2025 be approved.

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

Members proceeded to go through the detailed statement of income and expenditure against budget.

It was **resolved** to approve the detailed statement of income and expenditure against budget for the period to 31st January 2025.

### **14. Items for the next meeting agenda**

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

A member proposed to call a special meeting to discuss the criteria for the award of Freeman of Potton, and to consider the proposal for the award of Freeman of Potton to Alan Leggatt.

Cllr Macdonald volunteered to write the proposal for the award of Freeman of Potton to Alan Leggatt.

Cllr Leggatt advised that Mr Langridge will need to be escorted when he is presented with the award of Freeman of Potton. His wife may not be comfortable doing this, however Mr Langridge would be happy to be accompanied by Mr Leggatt if he is well enough.



It was **resolved i.** that following receipt of the written proposal from Cllr Macdonald, the Town Clerk arranges a special meeting of the town council to consider the award of Freeman of Potton to Alan Leggatt, and **ii.** that the town council considers a criteria for the Freeman of Potton award.

Cllr Zerny mentioned that he and Cllr Wye have been contacted by CBC on 3rd March with respect to an annual review of how buses manoeuvre around town centres. The feedback received from bus companies is that they would like to remove several car parking spaces on the North side of the Market Square adjacent to the Library. Cllr Zerny and Cllr Wye have responded that it is completely inappropriate, there isn't an issue with buses manoeuvring around the Market Square and that parking in the Market Square is at a premium, and if anything further happens they expect to be kept informed.

Cllr Zerny asked the Town Clerk to contact him for an update when putting the agenda together for the next town council meeting.

Cllr Zerny confirmed that parking fines levied by a traffic warden would go back to CBC.

The Chairman mentioned that the only time manoeuvring around the Market Square is when deliveries are taking place and cars are double parked, or parked half on and half off the kerb on the Market Square.

#### **15. Date of the next meeting**

Members noted that the Annual meeting of the Town Council will take place on Tuesday 6th May 2025, following a meeting of the Planning Committee at 7pm in the Community Centre.

The Chairman reminded members that at the Annual meeting of the town council, the council will be electing a new Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9pm.

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.