

POTTON TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held on
Tuesday 5th November 2024 at 7.15pm at the Community Centre
following a meeting of the Planning Committee

Present: Councillors Dr C. Craig, Mr J. Day, Mrs V. Gwilliam, Mr J. Hobbs, Mr G. Horsfall, Mr A. Inkersole, Mr B. Kett, Mrs C. Leggatt, Mr D. Norman and Mr J. Price Williams (Chairman).

Absent: Councillors Mrs H. Cairns, Mr A. Macdonald and Mr A. Zerny.

Also present: The Town Clerk.

1. Apologies for Absence

Formal apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs H. Cairns, Mr A. Macdonald and Mr A. Zerny. A formal apology was also received from CBC Cllr Ms T. Wye.

2. Declaration of Interest

Councillors were reminded that they should declare an interest in any matter of personal or prejudicial interest to be discussed at this meeting.

3. Public Participation Session

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

No questions.

4. Identification of land suitable for business expansion within Potton

Correspondence from Mr Robert Hutchinson of G & S Hutchinson Ltd, was noted.

The Chairman mentioned various places in the town which may be suitable for light industrial, the Old Quarry off Carthagen Road and the lorry yard off Sandy Road.

Members suggested the land on Sandy Road passed the Cemetery, Sutton Road and Hatley Road.

Correspondence from Central Bedfordshire Council which had been sent to all town cllrs with regards to a call for sites of brownfield land for the local plan was noted.

It was **resolved (i)** to advise Mr Hutchinson that the town council are discussing possible sites for light industrial as part of a Neighbourhood Plan review. **(ii)** that Cllr Inkersole arranges for the Potton Neighbourhood Plan Working Group to identify brownfield or greenfield land which may be suitable for light industrial and the Potton Neighbourhood Plan Working Group put forward a proposal to the town council of potential brownfield or greenfield land which may be suitable for light industrial.

5. Minutes of Potton Town Council

The minutes of the previous meetings held on 24th July 2024 and 3rd September 2024, which had been previously circulated, were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

6. **Town Council Committee Minutes**

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

Planning Committee – 3rd and 24th September, and 15th October 2024 - approved.

Youth Council – 16th September 2024 - approved.

Events Committee – 16th September 2024 - approved.

Management Committee – 15th October 2024 - approved.

7. **Reports from Central Bedfordshire Councillors**

It was noted that both Potton's Central Bedfordshire Councillors had sent apologies. The Chairman asked if a report had been submitted by either of Potton's CBC Ward Councillors. The Town Clerk advised that a report had not been submitted by either of the ward Cllrs.

Cllr Leggatt asked to speak about Central Bedfordshire Council matter. The Chairman invited Cllr Leggatt to speak about the CBC matter.

Cllr Leggatt mentioned Cameron's Newsagents are needing to replace the window of 11 Market Square which is a Grade II listed building in Potton Conservation Area following a car accident. Cllr Leggatt mentioned that the Town Clerk had sent a letter to the proprietor of Cameron's Newsagents and a copy of the letter had been supplied to both ward cllrs and the letter included "*..... and the two local ward Cllrs (Wye and Zerny) assist where necessary with making sure that the historic and architectural elements of 11 Market Square are returned to how they were prior to the accident.*".

Cllr Leggatt mentioned that she had subsequently spoken with Cllr Zerny about 11 Market Square. Cllr Leggatt mentioned she would like to see Cllrs Wye and Zerny assist the proprietor of Cameron's Newsagent.

It was suggested that Cllrs Wye and Zerny liaise with the Central Bedfordshire Council's Conservation Officer, who then in turn liaises with the proprietor of Cameron's Newsagents with regards to making sure the historic and architectural elements of 11 Market Square (Cameron's Newsagents) are returned to how they were prior to the accident.

It was **resolved** that the Town Clerk contacts Cllrs Wye and Zerny to ask them to liaise with the Conservation Officer, who then in turn liaises with the proprietor of Cameron's Newsagents with regards to making sure the historic and architectural elements (window) of 11 Market Square (Cameron's Newsagents) are returned to how they were prior to the accident.

8. **Finance**

i. **External Auditor – Audit for the year end 31st March 2024**

The Town Council noted the correspondence received from the Town Councils External Auditor. A copy of the annual return which had been returned by the External Auditor was presented to the town council in the council papers.

It was **resolved** to approve and accept the Annual Return including the external auditor's certificate which was presented to the town council for year ended 31st March 2024, following its return by the External Auditor now that they had given an audit opinion.

The town council thanked the Responsible Financial Officer for his work over the last year.

ii. **Appointment of Internal Auditor 2024/2025**

Members discussed about the appointment of the internal auditor. The Town Council undergoes an internal audit on an annual basis. The council reviewed the appointment of an internal auditor.

It was **resolved** that Haines Watts Chartered Accountants be appointed as Potton Town Council's internal auditor for 2024/2025.

iii. **Review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit**

Members had been provided with a copy of the town council's review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit for them to carry out a review of its effectiveness. Members then discussed and reviewed the effectiveness of the Internal Audit.

It was **resolved** to approve the review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit.

iv. **Financial and Management Risk Assessment**

Members had been provided with a copy of Potton Town Council's Financial and Management Risk Assessment for them to carry out a review.

It was mentioned that the RFO and Town Clerk are the same person and concern if the person was unable to carry out duties.

It was **resolved (i)** to approve Potton Town Council's Financial and Management Risk Assessment. **(ii)** that the Town Clerk speak with the Clerical Assistant about stepping in to the position when required for a period of time, so that the council has a fall back. **(iii)** that appraisals need to be undertaken.

v. **Verify Bank Reconciliations against statement 1st August – 31st August 2024.**

Members proceeded to go through the Bank Reconciliation.

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

It was mentioned about making payments online (BACS).

It was **resolved (i)** to speak with the Internal Auditor about whether the number of signatures can be reduced from three to two. **(iii)** about investigating the setting up of making payment online (BACS).

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

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

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

vii. **Verify Bank Reconciliations against statement 1st September – 30th September 2024.**

Members proceeded to go through the Bank Reconciliation.

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

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

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

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

ix. **Budget**

Members noted the report from the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) with regards to the budget. Members also noted the General Reserve and Ear Marked Reserves.

The Chairman spoke about the draft budget.

The Chairman asked the RFO to speak about the draft budget.

The RFO spoke about the budget, precept, council tax and tax base and suggested the council considers transferring monies from the General Reserve to Ear Marked Reserves to assist with the cost of delivering services already delivered by the town council and the delivery of capital projects. The town council has previously moved monies from the General Reserve to Ear Marked Reserves to pay for part or all of the cost of the delivery of several projects and these have included, replacement skatepark, car park extension, Potton Hall for All and replacement Millennium path.

Members spoke about the budget and council tax. It was mentioned that Cllrs can put forward proposals (projects) via the relevant channels eg Committees.

A query was raised about Section 106 and the adding of projects to the CBC list. It was mentioned that an organisation would need to put forward a fully costed project which is needed due to the housing development.

A member mentioned that Potton Cricket Club are looking for 200K for car parking at The Hollow. It was mentioned that this would likely be classed as Outdoor Sport for Section 106 and all Section 106 Outdoor Sport monies have been going towards Potton United Football Club 3G pitch, which is now planned to be located at Potton Primary School having been originally planned to be located at The Hollow.

It was **resolved (i)** that Cllr Hobbs speaks to Potton Cricket Club, making them aware that currently all Section 106 monies for Outdoor Sport are going towards the 3G pitch and ask them to put forward a fully costed project for carparking at The Hollow so that the town council can consider whether to submit the project to CBC as a

potential project for future Section 106 monies for Outdoor Sport. **(ii)** that the Town Clerk prepares a draft budget based on an increase in council tax of 2.5%, 5% and 7.5%.

9. Councillor Surgeries

The Chairman mentioned if anyone would like to volunteer for a councillor surgery, please contact the Clerical Assistant and the dates of councillor surgeries in 2025 are:

Saturday 15th March

Saturday 21st June

Saturday 20th September

Saturday 13th December

The Chairman invited a report from the councillor surgeries which took place on the 21st September, with Cllrs Inkersole and Kett in attendance.

Cllr Inkersole advised that one resident highlighted the speed on Gamlingay Road near Judith Gardens. Cllr Kett mentioned he had sent correspondence to various people to highlight the issue raised by the resident.

Members discussed Gamlingay Road near Judith Gardens and speeding in the town.

The Chairman thanked Cllrs Inkersole and Kett for the report.

Cllr Craig advised he was meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner on Wednesday 6th November with regards to Rural Crime.

10. 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 project has an obstacle in that a power cable hasn't been installed for the building and the council are liaising with the solicitor to make sure that the power supply is installed. The council will then need to look to claim monies back potentially from Tilia Homes. Progress on the building will have to cease without the power. Watson & Cox have written to the Employers Agent to advise Potton Hall for All project is in breach of the contract and the town council will be charged. The council will then again need to look to claim monies back potentially from Tilia Homes.

It was mentioned that without the power supply, a Meter Point Administration Number (MPAN) which is an electricity supply point cannot be issued.

It is difficult to know whether it is Tilia Homes (Kier Living), Central Bedfordshire or another organisation that are at fault for not installing the power supply.

It was mentioned that CBC would need to take Tilia Homes to court to make Tilia Homes install the services which have not been installed (Electric, Gas and Telecommunications).

The Chairman thanked Cllr Gwilliam for the update.

11. Christmas Lights Switch-on

The Chairman invited Cllr Leggatt to speak about the Christmas Lights switch-on.

Cllr Leggatt advised that she is looking for all cllrs to volunteer an hour or two on Saturday 30th November between 12pm – 7pm. The prime times for needing people is at the beginning and the end.

Cllr Inkersole advised he will be doing the Mulled Wine and will assist with packing away. Cllrs Craig and Hobbs advised they would be in attendance to assist.

It was **resolved** that members contact Cllr Leggatt to advise about the times they are available.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Leggatt.

12. Magpas Air Ambulance

Correspondence from Magpas Air Ambulance thanking the town council for a donation was noted.

13. Items for the next agenda

The Chairman mentioned the next meeting will include the budget and if members require any items on the agenda they need to submit them to the Town Clerk.

14. To note the date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting will be on Tuesday 7th January 2025 following a meeting of the Planning Committee at 7pm in the Community Centre.

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

Signed: Date:
Chairman

Mission Statement

The aim of Potton Town Council is to serve the people of this town to the best of its ability.