

Houghton Regis Town Council



Recruitment Pack
December 2024

Finance Support Officer

Closing date for applications: 20th December 2024

WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR



A very warm welcome and thank you for taking an interest in working with Houghton Regis Town Council.

I am extremely honoured to be serving currently as Mayor of such a fantastic and growing town with a lot of investment and exciting ongoing development.



I'm proud to introduce you to a council that's committed to making a positive impact in our community.

We are a vibrant and dedicated team, driven by a shared passion for enhancing the quality of life for all residents, stewarding our town's resources responsibly, and building a town that reflects both our proud heritage and our promising future. Every role within our council is vital to achieving these aims, and we are now looking for new members to join us in delivering the Town Council Corporate Plan 2024-2028.

If you share our commitment to community, our values, and our vision for Houghton Regis, we warmly invite you to consider this opportunity to make a meaningful difference with us.

I would like to wish you the best of luck with your application and I hope to be working with you shortly.

Regards

Cllr Elaine Cooper

Website: www.houghtonregis.org.uk





THE TOWN

References to Houghton Regis in history books have been found at the time of Edward the Confessor. In 1086, it was entered into the Domesday Book, which was a record of a survey of the land of England carried out by the commissioners of William I.

The name of Houstone was recorded in the Domesday Book, but many different versions of the name were recorded between the years of 1086 and 1353. The village name was recorded as Kyngshouton in 1287; while the name of Houghton Regis, as seen today, was first used in 1353. The name Regis was used even in the days of the Domesday Book, as it was a royal manor. It has also been thought that the name Houghton was of Saxon origins with “Hoe” meaning spur of a hill and “Tun” meaning village. Whichever the true meaning, it is certainly interesting reading.

The oldest known building, which is standing in Houghton today, is All Saints’ Parish Church, (situated next to Bedford Square), which was built in the 13th/14th century. Most of modern-day Houghton Regis has been built around its magnificent structure, and many people still enjoy visiting the church and worshipping there.

Locally Houghton Regis is famous for Houghton Hall (listed as an ancient monument), which was built for Dame Alice Milard in 1654 and completed in 1700. The Hall once had large and magnificent grounds surrounding it. These are largely now areas of public open space treasured by the local community.

Tithe Farm Estate was built during the 1960s with its shopping centre, Bedford Square, being a typical example of 1960s architecture. The original Tithe Farm, which stood on the site of Bedford Square, had a Tithe Barn built in the 15th century by Abbot John Moore. The farm and barn were demolished during the 1960s developments.

Redevelopment of the area continued through the 1970s when the Parkside Estate was built and has continued ever since. With the cost of housing increasing in the cities, people from all over the country have continued to settle here due to the ease of travel into London via rail and road networks.

It is clear that Houghton Regis with its ancient history will continue to grow and expand into this new century and beyond, bringing with it new and exciting developments and events which will form the history of tomorrow.

THE TOWN COUNCIL

Houghton Regis Parish Council moved into the former doctor's surgery premises on Peel Street in 1977.

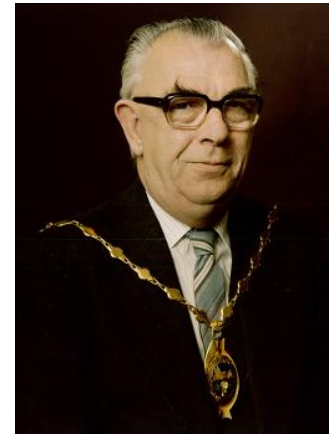


became the first Town Mayor.

Until that date the council did not have its own premises and held meetings in local schools and halls.

In 1974, all Parish Councils had the option to apply for Town Council status, and January 1980, Houghton Regis Town Council was established.

It was in this year that Councillor John Kinchella



Photograph courtesy of Turvey and Turvey

The Town Council consists of 14 councillors who serve the community voluntarily, representing the wards of Tithe Farm, Parkside and Houghton Hall.

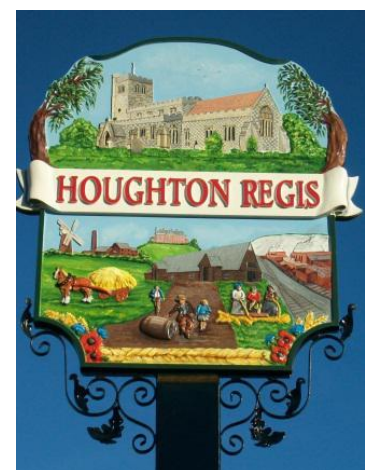
The Town Council is part of a two-tier governmental system. Central Bedfordshire Council is the Unitary Authority.

The primary source of income for the Town Council comes from the Precept, which is a local tax collected by the District Council on behalf of the Town Council. This money is required to run the Council and pay to maintain and improve the facilities, activities and services that the Town Council provides for the Town's residents.

THE TOWN SIGN

The sign was unveiled by the Town Mayor (Cllr Robin Hines 2010 - 11) on Monday 7th February 2011 at 12.30pm outside the Memorial Hall. The sign was paid for using specific grant funding and helped to add a sense of place and community to the town.

In the design and development of the sign, many images were talked about ranging from historic elements to current features, including All Saints Church (including the stained glass window), the Village Green, Bedford Square, the Memorial Stone, Houghton Hall House and Park, the Library, the Carnival, the Council Chamber, the Leisure Centre, the old village pond and willow trees (the trees remain), straw plaiting, the old windmills, barrel rolling, the old fire crew on horse and cart, the Red House, agriculture, the Old Red Lion Public House, the Crown Public House and local industries including printing, cement works and the Luton motor trade.



THE COUNCIL CREST



In a significant milestone for local governance, Houghton Regis Parish Council, as the institution was designated at that time, established its new offices at the Peel Street premises in 1977, marking the beginning of a new chapter in the community's civic history.

As the Council's influence and aspirations continued to expand, a noteworthy initiative emerged during 1981/82 when the governing body made the ambitious decision to commission an official mayoral insignia, befitting the dignity and prestige of the Town Mayor's office. After careful deliberation, the esteemed Birmingham-based craftsmen, Thomas Fatorrini & Sons, were entrusted with this prestigious commission. However, a considerable challenge soon became apparent: the absence of an official coat of arms or heraldic crest to serve as the badge's centrepiece.

In response to this predicament, the Town Council carefully considered which distinctive elements of their beloved community should be immortalised in the design. This led to extensive discussions and deliberations among council members.

A particularly illuminating passage from the official Council minutes reveals the carefully considered symbolism of the final design: "The overall design is the Parish Church with a wheatsheaf against green enamel to indicate the general rural, agricultural nature of the area."

This thoughtful composition was further enhanced by the addition of blue colouring in the lower portion, deliberately chosen to provide an aesthetically pleasing contrast. The pendant's distinctive silhouette was specifically conceived as a contemporary interpretation of traditional civic regalia, reflecting the forward-thinking nature of the community.

The creation of this magnificent Mayor's Chain was made possible through the generous patronage of numerous Local Businesses, who demonstrated their civic pride through financial contribution. The chain was formally presented to the community in 1983. In the decades since its inauguration, this distinguished symbol of civic authority has remained not only a functional piece of ceremonial regalia but has also become a cherished and widely admired emblem of the town's heritage and democratic traditions.

Finance Support Officer

15 hrs per week

Permanent

SCP 14-17 £28,264 – £30,060 pro-rata

An exciting opportunity awaits a passionate, energetic, and enthusiastic individual to join the established team at Houghton Regis Town Council in this new role.

The position is offered with excellent terms and conditions of employment including access to the Local Government Pension Scheme and generous annual leave entitlement.

The Search

We are looking for an experienced, self-motivated, and detail-oriented financial support officer to join our expanding council team. The ideal candidate will bring a proactive approach, a strong commitment to excellence, and the organisational skills needed to help us provide an outstanding level of service to our community.

The Team

Houghton Regis Town Council offers their employees the tools and training to complete their work efficiently. Our dedicated team of officers are proactive and able to make informed decisions based on industry knowledge and expertise. They are self-starters who are able to manage their time effectively and work with others collaboratively, using excellent communication skills to develop effective working relationships with colleagues, contractors and, most importantly, our residents and councillors.

The Applicant

The successful applicant will bring strong attention to detail, an ability to work methodically under pressure, and a commitment to supporting both colleagues and the wider council. Essential experience includes a solid understanding MS Office application (Word, Teams, and Excel) and has experience and knowledge in accounting software. As a confident communicator who is highly organised, will be adept at prioritising tasks effectively and staying calm under pressure. This role calls for initiative, strong teamwork skills, and a willingness to embrace change as required.

CV's will not be accepted.

Please note that no terminology in this advert is intended to discriminate on the grounds of a person's gender, marital status, race, religion colour, age, disability or sexual orientation. Every candidate will be assessed only in accordance with their merits, qualifications and ability to perform the duties of the job

JOB DESCRIPTION

Finance Support Officer

Job Title:	Finance Support Officer
Spinal Point Range:	SCP 14-17 (£28,624 - £30,060) Pro-Rata
Hours of Work:	15 hours per week
Location:	Council Offices, Peel Street, Houghton Regis
Job Summary:	To support the financial activities of the Council within the legal and statutory framework.
Responsible to:	Head of Corporate Services
Responsible for:	None
Committee Responsibility:	None

Key Areas of Responsibility

- To work within the legal, statutory, policy, financial, health & safety framework
- To undertake the day-to-day financial administration of the Council
- To assist with the implementation of the Council's strategic development plan as relevant

Specific Duties & Responsibilities

Corporate management

- To comply with the Council's policies specifically including, but not restricted to, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
- To assist with the management and maintenance of the Council's asset and inventory register

Financial Management & Compliance

- To support the delivery of the Council's financial obligations
- To assist with the internal and external audit processes, the year-end accounts process and the Annual return process
- To upkeep associated records

Financial Operations

- To process receipts including invoice generation, receipt processing and debtor management
- To process orders including managing the purchase order system, order authorisation, invoice allocation
- To process payments including making payments, allocating invoices, creditor management Input of data into the Council's financial software package (Omega)
- The support the petty cash system and petty cash reconciliation
- To keep up to date the asset and inventory registers
- To manage supplier accounts

Democratic Services

- To provide administrative assistance to the office staff as required

Health & Safety Management, Administration & Compliance

- To personally follow the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work Policy of the Town Council

Other

- To assist with providing staff cover within the scope of the role
- To maintain confidentiality at all times in respect of Council-related matters and prevent disclosure of confidential and sensitive information
- To assist with reception duties as required (office staff)
- To support council events as required
- Some evening and weekend work may be required
- Such other duties within the range and scope of the job as may be required from time to time.

Employment Provisions

Terms and Conditions	NJC for Local Government Services
Benefits	The post is eligible to join the Superannuation Local Government Scheme
Annual leave Pro-rata	23 days annual leave, plus 3 additional days after 5 years LG service Public Bank Holidays, 2 additional statutory days Pro Rata
Working hours	15 hours per week
Key holder	Yes – Office
Call out	No
First aider	Discretionary
Car allowance	Casual car user

This is a description of the job as it is at present constituted. It is the practice of this Council to periodically examine employees' job descriptions and to update them to ensure that they relate to the job as then being performed, or to incorporate whatever changes are being proposed. Management in consultation with the employee conducts this procedure. It is the Council's aim to reach agreement to reasonable changes, but if agreement is not possible the Council reserves the right to insist on changes to your job description after consultation with you.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Finance Support Officer

	Essential Attributes	Desirable Attributes
Educational Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bookkeeping qualification /AAT Level 2 or equivalent • Good standard of general education and to at least GCSE Grades A-C (or equivalent) standard in English and Maths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willing to undertake professional development relevant to role
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to prioritise work • Ability to achieve required outcomes • Ability to work effectively as part of a team and to work independently as necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to analyse financial information and to provide advice
Communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good oral and written communication skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good customer care
Information technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in MS office packages including Word, Excel and Team's • Experience in accounting software packages 	
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing and maintaining an asset and inventory register 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General knowledge of local councils and governing legislation.
Financial management	Experience of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day to day financial inputting including Sales & Purchase Ledger, Cash book, monthly bank reconciliation, financial accounting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An appreciation of policy requirements and implementation
Budgetary control		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of budget monitoring and management
Year-end preparation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of internal and external audit preparation and process • Experience of year end procedures

Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to operate with complete impartiality in a political environment.• Ability to work accurately, pay attention to detail, meet deadlines and cope well under pressure.	
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Note: Assessment of whether criteria are met will be from the application form submitted followed by interview where appropriate. In respect of qualifications original certification will be required.