

Houghton Regis Town Council



Recruitment Pack
December 2024

Support Officer (Community) Maternity Cover
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.



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.

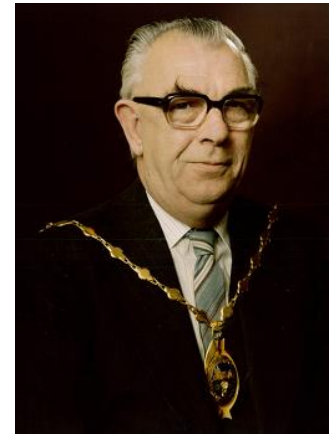
It was in this year that Councillor John Kinchella

became the first Town Mayor.

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.

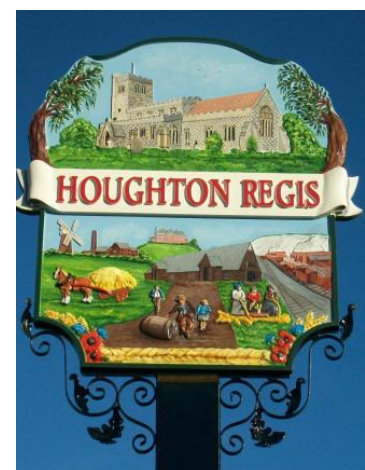


Photograph courtesy of Turvey and Turvey

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 sheaf of wheat 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.

Support Officer (Community) Maternity Cover

25 hrs per week Maternity Cover 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 for a maternity cover position.

The position is offered with excellent terms and conditions of employment including access to the Local Government Pension Scheme and generous annual leave entitlement. This fixed-term contract will cover the duration of maternity leave.

The Search

We are looking for an experienced, self-motivated, and detail-oriented support officer to provide maternity cover within our council team. The ideal candidate will bring a proactive approach, a strong commitment to excellence, and the organisational skills needed to help us maintain an outstanding level of service to our community during this temporary appointment.

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 for this maternity cover role 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 of MS Office applications (Word, Teams, and Excel). As a confident communicator who is highly organised, you will be adept at prioritising tasks effectively and staying calm under pressure. This temporary position 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

Support Officer (Community)

Maternity Cover

Job Title:	Support Officer (Community)
Spinal Point Range:	SCP 14-17 £28,264 – £30,060 pro-rata
Hours of Work:	25hrs per week
Location:	Council Offices, Peel Street, Houghton Regis
Job Summary:	To assist with the delivery of the councils community services work.
Responsible to:	Community Services Manager
Responsible for:	None
Committee Responsibility:	None

Key Areas of Responsibility

- To provide support to deliver community services projects and events
- To contribute to strategic project development as relevant to the position
- To assist with the implementation of the Council's strategic development plan

Specific Duties & Responsibilities

Legal & Statutory Compliance

- To comply with the legal, statutory and other provisions governing or affecting the civic and events services of the Council

Policy Development & Compliance

- To contribute to the preparation of the strategic development plan

Corporate Management

- To ensure that the aspirations of the council are achieved as relevant to the position

Democratic Services

- To contribute to the preparation of agenda reports and implementation of actions arising for Committees and Sub Committees
- To contribute to the implementation of projects
- To provide administrative assistance to the office staff as required

Health & Safety Management, Administration & Compliance

- To ensure that the Council's obligations for health and safety are properly met as relevant to the role
- To personally follow the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work Policy of the Town Council

Staff management

- To provide cover for relevant staff as required

Communication & Marketing

- To support the production of draft articles, press releases and social media posts ready for publication through the Town Council's newsletter, social media and website

Administration

- To meet & liaise with councillors, community groups, statutory agencies, outside organisations, contractors and public as applicable to the role
- To provide front line services including opening up and closing reception, receiving visitors, answering the phone, responding to or redirecting queries.

Community Services

- To help to deliver community & youth services projects and events
- To support the community and young person groups
- To deal with issues relating to the Council's community & youth services projects and events

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 support council events as required
- Some evening and weekend work is required as necessary to the role
- 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
Working hours	25 hours per week
Key holder	Yes – Office
Call out	No
First aider	Yes
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

Support Officer (Community)

Maternity Cover

	Essential Attributes	Desirable Attributes
Educational Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to continuing professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recognised qualification in Community Development and / or Youth Work at least to NVQ Level 3 in a relevant field or an equivalent professional qualification • Willingness to undertake role specific training
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience (minimum of 2 years) of working with community organisations, children and / or young people • Experience of working with a diverse range of people within the community • Planning, organising, delivering and attending events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working with a diverse range of community organisations, children and young people • Skill in problem solving and conflict resolution
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to prioritise work, set targets, achieve positive outcomes • Ability to organise and manage resources effectively. • Good organisational, coordination, project management, IT & time management skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of current Health & Safety legislation • Experience in successful partnership working
Communication Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent oral and written communication skills • Ability to provide objective advice / responses in a timely and coherent manner 	
Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of office IT packages • IT literate. 	
Meetings & Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of attending meetings, following up on actions and diary management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General knowledge of the law as it affects Local Councils, community work and youth work • Practical experience of servicing meetings
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience to managing finances at a scale relevant to the role. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of bidding for external funds and sponsorship

Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commitment to work out of office hours in order to attend events• Ability to operate with complete impartiality in a political environment.• Current driving licence• DBS Check will be required	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enthusiasm, flexibility and the ability to work under pressure and to deadlines• First aid qualification
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