

THE MAGAZINE OF HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Spring/Summer 2024 - ISSUE 72

TOWN CRIER



Telephone: 01582 708540

E-mail: info@houghtonregis.org.uk

Web: www.houghtonregis.org.uk

Delivered to all properties in Houghton Regis

FIND US ON



Also inside -
Words from the Town Mayor -
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Our Annual budget breakdown
and much more

Your 'Town Criers' are still free, delivered straight to your door, You'll disappoint us for sure, if it stays on the floor! So open it up and explore, all the FREE events and more that you don't want to ignore!



Houghton Regis Town Council Contact Details

Houghton Regis Town Council
Peel Street, Houghton Regis
Bedfordshire LU5 5EY

Telephone: 01582 708540

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 Houghton Regis Town Council

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Ian Haynes, Head of Environment & Community Services	01582 708 543
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Cllr Edward Costello	edward.costello@houghtonregis.org.uk
Cllr David Jones	david.jones@houghtonregis.org.uk
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Parkside Ward

Cllr Jimmy Carroll	jimmy.carroll@houghtonregis.org.uk
Cllr Pam Burgess	pam.burgess@houghtonregis.org.uk
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Vacancy	

Tithe Farm Ward

Cllr Tracey McMahon	tracey.mcmahon@houghtonregis.org.uk
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Houghton Regis East

Cllr Chloe Alderman	chloe.alderman@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
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Houghton Regis West

Cllr Yvonne Farrell	yvonne.farrell@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
Cllr Susan Goodchild	susan.goodchild@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Mayoral News!

Greetings to our residents.

This has been an amazing year representing the town and the people of Houghton Regis.

Since May 2023, I have taken the opportunity to visit all of our schools, and I have enjoyed talking to all the pupils about the Mayoral role, and taking the Mayoral Robes and Chair of Office.

The children were armed with many questions regarding the mayor and our town, and I hope that they enjoyed the visits.

The years that lie ahead will be good ones for the town and community.

The Tithe Farm football development and the new Leisure Centre are great news for Houghton Regis and the surrounding areas. The new developments are slowly but surely moving forward.

The size of our emerging town, the new developments, and the emerging communities within these developments, will need to be nurtured and guided into a whole new community of Houghton Regis, thus merging the old Houghton Regis with the new Houghton Regis.

*Councillor Jimmy Carroll,
Town Mayor.*



Important Meeting Notice

Important Notice

The Council would like to highlight to you two crucial meetings coming up. On 15th April it is the Annual Towns Meeting, and then on 15th May there is the Annual Meeting of the Town Council.

Although they sound similar they are in fact very different types of meeting.

The Annual Towns Meeting, 15th April, is a significant event aimed at fostering community engagement. While attendance by the Town Mayor and Clerk is mandatory, all electors of the parish are encouraged to participate. The meeting provides a platform for residents to raise pertinent issues affecting the local area. Although the Town Council is not bound to take action, the input from residents is highly valued, often leading to subsequent follow-ups to address community concerns.

In contrast, the Annual Meeting of the Town Council, scheduled for 15th May, functions as the council's annual general meeting. This formal

gathering involves the adoption of governing policies, scheduling of meetings, and allocation of responsibilities among councillors and officers. Additionally, a section for public questions allows residents to address matters outlined on the agenda

The Town Council acknowledges the potential confusion arising from the similarity in names of these two meetings. To provide clarity, residents are encouraged to seek guidance if unsure about which meeting to attend. The council emphasises the importance of community involvement and values the input of residents in shaping the town's future

For further inquiries or assistance regarding the meetings, residents are encouraged to contact the Town Council directly. The council remains committed to serving the best interests of the town and its residents, recognising the significance of public engagement in local governance.

Tithe Farm Sports Project update.....

We are delighted to share the exciting progress of the Tithe Farm Sports Project as we approach the final stages of completion. The installation of this state-of-the-art 3G Artificial Grass football pitch marks a significant milestone in our endeavour to revitalise recreational sports facilities in the community. With meticulously designed features such as a spacious spectator area, strategically positioned team dugouts, and robust perimeter fencing, this pitch sets a new standard for excellence in sports infrastructure.

Beyond the tangible improvements to the playing surface and facilities, the project embodies our unwavering commitment to enhancing the overall sports experience for participants and spectators alike. Gone are

the days of weather-related cancellations and uneven playing surfaces; the 3G Artificial Grass pitch ensures consistent playability and reduced risk of injuries, allowing athletes to focus on their performance with confidence.

While the completion of the football pitch marks a significant achievement, critical elements still await completion. Our attention has now turned to finishing the new pavilion, a multifunctional space designed to cater to the diverse needs of players, coaches, and supporters. From changing rooms with modern amenities to a welcoming social area for post-match gatherings, the pavilion promises to be a central hub for sporting activities and community engagement. We also recognise the importance of convenient and accessible parking for visitors,

and our team is working diligently to ensure that the needs of all stakeholders are met. Despite encountering some delays in securing connections to essential utilities, we remain steadfast in our commitment to delivering a world-class sports facility that exceeds expectations.

As we enter the final stretch of this transformative journey, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the community for their unwavering support and patience. Together, we are shaping a brighter future for local footballers of all ages and abilities. Stay tuned for further updates as we count down to the eagerly anticipated unveiling of the Tithe Farm Sports Project – a testament to the power of collaboration and a shared vision for Houghton Regis.



Houghton Regis Embarks on a Blooming Journey: 'Houghton Regis in Bloom'.....

At the recent Environment & Leisure Committee meeting, a momentous decision was made that heralds a new chapter in our town's story. With unanimous approval, Members have officially endorsed the establishment of 'Houghton Regis in Bloom'. This exciting initiative marks a significant step forward in our collective efforts to enhance the beauty and sustainability of our community.

But that's not all - there's even more thrilling news to share! In a show of unwavering support, the Committee has pledged full backing for Houghton Regis's inaugural entry into the esteemed regional 'Anglia in Bloom' campaign in 2024. This campaign, which is part of the RHS (Royal Horticultural Society's) Britain in Bloom competition, holds great promise for our town.

What exactly does this mean for Houghton Regis? It signifies an opportunity to showcase our town's natural splendor and environmental stewardship on a broader stage. The Anglia in Bloom campaign isn't just about pretty flowers; it's about cultivating a sense of pride and community spirit while promoting sustainable practices.

By participating in 'Anglia in Bloom', we're committing ourselves to make Houghton Regis the best it can be - environmentally, florally, and culturally. It's a chance for us to come together, roll up our sleeves, and work towards a common goal: creating a vibrant, welcoming, and sustainable hometown for generations to come.

As we embark on this blooming journey, let's embrace the opportunity to nurture

our green spaces, beautify our streets, and foster a deeper connection with our surroundings. Together, we can make Houghton Regis blossom in all its glory.

Stay tuned for more updates on how you can get involved in 'Houghton Regis in Bloom' and support our town's entry into the 'Anglia in Bloom' campaign.

Let's make our community proud!





HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN RANGER

'Making Houghton Regis an attractive and vibrant place to live and work'

The Houghton Regis Ranger provides a 'See it & Sort it' service, to those small scale problems and issues in the town which are an eyesore or an inconvenience.

Please let the Ranger know about these types of problems:

- Street cleaning / maintenance within a public space
- Litter / Fly tipping (small scale and non-hazardous)
- Overhanging bushes / shrubs
- Weeds / Leaf clearance
- Graffiti / Vandalism
- Other similar or related activities. Please specify

Reporting a problem is easy.

Thank you for helping us to look after Houghton Regis!

If you spot problems such as potholes, OTHER Highways problems or faulty street lights please report these direct to Central Bedfordshire Council by following this link: <https://bit.ly/2UdsaxG>

COPY THIS LINK INTO YOUR WEB BROWSER

<https://bit.ly/Townranger>

OR SCAN THE QR CODE →



YOUTH CLUB

EVERYONE WELCOME

Ages 12 - 18 years

5pm - 7pm

EVERY TUESDAY

Sandringham Hub, 48 Sandringham Drive, Houghton Regis, LU55UP

EVERY THURSDAY

Houghton Regis, Baptist Church, Hammersmith Gardens, Houghton Regis, LU55RG

FUN, FRIENDS, AND ADVENTURE - JOIN THE CLUB!

Houghton Regis Town Council
01582 708540 | www.houghtonregis.org.uk



OUR ANNUAL BUDGET BREAKDOWN FOR 2024/25



Breakdown of how we spend your Council Tax



Council tax contribution per Band 'D' property

£197.82 per year

£3.80 per week



Houghton Regis Corporate Plan 2024 - 2028

“ Houghton Regis: a growing town with a rich history and a strong sense of community ”

Houghton Regis Town Council is committed to ensuring it is in the best position to help, support and enhance our new and growing community.

Through public consultation the Council have listened to what you want and developed a further Plan to cover the next 4 years.

The plan has identified things to improve on, what you would like to change, and services and facilities that would improve where you live, play and work.

With the help and support of local organisations, strategic partners, and the community working together we can deliver the objectives of the plan.

We hope you'll be able to share and support our Plan, making it a reality for Houghton Regis

For more details on the Plan, please scan the QR code below



Houghton Regis Town Council, Houghton Regis, LU5 5EY



01582 708540 | Mon - Fri | 9am - 4pm



www.houghtonregis.gov.uk





The Corporate Plan includes 4 main areas of work, we've called them Pillars. Under each Pillar are a number of Objectives setting out how we will look to achieve each Pillar. As the Objectives span interrelated social, economic, spatial and environmental considerations and there are many different mechanisms that may be initiated to bring about delivery.

For more information on these mechanisms please visit our website to view the full Corporate Plan: www.houghtonregis.gov.uk

1. Town and Community: To unify all areas of the parish as one community and foster civic pride in our town

- 1.1 Improve integration between existing and new communities.
- 1.2 Support the sense of arrival and identity.
- 1.3 Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.
- 1.4 Develop an annual programme of community events across the Parish.
- 1.5 Improve the visual appearance of the town centre.
- 1.6 Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.
- 1.7 Strengthen Houghton Regis's landscape character and agricultural heritage.

2. Local Services and Facilities: To provide a broad range of high quality services and facilities for our residents, visitors and businesses

- 2.1 Work with partners to improve the quality and accessibility of the public realm in the town centre.
- 2.2 Continue to work with key partners to address crime and anti-social behavior.
- 2.3 Establish a town centre hub for the delivery of centrally based services, such as HRTC's offices, a youth centre and a tourist information/ heritage centre.
- 2.4 Maximise the value of HRTC assets.
- 2.5 Maintain and enhance sporting provision both at existing and soon-to-be-adopted sites.
- 2.6 Stimulate local business development and employment and training opportunities.
- 2.7 Promote awareness of our town, its assets and opportunities for businesses and investment.



3. Quality of Life: To enhance the quality of life of our residents

- 3.1 Improve environmental quality and sustainability.
- 3.2 Encourage a healthier lifestyle through healthy eating, smoking & vaping cessation and improved activity levels.
- 3.3 Improve access to services and support through the provision of a network of Parish-wide community hubs.
- 3.4 Improve existing and develop new opportunities for young people across the parish.
- 3.5 Continue to explore options for a new cemetery.
- 3.6 Continue to provide a Town Council Community Grant Scheme.

4. Management and Operations: To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Town Council as the key local service provider

- 4.1 Develop a 5-year financial & staffing plan.
- 4.2 Identify external/ partnership funding sources for council projects.
- 4.3 Extend IT infrastructure and software to better support the council.
- 4.4 Work with CBC and other stakeholders to explore opportunities for the adoption of additional community assets by the Town Council.
- 4.5 Enhance the role of the council.
- 4.6 To actively consider and weight the impact of new and existing initiatives and services.

Having formulated this Corporate Plan, the Town Council will work hard over the coming four years to deliver the vision and objectives that are outlined within it.



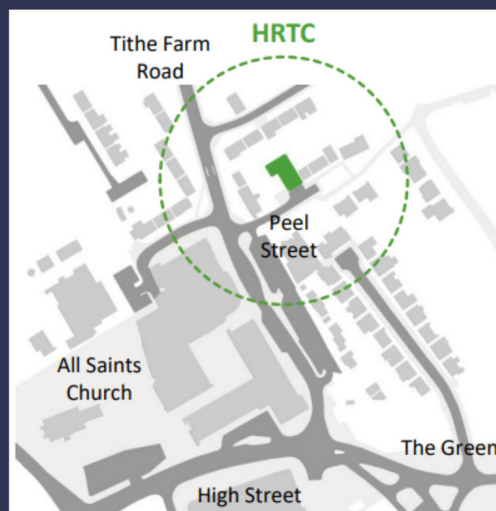
If you have any comments on the components of Plan or suggestions for a programme or initiative that would help following :

Address: Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Tel: 01582 708540

Email: info@houghtonregis.gov.uk

Web: www.houghtonregis.gov.uk



'We are looking forward to progressing these plans and seeing a stronger, unified and better served Houghton Regis in the future.'

Please contact us should you require a copy of the Plan in a different format





Town Council Corporate Plan

2024 - 2028

We want to hear from you about the new Town Council Corporate Plan that will guide our work over the next 4 years. This plan aims to make our community an even better place to live.

Please take a few minutes to answer these questions. Your feedback will help shape the priorities and actions of the Town Council.

1. **Bringing Our Community Together:** The plan includes ideas like community events and programs to connect all neighborhoods and residents. What would you like to see more of? Do you have other suggestions?

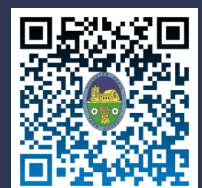
2. **Services and Facilities:** The plan looks at maintaining and improving services like parks, trails, community centers, etc. What's working well now? What needs improvement? Any glaring gaps?

3. **Quality of Life:** How can the Town Council best enhance the quality of life here? What issues matter most to you?

4. **Town Council Operations:** From your experience, how user-friendly and responsive has Town Council been? What could work better?

5. **Community Hubs:** The plan proposes establishing multi-purpose community hubs across the town for services, activities and volunteering. Hubs could be used by organisations, for groups to meet up for a coffee and a chat, clubs for young people, advice and wellbeing sessions, councillor surgeries, children's birthday parties and much more. Would you and your family benefit from a Community Hub? What would you like to see available there?

Please mail back the attached form or scan the QR code to provide your input online. Your perspectives will help guide the Town Council's efforts over the next four years. **Thank you for helping to shape our community's future!**



Committee Meeting Updates

Town Council

The Council has been drafting ambitious goals to make Houghton Regis an even better place to live and have approved a new Corporate Plan. A summary of this Plan is included within this newsletter, along with a feedback form. We would welcome your views, so please take a moment to complete and return the form. You can also find a link to this form on our website and social media pages.

The Council has also been looking at a town branding scheme to help to create a sense of place and a stronger local identity.

You'll also see in this newsletter that the Council will be launching its new website, which will make it easier to navigate and find information. The launch of the website will take place at the Annual Towns meeting on 15th April at All Saints View, so please come along for a virtual tour of the site.

Houghton Regis Partnership

The Town Partnership is exploring ways to strengthen collaboration between Houghton Regis Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council. The Partnership also continues to seek ways to tackle inequalities in the area and to enhance the provision of health and education services.

There's exciting progress on the new community and leisure centre, plus ongoing talks about facilities for seniors and those with disabilities.

Corporate Services

From IT upgrades to allowing online payments, policy reviews to investment strategies, the Corporate Services Committee continues to keep things running smoothly. There is good news for sports groups: HMRC have provided the opportunity for councils to reclaim VAT previously paid by sports clubs on sports hires. HRTC has successfully managed to reclaim this money and has passed the reclaim on to the relevant clubs.

Community Services

Updates continue to be provided on the progress of youth organisations, including the Youth Café, and on the provision of youth facilities under the Youth Investment Fund scheme. There was ongoing support for family events and those for Later Living members.

The Community Services Committee is working hard to provide activities for all. Alongside these clubs and groups, the council is continuing to provide a range of community events. The Committee also manages a community grant scheme to help groups offer various other

services in the town. To date recipients in 2023/24 have included South Beds Dial a Ride, Houghton Regis Heritage Society, Keech Hospice Care and the Houghton Regis Memorial Hall.

Environment and Leisure

New gym equipment is coming to Parkside, biodiversity will be encouraged through "Houghton Regis in Bloom," and talks are beginning for upgrades to play areas. The Environment and Leisure Committee is working to make our shared spaces even better.

Planning

Feedback, objections and recommendations were given on over 46 applications since October. The Council continued to balance a sympathetic approach to the town's history whilst considering the needs of residents, businesses and ongoing development in the area.

Exciting Announcement! Our New Town Council Website Coming Soon in April



We're thrilled to share some exciting news with you all! Our website team has been hard at work behind the scenes, and we're delighted to announce that our brand-new Town Council website will hopefully be up and running in April!

This website is designed with you, our community, in mind. It will serve as a centralised hub for all things related to our town, providing easy access to important information, updates, services, and resources.

Here's a sneak peek at what you can expect: User-Friendly Interface: Navigating the website will be a breeze, with an intuitive layout and easy-to-use menus.

Up-to-Date Information: Stay informed about town news, upcoming events, council meetings, and more. Quick Links: Access various services online, saving you time and hassle. From Council meetings to Events, it will all be just a click away.

We can't wait to unveil the new website and invite you all to explore its features. Keep an eye out for the official announcement coming soon! In the meantime, mark your calendars for April, when we hope to launch this valuable resource for our community.

Thank you for your continued support as we strive to enhance communication and accessibility for all residents.



Please find below the calendar of meetings for the Town Council from March 2024 to the 15th May 2024. All council meetings are at 7.00pm unless otherwise stated and are open to the public. Due to ongoing Covid concerns, members of the public who wish to attend the meeting are encouraged to do so remotely. Members of the public may also attend in person and, if doing so, are requested to socially distance as much as possible.

The links for the virtual meetings can be found on our website under each meeting agenda: www.houghtonregis.org.uk

The agendas for forthcoming meeting can also be found on the notice board outside The Town Council offices.

Date	Day	Committee	Time
2024			
4th March	Monday	Corporate Services	7pm
11th March	Monday	Planning	7pm
18th March	Monday	Town Council	7pm
2nd April	Tuesday	Planning	7pm
8th April	Monday	Community Services	7pm
15th April	Monday	Annual Towns Meeting	7pm
22nd April	Monday	Planning	7pm
23rd April	Tuesday	Town Partnership	7pm
29th April	Monday	Environment & Leisure	7pm
7th May	Monday	Personnel Sub-Committee	6pm
13th May	Monday	Planning	7pm
16th May	Monday	Planning	7pm
15th May	Wednesday	Town Council (AGM)	7pm

*subject to confirmation. Please see website for updates.

Follow us

You can use the following platforms to Follow, and keep in touch with Houghton Regis Town Council.


www.houghtonregis.org.uk


[@HRCouncil1](https://twitter.com/HRCouncil1)


[Houghton Regis Town Council](https://www.facebook.com/HoughtonRegisTownCouncil)




ALL RETIRED RESIDENTS WELCOME

Time for Tea & a Treat

Enjoy a change of scenery, **FREE** tea & a treat along with conversation and laughter.

1st Tuesday of every month
11am - 12.30pm

5th March **EASTER SPECIAL**
 2nd April
 7th May

All Saints View (entrance left of Costa Coffee)
Sapphire Place,
Houghton Regis, LU5 5LP

Make new friends!

For more information please contact:
 Zunaira Sabih - Houghton Regis Town Council
 01582 708 540

*If transport is a struggle we may be able to assist, please contact the above number for details



Organised by **HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**

Free Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday 23rd March 2024
10am to 1pm

Houghton Regis Library
 *16 and under for the Easter Egg Hunt

Craft Market
 10am-1pm
 Bedford Square Atrium

Last time to collect entry forms is 12.45pm

Houghton Regis Town Council Tel: 01582 708540 www.houghtonregis.org.uk

Vegan / Free from Easter Eggs available!



Houghton Regis Carnival



2024

Magic and Mystery
Saturday 13th July 24
The Village Green
from 9am

Fun for All

LIVE Music

This event is organised and promoted by Houghton Regis Town Council.
 All enquires please contact 01582 708540 or email info@houghtonregis.org.uk



Houghton Regis Town Council presents

Houghton Rocks 2024



Saturday 7th September
Parkside Recreation Ground, LU5 5RA

Including the HOUGHTON REGIS CAR SHOW!

FOOD STALLS • LIVE MUSIC • KIDS RIDES

www.houghtonregis.org.uk

