

THE MAGAZINE OF HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Issue 1 - 2026

# TOWN CRIER



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## Included in this edition:

**Houghton Hall Park: A year of Growth and Community Spirit**

**A Message from our MP - Alex Mayer**

**Important Meeting Notice**

**And Much More**



Welcome to this latest edition of the Town Crier -  
it's jam-packed with news from the council and details of all the  
FREE events taking place in and around Houghton Regis.



## Houghton Regis Town Council Contact Details

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

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Town Clerk 01582 708 542

#### Debbie Marsh

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#### Ian Haynes

Head of Environment & Community Services 01582 708 543

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Cllr Edward Costello [edward.costello@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk](mailto:edward.costello@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk)

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#### Parkside Ward

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Cllr Susan Goodchild [susan.goodchild@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:susan.goodchild@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

## Mayoral News!

### Spring Mayoral Reflection – Houghton Regis Town Mayor

When I was first elected as a town councillor in May 2023, I never imagined that one day I would have the honour of serving as Mayor of Houghton Regis. It simply wasn't something I thought possible. Coming from a humble and often difficult background, opportunities like this do not always seem within reach. So to stand here now, reflecting on this year, I feel immensely proud, deeply humbled, and truly honoured.

I will admit the journey did not begin without its challenges. Shortly after being chosen as Mayor, I experienced a moment of anxiety, worrying that I might not be good enough. But rather than letting that doubt hold me back, I turned it into motivation. I made it my mission to give my very best during my year in office, particularly in supporting and fundraising for my nominated charities.

I could never have achieved this alone. My heartfelt thanks go to my family and friends for their support, and to the dedicated officers and staff at Houghton Regis Town Council who worked tirelessly to organise and support so many events throughout the year. I am also incredibly grateful to our volunteer groups, local organisations, and fellow mayors from neighbouring towns and parishes who attended and supported many of my events.

This year has given me the opportunity to witness first-hand the extraordinary work carried out by charities and organisations across our community. Being able to raise funds for my chosen charities — Hospice at Home Volunteers, Houghton Regis Children's Centre, and Keech Hospice — has been one of the most meaningful parts of my mayoral year. Thanks to the generosity of residents, businesses, volunteers, and visitors, we have raised just over £9,500 so far through fundraising stalls, tombolas, cake sales, and mayoral events.

I have also had the privilege of sharing many memorable community moments. As Deputy Mayor and Mayor, I was honoured to attend two centenary birthday celebrations, including Harry's 100th birthday at Thorn Springs Care Home. I was also deeply moved by the community spirit shown when Thorn Springs faced the loss of their minibus. Seeing residents, staff,

and volunteers come together, including a special Christmas lights tour organised with SBDAR (South Beds Dial-a-Ride), was a powerful reminder of the kindness and resilience within our town.

The festive season was a particularly joyful time. Visiting local care homes, delivering cards and gifts, and spending time with residents and staff was truly heart-warming. It was equally wonderful to visit our schools and present prizes for the Mayor's Christmas Card Competition, celebrating the creativity and enthusiasm of our young people.

Throughout the year I have also enjoyed attending many of our town's much-loved events — from the fireworks display and Christmas tree lighting to school celebrations and the recent mini forest tree-planting event at Houghton Hall Park, where I planted four saplings that I look forward to seeing flourish in the years ahead.

As we now move into spring and summer, we can look forward to many more events that bring our community together. Houghton Regis has always been a town built on kindness, generosity, and community spirit, and I know that will continue.

Before I close, I want to thank everyone who has supported me throughout this journey — every resident who stopped for a conversation, every volunteer, fundraiser, teacher, caregiver, community leader, and local business who contributed their time, energy, and generosity. You are the heartbeat of this town.

Finally, to the people of Houghton Regis: thank you for trusting me and allowing me the honour of serving as your Mayor. It has been a privilege to represent and celebrate this wonderful community that I have proudly called home for over four decades.

Serving as Mayor of Houghton Regis has been one of the greatest honours of my life, and an experience I will treasure forever.

**Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.**



# Houghton Hall Park: A Year of Growth and Community Spirit

Houghton Hall Park is a safe, welcoming, and vibrant place for residents and visitors alike. Over the past year, several exciting initiatives have been delivered to bring the community together and enrich the park experience.

## Expanding Community Programmes

We continued to deliver a wide range of events and activities, including:

- **Easter and half-term activities**
- The return of **Classics in the Park**
- A new **Heritage Day**, part of **Heritage Open Days** — England's largest festival of history and culture
- **Halloween events**
- **Santa's Grotto**, complete with reindeer

## A Greener, More Sustainable Park

We've implemented environmentally friendly practices to **preserve Houghton Hall Park's natural beauty and biodiversity.**

Our new composting area ensures that no green waste generated from the park is sent to landfill. Our new borehole means we will use non-mains water for the Kitchen Garden irrigation and for watering the beautiful Houghton Regis in Bloom floral displays across the town.

One of our most exciting achievements this year is **planting the latest Tiny Forest in Houghton Hall Park!**



- **600 native trees** were planted by residents, volunteers, families, and local organisations
- The forest was designed in a unique **octagonal shape** and includes benches for relaxation and outdoor learning
- The project was delivered by **Earthwatch Europe** in partnership with **Houghton Regis Town Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, and Houghton Regis in Bloom**
- The **Mayor of Houghton Regis** marked the occasion by planting one of the first trees — a symbol of our **greener future**



This Tiny Forest will **attract wildlife, boost biodiversity, and provide a peaceful space for learning and relaxation**, demonstrating what we can achieve when the community comes together.



# Volunteers Wanted

## Volunteers Wanted at Houghton Hall Park

If you are **passionate about the park**, we would love your help!

**Join the Friends of Houghton Hall Park** and help improve this beautiful space.

There are plenty of opportunities to contribute, and we welcome people of **all ages and abilities**.

Volunteering is a wonderful way to:

- Support your local community
- Learn new skills
- Meet new people
- Help create a welcoming space for everyone



### Want to give it a try?

Contact our Community Gardener by completing our volunteer application form, which can be found on our website <https://www.houghtonhallpark.org/volunteer> and email it to [info@houghtonhallpark.org](mailto:info@houghtonhallpark.org) We'd love to welcome you!

The management team at Houghton Hall Park is committed to maintaining the park's high standards and supporting its future development.

## A Message from our MP

I always like this optimistic time of the year when Spring is in the air, and the evenings are getting lighter. Here's my latest report for Houghton Regis residents:

**Wages up:** It's good news for 6,700 local workers earning the Living Wage, who will receive another pay rise this April. The State Pension will also increase by 4.8%, and train fares and prescription charges remain frozen.

**Egg-cellent:** This Easter, thoughts naturally turn to eggs. One in five laying hens currently spend their lives stuck in cages smaller than a piece of A4 paper. I've campaigned against this cruel practice for years, and am really delighted the Government is ending the use of tiny cages for hens.

**Royal Mail:** I've heard from residents that post has often been arriving days, and in some cases even weeks, late. I raised this with the Government Minister and directly with Royal Mail. I'm told 12 new posties are being recruited. If you're having issues, please let me know your postcode and I'll ask Royal Mail to look into it.

**NHS:** Waiting lists are officially down. 15,000 fewer patients are now waiting for treatment at the L&D and Bedford Hospital than when the Labour government took office. There's also been a £1.5 million boost for school nurses, and stop smoking schemes across Central Bedfordshire.

**Potholes:** I continue to be frustrated by potholes. Central Bedfordshire Council are responsible for the condition of local roads. They received an "amber rating" recently - showing room for improvement. I agree. The funding the government provides to the council for road maintenance has risen to £9.6 million.

The council can also choose to spend its own resources. I will continue to press them for clear progress on repairs.

**Project H:** The Town Council showed me around the final vacant unit at All Saints View which is being transformed into a new community hub. It looks great.

**Mobile signal:** Some parts of Houghton Regis struggle with dropped calls and weak phone signal. In Parliament I've called for clearer national standards for 4G and 5G, and am in regular contact with the major network providers urging them to improve the quality of service. Thank you to everyone who has filled in my mobile survey so far at [www.alexmayer.co.uk/mobilesurvey](http://www.alexmayer.co.uk/mobilesurvey). It really helps when I can show the phone providers data like this.

**Linmere:** I planted the 2,000th tree at Linmere and led a debate in Parliament on young trees. Tree-memdous!

**A5 Bypass Litter:** I intervened after Highways England and the council repeatedly passed responsibility for litter on the A5 Dunstable Northern Bypass between them. I'm pleased litter-picking has now taken place, and I'll keep monitoring to ensure it continues.

As always, if you have issues I can help with or ideas you think I should take forward, please let me know: [alex.mayer.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:alex.mayer.mp@parliament.uk) or 01525 301390.



# Houghton Regis Annual Carnival

The **Annual Carnival** will return on **11th July**, promising another fantastic day for the whole community to enjoy. Alongside the traditional stalls, entertainment and activities that make the carnival such a highlight of the year, there will be an exciting change to the usual parade.

This year, the traditional parade will be replaced with a **People-Powered Parade** — giving everyone the chance to get involved and be part of the celebration. Whether you walk, wheel, push or pull, everyone is welcome to take part.

So get your thinking caps on and start planning your ideas. We can't wait to see the creativity our community brings to this year's carnival!

Do you have large items of furniture or white goods to dispose of? If so, take advantage of a HRTC subsidy scheme and arrange for these goods to be collected at a reduced fee or for **\*FREE** *\*if you are eligible*

	Normal Price	HRTC Subsidised price
Bulk Waste Collections	£69.80	£35.20 <i>*FREE if eligible</i>
Fridge / Freezer collections	£55.20	£27.70 <i>*FREE if eligible</i>

*Subsidy is only valid for bulk household waste and white goods, commercial waste cannot be collected under this scheme.*

**ARRANGE YOUR COLLECTION NOW:**

0300 300 8302  
Customers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Helping us to help you keep Houghton Regis tidy.



For more details on what can/cannot be collected please SCAN THE QR CODE or visit <https://bit.ly/2L28EQ8>



Collections will be free if you are on Means Tested Benefits  
\*\*Please note that the council reserve the right to cease the project if necessary.

# Houghton Regis Youth Sessions

## Houghton Regis Youth Sessions Offer Safe, Fun Space for Young People

Young people in Houghton Regis are benefiting from a range of engaging evening youth sessions designed to provide a safe, supportive, and enjoyable environment to learn new skills, stay active, and make friends. Running every Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 5:00pm to 7:00pm, the sessions are open to ages 12–18 and offer a variety of activities to suit different interests. On Mondays at Village Green Pavilion, the popular Pop-Up Café gives young people the chance to try simple cooking recipes and build practical kitchen skills. One attendee said, "I didn't think I'd enjoy cooking, but now it's one of my favourite things to do after school," while another added, "It's really chill here – we get to make food and hang out at the same time." Tuesdays at Houghton Hall Park focus on open-access activities, including games and sports. The relaxed setting allows young people to socialise and stay active. "There's always something to do, so you never get bored," said one regular participant. Another shared, "I've made loads of new friends just from coming here." On Thursdays, sessions at Tithe Farm Pavilion make full use of the brand-new 3G football pitch, alongside a PlayStation area for those who prefer a more relaxed pace. "The 3G pitch is amazing – it feels like playing at a proper stadium," one young person commented. Another added, "It's the best place to come after school to let off some energy and have a laugh." In addition to weekly sessions, a variety of trips, workshops, and special events are organised throughout the year, giving young people the chance to try new experiences, build confidence, and create lasting memories. Parents value the sessions for their safe and supervised environment, as well as the opportunities they provide for young people to develop skills, build confidence, and form positive friendships. With a strong focus on inclusion, creativity, and community, Houghton Regis youth sessions continue to offer a welcoming space where young people can grow, play, and connect in a positive way.

info@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk  
01582 708540



## Important Meeting Notice

### Important Notice

The town council would like to highlight two meetings forthcoming. On 13th April it is the Annual Towns Meeting, and then on 20th 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 on 13th 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 20th 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.

## Town Council Calendar



Please find below the calendar of meetings for the Town Council from **March** to the **September 2026**. All council meetings are at **7.00pm** unless otherwise stated. Members of the public may wish to attend the meetings remotely, if so links can be found via each agenda on our website:

[www.houghtonregis-tc.org.uk](http://www.houghtonregis-tc.org.uk)

**\*Dates subject to confirmation at the AGM. Please see website for updates.**

DATE	MONTH	DAY	COMMITTEE	TIME
20th	May	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee	11am
20th	May	Wednesday	<b>Town Council (AGM)</b>	
26th	May	Tuesday	Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub-Committee	
1st	June	Monday	Corporate Services	
2nd	June	Tuesday	Planning	
9th	June	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub-Committee	11am
15th	June	Monday	Town Council	
17th	June	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee	
22nd	June	Monday	Planning	
6th	July	Monday	Environment & Leisure	
13th	July	Monday	Planning	
15th	July	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee	11am
20th	July	Monday	Community Services	
21st	July	Tuesday	Staffing Committee	
28th	July	Tuesday	Town Partnership	
3rd	August	Monday	Planning	
19th	August	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee	11am
24th	August	Monday	Planning	
7th	September	Monday	Corporate Services	
8th	September	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub-Committee	
14th	September	Monday	Planning	
16th	September	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee	11am
21st	September	Monday	New Cemetery Sub-Committee	

# Houghton Regis in Bloom: Spring Update

Spring is in full swing, and Houghton Regis is certainly living up to its name! In our last Town Crier edition, we set an ambitious goal: creating over **400 square metres of bulbs and wildflower mixes**, planting more than **30,000 bulbs**. Thanks to the dedication of the **multi-award-winning Houghton Regis Town Council grounds team** and our fantastic partners at **John O’Conner Grounds Maintenance Ltd**, we’ve made incredible progress. Highlights include:

- **The Chequers Roundabout** – 7,000 bulbs planted
- **Houghton Hall Park Kitchen Garden** – 14,000 bulbs in a new 35m linear bed

This brings our **total to an amazing 83,000 bulbs planted this year!** From mechanical planting to wildflower mixes and linear beds, the community teamwork has been phenomenal. Now, all that’s left is to sit back and watch the magic grow.

## RHS It’s Your Neighbourhood Awards 2025 Success

We also celebrated another year of blooming achievement in the **RHS It’s Your Neighbourhood Awards 2025!** After winning three awards last year, we **doubled our entries**, and the results are fantastic. A huge congratulations to the six local community groups recognised for their dedication to creating greener, healthier, and more vibrant spaces:

- **Woodside Link Road** – Community Orchard – Level 2: Improving
- **Friends of Windsor Community Open Space** – Level 4: Thriving
- **All Saints View Independent Living Scheme - Gardening Club** – Level 4: Thriving
- **Houghton Regis Memorial Hall** – Level 4: Thriving
- **Houghton Regis Bowls Club** – Level 3: Developing
- **Houghton Hall Park Kitchen Garden** – Level 5: Outstanding

## Summer 2026 Display Revealed

Our **Summer Display for 2026** is ready to bring bold colour and beautiful textures to the town centre’s hanging baskets and barrier baskets. This year’s display will feature a vibrant mix of:

- **Lysmachia ‘Goldilocks’**
- **Begonia ‘Golden Picotee’**
- **Geranium Purple**
- **Surfinia Purple**
- **Bacopa White**

Together, these varieties will create a cascading blend of **purple, white, and warm coral tones**—perfect for brightening gateways, high streets, and community spaces all summer long.

A huge thank you to our **volunteers, supporters, and suppliers** who make **Houghton Regis in Bloom** possible. We can’t wait for everyone to enjoy the displays as they come to life!

**IT'S YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD**

**BRITAIN IN BLOOM**  
with the RHS  
ANGLIA

**RHS**

The Royal Horticultural Society and Anglia in Bloom are proud to present

**ALL SAINTS VIEW INDEPENDENT LIVING SCHEME GARDENING CLUB  
HOUGHTON REGIS**

With a 2025 It's Your Neighbourhood Award of

**Level 4 - THRIVING**

Keith Weed CBE  
President, Royal Horticultural Society

Houghton Regis in Bloom  
Horticulture Environment Community  
ANGLIA IN BLOOM 2025  
SILVER GILT WINNER

Houghton Regis Summer Basket Planting 2026

Above - Bacopa White (Trailing), Geranium Purple (Upright), Lysmachia 'Goldilocks' (Trailing), Surfinia Purple (Trailing) and Begonia Golden Picotee (Trailing).

Below - Proposed planting arrangement for barrier troughs and baskets

Legend:  
 LG - Lysmachia Goldilocks (T)  
 BG - Begonia Golden Picotee (U)  
 SP - Surfinia Purple (T)  
 BW - Bacopa White (T)  
 GP - Geranium Purple (U)

# Celebrate Houghton Regis: Past, Present and Future



## Houghton Regis - A Story Told by Its People

Discover the journey of our small town with a big history — and an even bigger future. From the close-knit community life of the 1950s through to the changes of the 70s, and into today's thriving, fast-growing town, the film celebrates how Houghton Regis has evolved — while never losing its heart.

Now at the centre of one of the fastest-growing regions in the country, Houghton Regis is home to new communities, new schools, and new opportunities. A modern town rising with pride in its past and ambition for its future.



### HOUGHTON REGIS

Home | Open | United | Growing | History | Tradition | Opportunity | Nature  
Respect | Exciting | Green Space | Inclusive | Settled

Watch the full video by scanning the QR code and celebrate Houghton Regis — **past, present, and future.**



Check our website and social media for full details of all events.

## UPCOMING EVENTS 2026



**MAY 23**

Houghton Hall Park  
**Dog Show**  
Fun, Fluff & Furry Talents!

Houghton Hall Park  
**Classics in the Park**

A day celebrating classic cars!

**06 JUNE**

**JULY 11**

Houghton Regis Town Council  
**Carnival**  
Fun, Stalls & our People-Powered Parade!

Houghton Regis Town Council  
**Houghton Rocks**

Fun, Stalls & our People-Powered Parade!

**29 AUGUST**

**SEPTEMBER 19**

Houghton Hall Park  
**Heritage Day**  
Celebrate places, people, and traditions of history.

Visit Our Website  
[www.houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk](http://www.houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk)

Contact Us  
**01582 708540**

## Summer FUN Activities

with Houghton Regis Town Council

<b>JULY 23</b>	SKATE JAM	Tithe Farm Skate Park
<b>JULY 28</b>	Crazy Golf & Garden Games	Parkside Recreation Ground
<b>JULY 30</b>	Sensory Day	Village Green
<b>AUGUST 04</b>	Inflatables & Garden Games	Parkside Recreation Ground
<b>AUGUST 06</b>	Roller Family Jam	Linmere
<b>AUGUST 11</b>	Go Karting	Thorn Park
<b>AUGUST 12</b>	Family Trip to Southend	

## HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

You can access information online at:  
[www.houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk](http://www.houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk)

Information and advice about all our services is available to help you save time and go online.

**01582 708540 | [info@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk](mailto:info@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk)**

### Reception Hours:

Main Office Monday-Friday | 9am - 4pm  
Telephone Monday-Friday | 9am - 5pm

### Most popular pages to visit:

- Your Council > Councillors & MP
- Your Community > Events
- Your Council > Council Committees, Meetings & Minutes

