THE MAGAZINE OF HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

DECEMBER 2015 - ISSUE 52

Telephone: 01582 708540

E-mail: info@houghtonregis.org.uk

Web: www.houghtonregis.org.uk Delivered to all properties in Houghton Regis







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Tuesday 24th November at 6pm The Grove Theatre, Dunstable

Be part of our 'Celebration of Christmas' with festive songs old and new from our Houghton Regis Schools plus performances from some special guests. For ticket availability please contact the Grove Theatre Box Office 01582 602080.

Car Show Success!

See middle pages for full story and Pictures Pages 6 & 7



Christmas Carol Service

Saturday 5th December at 5pm All Saints' Parish Church

The Town Mayor's Carol Service will be taking place at All Saints' Parish Church.

This will be followed by the switching on of the Christmas Tree lights in Bedford Square, plus light refreshments courtesy of the local churches. All are welcome to attend.

Pride of Houghton Awards See page10

anta's Grotto

Saturday 12th December from 9am - 12 noon in Houghton Regis Library

Santa and his elves are stopping by again in Houghton Regis Library on Saturday from 9am – 12 noon. Come and say Hello!

A surprise gift for every child

Entrance is free although there will be a collection in aid of the Mayor's Appeal Fund.

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL CHRISTMAS

OPENING HOURS

The office will close at 12.30am on Thursday 24th December 2015 and reopen on Monday 4th January 2016 at 9am.

The Mayor, Town Councillors and staff all join in wishing every resident of Houghton Regis a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.



Houghton Regis Town Council Contact Details

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Antonia Rvan (Parkside)

John Kane (Houghton Hall) Tony Swain (Tithe Farm)

Administration Officer

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Houghton Hall Ward:	
Cllr. Laura Ellaway	01582 537 105
Cllr. Robin Hines	01582 759 026
Cllr. Rob Shimmin	01528 933 538
Cllr. Chris Slough	01582 751 881
Cllr. Susan Thorne	07847 702 499
Cllr. Ken Wattingham	01582 705 830
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Cllr. Jimmy Carroll	01582 868 006
Cllr. Don Dixon-Wilkinson	01582 529 554
Cllr. Joanna Hillyard	07542 201 115
Cllr. Martin Kennedy	01582 702 274
Tithe Farm Ward:	
Cllr. David Abbott	01582 894 060
Cllr. Tracey McMahon	07948 532 662
Cllr. Richard Scott	01582 708 540
Cllr. Tony Swain	01582 522 952

The Town Mayor

It has been a busy summer and autumn, and thoughts are now turning to Christmas, which is rapidly approaching. I am pleased to be hosting 'A celebration of Christmas' at The Grove Theatre on Tuesday 24th November and I am looking forward to watching the performances from our local schools, the Art Town project and Luton Mencap. I look forward to meeting families of those taking part and I am sure it will be a magical show.



There have been many highlights over the last few months and I have very much enjoyed the events that have been held. In September, the Town Council held the Classic Car Show, which featured a terrific selection cars from many different eras. There was there also the Pride of Houghton Awards held in October and I was proud to have presented the awards to the winners as well as some awards to superstars from the Carnival.

The *Carol Service* is taking place on 5th December at All Saints Parish Church at 5pm and I hope that you can come along and join me. The service will be followed by the *Christmas Lights switch on*, and some special festivities in Bedford Square (please see The town Council website and Facebook page, and local press for further details).

The final event of the year will be the *Santa's Grotto* on Saturday 12th December from 9am – 12 noon in Houghton Regis Library, which will be a most enjoyable event for our young residents.

I hope that you have a peaceful Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Councillor Robert Shimmin

If you have an event that you would like the Town Mayor to attend, please contact Sarah Gelsthorp, Town Mayor's Secretary on **01582 708540** or email sarah.gelsthorp@houghtonregis.org.uk

Town Clerk

Welcome to this festive edition of the Town Crier.

Christmas is a very special time for all of us, a time to spend with family and friends, reflect on a year passed and plan for the New Year ahead.



This year has been an exciting one for the Town Council with the election in May and work commencing on the 4 year Town Council Plan. It is all set to be a busy year in 2016.

As Christmas approaches we hope you enjoy the festive community events taking place and the town centre Christmas lights. It's a busy time for businesses, retailers and families and the Town Council would like to extend to you all our very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Beyond the glitter and shine we should also remember those for whom Christmas can be a difficult time and the importance of living in a caring community. In the cold days ahead please do keep an eye open for your neighbours who may need a bit of extra help and a friendly word.

Early in November we held our annual *Service of Remembrance* at All Saints Church and it's a honour and tribute to those who sacrificed their lives in times of conflict the sheer number of the towns people who attended to pay their respects. It is fitting to know that they are remembered by so many people each and every year.

I wish you a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.



Houghton Regis Central -A Better Offer for Houghton Regis

Proposals are being worked up for a brand new independent living development in our town centre and local people are being invited to have their say on the scheme.

Thanks to advances in medicine and more active lifestyles, our population of older residents looks set to grow over the coming decades and the scheme will be designed to provide state of the art accommodation to help people to live independently, with the social and care services they need on hand.

Central Bedfordshire Council has committed to invest some £30million in the scheme which will be based on land of the former Co-Operative store and surrounding area. It is proposed that some 170 apartments will be made available either for rental, shared ownership and sale. The scheme will also provide for shared community spaces and new retail opportunities.

The proposals for Houghton Regis are part of a bigger plan the Council has to make sure we have the right sort of housing available for our older residents, most of whom want to live in their own homes for as long as possible. Having flexible care services available on site will give residents and their families the peace of mind that their new homes will give them the right balance of privacy and independence, with the support they need. There will also be a real focus on social activity with lots of shared space for both residents and the community.

Local people will be invited to find out more about the proposals and give their ideas and suggestions for the improved retails offer and other community space at a weekend event at the end of November. The views of everyone in Houghton Regis views will help inform the final proposal before it goes to planning Committee for approval in the Spring next year.

For more information visit the council's website: www.centralbedfordhsire.gov.uk/independentlivinginHR

If you are aged 65 or over, you can register for the Mayor's Christmas Card.

Please contact Sarah
Gelsthorp on 01582 708523
to ensure that you are
on the list.

Community Litter Pick

On 3rd October, Houghton Regis Councillors undertook a litter pick. 10 people attended at 10am on a sunny Saturday morning in a bid to clean up Houghton Hall and the surrounding area.

After an initial clean up of The Green and the playground, the group split up into two teams. The first team headed along the Brook and then onto Park Road North. The second team travelled along the path in the opposite direction and ended up at Pog Kennel Walk.

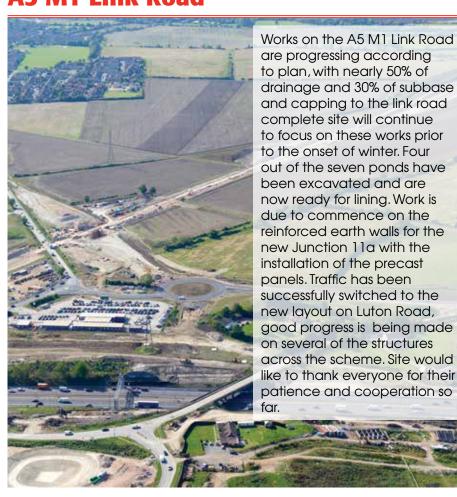
Puring the 2 hour community event, 17 bags of litter were collected including plastic bags, empty bottles, take away cartons, 2 car hub caps, broken police cones and some chicken wire, to name just some of the many things collected.

The initiative looks set to continue and we need your help! Our next planned litter pick is on 5th December so if you would like to take part and you have a spare hour or two, please contact Councillor Carroll on 01582 to meet etc. We have all the bags, pickers and gloves, all you need to bring is yourself and perhaps a friend or two.

We look forward to seeing you soon

Houghton Regis Councillors

A5 M1 Link Road



www.houghtonregis.org.uk

Houghton Regis North 1 (HRN1) and the Houghton Regis Development Consortium (HRDC) Update

As you may be aware in June 2014 HRDC received outline planning permission for a mixed use development at Houghton Regis North 1 (HRN1). Until earlier this year the plans had been subject to legal challenge. HRDC are delighted to now be free from this.

This £1 billion regeneration project will provide a major economic boost to the local area. It will deliver 5,150 new homes and employment space equivalent to the size of 20 international football pitches. It is expected to provide over 5,000 new jobs throughout its lifetime and through the regeneration of the area and the ripple effect outwards.

Under current plans HRN1 will also deliver a supermarket, retail units, banks and building societies, along with leisure and community facilities including; a hotel, cinema, health centre, community halls, changing pavilions, police facility, crèches, day nurseries, schools, places of worship. There will be 3 new primary schools, an extension to an existing primary school and facilitating a new secondary school on an adjacent site. Almost 1/3 of the whole site (over 117 international football pitches) will be open space including: wildlife corridors, community gardens, orchards, private gardens, equipped play areas, sports pitches and wetland areas.

The scheme has facilitated the delivery of the A5-M1 Link road, construction of which is well underway, and has also allowed Woodside Link Road (completion due 2016) to move forward. HRDC is keen to progress the development and is currently in the process of setting up the development teams, and reviewing their strategy moving forward.

Once a development timeline is in place HRDC will be keen to consult the community on the plans and will be asking for input into them. HRDC is looking forward to working with you in bringing the proposals to fruition and will be holding consultation events over the coming year, so please look out for information on newsletters, in the press and at www.hrn1.co.uk.





Supporting the local community

SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS

Business interview with John Pratt - Managing Director

1. How long have you been in Houghton Regis for?
The company has been firmly based in Houghton Regis since its inception over 5 years ago.

2. What are the changes you have seen?

Companies have come and gone in Bedford Square, but it is really great to see local independent businesses setting up within the last 5 years. Since the recession we have

seen an increase in people starting up their own companies and becoming self-employed.

3. How do you market your business? How are people aware of your busi-

We have a good Social Media presence and advertise on Facebook and Twitter. We also advertise in the Houghton Regis 'Clanger', which is a monthly newsletter distributed throughout the town.



5. Have you any special plans for the business this Christmas?

We usually spend December preparing for the rush in January. All online self-assessment tax returns for year ending 5th April 2015 will be due by the end of January. Generally, people want to see Christmas out and then look at their tax affairs. Consequently,

January is a very busy time for the company.

6. Is there any special message you would like to give residents of Houghton Regis?

We're very keen on serving and supporting local businesses and self-employed people, and though we have national and international clients most of our client base is within the local community. We aim to deliver a personalised service so our clients can focus on business and work without having to worry about

accountancy – which enables them to succeed and grow, and that's great for the local economy of course. We currently offer a referral bonus too, and that's putting us in touch with even more clients. We're here, we're local and we want to help Houghton Regis prosper!

4. What are your opening hours?

Although open Monday to Friday 9am – 5.30pm, the majority of our work is carried out online so clients can get access to their account 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Free Business Adverts Sponsored by HRTC - In Support of Local Businesses

The Sandringham Hub

Is your business looking for a home?

Looking to hold a confidential meeting in a professional location?

Located near to the M1 and A5 the Sandringham Hub can provide your business with an office space, networking opportunities, conference facilities, a training/meeting room, and much more all at an affordable cost.

- Wifi available
- Kitchen facilities
- · Cafeteria area
- Accessible toilets
- Hot desking
- Postal address

48 Sundringhum Drive Houghton Regis LUS SUP





Like us on Facebook: Sandringham Hub



Follow us on Linkedin: Aldwyck Housing Group

For anymore information please contact: Amy Eckersley o1582869275 amy.eckersley@aldwyck.co.uk www.aldwyck.co.uk









The sun shone again this year as we held our fourth Classic & Vintage Motor show on Sunday 13th September, on the Village Green, the FREE family fun day was organised by the Town Council and sponsored by Houghton Regis Development Consortium. "BIG River Duo" band entertained exhibitors and visitors, plus there was also a Circus Skills workshop, for the children. The Mayors Choice winner this year was Mr John Walker with his Chevrolet Monte Carlo.



Update for HRN2

"The 'hybrid' planning application for land west of Bidwell (Houghton Regis Site 2) received a unanimous resolution to grant planning permission by Councillors of the Central Bedfordshire development management committee in July 2015. The application was then referred to The Secretary of State who confirmed in writing at the end of September 2015 that the application would not be called in and should be determined by the local planning authority. The Bidwell West Consortium are currently in negotiation with the Central Bedfordshire on the S.106 legal agreement to enable planning permission to be issued by the end of October 2015.

Following the granting of planning permission the Bidwell West Consortium will engage with the Town Council regarding the next stages of the process. The advanced infrastructure works will comprise of new and upgraded roads, sustainable urban drainage channels and ponds and the central public open space parkland and sports pitches. This will involve further ecological, archaeological and construction management measures that will be submitted to and agreed with the Local Planning Authority prior to implementation.

The Bidwell West Consortium hope to see work commence on site early next year with the first new homes being occupied in early 2017 following the completion of the A5-M1 link road."



Woodside Link Update

Earthworks (site clearance, topsoil stripping, embankment filling) are about to extend into the area between Sandringham Drive/ Frogmore Road and Wheatfield Road. Increased noise levels may be experienced at times in neighbouring roads whilst contractors Balfour Beatty take delivery of materials to finalise these works, as well as carry out drainage works, install sheet piles for the retaining wall, and complete kerbing and surfacing. To ensure noise is kept to an acceptable level, working hours have been agreed with the local Environmental Health Officer. Advance works for Houghton Bridge and Parkside Bridge have started, both bridges scheduled to be fully installed by the end of January 2016. Forthcoming works include constructing Sundon Road roundabout and diverting a section of Houghton Brook. Full details of the scheme are available at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/woodsidelink.



The Houghton Hall Renaissance and Renewal Project – Update



The Houghton Hall Park Project is moving quickly behind the scenes, as a team we have been busy developing our work packages for the various regeneration projects and completing our tender documents for potential contractors.

We have appointed Chris Burnett from Chris Burnett Associates as our landscape architect for the Park, Chris has worked on several large scale Heritage Lottery Projects, most recently completing the stunning regeneration of The Swiss Gardens on the Shuttleworth Estate, Bedfordshire – so we're happy that are Park is in good hands!

Throughout the winter we plan to begin some preparation work for the New Year, taking advantage of the season, some Hazel coppicing is planned for December, kindly done by our friends of Houghton Hall Park volunteer group.

Throughout the winter we have some tree and scrub clearance planned, an archaeological exploration on the site of the new Café, the New Year will see the beginning of tree planting and woodland management, kitchen garden and formal garden construction and the establishment of a compound on site for Chris and the CBC team to work from.

If you would like to get involved in the Park, our friends group have various exciting activities planned for the New Year and beyond, for further information contact Tim Spencer on 01234 744594 or email tim.spencer@greensandtrust.org.

For regular updates, check out our new Houghton Hall Park website www.houghtonhallpark.org

From the Houghton Hall Park team, we wish you all a very merry Christmas and look forward to a busy new year in our Park!

Spotlight on the Community...



Your contract with CBC has just started, how long is it for and what do you hope to achieve?

The targeted youth work contract, which is commissioned by CBC and delivered by Groundwork across the Central Bedfordshire is for 2.5 years. Groundwork will be providing open access sessions at Bedford Square 2 evenings a week 6pm-8pm (Tuesday and Wednesday) and a detached programme on a Friday night. We would like young people to come to the sessions to enjoy, achieve and share their issues they face with the youth workers so they can support them with their needs.

What are you most looking forward to doing in HR?

Meeting lots of young people who we can support to set and achieve their goals. We will listen to the young people and provide the activities they want to participate in.

What activities are you offering young people in HR?

Lots and lots, from a place to be in the evenings and playing pool right through to organising events and providing workshops on issues close to them. All activities will help build the confidence, self-esteem and support them to make informed decisions.

Where can young people find out more from?

For more information please contact David Ramsay on david.ramsay@groundwork.org.uk or 07736 132293

The Annual Pride of Houghton Awards Ceremony

The Annual Pride of Houghton Awards Ceremony, which took place on Wednesday 7th October 2015 at All Saints Academy. The scheme has been running since 2003 and has been set up to recognise those people who have made a big contribution to the town of Houghton Regis. The Awards were presented by the Town Mayor, Councillor Robert Shimmin (accompanied by the Mayoress, Mrs Barbara Shimmin) to the following people: Michael Hunt, Neil, Nicola, Matt and Emily Fearn and a Lifetime Achievement Award to Christine Kavanagh. All winners were presented with a framed certificate and a gold badge as well as a cheque for £100.





Houghton Regis WI has always been a well represented organisation within the local community planting trees and supporting various local charities. For many years we have also supported Houghton Regis Town Council for many years now providing refreshments in the Pavilion for the annual Carnival and now for the more recently popular Classic & Vintage Motor Show too.

The ladies meet on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm at the Memorial Hall opposite the Green, Houghton Regis. They are always keen to welcome any new members.

For more information on your local WI please visit www.thewi.org.uk or contact Irene Carpenter, secretary on 01582 862 703 or Bevelly Lennox, President on 01582 527 789.



TRUSTEES OPPORTUNITIES:

A local Special Needs registered charity who have been operating for 14 years is currently in the process of inviting local people to apply for an opportunity to join the organisation for a position as a Trustee.

We are keen for committed and active members within our own community, who will continue with the ethos of the organisation, and join us in becoming ambassadors for a worthwhile cause within the organisation.

For more information please look on the website snoosc.org and if you feel that you would like to make a difference, we invite you to apply for a welcome pack via our e-mail address snoosc1@gmail.com.

This is in a voluntary capacity.

N. LADDS (CHAIRPERSON)

Council & Committee Reports

The Agendas and the draft and approved Minutes can be found on the Town Council website, http://www.houghtonregis.org.uk/town-council

Town Council met 28th September to consider a very full agenda. Of particular note was:

- The report from Central Bedfordshire councillors on the CBC 5 year plan;
- The confirmation by HRTC that it meets the eligible criteria to enable it to use the General Power of Competence which allows the Council to do things
 - an individual may generally do
 - anywhere in the UK or elsewhere
 - for a commercial purpose or otherwise, for a charge or without a charge
 - without the need to demonstrate that it will benefit the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area (although in practice councils will want to realise such benefits).
- The report on the new CBC Youth Services Provider, Groundwork. The Council have invited them to attend the next Community Services meeting to provide more detailed information on their planned work in Houghton Regis

The Corporate Services Committee in September undertook a budget review, considered and put forward policies for review and approval, appointed the Internal Auditor for 2015/16 and considered the closure of Natwest in Bedford Square. in relation to the loss of Natwest the Council undertook to write to Natwest to express extreme disappointment that the bank had chosen to take this action and to requested that the Bank give some consideration to training and support for customers who may need it to enable them to access alternative banking options. In response to this the Council have been liaising with Natwest and is pleased to report that the Bank have offered extra help to those customers in need.

The Community Services Committee met in the middle of September and received a final report from 4YP on their work with young people in Houghton Regis (as the contract from CBC had been re-issued to Groundwork), received a report on the usage of the Council's website and social media pages which were going from strength to strength as more and more people engage with the Council through these channels, and finally the Committee considered an enhanced disseminating community notices throughout the town.

www.houghtonregis.org.uk www.facebook.com/houghtonregistc https://uk.pinterest.com/houghtonregistc/

Planning & Licensing Committee

(1st Sept to 12th October 2015 inclusive) 10 applications have been considered of which only 2 caused any concerns.

Environment & Leisure Committee (7th September 2015) Consideration has been given to ways in which the life of the current cemetery can be extended. Various options were looked at and a plan of information gathering agreed. Once this has been completed then the options will be further considered and an appropriate course of action agreed.

The Cemetery Regulations have been reviewed. It was not deemed necessary to make any changes apart from some alterations to the layout.

Repairs to pavilions was discussed but any actions were deferred until a review of all the Town Council's pavilions had been undertaken and a report prepared for a future meeting.

The Time has come to start getting in Pancake Race Training and Join in our

HOUGHTON REGIS PANCAKE RACE 2016

The Town Council is holding its 3rd
Pancake race on the Village Green
on Tuesday 9th February 2016

This event is FREE!

All teams (of up to four people) will need to compete in a short obstacle course.

Whether you are a school, community group, or business, sign up and join in the fun!

Forms will be available from early
December from the council offices, or
call 01582 708540 for more information!
All spectators welcome!



Please find below the calendar of meetings for the Town Council from January to the end of March 2016. All council meetings are open to the public and are held in the Council Offices on Peel Street at 7.30pm unless otherwise stated. The agendas for forthcoming meeting can be found on the notice board outside the offices and on the Town Council website. Copies can also be obtained from the office.

Date	Day	Committee	Time
4 th January	Monday	Accounts Sub Committee Planning & Licensing Committee	6.15pm
6 th January	Wednesday	Environment & Leisure	
11th January	Monday	Community Services	
18 th January	Monday	Corporate Services	
25 th January	Monday	Town Council	
27 th January	Wednesday	Accounts Sub Committee Planning & Licensing Committee	6.15pm
1st February	Monday	Town Partnership	
15 th February	Monday	Accounts Sub Committee Planning & Licensing Committee	6.15pm
29 th February	Monday	Environment & Leisure	
7 th March	Monday	Accounts Sub Committee Planning & Licensing Committee	6.15pm
10 th March	Thursday	Community Services	
14 th March	Monday	Corporate Services	
21st March	Monday	Town Council	
29 th March	Tuesday	Town Partnership	

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