

THE MAGAZINE OF HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Spring/Summer 2025 - ISSUE 74

TOWN CRIER



Telephone: 01582 708540
Email: info@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

Web: www.houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk
Delivered to all properties in Houghton Regis

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Included in this edition:

Page 2 - Update from our new MP Alex Mayer

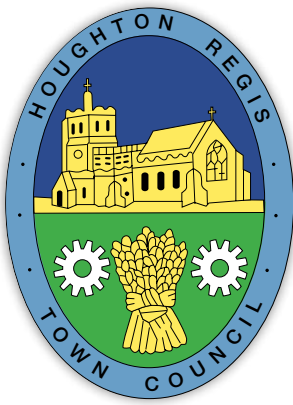
Page 3 - Expansion of HRTC Youth Services

Page 3 - Management of HHP comes to HRTC

Page 4 - HRTC Services & Budget explained

And Much More

Welcome to your Spring / Summer 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

Houghton Regis Town Council

Peel Street, Houghton Regis

Bedfordshire LU5 5EY

Telephone: 01582 708540

Email: info@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

Web: www.houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

www.facebook.com/HoughtonRegisTC

www.uk.pinterest.com/houghtonregis-tc

www.x.com/HoughtonRegisTC

[@HoughtonRegisTC](https://www.instagram.com/HoughtonRegisTC)

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

HRTC Senior Officers:

Clare Evans Town Clerk	01582 708 542
Debbie Marsh Head of Corporate Services	01582 708 544
Ian Haynes Head of Environment & Community Services	01582 708 543
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services	01582 708 540

HRTC Councillor Contact Details:

Houghton Hall Ward

Clr Emma Billington	emma.billington@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk
Clr Edward Costello	edward.costello@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk
Clr David Jones	david.jones@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk
Clr Yvonne Farrell	yvonne.farrell@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk
Clr Carole Rollins	carole.rollins@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

Parkside Ward

Clr Jimmy Carroll	jimmy.carroll@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk
Clr Pam Burgess	pam.burgess@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk
Clr Debbie Taylor	debbie.taylor@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk
Clr Elaine Cooper	elaine.cooper@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

Tithe Farm Ward

Clr Tracey McMahon	tracey.mcmahon@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk
Clr William Henderson	william.henderson@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk
Clr Abby Slough	abby.slough@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk
Clr Chris Slough	chris.slough@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk
Clr Michelle Herber	michelle.herber@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

CBC Councillor Contact Details:

Houghton Regis East

Clr Chloe Alderman	chloe.alderman@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
Clr Patrick Hamill	patrick.hamill@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
Clr Tracey McMahon	tracey.mcmahon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Houghton Regis West

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

Mayoral News!

Dear Residents,

As we begin 2025, I want to reflect on the privilege of serving as your Town Mayor and share some highlights from our vibrant community. During the festive season, I had the joy of visiting seven care homes delivering cards and gifts, and attending seven carol services, including our beautiful service at All Saints'. While the weather prevented our Christmas tree lighting ceremony, the tree still brought festive cheer to our town centre.

Our community events showcased the incredible spirit of Houghton Regis. The Bridgerton Afternoon Tea fundraiser for Keech Hospice Care and the Down Syndrome Association was a delightful success, despite the challenging weather. Summer brought exciting moments on the Village Green and Parkside Recreation Ground, where I had the unique experience of holding a snake, managing a rather hefty bird of prey, and even enjoying a motorcycle sidecar ride as part of Houghton Rocks! The Houghton Regis Fireworks Display at Thorn recreation ground was particularly memorable, drawing



impressive crowds and lighting up our skies.

One standout event was the Cultural and Literary Festival at Newport Pagnell, featuring international performances, food stalls, and an African fashion show – the kind of cultural celebration I'd love to see in our town. I've also had deeply meaningful personal encounters, including meeting a local mother and her two-year-old daughter with Down Syndrome, which resonated particularly as my own granddaughter with Down Syndrome approaches her twenty-first birthday.

Looking ahead to February, we're installing two special illuminated benches – one on the Village Green and another on Tithe Farm Recreation Ground. These 'Legend on the Bench' installations will include QR codes and information to support anyone going through difficult times, ensuring help is accessible when needed.

Our town continues to grow and thrive thanks to its wonderful residents. I look forward to meeting more of you at upcoming events and continuing to support our community's development. The funds raised throughout my mayoral year will be distributed to my chosen charities in May.

Thank you for making Houghton Regis such a special place to live and serve.

*Best wishes for 2025,
Clr Elaine Cooper*



Alex Mayer MP Update

Representing Houghton Regis in Parliament is a great privilege, and it is important to me to share what I have been doing on your behalf.

Safer Streets: I met the Policing Minister, and I am pleased that Bedfordshire Police's budget is now increasing to £167 million to strengthen neighbourhood policing. I think it is important to have a named local contact who really knows the patch. As I heard when I visited Morrisons in Houghton Regis, shoplifting remains a big problem, and too many retail staff are being attacked. I will soon be voting for a new law to close a loophole allowing shoplifters to escape justice if they steal goods worth under £200 and to make attacking a shopworker a standalone criminal offence.

Fixing Potholes: Potholes are a big issue that we need to get to grips with. The Government has increased the amount of funding to Central Bedfordshire to patch them up to over £9.6 million.

Improving Transport: As a member of Parliament's Transport Select Committee,

I'm working to make getting from A to B easier. I successfully pushed for an inquiry into bus services outside major cities. I also secured a commitment from the DVSA to tackle long driving test waiting times after one local person was told they needed to wait an entire year! I also continue to back East-West Rail.

New-Build Estates: Newer communities often face frustrating gaps in services. If you live in Bidwell West I am especially keen to hear where you would like a new post box located.

Animal welfare: In my view, how we treat animals is a mark of a civilised society. I was shocked to hear about the shooting on two pet cats recently and I have raised this with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Home Office.

If you have any issues that I can be of assistance with, please do not hesitate to get in touch on alex.mayer.mp@parliament.uk or 01525 301390.

Houghton Regis Town Council Expands Youth Services with £70,000 Investment

Houghton Regis Town Council is delighted to announce a significant expansion of its youth services and support programmes, backed by an increased investment of nearly £70,000. This funding will further enhance the opportunities and resources available to the young people of Houghton Regis, ensuring a brighter and more supported future for the town's youth.

The funding will enable the creation of a brand-new Youth Services Manager position, a dedicated role to oversee

and develop the Council's youth initiatives. This strategic appointment underscores the Council's commitment to nurturing young talent, addressing the needs of local youth, and fostering a thriving community.

Additionally, the investment will extend the impactful work initiated through the Youth Investment Funding previously secured by the Council. By building on these foundations, Houghton Regis Town Council aims to deliver even greater support for young people, focusing on activities, mentorship, and programmes that promote personal growth, skill development, and social

engagement.

The expanded youth services will include:

Enhanced Programmes: A wider range of activities and workshops tailored to young people's interests and developmental needs.

Improved Support: Greater access to resources and mentorship opportunities for personal growth.

Community Engagement: Initiatives to foster inclusivity, leadership, and civic participation among the town's youth.

Houghton Regis Town Council Takes Over Day-to-Day Management of Houghton Hall Park

Houghton Regis Town Council is pleased to announce that it has officially taken over the operational day-to-day management of Houghton Hall Park from Central Bedfordshire Council. This milestone marks a new chapter in the care and oversight of one of the community's most treasured green spaces.

Houghton Hall Park, a historic and beautifully maintained park, has long served as a focal point for leisure, recreation, and cultural events within our town. By assuming direct responsibility for its daily operations, Houghton Regis Town Council aims to enhance the park's role as a hub for community engagement, environmental stewardship, and local pride.

The Town Council is committed to ensuring that Houghton Hall Park remains a safe, welcoming, and vibrant space for residents and visitors alike. Plans are already underway to:

Expand Community Programmes: Introduce a range of new events, activities, and workshops tailored to diverse interests and age groups.

Enhance Facilities: Upgrade existing amenities and explore adding new features to meet the evolving needs of park users.

Promote Sustainability: Implement environmentally friendly practices to preserve the park's natural beauty and biodiversity.

Strengthen Accessibility: Ensure the park is inclusive and accessible to everyone, regardless of mobility or ability.

Houghton Regis Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council have worked closely to ensure a smooth handover of management responsibilities. Both organisations are committed to maintaining the park's high standards and supporting its future development.

Councillor Elaine Cooper, Mayor of Houghton Regis,



commented:

"We are thrilled to take on the management of Houghton Hall Park and look forward to building on its legacy as a cherished community asset. Our vision is to make the park an even more dynamic and inclusive space that reflects the needs and aspirations of our residents."

Councillor Tracey McMahon, Chair of the Houghton Hall Park Board, added:

"As management of the park transfers to Houghton Regis Town Council, I would like to thank all those involved at Central Bedfordshire Council for their work to develop this valuable and much-loved open space. We now look forward to a new chapter in the park's management, retaining and building on what has already been achieved to ensure Houghton Hall Park continues to meet the needs of residents in Houghton Regis for many years to come."

Houghton Regis Town Council encourages residents to share their ideas and feedback on how to improve the park further. Community input will play a vital role in shaping the future of Houghton Hall Park and ensuring it continues to be a place where memories are made.

Houghton Regis Town Council (HRTC) – Serving the Community

What does HRTC do?

Serving at the heart of our community, Houghton Regis Town Council (HRTC) delivers an extensive range of services and facilities that enrich local life and create a vibrant town for all residents.

We proudly manage a wide array of high quality formal parks, recreation grounds, and open spaces, complemented by well-equipped play areas, sports facilities, allotments, pavilions, and the peaceful Houghton Regis Cemetery. We enhance our town's environment through careful maintenance of street furniture, public seating, and floral displays.

Beyond managing these essential facilities, we actively foster community spirit through our year-round events programme, bringing residents together to celebrate our town's identity and heritage. Our commitment to community wellbeing extends to vital youth services, intergenerational projects, and community safety initiatives. We take pride in supporting local voluntary organisations through our grants programme and ensure residents' voices are heard in crucial planning decisions that shape our town's future.

We work in close partnership with a network of key stakeholders and partners including Central Bedfordshire Council, to bring added value to a wide range of other projects and initiatives all designed to improve the quality of life for local people. For more information please visit our website www.houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

How is HRTC funded?

The main source of income for HRTC is from the council tax.

Council tax is collected by Central Bedfordshire Council on behalf of 4 statutory agencies; Central Bedfordshire Council, the Police Authority, the Fire & Rescue Authority and the relevant town or parish council.

In 2024/25, the council tax for a Band D property in Houghton Regis was:

	£	%
CBC	1,752.30	75
Police Service	265.09	11
Fire Service	112.72	5
HRTC	197.82	8
Total	2,327.93	100

Your council tax changes on an annual basis depending on the requirements of each of these agencies. More information on council tax can be found here [Council Tax | Central Bedfordshire Council](#)

HRTC benefits from other sources of income including grants and contributions, developer funding, sports fees, burial fees, event fees and sponsorship, and bank / investment interest.

What does the HRTC 2025/26 Budget mean for a Band D household?

In 2024/25 a band D household contributed £197.82 of its council tax to HRTC, the rest went to Central Bedfordshire Council, the Police Authority, and the Fire & Rescue Authority. In 2025/26 a band D household will contribute £229.54 of its council tax to HRTC, an increase of £34.33 per year or 61p per week.

What benefits will residents receive in 2025/26 from HRTC?

For the cost of £4.41 per week residents will:

- Have access to high quality green spaces for leisure, recreation and sport
- Be entertained by an annual programme of community events, 95% are free to attend
- See support given to not for profit partners to help them continue to deliver their services to residents including Citizens Advice, SORTED, Keech Hospice, South Beds Dial A Ride, Houghton Regis Memorial Hall, Full House Theatre, and the Community Link Project (Singing Café)
- Live in a safer place through enhanced localised CCTV coverage and monitoring and additional high visibility policing patrols
- See an active involvement by the Council in the planning process and the development of the town
- Be able to access allotment facilities, Houghton Regis Cemetery and All Saints Churchyard
- See or benefit from services and support being given to young people and the not so young

All this and more for only £4.41 per week.

A Comment from the Mayor:

'We've scrutinised every aspect of our spending to find efficiencies while protecting services.'

The budget ensures residents continue to benefit from:

- Comprehensive town centre planting and high-quality green spaces
- Year-round community events programme, with most events remaining free to attend
- Support for vital not-for-profit partners serving our community
- Enhanced community safety measures
- A strong voice in local planning and town development
- Maintained allotments, cemetery, and All Saints Churchyard
- Dedicated services for both young people and senior citizens

The Mayor added: 'While we recognise this increase comes at a challenging time, every pound is invested directly into making our town a better place to live. We're committed to delivering value for money while maintaining the services our community relies on.'





Council Website Competition (Free Entry)

There is so much information on the Town Council's website, take a look and see what you can find.

As a little competition we are offering a PRIZE to the first resident who emails in (info@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk) and tells us or provides the website links to the 5 images of Regis the Lion which are hidden throughout the website. The competition is open between 1st March and 21st March 2025. Will you be our eagle eyed winner?

If you fancy taking a deeper look into the Council, take a look at the Your Council tab and under Council Plans, Policies and Strategies you can find copies of the following:

Council Plans – these set out the overall ambition for what the Council wants to achieve for residents and stakeholders.

Council Policies – these are developed and approved by Council to govern how the Council operates. They outline organisational decision-making processes for service delivery and administration.

Council Strategies – these set out a plan of action designed to achieve specific goals and objectives.

Other – this section includes various relevant documents

Certificates – this section provides copies of the Council's Public Liability Insurance Certificate and the ICO Registration Certificate

[Happy Scrolling](#)



Town Council Calendar of Meetings 2025/26

Please find below the calendar of meetings for the Town Council from March 2025 to September. All council meetings are at 7.00pm unless otherwise stated and are open to the public. Members of the public may wish to attend the meeting remotely, if so links can be found via each agenda. Members of the public may also attend in person if they wish.

Date	Day	Committee	Time
2025			
3rd March	Monday	Corporate Services	7.00pm
10th March	Monday	Planning	7.00pm
17th March	Monday	Town Council	7.00pm
19th March	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	7.00pm
25th March	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub-Committee	7.00pm
31st March	Monday	Planning	7.00pm
7th April	Monday	Community Services	7.00pm
14th April	Monday	Annual Towns Meeting	7.00pm
22nd April	Tuesday	Planning	7.00pm
28th April	Monday	Environment & Leisure	7.00pm
29th April	Tuesday	Town Partnership	7.00pm
12th May	Monday	Planning	7.00pm
14th May	Wednesday	Town Council (AGM)	7.00pm
19th May	Monday	Corporate Services	7.00pm
20th May	Tuesday	Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub-Committee	7.00pm
2nd June	Monday	Planning	7.00pm
9th June	Monday	Environment & Leisure	7.00pm
10th June	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub-Committee	7.00pm
16th June	Monday	Town Council	7.00pm
18th June	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	7.00pm
23rd June	Monday	Planning	7.00pm
7th July	Monday	Community Services	7.00pm
14th July	Monday	Planning	7.00pm
21st July	Monday	Personnel Sub Committee	7.00pm
29th July	Tuesday	Town Partnership	7.00pm
4th August	Monday	Planning	7.00pm
26th August	Tuesday	Planning	7.00pm
1st Sept	Monday	Corporate Services	7.00pm
8th Sept	Monday	Environment & Leisure	7.00pm
9th Sept	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub-Committee	7.00pm
15th Sept	Monday	Planning	7.00pm

Later Living Social Group (LLSG)

The Later Living Social Group is run by retired volunteers who host a "Tea and Treat" session on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month from 10:30 am to 12:00 pm at All Saints View. Attendees can enjoy a relaxed atmosphere, socialise, make friends, and book trips organised by the group. In December, members enjoyed a trip to the Grove Theatre to watch Beauty and the Beast and a special Christmas "Tea and Treat" event, where children from a local primary school sang carols.

Youth Work

Youth work sessions run up to four evenings per week, providing young people with a safe space and a range of activities.

- Mondays (4:30 pm – 6:30 pm, Village Green): Open access sessions offering activities such as cooking, crafting, gaming, pool, and board games. Recently, sessions included a Christmas party, cake-making, and crafting gifts.
- Tuesdays (5:00 pm – 7:00 pm, Sandringham Hub): Open access sessions featuring popular boxing activities, continuing throughout January and February.
- Wednesdays (4:30 pm – 6:30 pm, Town Council Office): Youth Council meetings. Members plan and deliver initiatives for other young people and volunteer at Town Council events. Recently, they supported the Christmas Carol Service, Santa Float, Santa's Grotto, and Crafty November, and were treated to a Christmas meal as thanks for their contributions.
- Thursdays (5:00 pm – 7:00 pm, Baptist Church): Open access sessions offering various activities. Recent highlights include basketball, PS5 gaming, and snacks such as cheese toasties.

Crafty November

In November, a craft session was held at Houghton Hall Park, where participants of all ages made Christmas crafts and created wreaths.

Summer Activities

Houghton Regis Town Council (HRTC) organises a variety of activities during the summer holidays, and plans for this year are already underway. Proposed activities include an inflatable fun day, mobile farm, birds of prey displays, a magician, laser tag, a coach trip to Southend, and a Skate Jam at multiple locations in Houghton Regis.

Provisional Dates:

- Week 1: Thursday, 24th July – Skate Jam
- Week 2: Tuesday, 29th July and Thursday, 31st July
- Week 3: Tuesday, 5th August and Thursday, 7th August
- Week 4: Tuesday, 12th August, Wednesday, 13th August (Seaside Trip), and Thursday, 14th August

Keep an eye on our social media pages for updates.

Operation Hana

Houghton Regis Town Council commissions Bedfordshire Police to provide additional support in reducing anti-social behaviour and enhancing community safety. As part of this initiative, Bedfordshire Police meet monthly with Councillors and the Safer Communities Partnership Team to identify focus areas for Operation Hana. Additionally, four redeployable cameras are moved to different locations as required to address specific needs.

ALL RETIRED RESIDENTS WELCOME

Time for Tea & a Treat

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

10:30am - 12pm

4th & 18th March
1st April & 15th April
continuing on the 1st and
3rd Tuesday of every month

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

Make new friends!

For more information please contact:
Zunaïra 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

Houghton Regis Town Council presents

Houghton Rocks 2025

Saturday 6th September

Parkside Recreation Ground, LU5 5RA

Including the **HOUGHTON REGIS CAR SHOW!** from 10am

FOOD STALLS • LIVE MUSIC • KIDS RIDES

www.houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

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

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 →

Pop-up Cafe
Village Green Pavilion
4.30pm - 6.30pm

2025

MONDAYS

Are you between the ages of 12-18?
Then come along and join in!
Looking for a fun, safe place to hang out and make new friends?

What we offer :
Games & Activities
Chill Zone
Snacks & Drinks

Just bring your positive vibes and energy.

Houghton Regis Youth Services

*Sessions only available during Term time only.

Join us on Facebook

HOUGHTON REGIS CARNIVAL

ICONS OF SPORT

FUN FOR ALL!

12th July 2025
THE VILLAGE GREEN
from 10am

This event is organised and promoted by Houghton Regis Town Council.
All enquiries please contact 01582 708540 or email info@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk