THE MAGAZINE OF HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

March 2018 - ISSUE 61



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Don't forget ou turday 31st March 2018

ford Square ween 9am - noon



My Mayoral Year ords from the Town Mayor

> Information about the Budget Page 5

Other exciting events coming up soon...

May Fair Carnival



Houghton Regis Town Council Contact Details

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Councillor contact details:	
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Town Clerk

WELCOME TO THE SPRING EDITION OF THE TOWN CRIER.

Spring is always a busy time in the Council offices as budgets are set, the accounts are closed for the end of the Financial Year, numerous events have already taken place and planning is well underway for summer events, plus the Annual Meeting which will be held in May for the election of the new Town Mayor.

The Council hope you find this edition an interesting and informative read.

Inside features provide you with a review of the community events we held in 2017, details of the agreed budget for the Council in 2018/19, various articles and information from local community groups and businesses along with updates from strategic partners.

Look out for details of the Easter Egg Hunt coming up on Saturday 31st March and the return of our Easter play scheme coming in April. For more information on what the Council does, please visit our website at:

www.houghtonregis.org.uk or take a look at the Councils Facebook and Twitter pages to find all the latest up to date local information, and upcoming FREE community events. Don't forget to LIKE the page too!

Any questions arising from the newsletter or feedback can be sent to info@houghtonregis.org.uk or you can contact the Council offices by phone on 01582 708 540.

Clare Evans
Town Clerk

Mayor's Foreword

Can you believe it's Spring? Christmas seems a long time ago now and we're just about to see British Summer time begin, with the long summer days ahead of us.

Last year was a lot of fun with all the various events in the town. I started my Mayoral year with a Community Picnic on the Village Green on an incredibly hot day, with games, activities and refreshments, this was followed by the Teddy Bears' picnic, a meal and various other events and someone told me that Santa even dropped in to the town just before Christmas.

During the year I've had the privilege of attending many invitations from surrounding towns and villages and along with the Deputy Mayor Cllr Ken Wattingham, we have been positively promoting all the good things about Houghton Regis. The one thing that comes up time and time again whilst talking to other towns is the strong sense of "community" and the many volunteer run groups and clubs that Houghton Regis has to offer, and I'm often asked "How does Houghton Regis do it?". My answer is, because we have a lot of incredible residents, businesses and volunteers that care, plus a resilience and a determination to do things to support others.

Houghton Regis is a town to be proud of, and as it slowly grows, so will that sense of community develop even further.

The support I have received has been tremendous, allowing many items to be purchased to help the 3 local groups I chose at the beginning of my year. I can not thank everyone enough, but I would like to say a special thank you to the young people of the Houghton Regis Youth Council, who are always first to offer a hand at all the events, come up with wonderful ideas and work really hard in everything they do. It's been an absolute pleasure to get to know each one of them and to see them grow in confidence.

So what lies ahead? We have the May Fair, the Annual Meeting of the Town and of course Carnival in July plus the last couple of Mayoral events for my term.

I hope you all have a great rest of the year.

Cllr Jo Hillyard, Mayor 2017-18

The Neighbourhood Plan

Our town is going through some pretty major changes! The expansion that happened in the 1960's changed Houghton Regis from a small village into a town, but a town that was more like a large village. The changes currently proposed will change it into a large town. In order to cope and prosper, many other things will need to change, and it is only fair and right that the people most affected—those who live and/or work in the town—should have a say in those changes.

Fortunately, the government put in place a mechanism to empower local communities in order to have just such a say: The neighbourhood plan.

Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community.

Some time ago our town council decided that we needed one and hired a consultant, Martin Small, to begin the process. Martin did a lot of research and produced a sample document of what a plan might look like. The next step was to gather a group of local residents to oversee the remaining work, and so an open meeting was held at the council offices. Sadly, the turnout for such an important discussion was very low, however enough people attended for a steering group to be formed and the work began. The task is quite daunting and covers a wide range of issues. To help us tackle it, the steering group divided the work into 6 areas: Business and Employment; Open Spaces and Leisure; Education; The Town Centre; Housing; and Heritage. One of the group members was placed in charge of each area, tasked with talking to the community and drawing up an initial description of what we would like to see in that area. The next step will be to blend those desires into a comprehensive whole.

Our initial steps included a survey which was tested at the Santa's Grotto event and will soon be available for people to make further responses to online. Initial feedback was very useful, and we hope many of you will take the 10-15 minutes needed to fill it out. We will be publicising how to access the survey as soon as it is ready.

Once the steering group completes its work and produces a draft plan there is a clear legal process that must be followed to get it adopted, including its acceptance by the town council, a mandatory consultation with certain key parties, and a review by Central Beds Council. The final step will be a public vote where you will get one last chance to say yea or nay to the plan.

The steering group are currently trying to get together focus groups for each of the six areas, to meet over the next few weeks. This is an open process and needs people to get involved (one of the biggest dangers to getting a plan adopted is failure to show local involvement). We know there are many people out there in our community who have strong opinions and ideas about the town, now is the time to come forward and have a positive impact on a document that will give our desires a legal standing in future developments in our town. If you are interested, please contact Debbie Marsh, Corporate Services Manager, at the council offices (debbie, marsh@houahtonreais.ora.uk) letting

her know which areas you are concerned about and how to contact you. She will make sure that the appropriate people keep you informed about focus group meetings.

The current Steering Group consists of: David Gibbons, Chair, Town Centre Working Group, Cllr Jimmy Carroll, Secretary, Housing Working Group, Christine Clavey, Treasurer, Business and Employment Working Group,

Neil Fearn, Open Spaces Working Group, Cllr Tracy McMahon, Heritage,

Tracy Plunkett, Education Working Group, Alan Winter,

Carol Butler,

Cllr David Abbott,

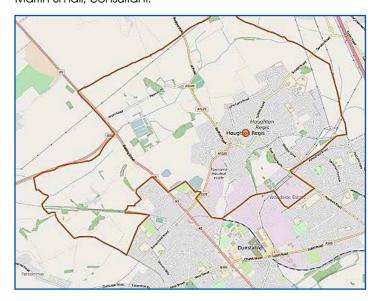
Cllr Ken Wattingham,

Cllr Martin Kennedy,

Cllr Susan Goodchild (CBC)

Also involved:

Debbie Marsh, administrative help Martin Small, consultant.



Year 7 places available



'Be Inspired'

Sponsored by the Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust

Parkside Drive Houghton Regis Bedfordshire LU5 5PX Our current pupils are making wonderful progress in a safe and happy environment. We currently have spaces available in KS3. If you would like your child to join us, please contact the school office for an application form. We can then arrange for you to come and take a tour, experience the warm and welcoming atmosphere, meet the staff and discuss how we can support your child's future learning.

We look forward to hearing from you.



www.houghtonregis.org.uk www.houghtonregis.org.uk

February 2018 update on our planned Houghton Regis flood storage area

We are working in partnership with Luton Borough Council to deliver a flood alleviation scheme, which will reduce the flood risk to over 500 properties in Luton. These properties experience flooding from the River Lee at times of high rainfall. Flooding from the River Lee and its tributaries has been recorded many times, particularly where the Houghton Brook joins the River Lee around Toddington Road.

We held a public drop-in at the end of 2017 in Houghton Regis to share information on our proposed flood alleviation scheme for Luton. We thank the local residents for their interest in the scheme and for coming along to find out more.

As part of the scheme, a flood storage area (FSA) will be built on land beside Houghton Regis, next to the M1 motorway. We will be submitting a planning application for the FSA to Central Bedfordshire Council within the next few months. We will continue

to update residents of our progress. Once the planning application has been registered, all the supporting documents will be accessible on the Council's website at: www. centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/planning/flooding/houghton-regis.aspx
The map below shows the approximate location of the

planned FSA. If you have any questions about the scheme, you can email us at HNL-PSO@ environment-agency.gov.uk or write to The Houghton Regis FSA, Environment Agency, Alchemy Offices, Bessemer Road, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL7 1HE.



New Staff Join The Team

Houghton Regis Town Council has appointed two new members to its team. Louise Senior to the new position of Head of Democratic Services and Matthew Oliver as Office Apprentice. The Head of Democratic Services role holds the responsibility of Council's office manager, ensuring the smooth running of the office and providing the administration around council meetings. Louise has a wealth of experience in this area having previously worked in various local authority run schools across Luton. Louise joined the council in December. Louise said, "I am looking forward to working within the local community and have received a wonderful welcome from all the staff and councillors at the council offices"

The Office Apprentice role started in November with Matthew bringing great skills to a diverse role supporting the administration of the Town Council. Matthew has previously worked at Greggs and spent time at South Beds Golf Club and Active Luton during his

work experience.

Matthew is enjoying his role and has been working in a variety of different areas within the council, as well as being the main contact for bookings of the Community Centre.



Matthew Oliver - Office Apprentice

The staff and councillors are enjoying working alongside both Louise and Matthew and hope you all will enjoy meeting them at our local events and activities.



Louise Senior - Head of Democratic Services

Have you discovered Houghton Hall Park yet?









Following the recent opening of the Houghton Hall Park visitor centre in October 2017; both the centre and park have seen a positive and busy winter season, with the local community and businesses engaging with the centre and regularly using the facilities.

Did you know the café is dog friendly? The café welcomes your furry friends to join you when meeting friends for a late breakfast, lunch, or simply stopping by for a quick cuppa and slice of cake!

There is plenty on offer at Houghton Hall Park to keep you busy. Within the centre there is the interactive discovery zone situated in the café offering a wealth of information, local history and fun games for all ages, two bookable meeting spaces perfect for formal or

informal use, and various types of natural play equipment dotted just outside the centre and also around the park for children to enjoy. There are wide ranging volunteering opportunities such as maintaining the beautiful kitchen & formal gardens on a weekly basis (sometimes volunteers get to bring home the veggies!), a monthly conservation task held in the park which is open to all, and there are also volunteering opportunities to assist with various events and activities. Many groups that use the facilities or park are open for the community to join, including weekend Parkrun events for both adults and juniors, Buggy Exercise classes twice a week and Bumps, Babies and Beyond. Sign up to the newsletter by emailing hhp@ centralbedfordshire.gov.uk for regular updates and to find out this month's Photography Theme. Running every month, this opportunity encourages local photography enthusiasts to get snapping in Houghton Hall Park! As well as these exciting activities, there is also a fun events programme for all to enjoy throughout the year.

So whether it be a half term where you're stuck for ideas of what to do with the family or just an afternoon by yourself where you'd like some fresh air, join us at Houghton Hall Park to explore, enjoy and relax...

For more details on any of the above and to keep up to date, follow the Facebook page www. facebook.com/houghtonhallpark or visit the Houghton Hall Park website www.houghtonhallpark.org.

Houghton Regis Town Council - Budget 2018/19

After much deliberation and hard work over the last few months the Town Council has set its budget and precept for 2018/19 and is able to advise residents that the precept has been set at £834,904 which will enable the Band D charge to remain the same for the fifth year running.

The budget which has been set makes provision for the delivery of the projects identified within the Houghton Regis: Our 2020 Vision, including:

Corporate Services Committee:

 Continued provision for central services such as accountancy and investment fees, councillor services and support, IT and communication costs, insurance, advertising and property maintenance costs along with officer salaries and training.

Environment & Leisure Committee

- Ongoing provision has been made to manage and maintain public open spaces, sports facilities, play areas, the cemetery and All Saints churchyard;
- Capital provision for many projects including the

establishment of the new area within Houghton Regis Cemetery and for sport and recreation projects including new sports and recreational space within the Green.

Community Services Committee:

- Provision for Easter and Summer Holiday clubs, for the Youth Pop Up Cafe, for town centre toilet cleaning, for Christmas lights, Council communications and a community grant scheme;
- Continued provision of community events;
- Local retailer support (Shop Local Campaign and town centre events);
- Improved community safety and reduced fear of crime.

Planning Committee

- Professional support to guide the Council in relation to the planning developments;
- Development of a Neighbourhood Plan

For further details on the budget, please contact the Town Clerk on (01582) 708540 or by e-mail on info@houghtonregis.org.uk

www.houghtonregis.org.uk

Review of 2017's Events

The Town Council has organised many community events last year and we would like to take this opportunity to look back at these successes

February

This saw our 4th Pancake Race event. It was another Flipping... Success, with schools, residents, Staff and councillors taking part in teams of 4 competing in a Flip the Pancake race.



March

We launched our Shop local campaign along side our Red Nose Day event which raised £752.64.

Have you joined the Shop Local campaign? Help support your local shops by collecting stamps on your stamp card (available at participating stores) each time you shop with them to build up to a goodie bag full of vouchers and discounts to spend locally.

The Town Council's annual 'Easter Egg Hunt' in Bedford Square, in which children took part in the Hunt along with an Egg and Spoon Race.



We held our 5th May Fair event with Maypole Dancing, traditional fairground rides various activities for children all presided over by Houghton Regis' very own May Queen & her Princess's.

July

The Town Council Annua Carnival "From Hollywood to Bollywood" Themed, which was another very successful event.

Also in July we held our Skate Park Competition, which is open

to skateboard, scooter and bike riders of all ages, to come along and show off their talents.

Our annual Pride of Houghton

Award Ceremony.

October -

We held our 2nd live music event Houghton Rocks at Parkside. A fantastic event with various local bands playing.

September



November

We started our Christmas events season off with a bang with our "A Celebration of Christmas", held at The Grove Theatre, Dunstable.

We also held our 2nd Fireworks Night a spectacular display which saw a crowd of over 3,000 enjoy the free family event.









December

Christmas! Once again Santa came to town with his elves bringing lots of presents with him for the children.



The council would like to thank everyone who took part in the past events and look forward to seeing you all at our future events.

If you would like to know more about the Town Council events then please take a look at our website or our Facebook page.

www.houghtonregis.org.uk

Spotlight on the Community

1. How long has the group been running?

The Society has been running since October 2012, it started with nine people who where passionate about Heritage. The Society was set up with the help of Jan Cooper who gave us advice and encouragement. Initially David Hill saw the wonderful archive of pictures that Pat Lovering had and wanted a way to ensure these would be kept for the current and future generations of the town. The Society developed to where it is today.

2. How many members do you have to date?

We have on the books some sixty members but the numbers who attend public meetings vary.

3. How do you think the group is received within the community?

We know that HRHS is in the forefront of heritage in the local community. People love looking at old pictures and talking about old times when the town was just a village. Our website www.hrhs.org. uk has many interesting pages including old local directories.

4. How do residents/community join the group?

Joining is easy, look at our website, attend one of our meetings, or send us an email.

HOUGHTON REGIS HERITAGE SOCIETY

5. Is the group involved in any projects?

The Society has been involved with the heritage side of the Houghton Hall Park Renaissance Project. It has supplied images and information for the various interactive displays in the Visitor Centre. It currently has two display cabinets one of which has a collection of local finds. We have also had meetings with Central Bedfordshire Council regarding the Red House, as we wish to use part of this building eventually as our Base when its restoration is complete.

6. Have you any exciting plans for the group this year?

We are planning to have stands at the May Fayre and Carnival this year and are at present developing an event on the Village Green for Remembrance Sunday.

Houghton Regis Central development

Central Bedfordshire

The tender process has started!

On Tuesday, 19th December we commenced the contractor tendering process that will lead to the appointment of a developer for the Scheme. The first step is to identify those companies that have the capacity and relevant experience to take on a major development in a Town Centre that incorporates a Grade 2 Listed Building (the Red House). The decision to award a contract will be taken by the Council's Executive in August 2018.

Proposal for Whitbread PLC to use part of the HRC site as a temporary staff car park

Whitbread PLC are a major business located on the Houghton Hall Business Park. They are substantially extending their existing car park and have asked for the Council's help to use the Houghton Regis Central site as a temporary staff car park for six months, whilst the work to provide their new staff car park is carried out.

Whitbread are committed to the

local area and are working closely with the Council to invest in business growth and expansion. As this is an opportunity to unlock investment, with a wider benefit for Houghton Regis and significant job creation, the council are keen to support them. Whitbread will pay for and undertake the works required to make the site fit for purpose as a temporary staff car park. Any works will be supportive of future HRC development works and will not impact on timescales or costs for HRC. The site will be staffed by Whitbread and used by their employees Monday to Friday. Using this space will mean that Whitbread staff will not need to use existing on street parking or public car parks.

Consideration has been given to the feasibility of a small number of these parking spaces being made available to the public. However, this has not proved possible as public car parks must comply with different regulations to private car parks.

Applying these regulations would

mean significant changes in the work and management of the car park and require an increase in costs for Whitbread that would be excessive for the relatively short period of time they require for the temporary car park.

Starting on site

As Whitbread will need to vacate the site by the end of July they are looking to start their preparatory works before the end of this month.

Whitbread's contribution to the Houghton Regis community

Whitbread understand the importance of the role that a business of its size can play in a local community. In recognition of that role and their commitment to the local area, they have decided to make a sum of money available to support local organisations active in the community, for the longer-term benefit of the residents of Houghton Regis. Further details in how they will manage this arrangement will be available in due course.









your devices.

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www.houghtonregis.org.uk www.houghtonregis.org.uk

SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS Business Interview with...

1. How long has Kids in Action been running for?

Kids in Action was founded in 1996 by Paul-Bowen James and celebrates its 22nd Birthday on the 6th March 2018

2. What kinds of services do you provide to the community?

Our main facility is in Dunstable a 10,000sq ft warehouse which has been transformed into a giant youth club housing different accessible spaces for social interaction where we run weekly activities for children and adults with special needs over 150 members attending a week. We also organise trips these include the theatre, bowling, theme parks and various farms etc. Kids in Action also owns 3 caravans, 2 based on a Haven site in Caister on Sea and one in Clacton on Sea these enable our families to have affordable holidays.

3. How do you promote these services?

We promote Kids in Action by visiting schools, social services, day centres, supported living homes, and all social media.

4. When do you run these services?

We run clubs during the day and evening throughout the week.

5. What is a typical day like?

The service that provide to our special needs members can be very different with no 2 days ever being the same!!!!! It can be very emotional but exceptionally rewarding.

6. What do you want visitors to take from the service?

Our aim is to make a positive difference to each individual, giving them the confidence to participate in social activities, make friends in a safe, non-judgemental environment as many experience isolation and loneliness.

7. What are your biggest problems/challenges you face?

We would like to say nothing is a problem but some of the issues we do face is trying to get voluntary staff as the charity relies on these heavily. Transport for our members is a challenge as many homes and days centres rely on only form of this.

8. Does your organisation take part in any kind of special events?

We to take part in school open days, networking meetings and other opportunities we can to raise the awareness and profile of the charity.

9. Have you got any exciting plans for the future?

We have very exciting plans for the future .as the charity has grown and developed over the years, it has become vital that the future of Kids in Action is secured this is why the decision has been taken to commence the process of buying the building. This decision will ensure that Kids in Action will be able to support children, young people and





adults with special needs and disabilities, together with extended support to their families' long term, ultimately

creating a lasting legacy. We are extremely excited about this project and we are looking for as many people as possible to get involved in our journey to achieve this and have launched The £1000 Challenge fundraising campaign if you would like to know more about this please call 01582-477762.



Annual Towns Meeting for all Registered Electors of the Parish of Houghton Regis

All registered electors of the parish of Houghton Regis are invited to attend the Annual Towns Meeting.

Under the Local Government Act 1972 s9 all parishes / towns in England must hold an Annual Parish / Town Meeting.

This is a public meeting of the registered electors of the parish of Houghton Regis. Although the meeting is called by the Mayor of the Town Council, the Annual Towns Meeting is not a meeting of the Town Council.

You have the right to attend, to speak and take part in the discussions and, if appropriate, to vote on such matters. Any matter of relevance to the town maybe discussed.

The next Annual Town Meeting will take place on Monday 9th April 2018 at 7.30pm at Bedford Square Community Centre, Houghton Regis.

The agenda will include open session for electors to ask questions or make comments.





Please find below the calendar of meetings for the Town Council from April to the end of May 2018. 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
3rd April	Tuesday	Accounts Sub Planning	6.15pm
9th April	Monday	Annual Towns Meeting	
10th April	Tuesday	Town Partnership	
23rd April	Monday	Accounts Sub Planning	6.15pm
8th May	Tuesday	Accounts Sub Planning	6.15pm
16th May	Wednesday	Town Council (AGM)	



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Pride of Houghton CS 2018

Do you know any individual or groups of people, young or old, who deserve recognition for their efforts, skills, perseverance or commitment? This is their chance to get the recognition that they deserve.

Use the form below to forward your nominations to the Town Council Office, Peel Street, Houghton Regis by 27th August 2018.

Nominees must be residents of Houghton Regis and nominated for their work within the town. Nominations can also be received from people outside the town and for immediate family, (nominations cannot be made for Town Council Staff, Town or Central Bedfordshire Councillors) Previous winners can be considered again.

Town or Central Bedfordshire Councillors) Previous winners can be considered again.					
I would like to nominate:					
For: (please tick appropriate box)					
Individual		Young Person (under 18)			
Carer (The extra mile award)		Community Facilitator/Local Her			
Local Group		Local Business/organisation in Houghton Regis			
Care Home Workers		Lifetime achievement/special award			
Your Name:	-				
Your contact number:					
Your address:	Bally				
Name of your nominee:	COMMENT DANSES				
Nominee address:					
Why do they deserve an award? (use extra sheets of paper if required and affix to this form)					