THE MAGAZINE OF HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Issue 2 - 2026

TOWN CRIER

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

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Included in this edition:

Community Speed Watch
Looking back at our events
Houghton Regis in Bloom
RHS It's Your Neighbourhood

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

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
@HoughtonRegisTC
Houghton Regis Town Council

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

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

Parkside Ward

Cllr Jimmy Carroll	jimmy.carroll@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk
Cllr Sarah King	sarah.king@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk
Cllr Debbie Taylor	debbie.taylor@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk
Cllr Elaine Cooper	elaine.cooper@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

Tithe Farm Ward

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

CBC Councillor Contact Details:

Houghton Regis East

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

Houghton Regis West

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

A Message from the Town Mayor, Cllr David Jones



Dear Residents,

I am honoured to be serving as Town Mayor of Houghton Regis, having been elected at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council in May. Having lived in Houghton Regis since 1986 and previously served as Mayor in 2012/13, it is a privilege to once again represent our town and its residents.

I first became a Town Councillor in 1999, serving for 16 years before returning to the Council in 2019. My years of involvement in local government have given me a longstanding connection to our town and its community.

This year, I am supporting three charities: **Keech Hospice, Hospice at Home Volunteers and the Motor Neurone Disease Association**. I am proud to use my Mayoral year to raise funds and awareness for these organisations and the important support they provide.

Since becoming Mayor, I have hosted a summer afternoon tea and also held the Civic Reception. in August, which was a great success and raised money for my chosen charities. In September, I also held my Civic Reception, welcoming guests and recognising the people who contribute so much to our community.

One of the highlights of this year has been Houghton Regis's success at the **Anglia in Bloom Awards 2026**, where we made history by becoming the Inaugural Bedfordshire Champion. Our town received a Gold Award in the Large Town category, alongside Gold Awards for Houghton Hall Park, Thorn Park, and Houghton Regis Cemetery. Our community projects also received recognition, including awards for the Kitchen Garden, 100 Aker Wood and our Tiny Forest. We also received seven RHS It's Your Neighbourhood certificates, including an Outstanding award for All Saints View Gardening Club.

These achievements are a testament to the dedication of our volunteers, residents, schools, community groups, businesses, councillors, and staff. My congratulations and thanks go to everyone involved in making Houghton Regis such a special place to live.

I look forward to attending more events, meeting residents, and supporting the organisations and individuals who help bring our community together.

Thank you to everyone who has already supported my Mayoral year and fundraising efforts. Every donation, event attendance and act of volunteering is greatly appreciated and helps make a difference to my chosen charities.

I look forward to seeing many more of you throughout the remainder of my Mayoral year.

Warm regards,

Cllr David Jones
Town Mayor of Houghton Regis 2026/2027





Community Speed Watch gets underway in Houghton Regis

Our Community Speed Watch scheme has now got underway in Houghton Regis, thanks to the support and commitment of our fantastic volunteers: Cllr Pat Hamill, Cllr Tracey McMahon, Cllr Michelle Herber and residents Christine Lyus and Hannah Bailey.

The scheme aims to help reduce speeding in our neighbourhoods, making our roads safer and improving the quality of life for local residents.

On the **first day of Community Speed Watch activity, 550 vehicles were recorded passing the volunteers, with just one vehicle recorded exceeding the speed limit.** This is an encouraging result and a positive start for the scheme.

Our trained volunteers use equipment provided by Bedfordshire Police to monitor vehicle speeds at agreed locations. Any vehicles recorded exceeding the speed limit are reported to the police, who may then take further action.

Community Speed Watch is about education and raising awareness rather than immediate prosecution. Registered keepers of vehicles recorded speeding may receive a warning letter, with repeat offences potentially leading to further police action.

A big thank you to our volunteers for giving their time to help make Houghton Regis a safer place for everyone.



A Message from our MP



Since my last Town Crier update, we've got a new Prime Minister. His priority is the cost of living. That's why there's been an immediate cut in VAT on electricity bills, he's cut road tax for hauliers to help reduce the prices of products they drive to the shops, announced a 20% cut in business rates for pubs, and bus fares will fall to £2 from the start of next year. Meanwhile investment continues apace in our NHS.

We're also looking to the future with plans for a National Care Service to provide people with free personal care, on the same basic principle as the NHS: everyone contributes and everyone is covered. To pay for this from 2030 the triple lock will be adjusted but nevertheless pensions will be guaranteed to go up every April by 2.5% or by inflation if that's higher.

Off road bikes: The Crime and Policing Act I voted for in Parliament has become law. Police can now immediately seize off-road bikes being ridden antisocially which is a big issue locally including in the main Bedford Square area, the undercover library area, and in local neighbourhoods. The police also tell me they're focusing on shoplifting.

Mobile signal: Dropped calls and weak signal remain a real problem especially in some new build areas. Thank you to everyone who has let me know their experiences. Having local examples really helps as I press phone companies and Ministers on this.

Fireworks: Please do let me know if you're experiencing anti-social firework use at www.alexmayer.co.uk/bang. I'm calling for tougher rules and will pass on specific concerns to the police and council.

Bus boosts: This Autumn I was pleased we secured improvements to the 42, as well as 20-minute Jo buses and more morning and evening C and CX services to Luton. In Parliament, I led a debate calling for better bus stops that are clean and provide more reliable information. Meanwhile, the Government has awarded £500,000 to CBC and Luton Council to explore greater public control along the Busway, something I strongly back.

Health Hub: I continue to press strongly on the ridiculous situation whereby the modern clinical rooms are not being used, including highlighting this in the Commons Chamber.

As ever, a big thank you to some of the brilliant local businesses who have welcomed me recently.

I've found out how Houghton's Mega Glass are really smashing it with extra investment and how Snakes and Ladders soft play is climbing to new heights. Plus it was great to meet Sourcasa's father and son duo. They're bread-y for business delivering freshly baked bread by cargo bike across LU5.

As always, if you have issues or ideas, please let me know: alex.mayer.mp@parliament.uk or 01525 301390.

Looking back at our events

It has been a busy and memorable summer in Houghton Regis, with residents, volunteers, community groups and visitors coming together to enjoy a fantastic programme of local events.

Regis the Lion has been out and about across the town, joining in the fun and helping to celebrate everything that makes our community so special. In May, Houghton Hall Park welcomed dog lovers and their four-legged friends for the annual dog show, held in partnership with Accolade Hounds. Classic car enthusiasts also had plenty to enjoy at Classics in the Park in early June, where much-



loved vehicles were shown off.

July brought sunshine, soaring temperatures and a real sense of community spirit. The Carnival and People Powered Parade filled The Village Green with colour, creativity and local pride. A huge thank you goes to the community groups, charities, schools, organisations and residents who helped make the day such a success. Later in the month, Bedford Square came alive for the town's first Arts and Cultural Festival, featuring Indian drummers and dancers, a world





map trail, crafts, international snacks and performances from talented local groups. Families also gathered at Houghton Hall Park for Open-Air Cinema screenings of GOAT and Wicked, offering a perfect start to the summer holidays.

In August, Open-Air Theatre brought much-loved stories to life in the beautiful surroundings of Houghton Hall Park. Audiences of all ages enjoyed Treasure Island and The Tale of Peter Rabbit and Benjamin Bunny, with the summer breeze welcomed by visitors,



pirates and woodland creatures alike. The weather was not quite so kind for Houghton Rocks — or perhaps Houghton Rains this year — but spirits remained high at Parkside Recreation Ground. Thank you to everyone who came along, danced to our fantastic line-up of bands and stayed with us until the Bank Holiday downpour brought the event to an early close. September offered another opportunity to celebrate Houghton Regis, as our second Heritage Day took place in partnership with Heritage Open Days at Houghton Hall Park. Visitors enjoyed arena



displays from reenactors representing the 9th, 13th and 14th–15th centuries, alongside a court jester who entertained kids of all ages. Exhibitions hosted by Houghton Regis Heritage Society and All Saints Church gave residents the chance to explore the rich history of the town, ask questions and take pride in our shared heritage.

There is still plenty more to look forward to before the year is out. We hope to see you at the Halloween Trail on 30th October at Houghton Hall Park, Fireworks on 6th November at Bidwell West, the Christmas Lights Switch On and Market on 5th December in Bedford Square, and



Santa's Grotto on 12th December at Houghton Regis Library.

Thank you to all of our sponsors over the course of our summer events including Nick Browne EXP, Houghton Regis Leisure Centre, Thorn Springs, Safer Luton Partnership and Cllr Alderman.

Houghton Regis Celebrates Outstanding Success at Anglia in Bloom Awards 2026

Houghton Regis is celebrating an outstanding performance at the **Anglia in Bloom Awards 2026,** becoming the **inaugural Bedfordshire Champion** and the first community to receive this prestigious new county title.

The town also achieved an impressive collection of awards, recognising the continued hard work and dedication taking place across Houghton Regis.

Houghton Regis – 1st Gold Award

Houghton Regis was awarded **1st Gold Award in the Large Town Category,** marking another fantastic achievement for the town.

Houghton Hall Park – Gold Award and Category Winner

Houghton Hall Park received a **Gold Award and was named Category Winner in Historic Parks & Gardens.**

This is the **third consecutive year** that Houghton Hall Park has achieved a Gold Award and the **second time it has been named category winner.**

The park also received:

- **Best Grow Your Own Project**
  – Houghton Hall Park Kitchen Garden
- **Best Sustainable Garden Project**
  – Houghton Hall Park Tiny Forest

Other Houghton Regis successes

The town achieved further recognition across a range of categories and projects:

- **Gold Award – Public Parks Virtual Category**
  – Thorn Park
- **Gold Award & Best Cemetery**
  – Houghton Regis Cemetery
- **Winnie-the-Pooh Centenary Award**
  – 100 Aker Wood

Eight Special Award nominations

Adding to this success, all **eight Houghton Regis projects nominated for Special Awards received nominations,** highlighting the quality, creativity and innovation taking place across the town.

The nominated projects were:

- Houghton Hall Park Kitchen Garden
- 100 Aker Wood
- Tiny Forest
- Never Ending Dead Hedge
- Community Art Project
- Bedford Square
- All Saints View
- The Chiltern School

Houghton Regis in Bloom
Horticulture Environment Community
Anglia in Bloom Gold & Bedfordshire County Winner 2026



Receiving a Special Award nomination means a project was judged by Anglia in Bloom judges to be among the very best they encountered across the entire region.

A success for the whole community

These achievements reflect the dedication and hard work of the many people who help make Houghton Regis a greener, more vibrant and welcoming place.

Our volunteers, residents, schools, community groups, businesses, councillors and staff all play an important part in enhancing our parks, green spaces, wildlife habitats, public realm and community gardens.

As one of the fastest-growing towns in the region, Houghton Regis continues to demonstrate that growth and development can go hand in hand with **horticultural excellence, biodiversity, sustainability and community pride.**

These awards are a celebration of the whole community and the contribution made by everyone involved.

Thank you to everyone who continues to help Houghton Regis bloom.

Introducing The Regis Group

You may have noticed the occasional post on our social media titled **"The Regis Group"**, where we share news, events and achievements from other towns and communities with Regis in their name.

Houghton Regis is part of **The Regis Group**, a connection between councils with Regis in their name. The group provides an opportunity for us to support one another, share ideas, promote events and celebrate the achievements of our fellow Regis communities.

Alongside **Houghton Regis**, the group currently includes **Bognor Regis, Bere Regis, Lyme Regis, Grafton Regis** and **Beeston Regis**.

So, when you see a The Regis Group post, you'll be seeing a little glimpse of what's happening in one of our fellow Regis communities – and we hope you'll enjoy discovering more about them!

Six communities, one shared connection – stronger together.



Town Council Calendar



Please find below the calendar of meetings for the Town Council from November to the end of April 2027. 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.gov.uk

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

DATE	MONTH	DAY	COMMITTEE	TIME
2nd	Nov	Monday	Community Services	
9th	Nov	Monday	Community Services (Grants)	
10th	Nov	Tuesday	Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub-Committee	
16th	Nov	Monday	Planning	
18th	Nov	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee	11am
23rd	Nov	Monday	Town Partnership	
24th	Nov	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub-Committee	
30th	Nov	Monday	Corporate Services	
7th	Dec	Monday	Town Council	
8th	Dec	Tuesday	Planning	
2027				
4th	Jan	Monday	Planning	
11th	Jan	Monday	Environment & Leisure	
12th	Jan	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub-Committee	
19th	Jan	Tuesday	Staffing Committee	
20th	Jan	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee	11am
25th	Jan	Monday	Town Council	
26th	Jan	Tuesday	Planning	
15th	Feb	Monday	Planning	
22nd	Feb	Monday	Community Services	
1st	Mar	Monday	Corporate Services	
8th	Mar	Monday	Planning	
16th	Mar	Tuesday	Town Partnership	
17th	Mar	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee	11am
22nd	Mar	Monday	Town Council	
23rd	Mar	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub-Committee	
30th	Mar	Tuesday	Planning	
5th	April	Monday	Environment & Leisure	
12th	April	Monday	Staffing Committee	
19th	April	Monday	Planning	
26th	April	Monday	Community Services	

RHS It's Your Neighbourhood

Celebrating our community gardening groups



Houghton Regis is proud to celebrate the community groups and volunteers who are helping to make our town greener, brighter and more welcoming through the **RHS It's Your Neighbourhood** scheme.

It's Your Neighbourhood is a free, non-competitive community gardening scheme run in partnership with the **Royal Horticultural Society (RHS)**. It supports volunteer groups to create, improve and care for local green spaces, while bringing communities together and encouraging people to take pride in their surroundings.

Eight Houghton Regis schemes recognised in 2026

We are delighted that **eight local schemes** have been assessed this year, with groups achieving levels from **Establishing** through to the highest level of **Outstanding**.

A huge congratulations to all the groups and volunteers involved:

Houghton Hall Park Kitchen Garden
Level 5 – Outstanding

All Saints View Independent Living Scheme Gardening Club
Level 5 – Outstanding

Friends of Windsor Community Open Space
Level 4 – Thriving

Houghton Regis Memorial Hall
Level 4 – Thriving

Houghton Regis Bowls Club
Level 3 – Developing

All Saints' Parish Church, Houghton Regis
Level 3 – Developing

Woodside Link Road Community Orchard
Level 2 – Improving

Elm Park Close
Level 1 – Establishing

A fantastic achievement for our community

These assessments recognise the time, enthusiasm and commitment of the volunteers who work throughout the year to care for their local spaces. From community gardens and orchards to church grounds, open spaces and residential gardens, each scheme is making a positive contribution to Houghton Regis.



We would like to congratulate all eight groups on their 2026 achievements and thank every volunteer who gives their time to help their community grow. Their work demonstrates what can be achieved when local people come together to create spaces that are enjoyed by residents, support wildlife and help make Houghton Regis a greener and more attractive place to live.

Together, we can continue to help **Houghton Regis bloom.**

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

You can access information online at:
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

Reception Hours:
Main Offiice 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



Christmas in Houghton Regis

Christmas is fast approaching, and there is already lots happening across Houghton Regis as the town gets ready for the festive season.

From community activities and local events to Christmas fairs, markets and family fun, there will be plenty of opportunities to get involved. Some Christmas events will even be getting underway in November, so there is no need to wait until December to start enjoying the celebrations.

To find out what's happening across Houghton Regis, keep an eye on our What's On page, where we bring together events taking place around the town, including those organised by local community groups and organisations.

Visit www.houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk/community/events for the latest events and details.

Houghton Regis Town Council Christmas Events

Alongside the many events taking place around the town, Houghton Regis Town Council will also be bringing some of its own Christmas celebrations to the community.

Christmas Market – Saturday 5 December

The Town Council's Christmas celebrations begin at 12 noon on Saturday 5 December with our Christmas Market.

Come along and browse the stalls, find some Christmas gifts and treats, and enjoy the atmosphere as the town gets ready for the Christmas Light Switch-On. It's also a great opportunity to support local traders, community groups and organisations.

Mayor's Christmas Carol Service

At 5pm, the Town Mayor's Christmas Carol Service will take place at All Saints Church. The service provides an opportunity to come together, enjoy traditional Christmas carols and music, and take a moment to reflect during the busy Christmas period.

Christmas Light Switch-On

Following the Carol Service, the Christmas Light Switch-On will take place, marking the start of the Christmas season in Houghton Regis.

With entertainment and activities leading up to the countdown, the switch-on is always a popular occasion for residents to come together with family and friends and watch the town's Christmas lights illuminate.

Santa Comes to Town

The Christmas celebrations continue on **Saturday 12 December,** when **Santa will be visiting Houghton Regis Library**. Children will have the chance to meet Santa and enjoy some Christmas magic, making it a lovely family activity during the run-up to Christmas.

For all the latest information about Houghton Regis Town Council's Christmas events, including any updates or changes, make sure you follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

With events taking place throughout November and December, there are plenty of ways to enjoy Christmas in Houghton Regis. We look forward to celebrating with residents and seeing the town come alive over the Christmas period.



