

7th November 2023

To: Town Mayor and all Members of the Partnership Committee

Town Councillors: **D Jones, J Carroll, Y Farrell and C Slough**

CBC Councillors: **C Alderman, S Goodchild, P Hamill, T McMahon**

Co-Optees **J Anderson, D Gibbons, C Regan**

CBC Officers: **Mrs Hughes, Community Engagement Manager**

Copies, for information, to:

- Cllr Hares, Executive Member for Health and Community Liaison, CBC
- all Houghton Regis Town Councillors

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **Partnership Committee** to be held on Tuesday **14th November 2023** commencing at **7.00pm hours** at the Council Offices, Peel Street.

Members of the public who wish to attend the meeting may do so in person or remotely through the meeting link below.

To attend remotely through Teams please follow this link: [MEETING LINK](#)

Please follow this guidance if attending the meeting remotely [LINK](#)

<i>THIS MEETING MAY BE RECORDED *</i>
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Clare Evans
Town Clerk

AGENDA

- 1. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**
- 2. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC** (3 minutes per person; maximum 15 minutes)

**Phones and other equipment may be used to film, audio record, tweet or blog from this meeting by an individual Council member or a member of the public. No part of the meeting room is exempt from public filming unless the meeting resolves to go into exempt session.*

The use of images or recordings arising from this is not under the Council's control.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP
COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET
ON 18th July 2023**

Present: Town Cllrs: **C Slough (Vice-Chair), J Carroll, Y Farrell and D Jones**
CBC Cllrs: **T McMahon (Chair), C Alderman, S Goodchild and P Hamill**
HRTC Clare Evans, Town Clerk
Officers: Louise Senior, Head of Democratic Services

Co-opted members: D Gibbons
J Anderson
C Reagan

Also in attendance: Jemma McClean, Community Engagement Manager
HRTC Cllr M Herber

Apologies: Mrs Hughes, Community Engagement Manager, CBC

Members of the public: 1

989 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Members were invited to elect a Chairman for Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2023/24 in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference this could be a member from either authority.

Nominee	T McMahon	Proposed by:	P Hamill
		Seconded by:	J Carroll

No further nominations were received.

Accordingly, Cllr McMahon was elected as Chair of the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for the municipal year of 2023/2024.

990 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Sarah Hughes, CBC Community Engagement Manager.

991 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

**992 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR
DISPENSATIONS**

None.

993 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 24th January 2023.

Members requested some amendments to the minutes of the 24th January 2023.
The minutes were approved subject to the amendments.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 24th January 2023, as amended, and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

994 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Members were invited to elect a Vice-Chairman for Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2023/24 in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference this should be a member from the other authority to the Chairman.

Nominee	C Slough	Proposed by:	D Jones
		Seconded by:	Y Farrell

No further nominations were received.

Accordingly, Cllr C Slough was elected as Vice-Chair of the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for the municipal year of 2023/2024.

995 CONFIRMATION OF THE SECRETARIAT

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the Committee were required to confirm the secretariat for the Partnership Committee for 2023/2024.

It was agreed for Houghton Regis Town Council to continue to act as the secretariat for the Partnership Committee for the municipal year of 2023/2024.

996 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION

The Terms of Reference required the list of Co-opted Members to be reviewed annually, by the Town Joint Committee.

Members had received applications for co-option from:

- David Gibbons - a co-opted member during 2022/2023, confirmed would like to be co-opted again
- Jo Anderson – a co-opted member during 2022/2023, confirmed would like to be co-opted again
- Carole Regan – a co-opted member during 2022/2023

Members were invited to consider whether they would like to explore the possibility of seeking to co-opt local stakeholders onto the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee. In this regard the Terms of Reference for the Committee state:

Co-option

To support engagement with local stakeholders the Town Joint Committee could co-opt members from local representative groups, as appropriate up to a maximum of 15. Each co-opted Member would be able to engage fully in all discussions but would not have any voting rights. Co-opted members could be removed from the Town Joint Committee. Decision making around removals could either be taken by the whole Town Joint Committee or by joint agreement of the Chair and Vice Chair, depending on each Town Joint Committee's preference.

Members agreed for the co-optee applicants to be co-opted onto the committee for the municipal year of 2023/2024.

The co-optees joined the meeting.

Resolved: To confirm the following co-opted members of the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2023-24:

- **David Gibbons**
- **Jo Anderson**
- **Carole Regan**

997 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members received the Terms of Reference which related to this committee.

Concerns were raised that the Town Partnership Committee's Terms of Reference were not in alignment with the way the committee operated. It was suggested that consideration of change be given either to the objectives or changes to the way the committee operated. It was highlighted that the minutes of the Partnership meeting do not get presented anywhere within Central Bedfordshire Council for action.

It was suggested that with new administrations in place at both councils, that the relationship between Houghton Regis Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council may improve over the term of office.

It was requested that other towns who also had a partnership committee with Central Bedfordshire Council be contacted with a view to discussing the Partnership Committees Terms of Reference.

998 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members were invited to consider the Partnership Committee workplan and were invited to discuss what items to include. Members agreed for the headings to be the same as the workplan of 2022/2023, less the items of Tithe Farm Sports Provision and future Cemetery Provision as these were ongoing projects and would be reported in the HRTC Update report going forwards.

It was requested that the work plan include reference to the future use / management of Bedford Square Community Centre. It was suggested that a report be included on the next agenda the option of moving the college (currently using Bedford Square Community Centre) to the University Technical College to enable community use again of the Centre.

Concerns were also raised regarding the condition of the centre due to the use of the facility by Central Bedfordshire College. Updates were requested on the future use of the Community Centre.

Members expressed concerns that with the growth of the town primary care and school places would need to be considered. The option of a police hub was also referred too.

Members highlighted that, as some matters were discussed at other committee meetings, there seemed to be some duplication within the workplan and felt it could be presented in a manner to avoid replication. However it was highlighted that without the feedback provided at Town Partnership Committee Meeting, the opportunity to raise any issues highlighted in other meetings of the council with Central Bedfordshire Council would be missed.

999 IMPROVING HEALTH & WELLBEING IN HOUGHTON REGIS: TIME 2 CONNECT

Agenda item 13 - brought forward

Jemma McClean, Community Engagement Manager, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) was in attendance to update members and respond to any queries or comments on this project.

Members were advised that the open access sessions had been well attended and 53 1:1 sessions had been held. A tea dance project had been running in Leighton Buzzard and grant money had been awarded for to trial a similar activity in Houghton Regis.

Maths courses had been offered and arts and crafts sessions were being offered over the summer. Time2Connect had a hot desk based in Linnere, although it had been fairly quiet as the café has not been open.

Time2Connect were undergoing an evaluation by Central Bedfordshire Council to look at the impact and benefit the project has had for local residents which would influence future funding opportunities.

There had been enquiries to book additional space at All Saints View to hold Jazz up Your Life sessions, however contact had proven difficult to confirm any bookings.

1000 CBC UPDATE REPORT

Members received the Central Bedfordshire Council update report.

Members raised concerns regarding the accuracy of crime figures as stated within the report and felt that inaccurate figures showed a misrepresentation of the town and any arising issues it faces.

It was suggested that shoplifting figures were not a true representation of the issue in Houghton Regis as shopkeepers were reluctant to report incidents as they had a lack of confidence of action being taken.

Also of concern was traffic parking infringements and the lack of priority from Central Bedfordshire Council in focussing on Houghton Regis despite Traffic Enforcement Officers frequenting the town.

It was suggested that schools within Houghton Regis be encouraged to become more eco-friendly. The report highlighted that 7 schools were eco-friendly, however only 2 of these were within Houghton Regis. It was requested that through the advertising of events participants be encouraged to walk to events instead of driving.

Members were advised of the recruitment status of staff for Houghton Hall Park, and that interviews had been arranged.

Concerns were raised regarding the Primary Care in Houghton Regis and the health inequalities throughout the town.

1001 HRTC UPDATE REPORT

Members received the HRTC update report, including:

Corporate Services

- 23/24 Budget highlights
- Corporate Plan process

Environment & Leisure

- Tithe Farm
- New cemetery investigations
- VG Pavilion decoration in partnership with Morgan Sindall Community services

Community services

- Youth services
- Events

Planning

- NHP

Members received an update on some of the work the Town Council had completed, the positive work was acknowledged by members and it was highlighted that it had felt more like an equal partnership.

A member raised concerns that the land in front of The Gables in Houghton Regis was looking unkempt, it was requested of the Town Council this area be tidied up. The Town Clerk confirmed the location and extent of Common Land in Houghton Regis would be looked into and feed back to members. In some instances it was difficult to determine as historic land marks / features had changed.

A member questioned the planting of trees on the Village Green, highlighting concerns that this had taken away amenity land. There was some discussion around the definition of recreation and open space and common land.

The placement of 'No Parking' signs on the land around the entrance to The Brambles were queried, and whether these had been placed by the Town Council. This was to be investigated and fed back accordingly.

Agenda item 13 – discussed earlier in the agenda

1002 ITEMS REQUESTING ATTENTION BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

Members had been advised of the CBC process to determine further consideration, at CBC committee level, of items and issues.

Members of this committee were able to use this process to forward items for CBC's attention via the CBC Joint Committee Chair or CBC Joint Committee Vice Chair.

As such members were requested to identify and confirm if there were any requested items for CBC's attention.

Members requested the following items be considered for Central Bedfordshire Council's attention:

- Booking and hire arrangements of All Saints View
- Challenges around the Terms of Reference for this committee
- Bedford Square Community Centre and options with the UTC.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.21pm

Dated this 14th day of November 2023

Chairman

**NOTES OF AN INFORMAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE
HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE
ON 17th October 2023**

Present: Town Cllrs: **D Jones, J Carroll and C Slough (Vice-Chair), E Costello (Substitute)**
CBC Cllrs: **T McMahon (Chair), and S Goodchild**
HRTC Ian Haynes, Head of Environmental & Community Services
Officers: Amanda Samuels, Administrative Officer
CBC **S Hughes, Community Engagement Manager**
Officers: **Tobin Stephenson, Head of Services, MANOP**
Carol Rooker, Head of Housing Management
Co-opted D Gibbons
members: J Anderson
C Reagan

Also in attendance: Cllr R Hares

Apologies: Cllrs C Alderman, Y Farrell, P Hamill,

Members of the public: 0

1 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllrs C Alderman, Y Farrell and P Hamill

2 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A reference to the Red House had been included in the work plan (item 12 of the agenda). It was requested that a Houghton Regis town councillor propose an amendment asking that the review involved CBC Assets in the spirit of the Localism Act 2011, which gave rights and powers to local communities and made it easier for them to take over the amenities. It was requested that HRTC and CBC work together to ensure all suitable amenities were transferred to HRTC for the betterment of the town, including: Parkside Recreation Ground; Tithe Farm Recreation Ground; Grendell Lane; The Red House; Bedford Square Community Centre; Houghton Regis Day Centre; Windsor Drive Open Space and CBC-owned play areas. It was agreed to note these comments for discussion under the relevant agenda item.

A question was raised regarding Houghton Regis Community Centre and the lease to Bedford College. This was to be discussed further under item 5.

3 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

4 MINUTES

The minutes were not able to be approved; however, it was noted that amendments were required to the minutes prior to signing.

5 BEDFORD SQUARE COMMUNITY CENTRE

A report was presented which discussed Bedford Square Community Centre in terms of its future occupation by the college and other possible future uses / management options.

Members were advised that the college had been granted a 5-year lease for occupation incorporating a 3-year break clause. It was suggested that the break clause presented an opportunity for the Town Council and CBC to consider the possibilities the building offered in the longer term and to develop a project, supported by funding, to enhance community and youth services from this building.

It was agreed that clarification was required regarding the dates on the lease and whether the break clause would come into effect in 2024. A 3-5-year lease would give both CBC and HRTC adequate time to consider future options. The Town Council corporate plan would cover the period 2024 to 2028, and the aspirations to deliver and enhance community and youth services across the town, including the town centre, were likely to be included.

6 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Sarah Hughes, Community Engagement Manager, gave a verbal update on the Terms of Reference. Any changes to the Terms of Reference would need to go through a process which could impact other joint/partnership committees in Central Bedfordshire as it was a shared, single Terms of Reference. The process included going through the General Purposes Committee and then to Full Council. It was stated that quorate numbers in particular had not been raised as an issue by other committees.

Regarding the new administration, there was a desire for the partnership committees to be a platform for collaboration which required a change of approach. Councillors had been attending all the joint committees to ascertain how they operated and if they had any aspirations to change. It was hoped that Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Clerks could be brought together to discuss how best to make meetings more effective.

A question was raised as to whether remote attendance would be possible for future meetings and the Committee was informed that this required Members to be in attendance to consider this.

7 HOUGHTON REGIS CENTRE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

CBC were running a consultation on the future of Houghton Regis Day Centre for Older People. The consultation covered the period from 14th August to 6th November 2023.

An overview was provided by Tobin Stephenson, Head of Services, MANOP, from CBC who advised that they were in the middle of a programme which considered the day offer for older people and people with learning disabilities. This programme had been started in 2017 with the co-production of key components and principles and each day centre would be reviewed to ensure they met with these criteria. There had been a decision to move away from single-use buildings and focus instead on community-based options. The hub space at All Saints View was the preferred option for the centre and would offer a variety of facilities.

A report would be produced following the consultation process and would be reviewed by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and would then be presented to Executive for a decision.

Addressing the concerns of the Members Mr Stephenson confirmed the following:

- The space at All Saints View was deemed sufficient to meet the needs of the existing number of service users.
- A restaurant operator had been procured and people would be offered a lunchtime meal, with dietary requirements being catered for.
- No move would take place until the appropriate food offer was in place.
- Parking provision would be adequate, especially taking into consideration that most of the service users were dropped off.
- It would cause less disruption to relocate the service, rather than temporarily move them out while refurbishments took place at the current location.
- The space provided for the service would be separate from that for the residents of All Saints View, and community spaces would also be separate; however it was deemed that engaging with the community would be beneficial for the service users.

A decision would be made in February 2024 but, in the event the move was approved, the space would be made suitable for use before any relocation took place.

Townsend consultations would take place soon and it was suggested that if members had any ideas they wanted to put forward that they should email directly. Mr Stephenson confirmed he would be happy to hold further discussions regarding this at a later date.

8 ALL SAINTS VIEW CONTRACTOR PARKING

Members were advised that concerns and complaints had been received relating to the high level of parking problems experienced by residents of Clarkes Way and Whitehouse Close caused by contractors for All Saints View (ASV) parking in both areas.

A complaint had also been received in relation to parking around the Memorial Stone, although it was felt that this was not necessarily related to contractor parking. Discussions were taking place to see if bollards could be installed to prevent the problem.

Carol Rooker gave an overview and confirmed that works were likely to be finished by February 2024. All the main contractors had been asked to park responsibly but smaller contractors had been the most problematic; however, parking was scarce in the area.

Following a group discussion, potential solutions were put forward as follows:

- People reporting on site was the best opportunity to check and control parked vehicles.
- Illegal parking needed to be ticketed more effectively.
- Provision of a safe space for overnight tool storage would reduce the need for contractor parking.
- Alternative spaces used for parking, e.g., disused garage areas or other pieces of land. Any damage to such areas could potentially be landscaped on the completion of works.
- Approach Morrisons to ascertain whether the use of their car park could be reinstated.
- Spaces were thought to be available in the Undercroft for public use. This facility was not currently utilized and could potentially be used by contractors as well as by carers and professionals who currently have no allocated areas.

Carol Rooker confirmed that she would take all suggestions on board and would look at what reparation could be made regarding the damage to kerb stones etc. during works.

9 CBC UPDATE REPORT

Members received the CBC update report and commented on the following issues:

- How the Houghton Regis Community Leisure Centre could be used.
- Existing health inequalities in the area and the lack of space for medical centres.
- Figures in the Youth Support Services Reports on the needs of young people not employed or in educational training are greater than surrounding areas.
- Was the use of CCTV cost effective in relation to the number of arrests and were figures available to justify the cost?
- Town centre vacancy rates are positive.

10 HRTC UPDATE REPORT

An application had been submitted for funding under the Community Grant Scheme for the installation of exercise equipment at Parkside Recreation Ground. The application had been successful and a sum of £6,250 had been granted.

An inspector had been appointed for the neighbourhood plan and all the relevant documentation was with the Inspector. The plan would start imminently and a copy of the result of the Regulation 16 consultation had been received.

11 ITEMS REQUESTING ATTENTION BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

As this was not a formal meeting, this item could not be discussed.

12 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Points had been raised under item 2.

13 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION

Members were invited to consider whether they would like to explore the possibility of seeking to co-opt local stakeholders onto the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee.

It was confirmed that there was a potential for 15 co-opted places. Current numbers were deemed sufficient but could be reviewed again at a future date.