



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Cllr Yvonne Farrell**

Tel: 01582 708540

Town Clerk: **Clare Evans**

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14th March 2023

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

To: All Town Councillors

Notice of Meeting

You are hereby summoned to the Meeting of the Houghton Regis Town Council to be held at the Council Offices, Peel Street on Monday 20th March 2023 at 7.00pm.

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](#)

Clare Evans
Town Clerk

**THIS MEETING MAY BE
RECORDED¹**

AGENDA

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

In accordance with approved Standing Orders 1(e)-1(l) Members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.

The total period of time designated for public participation at a meeting shall not exceed 15 minutes and an individual member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.

¹ *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.

3. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Under the Localism Act 2011 (sections 26-37 and Schedule 4) and in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, Members are required to declare any interests which are not currently entered in the member's register of interests or if he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of any such interest.

Members are invited to submit any requests for Dispensations for consideration.

4. MINUTES

Pages 6 - 11

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January 2023

Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January 2023.

5. COMMITTEE AND SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

Pages 12 - 61

To receive the minutes of the following committees and consider any recommendations contained therein

Corporate Services Committee	28 th November 2022, 16 th January and 30 th January 2023
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Members are referred to:

- *12273 Local Government Pension Scheme: Statement of Local Discretions
To recommend to Town Council that the Local Government Pension Scheme: Review of Statement of Local Discretions be approved.*
- *12275 Eye Care Policy
To recommend to Town Council that the Town Councils Eye Care Policy be approved.*
- *12277 Health & Safety at Work Policy
To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils Health & Safety at Work Policy.*
- *12278 Risk Management Strategy & Schedule
To recommend to Town Council that the HRTC Risk Management Strategy & Schedule be approved with the approved amendments.*

Community Services Committee	7 th November, 15 th November 2022
Environment & Leisure Committee	14 th November 2022
Planning Committee	9 th January, 30 th January and 20 th February 2023

Members are referred to:

- *Minute 12340 Neighbourhood Plan Update*
To recommend to Town Council that funds continue to be drawn from EMR 330, for the 2023/2024 financial period, for the progression of the plan to examination stage.

Town Partnership Committee 18th October 2022

To receive the minutes of the following sub-committee and consider any recommendations contained therein

New Office Provisions Sub-Committee	None to present
New Cemetery Sub-Committee	None to present

Please contact the Head of Democratic Services if you would like a copy of any of these policies re-sent to you.

Recommendation: To receive the Minutes detailed above and to approve the recommendations contained therein as follows;

- **To approve that funds continue to be drawn from EMR 330, for the 2023/2024 financial period, for the progression of the plan to examination stage.**
- **To approve the Local Government Pension Scheme: Review of Statement of Local Discretions be approved.**
- **To approve the Town Councils Eye Care Policy be approved.**
- **To approve adoption of the Town Councils Health & Safety at Work Policy.**
- **To approve that HRTC Risk Management Strategy & Schedule be approved with the approved amendments.**

6. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

A verbal report will be provided.

7. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS & ON TRAINING SESSIONS ATTENDED

Councillors are requested to provide verbal reports from meetings they have attended of outside organisations or from training courses they have attended on behalf of the Council.

8. STRATEGIC POLICES 2023/24

Pages 62 - 132

To provide members with the opportunity to consider key council policies and a calendar of meetings and events for 2023/24. In accordance with Standing Orders these will be presented the Town Council at the AGM on 17th May 2023. The following points have been put forward for discussion:

- Scheme of Delegation
Pages 62 - 64
This policy is put forward without any suggestions for alteration / amendment
- Committee Functions & Terms of Reference
Pages 65 - 86
 - Members will find attached a Motion for consideration. The changes suggested in the motion are highlighted in the attached policy.
 - It is also suggested the a recommendation be put forward to Town Council in May to conclude the New Office Sub Committee. This Sub Committee last met on 27th September 2022 where it agreed that the revised Chamber layout was suitable for meetings and as such the building would continue to be maintained as required.
 - It is also understood that the Events Working Group gave some consideration to the Functions & Terms of Reference of the Pride of Houghton Working Group. However as the Pride of Houghton Working Group reports to the Community Services Committee it was not for the Events Working Group to consider such arrangements. Members may like to put forward their suggestions to this meeting.
- Standing Orders
Pages 87 - 112
This policy is put forward without any suggestions for alteration / amendment
- Financial Regulations
Pages 113 - 128
The Internal Auditor has suggested 2 amendments which enable the current practices of the council to be in accordance with Financial Regulations, these amendments are highlighted in para 5.2 and 5.3.
Members are advised that a review is being undertaken of Financial Regulations and it is anticipated that further amendments will be put forward to Town Council in May. Of note these will relate to Budgetary Control and Authority to Spend
- Council Calendar 2023/24
Pages 129 - 132
Suggested changes to the format of the current calendar include:
Allotments Working Group to meet every 2 months or more frequently if required
Town Council – Members are invited to consider the necessity of having a Town Council meeting in December and also in January. It is felt that there is scope to combine these meetings into one. The officer preference is to remove the January meeting, this would mean that the council would set its budget in December.
The attached Calendar shows both the December and January meeting.

Recommendation: To recommend to the Annual Meeting of Town Council approval of the following:

- **Scheme of Delegation**
- **Committee Functions & Terms of Reference as amended**
- **Standing Orders**
- **Financial Regulations as amended**
- **Council Calendar 2023/24**

9. COUNCIL ASSETS

Page 133

Members are advised that the Internal auditor recommended as part of his 21/22 audit that the council review its asset register to ensure its accuracy. This work is under way. However to aid this work the Council are requested to define an asset.

Within the Practitioners' Guide (Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance) March 2022 it advises that the term 'fixed assets' mean property, plant and equipment with a useful life of more than one year used by the authority to deliver its services.

However it is also suggested that a purchase price monetary value be placed on the councils definition. The Internal Auditor suggested using the value recorded in Financial Regulations up to which the Clerk has the authority to spend (Para 4.4). This value is currently £1,000.

Other purchases made with a longevity of use of over 1 year will be recorded on an inventory list.

Recommendation: To define for HRTC an asset as being a purchase of over £1,000 with a longevity of use of over 1 year.

10. INTERNAL AUDITOR INTERIM REPORT

Pages 134 - 140

Members are advised that the interim Internal Audit (IA) for 2022/23 was completed on 21st February 2023 by IAC Audit and Consultancy Ltd.

Members will find attached the following:

1. Cover Letter dated 27th February 2023 – this details the areas covered by the audit
2. Observations – this includes detail on the audit test, the IA observation and any IA recommendation. In the Comments column Members will find the Clerks response to the Recommendation. Members are requested to consider the Recommendation and the response in the Comments Column.
3. Summary – this summarises the audit

Recommendation: To support the Comments provided on the interim Internal Audit report.

11. ADDITIONAL ITEM:

TITHE FARM RECREATION GROUND SPORTS PROJECT - BORROWING APPROVAL

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HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 23rd January 2023 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: P Burgess
J Carroll
E Cooper
Y Farrell
S Goodchild
D Jones
T McMahon
R Morgan
A Slough
C Slough
S Thorne
K Wattingham

Officers: Clare Evans Town Clerk
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 8

Apologies: Councillors: C Copleston

Absent: M Kennedy

12316 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor C Copleston.

12317 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

- Feedback was requested on the effectiveness in terms of crime reduction of the CCTV camera placed on Windsor Drive and requested the number of prosecutions as a direct consequence of the camera being in situ.
It was confirmed that it was not possible to link prosecutions with CCTV footage.
- The camera on Windsor Drive had been removed, would this be replaced?
It was confirmed that the Council's Combating Crime Working Group managed the camera locations based on the advise of the police. Cameras were sited around the town in locations considered to be most at need.
- Would the council consider registering Windsor Drive Open Space as a community asset?
- Were the council considering offering grants for Coronation celebrations?
It was confirmed that a report to Community Services Committee was envisaged to facilitate this.
- It was asked what the HRTC response was regarding the 'no funding' announcement in relation to the pressures on GP's.
- It was asked why the Town Partnership Committee recording from the last meeting was unavailable

To was advised that there was a technical problem with the recording and as such was unavailable.

- It was asked for the damaged tree stump on Windsor Drive to be removed

It was advised the remaining questions would be responded to in due course.

12318 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

12319 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19th December 2022.

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19th December 2022 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12320 COMMITTEE AND SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES

To receive the minutes of the following committees and consider any recommendations contained therein

Corporate Services Committee	None to present
Community Services Committee	None to present
Environment & Leisure Committee	None to present
Planning Committee	12 th December 2022
Town Partnership Committee	None to present

To receive the minutes of the following sub-committee and consider any recommendations contained therein

Office Provisions Sub Committee	None to present
Proposed New Cemetery Working Group	None to present

Resolved: To receive the Minutes detailed above.

12321 TOWN MAYOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members were advised that an upcoming charity dinner was to be held in Bedford Square, and the Memorial Hall had planned a Bingo evening to be held during March.

12322 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS & ON TRAINING SESSIONS ATTENDED

Members provided verbal reports from meetings they had attended of outside organisations or from training courses they had attended on behalf of the Council.

Cllr McMahon advised members she had attended the Houghton Hall Park Project Management Advisory meeting, discussions included repairs to play equipment, the extension of the café tender, a Youth Ranger was to be introduced for 13 – 18 year olds and the Classic Car and Dog Shows would continue for the coming year,

Cllr Cooper advised members of the completion of the Memorial Hall decoration, the kitchen refurbishment had been put on hold as the need to refurbish the toilet facilities had taken priority. The decision had been made for the Memorial Hall not to hold a Coronation Event, as there would be other local events held, however, it was confirmed they would be holding a race night in June.

Cllr Jones had attended the BATPC Finance and General Purpose Committee meeting and advised members that the office move had been temporarily halted by the finalisation of the lease. An accounting software package was to be purchased for use by the honorary Treasurer and there was promotion of training through Breakthrough Communications Network on Communication and Data Protection.

12323 2023/24 BUDGET AND PRECEPT

Members were presented with the Town Council draft budget for 2023/24 for consideration and requested that members approve a budget for 2023/24 and set a precept.

Discussions were held in depth regarding proposed alternative budgets with emphasis on various needs of the local community along with cost saving suggestions.

An amendment to the officer recommendation was proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by: Cllr Morgan to read:

To approve the budget as amended by the Amendments and Allocations set out by the Liberal Democrat Group and circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting, showing a deficit budget of £14,140 to be covered by General Reserves brought forward, and to set a precept of £1,196,781 for 2023/2024.

The officer recommendation read:

To approve the budget and set a precept of £1196,781 for 2023/24.

A recorded vote was requested:

Members in favour: Cllrs C Slough, A Slough, E Cooper, D Jones, S Goodchild, K Wattingham, S Thorne, R Morgan and Y Farrell

Members against: Cllr McMahan

Abstentions: 0

The amendment was carried, subsequently this became the substantive motion.

Proposed by: Cllr Jones, seconded by: Cllr Morgan

A recorded vote was requested:

Members in favour: Cllrs C Slough, A Slough, E Cooper, D Jones, S Goodchild, K Wattingham, S Thorne, R Morgan and Y Farrell

Members against: Cllrs T McMahan, P Burgess and J Carroll.

Abstentions: 0

Resolved: To approve the budget as amended by the Amendments and Allocations set out by the Liberal Democrats Group and circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting, showing a deficit budget of £14,140 to be covered by General Reserves brought forward, and to set a precept of £1,196,781 for 2023/2024.

12324 REVIEW OF EAR MARKED RESERVES

To enable Members to review the status of the Council's Ear Marked Reserves part way through the financial year.

Resolved: To note the Schedule of Ear Marked Reserves 2022/23 and the predicted schedule of Ear Marked Reserves 2023/24.

12325 PROPOSED PAN-BEDFORDSHIRE BUS USERS' FORUM

The Town council had been advised of the following and had been invited to nominate a representative to attend:

Background

The National Bus Strategy for England, "Bus Back Better" published by the DfT in March 2021, formalised the expectation that all local transport authorities in England would establish Enhanced Partnerships with the local bus operators to deliver better bus services in their areas.

In October 2021, local authorities published their Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIP), which acted as the bidding documents for funding from the Department for Transport (DfT), Bedford Borough Council, Luton Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council liaised on the development of a number of joint proposals, which were included in the BSIPs.

In November 2022, the DfT confirmed a total funding allocation of £19.1 million for Luton and £3.7million for Central Bedfordshire, from 2022/23 to 2024/25.

One of the BSIP joint commitments was to create a pan-Bedfordshire Bus Users' Forum covering Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton. The Partnerships recognised the importance of the views of their local communities and wanted to build on existing relationships with bus passengers to better understand their needs and to expand that relationship to include under-represented user groups and the views of non-users. The Bus Users' Forum served as a consultation medium for considering Partnership Schemes as they emerged and developed and also provided valuable feedback on all aspects of the bus network. The Partnerships agreed that Central Bedfordshire Council would act as the lead on the establishment of the Forum.

The intention was that the Bus Users' Forum would act as an umbrella organisation comprising representatives from any current bus user groups within the Bedfordshire area as well as transport representatives from Parish and Town Councils.

The purpose of the proposed pan-Bedfordshire Bus Users' Forum was:

- To provide community and bus operator awareness of public transport needs and developments
- To allow informed and constructive public discussion of existing and proposed service and infrastructure provision
- To consult on both current and future transport policies, strategies and proposals
- To ensure the voice of regular bus users was heard in an equitable way.

The Bus Users' Forum would be non-party-political and participation in the forum, including attendance at any meeting, would not require the payment of any membership subscription. Similarly, there would be no financial remuneration for participation in the forum, or attendance at any meeting

Participation

CBC were inviting Parish and Town Councils across the area to participate in the Bus Users' Forum to represent the interests of their residents and communities. Councils may choose to participate in the pan-Bedfordshire Bus Users' Forum on an individual basis or may choose to link together with neighbouring Parish or Town Councils, where common bus routes serve adjacent areas, or where a larger Parish or Town may already have a councillor with a transport portfolio who was happy to attend on behalf of a wider local area.

CBC were keen that all individuals participating were able to represent their local residents through constructive and strategic discussion at meetings, coupled with the ability to work in a respectful way with both bus operators and council officers, in order to achieve mutually beneficial results.

Launch meeting

CBC intended to arrange a launch meeting early in 2023, when CBC would be able to give attendees a full briefing on the plans for delivering the measures identified in the BSIPs through the Enhanced Partnerships. In advance of this inaugural meeting, CBC would welcome expressions of interest for involvement in the proposed Forum.

It was anticipated that the launch meeting would be in hybrid form and was most likely to be late afternoon/early evening for an hour or so.

Once the user group was up and running the format would be decided by the members.

Cllr McMahon volunteered to act as the Houghton Regis Town Council representative on the pan-Bedfordshire Bus Users' Forum.

Resolved: To appoint Cllr McMahon as Houghton Regis Town Council representative to attend the pan-Bedfordshire Bus Users' Forum.

Members were formally advised that Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) launched their budget consultation exercise which was open for public consultation until 24th January 2023.

Feedback from the consultation would be presented to the February Executive, in advance of decision making on the finalised budget, which would be recommended to Full Council.

12327 APPOINTMENT TO APPEALS SUB COMMITTEE

In accordance with the approved Committee Functions and Terms of Reference members were requested to nominate 3 councillors to sit on an Appeals Committee. Due to the sensitive nature of this matter further details would be provided in due course to the appointed Appeals Sub Committee.

Resolved: To appoint Cllrs C Slough, D Morgan and T McMahon to sit on the Appeals Committee.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.15pm

Dated this 20th day of March 2023

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Corporate Services Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on
28th November 2022 at 7.00pm.

Present:	Councillors:	D Jones E Cooper S Goodchild K Wattingham	Chairman
	Officers:	Debbie Marsh Louise Senior Clare Evans	Corporate Services Manager Head of Democratic Services Town Clerk
	Public:	0	
Apologies:	Councillors:	J Carroll C Copleston	
Also present:	Councillor:	T McMahan	
Absent:		M S Kennedy	

12259 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllrs Carroll and Copleston.

12260 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

12261 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Members were reminded at the last Corporate Services Committee meeting held on 4th October 2022, a query was raised whether councillors needed to declare an interest if they were in receipt of a Local Government Pension, it was confirmed that clarification had been sought and a declaration of interest was not required.

12262 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th August and 4th October 2022.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th August 2022 and 4th October 2022 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12263 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

Personnel Sub-Committee: 11th July 2022

Resolved: To receive the Minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting of the 11th July 2022.

12264 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Members received the income and expenditure report, highlighting significant variances, for Corporate Services Committee to date.

Clarification was sought on budget heading 101-1091 - Misc. Income and what the wording of explanation, as contained in the officer's report, meant.

Under budget headings 190-4021- Communications Costs & 190-4026 - Computer Costs members suggested that these headings may require consideration when presenting the budget for 2023/2023 as they were on track to be overspent in this financial year. The proposed budget for 2023/2024 was, on first look, insufficient.

It was acknowledged that the staff overtime budget would have an overspend due to the recent NJC pay increase. This budget, at the time of setting, had been budgeted for a 2% increase in salaries, however the actual increase had been in the region of 6% across staff. It was also acknowledged this increase would have an impact to those budget headings that covered on-costs.

Members asked if enquires had been made as to whether there was any financial relief in place for public sector buildings, regarding utilities.

Members requested that the above queries be investigated and fed back to the committee.

Members received this report for information.

12265 BANK AND CASH RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS

Members received the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for August and September 2022.

Resolved: 1. To approve the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for August and September 2022;
2. For these along with the original bank statements to be signed by the Chair of Corporate Services Committee and the Council's RFO.

12266 LIST OF CHEQUE PAYMENTS

Members noted the agenda stated that members would receive a list of payments for the period August and September 2022 (inclusive) however members received a list of payments for the period September and October 2022 (inclusive). It was requested that August be circulated via email.

Clarification was sought on whether the All Saints Tree works at £22,800 had been sufficiently budgeted for. Members acknowledged this budget heading was not under the control of this committee. Members were advised that this would be clarified and fed back to the committee.

Members received this report for information.

12267 INVESTMENT REPORT

In accordance with Committee Functions, Financial Regulation 8 and Banking Arrangements, Investment Strategy & Investment Arrangements.

The Corporate Services Committee were to oversee and manage the financial obligations of the Council, including:

To receive quarterly reports on investments containing a forecast of capital expenditure, investment opportunities and a recommendation for further investment including where, length and amount.

Members were informed that the CCLA would be exercising their discretion to extend the redemption notice period from the current 90 days to 6 months with immediate effect. This will need to be borne in mind when the Council considers accessing this fund. Members requested that the Clerk scrutinises the timetable of the Tithe Farm refurbishment programme to ensure the availability of funds as and when payment was required.

Members received this report for information.

12268 INSURANCE CLAIMS

Members were advised that there had been no insurance claims made against the council from the 1st September 2022 to date.

Members received this report for information.

12269 REVIEW OF TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP TO OTHER BODIES

In accordance with the approved Committee Functions and Terms of Reference the Corporate Services Committee was required to annually review the Council's and/or employees' memberships of other bodies.

<i>Membership</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Annual Subscription 2023/24</i>
Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)	Annual	£446
Bedfordshire Association of Town & Parish Councils (NALC)	Annual	£2,122

Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management	Annual April to March	£100
Information Commissioners Officer (ICO)	Annual	£55
National Allotment Association	Annual	£56
Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)	Annual	£36

It was confirmed that the BATPC 3% increase had not been included in the above table as the agenda had been published before the announcement had been made.

12270 REVIEW EXISTING CONTRACTS

In accordance with the approved Committee Functions and Terms of Reference the Corporate Services Committee was required to annually review existing contracts.

<i>Service</i>	<i>Minute No.</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Cost / annum</i>	<i>Start date</i>
IT Support & Hosting		Support charge	£1,800	
		Microsoft 365 Business Standard - Annual Subscription	£1,015	3 rd November 2020
		Microsoft Exchange On-Line Plan1 - Annual Subscription	£576	10 th November 2020
		SolarWinds Cloud Backup - per month	£600	17 th November 2020
		McAfee Endpoint Protection Ess SMB 1:1 GL	£347	18 th October 2020
		Total / annum	£4,338	
Website hosting		Annual fee	£346	
DCK Accounting		Annual arrangement for year-end close	£1,250	

		down and year end accounts preparation		
Operation Hana	CC214	Annual arrangement	£34,990	1 st April 2022 to 31 st March 2023
Internal Audit	11965 (CS) 12082 (TC)	3-year arrangement	£1097.25	May 2022, 2023, and 2024
Human resources advisor	9942	Annual arrangement	£2,574.12	
External audit	12191	5 years from 1 st April 2022 and ending on 31 st March 2027	Cost TBC as SAAA central external auditor appointment arrangements process is currently being undertaken.	Appointed via Regulation 3 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015.
Town centre toilets	12119 (Com Serv) 12186 (TC)	3 years from 1 st September 2022 to 31 st August 2025	£19,600.00 plus consumables per annum	
Insurance	12048	Long term agreement	£13,034.97 plus additional premiums relating to any changes in circumstance.	13 th May 2019 - 31 st May 2024
Payroll	11454	Initial 6 months, then 30-day notice period	£145.25 pm	1 st April 2021
Photocopier lease	9695	Long term agreement	£396	2018 to 2023
Mobile Phones		10 x phones 12 month contract – Sim only	£1440	Oct 2022-Sept 2023
Telephone software		12 months then rolling	Set up £270 £65 month year 1 £88 month year 2 £276 cost of maintenance, annual fee after year 1	November 2020
BT Broadband		24 months	£611.40 p.a.	27/1/2021-26/1/2023
Franking Machine		Long term agreement	£300	1 st August 2019-31 st July 2023

Accounting Software support		Annual arrangement	£1018	1/4/21-30/3/22
Cemetery Software support		Annual arrangement	£290	1 st April 2021 onwards
Allotment Software support		Annual arrangement	£695 year 1 £175 year 2 onwards	17 th June 2022 onwards
Christmas Lights	9782	Long term agreement	£10,500 fixed (excluding tree)	1 st April 2019 to 31 st March 2024
Employee Assistance Programme	11774 (CS) 11879 (TC)	Long term agreement	£500	1 st March 2022 to 28 th February 2027

Members noted a mistake on the agenda for the cost per annum for the Town Centre Toilets contract. The cost was £19,600.00 plus consumables per annum and not £9,600 plus consumables per annum, as per the agenda.

Members received this report for information.

12271 REVIEW OF CHARGES 2023/2024

In accordance with Financial Regulation 9.3 Members received a list of charges for 2022/23 which were under the control of this Committee. In order to support users of these facilities, it was suggested that Members consider applying the same charges for 2023/24.

Resolved: To approve the charges for 2023/24 as attached.

12272 BUDGET 2023/24

Members received the officer draft budget for 2023/24 along with explanatory notes for the Corporate Services Committee.

The draft budget reflected on ongoing budgetary commitments along with anticipated budgetary commitments arising from the Council Vision 2020/24.

It was highlighted to members that a figure for the precept had not been included at this stage. However, in the explanatory notes members found information on the tax base for 2023/24 and a note outlining the arising implications.

The following points were highlighted:

- There was a predicted increase in interest and dividends receivable
- Bank and loan charges had increased to reflect the agreed account upgrade
- Additional software was required to support the council operations
- Additional budget was suggested to support member attendance at conferences and member training to reflect a new council from May 2023
- Continuation of the Digitalisation project re land transfer documents

- Professional support to the council to produce the next town council plan
- Additional budget to fund the May 2023 election
- Staff training
- Additional budget to support staff costs as progressed through the Personnel Sub Committee and the Corporate Services Committee
- Additional overtime budget to support council events

Members queried as to why the proposed figure for budget heading 190-4014 Electricity for financial year 2023/2024, had been shown as a decrease from the current 2022/2023 figure however, the justification was a request to increase the budget.

Members requested that codes 190-4021 & 190-4026 be re-examined when budget setting for financial year 2023/2024. Both of these budget codes have a proposal to be set lower, for the 2023/2024 financial year, than the current financial year. Members were concerned about these proposals as these codes were predicted to be overspent in the current financial year.

The month by month fluctuating photocopier charges were queried, it was explained that these fluctuations coincided with event promotions i.e. posters/flyers/leaflets.

It was queried whether it was known how much underspend would go into General Reserves, it was advised that this figure was currently unknown, more accurate information would be available in February 2023.

Members requested that costs associated with budget headings 190-4021 Communications Costs & 190-4026 Computer Costs be reconsidered when presenting the budget for 2023/20/24 as it was likely they both would be overspent this financial year and therefore, the proposed budget for 2023/2024 was, on first look, insufficient.

12273 LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME: STATEMENT OF LOCAL DISCRETIONS

Members received the Town Councils Local Government Pension Scheme: Statement of Local Discretions.

There had been no amendments to the Regulations, therefore it was suggested that it remained suitable and fit for purpose.

For information this Statement of Local Discretions was applicable to Houghton Regis Town Council employees only. This statement was required to be effective from the 1st April 2014, the administrating authority and the employing authority were required to have individual statements setting out their local discretions.

Members were reminded that this item was deferred from the last meeting held on the 4th October 2022.

Members queried as to whether, under Regulation R30(6)*&Tp11(2), the age of attainment should be in line with government retirement age. As detailed on the agenda,

there had been no amendments to these regulations however, further scrutiny would be undertaken and reported back to members.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that the Local Government Pension Scheme: Review of Statement of Local Discretions be approved.

12274 BEDFORDSHIRE LGPS – TRIENNIAL VALUATION AND EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTION RATE 1st APRIL 2023 – 31st MARCH 2026

Members were advised that a valuation of the Pension Fund takes place every three years, this also included an assessment of employer pension contribution rate for the coming three year period (1st April 2023 to 31st March 2026).

The outcome of the valuation was that the Town Councils contribution rate was set at 26.8% for the next three years. Current contribution rate was 25.8% This rate had been included in the officer's draft budget for financial year 2023/2024.

Members received this report for information.

12275 EYE CARE POLICY

The law stated employers must arrange an eye test for display screen equipment (DSE) users if they ask for one and provide glasses if an employee needs them only for DSE use.

The Town Council Eye Care Policy was adopted on the 26th March 2018. This policy was to be reviewed every 4 years or as required by the Corporate Services Committee.

Members were advised that regulations had not changed since this time and therefore this policy remained fit for purpose.

Members were also advised that Town Council employees were fully aware of this policy.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that the Town Councils Eye Care Policy be approved.

12276 LEAVE ENTITLEMENT POLICY

At the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on the 8th November 2022, Members were informed that the National Joint Council (NJC) reached an agreement on rates of pay applicable from the 1st April 2022. This agreement was reached on the 2nd November 2022.

The agreement was that from the 1 April 2022, there was an increase of £1,925 on all NJC pay points 1 and above (pro rata for part-time employees).

In addition, the National Joint Council (NJC) had agreed that from 1st April 2023, all employees covered by this National Agreement, regardless of their current leave entitlement or length of service, would receive a permanent increase of one day (pro rata for part-timers) to their annual leave entitlement.

Members were requested to note this minor amendment to the Town Councils Leave Entitlement Policy which had been revised to include the increase to the leave entitlement however, it was anticipated that a Family Friendly Policy would be presented to members at the next Corporate Services meeting which would specifically cover all leave entitlements other than Annual Leave and that the current Leave Entitlement Policy would just cover this one aspect of leave.

Members agreed to view the Leave Entitlement Policy and the Family Friendly Policy in the new year, however, would leave approval of these policies until the new municipal year for approval by the new council.

Resolved: To note the information and to await a revised Annual Leave Entitlement Policy that removes reference to all other leave entitlements other than Annual Leave and to receive a new Family Friendly Policy, that specifically covers all leave entitlements other than Annual Leave.

12277 HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK POLICY

Members received the Town Councils Health & Safety at Work Policy which had been slightly amended.

These amendments covered the addition of employees working from home, names of those who were Appointed Persons for first aid and the word vaping had been added to section 4 Code of Practice paragraph 4.1XVII. Other than these amendments the policy remained fit for purpose.

It was confirmed to members that staff had received advice on Health & Safety matters regarding working from home.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils Health & Safety at Work Policy.

12278 RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY & SCHEDULE

In accordance with Financial Regulation 17.1, the council was responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk would prepare, for approval by the council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements would be reviewed by the council at least annually.

Members received a copy of the Risk Management Strategy and Schedule.

Members were advised of the following amendments:

The addition of Allotments to the schedule ready for when the Town Council was responsible, information shown in red on the document.

Members supported an amendment to the Risk Management Strategy, under the Tithe Farm Sports Project heading, to take into account of the recent change to the redemption period for funds being withdrawn from the CCLA property fund, as per minute number 12267. Members agreed for the policy to go to Town Council subject to the amendments as discussed.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that the HRTC Risk Management Strategy & Schedule be approved with the approved amendments.

12279 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

- Staffing matters

Resolved: In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the item set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

12280 STAFFING MATTERS

Members received a copy of the report presented to the Personnel Sub Committee on 17th November 2022. At this meeting the suggestions detailed in the report were supported and it was agreed to put these suggestions forward to Corporate Services Committee.

Resolved: To support the suggestions put forward.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.38pm

Dated this 27th day of February 2023.

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Corporate Services Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
16th January 2023 at 6.00pm

Present:	Councillors:	D Jones	Chairman
		J Carroll	
		Y Farrell	Substitute
		S Goodchild	
		C Slough	Substitute
	Officers:	Clare Evans	Town Clerk
		Louise Senior	Head of Democratic Services
	Public:	0	
Apologies:	Councillors:	C Copleston	
		E Cooper	
		M S Kennedy	
		K Wattingham	

12311 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Cooper, Cllr Kennedy, Cllr Wattingham (Cllr Farrell substituted) and Cllr Copleston (Cllr C Slough substituted).

12312 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

12313 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

12314 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Staffing matters

Resolved: In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the item set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

12315 STAFFING MATTERS

Members received a report and were reminded of the background and history of the content and of previous resolutions. Members discussed the report at length and agreed the suggestions contained within the report.

Resolved: To support the suggestions put forward.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 6.32pm

Dated this 27th day of February 2023.

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Corporate Services Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
30th January 2023 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors: D Jones Chairman
J Carroll
E Cooper
S Goodchild
K Wattingham

Officers: Clare Evans Town Clerk
Debbie Marsh Corporate Services Manager
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillor: C Copleston

Absent: M S Kennedy

12328 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Copleston.

12329 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

12330 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

12331 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

- Staffing matters
- Appointment of Disciplinary, Grievance and Appeals Sub Committee

Proposed by: S Goodchild seconded by: K Wattingham
Carried

Resolved: In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the item set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

12332 STAFFING MATTERS

Members discussed the current issue.

Resolved: To agree the suggested way forward.

12333 APPOINTMENT TO DISCIPLINARY, GRIEVANCE AND APPEALS SUB COMMITTEE

In accordance with the approved Committee Functions and Terms of Reference members were requested to nominate 3 councillors to sit on a Grievance Sub Committee and a further 3 councillors to sit on a Grievance Appeals Sub Committee, to be drawn from the membership of the Corporate Services Committee.

Members felt it was not necessary to appoint to a Disciplinary, Grievance and Appeals Sub Committee at this time.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.06pm

Dated this 27th February 2023

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Community Services Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
7th November 2022 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: K Wattingham Chairman
J Carroll Substitute
P Burgess
Y Farrell
S Goodchild
A Slough
Officers: Town Clerk
Clare Evans Community Development Officer
Tara Earnshaw Head of Democratic Services
Louise Senior Lead Youth Worker
Dave Ramsay

Public: 1

Apologies: Councillors: C Copleston

Also Councillor: T McMahan (Virtual attendance)
present:

The Chair requested to bring item 10 forward in the agenda.

12232 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Copleston. Cllr McMahan gave her apologies as unable to attend in person, however, did attend virtually. Cllr Carroll substituted.

12233 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

It was suggested that the member of the public speak at item 10.

12234 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

12235 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 5th September 2022.

A member highlighted that within the minutes of the last meeting, it was requested that a kitchen be considered for Parkside pavilion, confirmation was requested whether this had been included in the Environment and Leisure Committee agenda.

It was advised that there would be a discussion on the matter during Budget 2023/24 the Environment and Leisure meeting.

Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Community Services Committee meetings held on 5th September 2022 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12236 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING WORKING GROUPS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

Events Working Group 25th August and 29th September 2022.

Combating Crime Working Group 17th August and 28th September 2022.

Resolved: To receive the Minutes detailed above.

12237 REPLACEMENT CCTV
(agenda item brought forward)

A member of the public highlighted to members that whilst CCTV is valuable when used to its full potential, it was questioned whether the cost of the CCTV had proved to be economically viable. It was requested that the council consider whether the redeployable cameras work productively before agreeing to spend funds.

Members discussed the value of the re-deployable cameras and positive community feedback.

The option for the replacement cameras and the additional elements included in the new package were discussed, and it was felt that the new deal was better suited to the needs of Houghton Regis Town Council.

Resolved: To support the purchase a 3 new redeployable cameras with 5 year service packs.

12238 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Members received the income and expenditure report, highlighting significant variances, for Community Services Committee to date.

An overspend was queried on Playscheme expenditure, members were advised that this was due to the popularity of the trip, there was a need to hire an additional bus to accommodate demand.

12239 REPORT FROM GROUNDWORK

Anthony Fuller, a representative from Groundwork was in attendance to update members on the work completed on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council.

Members were advised that youth provision had been quieter during the summer months, however, the pool table and table tennis had remained firm favourites with attendees and a bicycle repair workshop had been organised with the support of Sustrans.

Concerns had been highlighted regarding the use of Vapes by the younger community, it was hoped that an outside agency would visit and speak to young people about the harmful effects of vaping.

Members were advised that Veru funding had been received to support outreach work in Houghton Regis however, staff capacity had proved an issue.

It was suggested that Houghton Regis may benefit from a full time Youth Worker.

It was highlighted that more youth support may be necessary in Houghton Regis with the growing number of occupancies in the new developments.

12240 HRTC YOUTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Members received a report for September and October on youth and community work completed by Houghton Regis Town Council.

Members were updated on the HRLLSG, since the last meeting, the group had met twice and held three tea and treat sessions with around 10-14 people in attendance. The Southend trip was a great success, 48 retired residents enjoyed on the trip.

The group had planned a pantomime trip in November and a pub lunch in February.

Dementia-friendly signs had been placed at the Town Councils offices, pavilions, recreation grounds, and cemetery.

Family Fun Days were delivered, Skate Jam and Cinema, Magician, Inflatable Fun, Mobile Farm, and Teaching Talons were all well attended. Due to the popularity of the seaside trip to Southend, it was recommended that three coaches be booked for 2023.

Crafty November event was planned with Christmas wreath-making at the Farmstead.

Ward Councillor funding had been granted to help with the cost of living for Houghton Regis residents. The Town Council would create 400 support packs. The packs were to be distributed out to professionals working directly with residents experiencing poverty and any remaining packs would be available at the Town Council offices to collect.

Youth Café Members were advised there had been a varying number of attendees each week. Where possible, detached sessions had been delivered which had enabled engagement in Parkside and Tithe Farm and the opportunity to speak with young people who may not know of, or access, the provision.

Concerns were raised regarding the lack of lighting along the path that runs behind the Village Green Pavilion.

Resolved:

- 1. To deliver the family fun days and trips in the same format as 2022;**
- 2. To seek to increase budget provision in 2023/24 to enable 3 coaches to be hired for the summer family trip**

12241 COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE DRAFT BUDGET 2023/24

Members received the officer draft budget for 2023/24 along with explanatory notes for the Community Services Committee.

The draft budget reflected on ongoing budgetary commitments along with anticipated budgetary commitments arising from the Council Vision 2020/24.

Members expressed their concerns regarding the uplift in many costs.

Members discussed aspects of the budget and focussed on overtime costs. Members emphasised how much the community valued Town Council events and that the events needed staffing, as such the requirement for staff overtime needed to be appreciated. It was suggested that members of the community may wish to get involved with the events and volunteer. Members acknowledged the work of the staff and conveyed their thanks.

12242 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS EXTENSION 2023

Members considered options to expand the Christmas Lights display in 2023.

Members discussed the choices presented to them, and felt that snowflakes projected on the floor by Poundstretcher and snowflakes projected on the wall by the library would be most the most aesthetically pleasing option. It was hoped that it may be possible to achieve this with the 2022/23 budget.

12243 COUNCIL WEBSITE

Members were advised that quotes had been sought for a developer for a new council website. Members received a summary of the quotes received.

Members were requested to appoint a contractor to deliver a website redesign.

Members appointed Company 3 (Setsquare) to deliver the Houghton Regis Town Council redesign.

Resolved: To appoint a Company 3, Setsquare, to deliver a website redesign.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.12pm

Dated this 6th day of February 2023

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Community Services Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
15th November 2022 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: K Wattingham Chairman
C Copleston
Y Farrell
S Goodchild
T McMahon

Officers: Clare Evans Town Clerk

Public: 0

Apologies: P Burgess
A Slough

12245 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr A Slough and Cllr P Burgess.

12246 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

12247 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Cllr Goodchild declared a non-pecuniary interest in the grant for SORTED as she was the Town Council's representative, accordingly, she did not participate in discussion relating this grant application.

Cllr Wattingham declared a non-pecuniary interest in the grant for the Memorial Hall as his role as Chair of the Memorial Hall Committee, accordingly, Cllr Wattingham requested Cllr McMahon chair the meeting for the duration of this discussion.

Cllr Farrell declared a non-pecuniary interest in the grant for the Memorial Hall as a trustee on the Memorial Hall Committee.

Cllr McMahon declared a non-pecuniary interest in the grant for the Houghton Regis Heritage Society as she was a trustee on the Houghton Regis Heritage Society Committee.

12248 KEY PARTNERS - ANNUAL REVIEW OF EXISTING

Consideration process

Representatives from these organisations were invited to the meeting to present their annual review / update.

Members were reminded that Key Partner status had been awarded to these organisations for the financial years 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Members were able to inspect supporting information provided by the applicants upon request from the Head of Democratic Services.

Gary from Dial-a-Ride, Harriet Hardie from Full House Theatre and David Hill from Houghton Regis Heritage Society were in attendance at the meeting to present their annual review / update.

David Hill was also in attendance to represent Houghton Regis Memorial Hall, Cllr McMahon Chaired the meeting during this presentation.

The following summarises the amount of the Key partner grant awarded:

Dunstable & District CA	£2,000
SORTED	£2,000
Keech Hospice Care	£2,500
South Beds Dial a Ride	£1,125.50
Houghton Regis Memorial Hall	£2,000
Full House Theatre	£1,500
Houghton Regis Heritage Society	£500

Due to Interests being declared by 2 councillors in relation to the Houghton Regis Memorial Hall the meeting was not quorate to consider this renewal. The Clerk would consider the most appropriate way forward for this renewal to be considered.

Resolved: To approve the release of funding as detailed for the financial year 2022/23 for the following organisations:

Dunstable & District CA	£2,000
SORTED	£2,000
Keech Hospice Care	£2,500
South Beds Dial a Ride	£1,125.50
Full House Theatre	£1,500
Houghton Regis Heritage Society	£500

Members were advised that no Large Capital Grant or Small Capital Grant applications had been received.

Availability of the grants scheme was publicised through the Town Crier, the council's website and through social media. Direct contact was also made with previous applicants.

Members were advised that grants of £200 for Jubilee events had been issued.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.48pm

Dated this 6th day of February 2023

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Environment & Leisure Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
14th November 2022 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: A Slough Chairman
P Burgess
E Cooper
Y Farrell
T McMahon
R Morgan
S Thorne

Officers: Clare Evans Town Clerk
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 0

Also present: Councillors: J Carroll
D Jones

12234 APOLOGIES

None.

12236 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

12237 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12238 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 26th September 2022.

Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Environment & Leisure Committee meeting held on 26th September 2022 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12239 MINUTES OF WORKING GROUPS

Allotment Working Group None to present.

12240 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Members received the income and expenditure report, highlighting significant variances, for Environment & Leisure Committee to date.

Members received this report for information.

12241 ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE COMMITTEE DRAFT BUDGET 2023/24

Members received the officer draft budget for 2023/24, along with explanatory notes for the Environment & Leisure Committee.

The draft budget reflected on ongoing budgetary commitments along with anticipated budgetary commitments arising from the Council Vision 2020/24.

The following points were highlighted:

The draft budget put forward an increase in this committees expenditure of £95,653. Additional significant areas of spend were:

- Painting the Green bow top fencing
- External decoration of the Green pavilion
- External decoration of the Orchard Close pavilion
- Playground fence painting at Parkside and Orchard Close
- Increase for play areas repairs
- Increase for refuse disposal
- Provision for 3 yearly tree survey
- Provision for professional services to enhance Parkside Pavilion to provide community consultation and possibly community space
- Increase to provide for a replacement of 1 vehicle with an electric vehicle
- Increase to provide for enhanced play / exercise provision at Parkside recreation ground

Also noted in relation to Tith Farm sports provision project:

This project development would span 2 financial years. It was anticipated that the development of the pitch would be completed in 2022/23 and the development of the pavilion, refurbishment of the car park and the remodelling of the existing pavilion would take place in 2023/24. In the draft budget for 2023/24 the income and costs associated with the second phase of this project were included.

12242 ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE FEES 2023/24

Members were requested to consider the hire charges under the control of Environment & Leisure Committee for 2023/24.

Members received the schedule of fees for 2022/23 for reference.

As the Committee was aware officers usually recommend a fee structure to members to consider, this was based on the previous years charges plus a level of inflation, often at around 2%. However, the cost of labour, utilities and materials had increased significantly in recent months. Labour had increased by around 5-7%, utilities by 20% (as budgeted) and materials by 20-40%.

Although the council had been working towards an overall sports and facilities subsidy level of 30% or so, it was suggested that an increase in fees to cover the increase in costs may be unaffordable to the local clubs who use the facilities and the council may choose to vary its level of subsidy.

It was suggested however, that the football fees were excluded to enable discussions to take place with the Beds FA so that a co-ordinated approach to football fees was achieved. Members were supportive of this.

Members were requested to consider the current years fee structure and to determine a suitable fee structure for 2023/24.

Members discussed the community value of the clubs for maintaining the social wellbeing of residents and raised concerns that clubs could fold if the increase in fees proved to be unaffordable for clubs to sustain.

Members agreed that approaching the clubs to better understand their capacity for a fee increase, and to gain an overview of the demographic of the group's members with a possibility of offering advice of grant funding may be available for their group to apply for.

Members agreed to gain further information from individual clubs to gather an accurate overview before committing to fee confirmation.

12243 TITHE FARM ALL WEATHER UPDATE

Members received an update report on the Tithe Farm Recreation Ground Sports Project.

Members acknowledged their disappointment that this project had not yet started on site but recognised that a considerable amount of work was being completed behind the scenes.

12244 VILLAGE GREEN - FAIR AND CIRCUS VISITS 2023

Members were advised that the following dates for fair and circus visits on the Green had been requested:

Tom Smith's Fun Fair

Pull on site 10th May 2023

Open 12th May till 21st May 2023 – 10 days of opening

Pull off site 22nd May 2023

Members agreed that 10 days of the Fair opening during May was too long and could prove problematic for local residents. It was requested that this be reduced to 5 days of opening with a day either side for setting up and packing away between the dates of 10th May 2023 and 22nd May 2023

Pull on 4th September 2023

Open 7th till 10th September 2023 – 4 days of opening

Pull off site 11th September 2023

John Lawson's Circus

Pull on 9th October 2023

Open 11th October to 17th October 2023

Pull off site 19th October 2023

In addition to these usual annual requests the following requests were made. The council was under no obligation to accept any additional bookings.

A request was received from Thurston Attractions for the use of a recreation ground to host a pop up fun park. The following dates were requested:

Monday 10th July - Sunday 23rd July.

Operating dates:

Thursday 13th July - Sunday 16th July.

Thursday 20th July - Sunday 23rd July

Depart site - Monday 24th July

Members were provided with an overview of activities and attractions that would be provided by Thurston Attractions.

Members discussed options for the possible siting of the Pop-up Fun Park, and felt that the attractions were very large and as such members agreed that suitable recreation ground was not available in Houghton Regis.

Tom Smiths fair also offered to provide a children's fun fair (no big rides) on 4th – 6th August (pull on 3rd August and leave 6th August) in an alternative location to The Village Green.

Members suggested the possibility of tying this in with National Play Day. It was agreed that Parkside Recreation Ground would be suitable to accommodate the children's fun fair, however it was requested that the number of rides be agreed along with a confirmed finish time of 8pm.

Gumbles

A request had been received from Gumbles for the use of a recreation ground to host a children's event. The following dates were requested:

Pull on site 21st August 2023

Open 24th August until 27th August 2023

Pull off site 28th August 2023

Members were provided with an overview of activities and attractions that would be provided by Gumbles.

Members felt that this would be too many events in a short space of time and questioned the affordability for families of having too many attractions during August and September.

- Resolved:** 1. **To approve the following dates for fair and circus visits on the Green:**

Tom Smith's Fun Fair

5 days of opening agreed to be within the scope of the requested dates of 10th May – 22nd May 2023

Pull on 4th September 2023

Open 7th till 10th September 2023 – 4 days of opening

Pull off site 11th September 2023

John Lawson's Circus

Pull on 9th October 2023

Open 11th October to 17th October 2023

Pull off site 19th October 2023

1. **To approve the following fair visit on Parkside Recreation ground:**

T Smith – Children's fun fair

Pull on 3rd August 2023

Open 4th – 6th August 2023 with an 8pm finish time

Pull off site 6th August 2023

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.02pm

Dated this 13th day of February 2022

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

9th January 2023 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: J Carroll
S Goodchild
D Jones Chairman
S Thorne
C Slough

Officers: Debbie Marsh Corporate Services Manager
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillor: E Cooper

Also present: Councillor: T McMahon Virtual attendance

Absent: Councillor: M S Kennedy

12304 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Cooper.

12305 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

12306 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12307 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 12th December 2022.

**Resolved To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2022
and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

12308 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/22/04525/VOC Removal of condition 10 and Variation of conditions, 13 and 21 of planning permission CB/19/04220/OUT (Outline Application for Residential Development for up to 100 Dwellings with all matters reserved, except access) vary condition 13 from the requirement of 14 mainstream housing together with 9 units for care/support to 13.72% of total units

suitable for the elderly and condition 21 to be amended to "The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan: 13060as2.15 Rev D (in so far as it relates to the means of access)"
Bury Spinney, Thorn Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JQ
For: Lagan Homes

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application, however wished to raise the following concerns/comments:

- **Condition 10: requested for this to remain in place to ensure there could be no subsequent changes at a later date**
- **Condition 13: the fairness of the request to change to 13.72% was acknowledged**
- **Condition 21: negative phraseology should be used rather than positive, with further clarity required regarding means of access.**

CB/22/04652/FULL Change of use from storage and distribution (Class B8) to flexible employment uses in Classes B2 and/or B8.
Unit 9, Humphrys Road, Dunstable, LU5 4TP
For: Intercounty Truck and Van Ltd

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application, however it was requested that consideration be given to conditions being put in place on air, noise and light pollution due to the close proximity of residential homes.

CB/22/04627/FULL Rear and front single storey extensions and roofed barbecue (Retrospective)
16 Fenwick Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5RP
For: Mr & Mrs Balan

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application.

CB/22/04189/ADV Advertisement: Installation of 11 non-illuminated Signs to the exterior of the building and 3 non-illuminated signs to the freestanding post.
The Crown, East End, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5LB
For: Stonegate Group

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application.

Noted:

CB/22/04763/DOC Discharge of Condition 16 against planning permission

CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans). Cond 16 - Noise and Vibration Mitigation Scheme
Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

CB/22/04765/DOC Discharge of Conditions 2,5 against planning permission CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans). Cond 2 Area Master Plan and Cond 5 Site Wide Master Plan.
Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

CB/22/04683/DOC Discharge of Condition 12 against planning permission CB/22/00545/FULL (Development of a single industrial warehouse unit for E(g)(iii), B2 and B8 use with ancillary offices, car parking, service areas and soft landscaping).
Cond 12 Material Management Plan
Unit 15 Humphrys Road, Dunstable, LU5 4TP

- CB/22/04663/DOC Discharge of Condition 6 against planning permission CB/20/01537/FULL: Erection of a mixed use Local Centre comprising 52 no. apartments, 1 no. day nursery (use Class D1), 1 no. retail unit (use Class A1), 4 no. retail units (use Classes A1/A3/A5) and associated infrastructure works including a haul road, landscaping and public realm. Cond 6 - Energy and Sustainability
Land west of Bidwell, Houghton Regis LU5 6JQ
- CB/22/04707/GPDE Prior Notification of Householder Extension: Single storey rear extension, 4.46m beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling, maximum height of 4m & 3m to the eaves.
5 Watervale, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6FY
- CB/22/04866/DOC Discharge of Condition 9 against planning permission CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans). Cond 9 - Advanced Infrastructure Works.
Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

None received.

12309 HOUGHTON REGIS FOOTPATH NO's 4, 16 and 40 PUBLIC PATH DIVERSION ORDER

Members received a public notice and map in regard to the above footpaths.

Members were advised that any representations about or objections to the Order may be sent in writing to the Highway Assets Intelligence Team Leader, Central

Bedfordshire Council Highways, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, SG17 5QT or sarah.smalley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk not later than 18 January 2023.

Members were in support of the proposed diversions for Footpaths 4, 16 and 40.

Resolved: To respond to Central Bedfordshire Council in respect to the public path diversion order for Footpath No's 4,16 and 40.

**12310 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITES/LOCAL PLAN–
UPDATE/PROGRESS**

Woodside Link – No substantive update to report.

A5 M1 Link – No substantive update to report.

All Saints View – No substantive update to report.

Linnere – No substantive update to report.

Bidwell West – No substantive update to report.

Kingsland – No substantive update to report.

Windsor Drive – No substantive update to report.

Section 106 Monies – No substantive update to report.

Resolved: To note the information

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.00pm

Dated this 30th day of January 2023.

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held on
30th January 2023 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors: J Carroll
E Cooper
S Goodchild
D Jones
S Thorne
C Slough

Officers: Debbie Marsh Corporate Services Manager
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Apologies: Public: 0

Absent: Councillor: M S Kennedy

12334 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

12335 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

12336 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12337 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 9th January 2023.

**Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th January 2023
and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

12338 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/23/00066/RM Reserved Matters: following Outline Application
CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the
details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale
reserved for later determination. Development to comprise:
up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm
gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3
(retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away), B1, B2, B8
(offices, industrial and storage and distribution), C1 (hotel),

C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure), car showroom, data centre, petrol filling station, car parking; primary substation, energy centre, and for the laying out of the buildings, routes and open spaces within the development, and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition, earthworks, engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans) approval sort for layout, scale, appearance and landscaping for 188 dwellings on parcels 3 and 4, along with parking and landscaping
Houghton Regis North Site 1 Phase 3 Parcels 3 and 4
Houghton Regis

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application.

CB/22/04923/FULL Demolition of existing dwelling, garage and buildings for a residential development for 32 dwellings with access road and sewers.
Red Cow Farm House, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, LU5 6JP

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council objected to this application on the grounds of:

- **Overdevelopment**
- **Lack of design features – aesthetically unappealing**
- **Concerns regarding an additional access road from Bedford Road as this road already hosts an inordinate number of new access points for numerous developments.**
- **The proposed layout is cramped with no areas of green spaces to soften the hard landscaping.**

CB/22/04917/REG3 Temporary Infiltration Basin
Houghton Regis Academy, Parkside Drive, LU5 5PX

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application.

CB/23/00023/FULL Change of use of amenity land with the removal of the grass verge and raised kerb and replace with tarmac access and a dropped kerb
105 Grove Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PE
For: Mrs D Binder

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council objected to this application on the grounds of:

- **Loss of amenity land**

However, if permission were to be granted for this application, members requested that strong consideration be given to the insistence of use of permeable materials to allow adequate drainage to prevent water logging.

CB/TRE/23/00004

Works to trees protected by a Tree Preservation order and in a Conservation Area: SB/TPO/2/1962 Various works to include felling, removing dead wood & reducing trees in height. Houghton Hall Visitors Centre, Park Road North, LU5 5FU

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application but requested that more information be provided in order that the Town Council could support this application. Members requested details of any replanting scheme and whether a representative from CBC could attend a meeting to further explain the works.

Noted:

CB/23/00122/NMA

Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/20/00675/VOC (Variation of condition 19 of planning permission CB/19/03232/RM Reserved matters: Appearance, scale and landscaping for residential development of 336 dwellings on Development Parcels 5a and 5b Bidwell West, Houghton Regis. Outline application (CB/15/0297/OUT) was supported by a full Environmental Statement (ES). Variation to approved plans list (condition 19) to amend red line and to substitute approved plans.) Amendment sought to side windows on 2 house types. Parcels 5a and 5b Bidwell West, Houghton Regis, LU5 6JQ

CB/23/00158/DOC

Discharge of Condition 10 against planning permission CB/18/04471/FULL (48 new residential units). Oakwell Park, Thorn Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JH

CB/23/00122/NMA

Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/20/00675/VOC (Variation of condition 19 of planning permission CB/19/03232/RM Reserved matters: Appearance, scale and landscaping for residential development of 336 dwellings on Development Parcels 5a and 5b Bidwell West, Houghton Regis. Outline application (CB/15/0297/OUT) was supported by a full Environmental Statement (ES). Variation to approved plans list (condition 19) to amend red line and to substitute approved plans.) Amendment sought to side windows on 2 house types. Parcels 5a and 5b Bidwell West, Houghton Regis, LU5 6JQ

None received.

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

CB/22/02056/REG3 Installation of vehicular access security gates to Thorn Turn Highways Depot
Highways Depot, Grendall Lane, Houghton Regis, LU5 6GJ

CB/22/04405/VOC Variation of condition number 10 of planning permission CB/18/04471/FULL (48 new residential units.). Variation sought to split into two phases due to change on subcontractor.
Land at Oakwell Park, Thorn Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JH

12339 CB/22/01876/FULL – THE GABLES, EAST END, HOUGHTON REGIS, LU5 5LA

At the planning meeting held on the 21st November 2022 members made the following comment:

Members expressed their disappointment at CB/22/01876/FULL having been granted as this was not in keeping with the aesthetics of the area. Members also requested that this item be placed on the agenda for the meeting to be held on the 30th January 2023 in order that the Town Council could be satisfied that a landscaping scheme to include all hard and soft landscaping and a scheme for landscape maintenance for a period of five years following the implementation of the landscaping scheme had been received by the Planning Authority, as per Condition 2 of the Decision Notice.

Members were advised that the case officer for this application had been contacted, however a response had not been received to date.

12340 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE

At the town council meeting held on the 19th December 2022 members agreed to adopt the final version of Houghton Regis Town Councils Draft Neighbourhood Plan ready for a light touch Regulation 14 public consultation (minute number 12301).

Members were advised that this consultation commenced on the 23rd January 2023 and would end on the 6th March 2023. Although a light touch consultation, all statutory and non-statutory bodies had been contacted. Information fliers had been delivered to all households informing residents of the consultation, banners had been displayed around the town, social media posts had been made and copies of the flier had been displayed in town council noticeboards.

Members were requested to make a recommendation to town council that funds continued to be drawn from EMR 330, for the 2023/2024 financial period, for the progression of the plan to examination stage.

Resolved: **To recommend to Town Council that funds continue to be drawn from EMR 330, for the 2023/2024 financial period, for the progression of the plan to examination stage.**

12341 ADOPTION OF CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS – ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING & FOREST OF MARSTON VALE DESIGN GUIDANCE

Members were informed that the following Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) were adopted by Central Bedfordshire Council on 6th December 2022:

- Electric Vehicle Charging: Guidance for New Developments SPD
- Forest of Marston Vale: Design Guidance SPD

The SPDs supported policies in the adopted Local Plan were a material consideration in the determination of planning applications submitted to the Council.

The Electric Vehicle Charging SPD set out the requirements for electric vehicle charging points to be provided for all new developments in Central Bedfordshire and provided guidance on the types, design, layout and standards of electric vehicle charging, as well as the information that developers were required to provide at the planning application stage. As such, the adoption of this document was a positive step towards Central Bedfordshire Councils 2050 Vision for developing cleaner and greener modes of travel.

The Forest of Marston Vale Design Guidance SPD set out how the 30% tree cover target for the Forest of Marston Vale should be achieved, including guidance on the number of trees required, tree planting options and some design guidance for this.

The SPDs, together with Consultation Statements and Adoption Statements, were available to view on Central Bedfordshire Council's website.

The Adoption Statements explained where paper copies of the documents would be made available to view and the process for applying for a judicial review of the decision to adopt the SPDs.

Resolved: **To note the information.**

12342 CONSULTATIONS – CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE DESIGN GUIDE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT AND HOUSING POLICY TECHNICAL GUIDANCE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT CONSULTATION JANUARY 2023

Members were advised that Central Bedfordshire Council commenced a six week consultation on two new planning guidance documents.

- Design Guide SPD
- Housing Policy Technical Guidance Supplementary Planning Document

The consultation commenced on the 17th January 2023 and was due to end at 10am on Wednesday 1st March 2023.

Central Bedfordshire Councils Design Guide SPD

Policy HQ1 of the adopted Local Plan set out the requirement for high quality design in Central Bedfordshire. National planning policy placed great emphasis on the need to deliver high quality new development and required Local Authorities to have up to date design guidance in place. Central Bedfordshire Council updated the Design Guide to take account of the changes to planning policy, guidance and legislation since the current Design Guide was adopted in 2014. The new Design Guide set out the key principles and standards of design for all new development in Central Bedfordshire.

Central Bedfordshire Councils Housing Policy Technical Guidance SPD

The delivery of the right quantity, quality and type of new housing was fundamental to achieving sustainable communities. The housing policies in the adopted Local Plan set a clear planning framework to support Central Bedfordshire Council to deliver appropriate housing development within Central Bedfordshire. The Housing Policy Technical Guidance SPD provided further detail to support these policies, setting out how the policies would be applied, what was expected from development and how applications would be assessed. The SPD covered the mix of house types required, housing for older people, affordable housing and self-build and custom housing. It also included guidance on Sustainability, First Homes and Community Led Housing.

Members agreed to defer consideration of this item to the next meeting.

12343 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITES/LOCAL PLAN– UPDATE/PROGRESS

Woodside Link – No substantive update to report.

A5 M1 Link – No substantive update to report.

All Saints View – No substantive update to report.

Linnere – No substantive update to report.

Bidwell West – No substantive update to report.

Kingsland – No substantive update to report.

Windsor Drive – No substantive update to report.

Section 106 Monies – No substantive update to report.

Resolved: To note the information

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.21pm

Dated this 20th day of February 2023.

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held on
20th February 2023 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors: D Jones
J Carroll
E Cooper
S Goodchild
S Thorne
C Slough

Officers: Debbie Marsh Corporate Services Manager
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillor M S Kennedy

Also present: Councillor: T McMahon

12364 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Kennedy.

12365 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

12366 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12367 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 30th January 2023.

**Resolved To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 30th January 2023
and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

12368 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/23/00127/FULL Proposed 2 storey side extension
4 Brambles Edge, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5FS

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objections to the application in principle, however concerns were raised regarding the proposed development in that it appeared cramped and imposing, which would lead to a loss of light and therefore would

have a detrimental impact on the residents in the adjacent properties.

CB/22/04845/FULL Outbuilding at the rear of the garden (Retrospective)
1 All Saints Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5HJ

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objections to the application in principle, however queried

- **what provision was in place for the removal of fumes**
- **whether the structure was in keeping with the surrounding homes**
- **if the structure complied with building regulations.**

CB/23/00281/ADV Advertisement: 2 No. building mounted, colour coated metal signs and logo and 1 No. free standing internally illuminated colour coated metal entrance sign.
Unit 1, Foster Avenue, Dunstable, LU5 5TA

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application.

Noted:

CB/23/00243/DOC Discharge of Condition 21 against CB/21/03860/FULL Community sports facility Enhancements/improvements including upgrading of an existing grass pitch to a floodlit FTP, a new additional pavilion building and additional car parking.

CB/23/00244/DOC Discharge of Condition 7 against CB/20/01537/FULL Erection of a mixed use Local Centre comprising 52 no. apartments, 1 no. day nursery (Use Class D1), 1 no. retail unit (Use Class A1) 4 no. retail units (Use Classes A1/A3/A5) and associated infrastructure works including a haul road, landscaping and public realm. Acoustics Report Land West of Bidwell, Houghton Regis, LU5 6JQ

- CB/23/00336/DOC Discharge of Condition 1 against planning permission CB/20/00388/RM (Reserved Matters; following outline Application CB/12/03613/OUT Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. 5,150 dwellings (use class C3) 202,500 sqm of additional development in Use Classes A1,A2,A3,A4,A5,B1,B2,B8,C1,C2,D1,D2 All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans. Reserves matter for 153 dwellings with access, parking, landscaping and associated works)
Phase 1, Parcel 3 Houghton Regis, North Site 1, Houghton Regis
- CB/23/00259/DOC Discharge of Conditions 1 and 5 against planning permission CB/21/05047/RM (Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/15/00297/OUT (Outline 'hybrid' planning application. Development to comprise: Up to 1,850 residential (C3) dwellings (including affordable housing), 2FE Primary School (D1), employment land (Use Classes B1 [a-c], B2 & B8), local centre comprising retail (A1, A2, A3, A4 & A5) and community/leisure uses (D1 & D2), layout of public open spaces including sports pitches and changing rooms, natural wildlife areas and all associated works and operations including engineering operations and earthworks) Reserved matters for approval of the sports pavilion access, appearance and layout.)
Land west of Bidwell, Houghton Regis North Site 2
- CB/22/04962/LDCP Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Single storey rear extension.
55 Kent Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5NZ

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

None received.

12369 CONSULTATIONS – CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE DESIGN GUIDE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT AND HOUSING POLICY TECHNICAL GUIDANCE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT CONSULTATION JANUARY 2023

Members were advised that Central Bedfordshire Council commenced a six-week consultation on two new planning guidance documents.

- Design Guide SPD
- Housing Policy Technical Guidance Supplementary Planning Document

The consultation commenced on the 17th January 2023 and would end at 10am on Wednesday 1st March 2023.

Central Bedfordshire Councils Design Guide SPD

Policy HQ1 of the adopted Local Plan set out the requirement for high quality design in Central Bedfordshire. National planning policy placed great emphasis on the need to deliver high quality new development and required Local Authorities to have up to date design guidance in place. Central Bedfordshire Council updated the Design Guide to take account of the changes to planning policy, guidance and legislation since the current Design Guide was adopted in 2014. The new Design Guide set out the key principles and standards of design for all new development in Central Bedfordshire.

Central Bedfordshire Councils Housing Policy Technical Guidance SPD

The delivery of the right quantity, quality and type of new housing was fundamental to achieving sustainable communities. The housing policies in the adopted Local Plan set a clear planning framework to support Central Bedfordshire Council to deliver appropriate housing development within Central Bedfordshire. The Housing Policy Technical Guidance SPD provides further detail to support these policies, setting out how the policies would be applied, what was expected from development and how applications would be assessed. The SPD covers the mix of house types required, housing for older people, affordable housing and self build and custom housing. It also included guidance on Sustainability, First Homes and Community Led Housing.

Members were reminded that this item was deferred from the last meeting.

Members were advised that Central Bedfordshire Council had invited Town and Parish Council's to join an online Topic session, on Wednesday 1st March, to find out more about these documents and to allow Town and Parish Council's to add any final comments to their responses following this event.

Members were advised that the closing date for receipt of comments had been extended to 10am on Thursday 16th March to allow Town and Parish Council's to add any final comments to their responses following this online event.

It was agreed for Cllr Jones to attend the topic session and feed back to the committee at the next meeting.

Members agreed to defer consideration of this item to the next meeting.

12370 ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) BAYS CONSULTATION – CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

Central Bedfordshire Council were consulting on several Electric Vehicle (EV) Bays in the following parishes:

- Biggleswade
- Dunstable
- Gravenhurst
- Houghton Regis
- Leighton Buzzard
- Henlow
- Shefford
- Stotfold
- Maulden
- Potton

Maulden and Potton Bays were 'On-Street' and the rest were 'Off Street'.

Members were reminded that the response to this consultation was required to be with Central Bedfordshire Council by 9am on the 21st February 2023.

Members noted the bays were already in situ, at Tithe Farm Recreation Ground, but queried whether liaison had taken place between Central Bedfordshire Council and Houghton Regis Town Council regarding positioning of these bays. Members were concerned that all aspects of the positioning of the bays had been considered alongside the extensive works planned in the development of a new Pavilion. Members requested the Corporate Services Manager make enquiries with the Clerk and confirm whether discussions had been held and would feedback to the committee.

Resolved: To respond to Central Bedfordshire Councils Electric Vehicle Bays consultation that the Town Council supports the inclusion of Electric Vehicles Bays at Tithe Farm Recreation Ground.

12371 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITES/LOCAL PLAN– UPDATE/PROGRESS

Woodside Link – No substantive update to report.

A5 M1 Link – No substantive update to report.

All Saints View – No substantive update to report.

Linnere – No substantive update to report.

Bidwell West – No substantive update to report.

Kingsland – No substantive update to report.

Windsor Drive – No substantive update to report.

Section 106 Monies – No substantive update to report.

Resolved: To note the information

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.52pm

Dated this 13th day of March 2023.

Chairman

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP
COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET
ON 18th October 2022**

Present: Town Cllrs: **D Jones (Chair), T McMahon, K Wattingham, C Slough**
CBC Cllrs: Cllr Hamill (Vice-Chair), A Ryan, Y Farrell, S Goodchild
CBC Officers: S Hughes, Community Engagement Manager
HRTC Officers: C Evans, Town Clerk
L Senior, Head of Democratic Services

Co-opted members: D Gibbons
J Anderson
C Regan

Also in attendance: J Yeomans, Head of Housing Property, Housing Services CBC
B McBrearty, Community Connections Advisor BRCC
J McClean, Community Engagement Manager BRCC
S Bailey, Senior Community Engagement Officer CBC
B Gaynor, Interim Head of Place Delivery, CBC
L Gunn, Community Connections Advisor, Time 2 Connect

Apologies: None

Members of the public: 3

959 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Members were invited to elect a Chairman for Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2022/23 in accordance with the Terms of Reference of this committee.

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

Nominee	Proposed by:	Seconded by:
Cllr Jones	Cllr Wattingham	Cllr Farrell

No further nominations were received.

Accordingly, Cllr Jones was elected as Chairman of the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for the municipal year of 2022/23.

960 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

961 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Clarification was sought from Central Bedfordshire Council:

- Whether the investment zones in Central Bedfordshire would impact Houghton Regis.
- How the purchase opportunity of the disused Morrisons site was missed by Central Bedfordshire Council, as this had since been purchased with the intended use as a storage facility within the town?
- How did Central Bedfordshire Council propose to evaluate the pressure of the new residents on the existing GP's in the town?

It was advised that there had been no progress with the Health Hub due to lack of funding, it was acknowledged that this had presented a service issue and the appointment system had been impacted.

It was advised that limited information regarding the purchase of the Morrisons owned land was available, however, it was highlighted that attempts by Central Bedfordshire Council had been made to contact the land owners, however, Morrisons had remained non-responsive.

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

None.

963 **MINUTES**

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2022.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2022 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

964 **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

Members were invited to elect a Vice Chairman for Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2022/23 in accordance with the Terms of Reference of this committee.

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

Nominee:
P Hamill

Proposed by:
T McMahon

Seconded by:
K Wattingham

No further nominations were received.

Accordingly, Cllr Hamill was elected as Vice Chairman of the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for the municipal year of 2022/23.

965 **CONFIRMATION OF THE SECRETARIAT**

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the Committee were required to confirm the secretariat for the Partnership Committee for 2022/23.

Members agreed for the Town Council to continue to act as the secretariat for the Partnership Committee for the municipal year of 2022/23.

966 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 received applications for co-option from:

- David Gibbons - a co-opted member during 2021/2022
- Jo Anderson – long term resident of Houghton Regis
- Carole Regan – long term resident of Houghton Regis

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 stated:

Co-option

To support engagement with local stakeholders, the Town Joint Committee can 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.

Resolved: To confirm the following co-opted members of the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2022-23:

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

967 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

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

Members requested consideration be given to dropping the quorate to two councillors from each council rather than three, as substitution allowances for Central Bedfordshire Council Ward members on this committee were limited. It was highlighted to members that this would need to be taken through General Purposes and Council to allow for changes to the constitution. Members were advised that advice would be sought and fed back to the committee.

Members received this report for information.

968 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members were invited to consider the Partnership Committee workplan.

It was requested that Grendall Lane Cemetery funding be placed on the workplan, the use of £2,000 of Ward Councillor Community Grant money was offered to complete the searches on the site.

Members were advised of the outcome of two New Cemetery Provision Sub-Committee meetings, both of which had determined that investigations into this site were to cease.

Members discussed in depth whether this was an appropriate item to be included on the workplan as Town Council members had made the decision to cease investigations. Members were provided with background information and an overview of the report findings behind the decision of the New Cemetery Provision Sub-Committee.

Members agreed to include Cemetery provision in the workplan for future agendas to allow scope for regular updates.

It was suggested that a Central Bedfordshire Council Officer be invited to attend a future meeting to update members on the status of the Health Hub.

It was requested that regular updates on primary care were provided at the Town Partnership Committee meetings under Improving the Health and Wellbeing in Houghton Regis section of the agenda.

It was advised that the investment plan was a recent strategy and no updates were available for this meeting, further information would be sought and fed back to the Town Partnership Committee when appropriate information was available.

969 CBC UPDATE REPORT

Members received the CBC update report for information. It was highlighted to Members that included within the report was an update on the Bidwell Quarry / Houghton Regis Chalk Pit.

Members were advised that meetings had been held with Central Bedfordshire Council and the owners of the Houghton Regis Chalk Pit, once an agreement had been finalised, the Council would then be allowed to make arrangements for a third party to manage the site.

Members were advised the former Houghton Regis Academy site had been transferred from Department of Education to Central Bedfordshire Council and had been working with the preferred contractor on the award of the contract, further updates would be provided at the next meeting.

Members were advised that the Community Asset Grant scheme, had agreed projects for the £200,000 of available funding, it was highlighted that 45 bids had been received which had amounted to £700,000 which had involved implementing a robust scoring process which resulted in 12 successful bids.

Members raised concerns regarding the experiences of harassment of the new shopkeepers in All Saints View. Members felt that police interaction could be more proactive and support for the new shops was needed.

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

Jemma Mclean, Community Engagement Manager, and Bex McBrearty, Community Connections Advisor of Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) were in attendance at the meeting to update members and respond to any queries or comments on this project.

Members were introduced to Jemma McClean, Community Engagement Manager (BRCC) and Laura Gun, Community Connections Advisor who had recently joined the Time 2 Connect team. It was advised that Jemma had taken on project management, finance and reporting elements which had enabled a continuation of service provision, and Laura would be working alongside Bex.

Members were advised the drop-in sessions continued to take place at Houghton Hall Park and were well attended with around 20 people per session, café connect sessions were held on Tuesdays and 11 joint sessions had been run in conjunction with Central Bedfordshire Council Online Day Activities Team, run hybrid sessions had been held with a variety of activities and had proved popular. User feedback had been collated and positive responses had been received.

Members were advised that Time 2 Connect services had been promoted widely with a positive uptake of the use of the Next Door app to access local services.

971 HOUSING AND ENGAGEMENT

A verbal update was provided by James Yeomans, Head of Housing Property, CBC covering the progress with new facilities at All Saints View and The Brook and provided an update on Windsor Drive.

Members were advised due to volatility in the construction market, the decision had been made to pause work on Windsor Drive for the interim, with a possibility to revisit once the market had settled.

The Brook was progressing well and it was hoped to occupy the site by November 2022.

Members were advised that further occupation of All Saints View had been paused temporarily however occupation had resumed.

~~Concerns were raised over the cease of progressing Windsor Drive, as m~~Members highlighted the need for social housing had not diminished. It was advised that the rationale was to consider the best way forward and it had been decided that completion of schemes that were already underway had proved most financially viable.

972 TITHE FARM SPORTS PROVISION UPDATE

Members received the agenda report as presented to the HRTC Environment & Leisure Committee on 13th June and 26th September 2022.

Concerns were raised over who was paying for the pedestrian access between Linnere and Tithe Farm Recreation Ground. Members were advised that the developers of Linnere were to pay for the links to the edge of their boundary, the Town Council would source the funding for the links on Tithe Farm Recreation Ground, this was expected to be funded by the Sustainable Transport Team at Central Bedfordshire Council.

Concerns were raised over the coverage of any CCTV provision for Tithe Farm Pavilion and what area this would cover. This would be investigated further and fed back to the committee.

Concerns were raised that the expectation was work on the site would have started prior to November. Members were advised that there had been two pre-development planning conditions that required fulfilling which related to drainage and highways access, once both of these had been discharged, contractors would be mobilised and able to start work on the site.

973 HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN

To enable members to consider the Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan.

Beverley Gaynor, Interim Head of Place Delivery, CBC was in attendance at the meeting to respond to queries around the Action Plan.

Members were advised the action plan had been developed through the Levelling Up Fund and Welcome Back Fund from Central Bedfordshire Council. However, it was felt that a partnership approach was necessary for success.

It was requested that page 58 be looked at and consideration be given to rewording as it suggested that single parent families and higher crime rates were connected.

Resolved:

- 1. For the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee to endorse the Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan**
- 2. To request that CBC review and update the 2008 Town Centre Masterplan**

974 PUBLIC REALM - CBC / HRTC JOINT PROJECT UPDATE

A verbal update was provided by Sarah Hughes, Community Engagement Manager, CBC and Clare Evans, Town Clerk, HRTC, on the project to date.

Members were advised funding had been set aside by Central Bedfordshire Council for partnership working with Town and Parish Councils to enable the improvement of their Public Realm, there were two hubs, Leighton Linlade and Dunstable / Houghton Regis with funding available for the existing Grounds Team to utilise for additional equipment to undertake Public Realm improvements and to offer their expertise to surrounding Parishes.

Members were advised that capital of £50,000 had been received and had enabled the support of the introduction of a Town Ranger for three days a week, utilising a reporting app for residents to report issues they see. Feedback received from residents had been positive.

It was suggested that an agreement be sought with the tidy tip for disposal of items picked up by the Town Ranger.

Members were advised that local parishes were regularly contacted to offer support from the Town Ranger, however, the pricing structure had proved prohibitive, and the offers had ultimately been declined.

975 ITEMS REQUESTING ATTENTION BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

Members were 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. This item was suggested:

Dunstable Market Charter, members received a report which outlined the implications for Houghton Regis (and surrounding parishes) when holding events arising from the Dunstable Market Charter. The Town Council would request the support of CBC in confirming the validity of the Dunstable Market Charter, clarification as to what was defined by 'market' as it was considered that this would not apply to the stalls held at Houghton Regis events and requested a copy of the Charter.

It was requested that it be investigated how Houghton Regis Town Council could create their own policy or Market Charter.

Resolved: To request that the CBC Joint Committee Chair or CBC Joint Committee Vice Chair take the following matters forward:
1. Dunstable Market Charter

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.20pm

Dated this 24th day of January 2023

Chairman



Houghton Regis Town Council

Scheme of Delegation

Date of Approval:	Town Council 18 th April 2016
Date of Review:	24 th May 2017; 3 rd July 2018; 15 th May 2019; 20 th July 2020

This Scheme of Delegation authorises the Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer (which may be one and the same person), Council and Standing Committees of the Council to act with delegated authority in the specific circumstances detailed.

1. **Responsible Financial Officer**

The Town Clerk shall be the Responsible Financial Officer to the Council and shall be accountable for the Town Councils accounting procedures, in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations in force at any given time.

2. **Proper Officer**

2.1 The Town Clerk shall be the Proper Officer of the Council and as such is specifically authorised to:

- 2.1.1 Receive declarations of acceptance of office;
- 2.1.2 Receive and record notices disclosing pecuniary interests;
- 2.1.3 Receive and retain plans and documents;
- 2.1.4 Sign Notices or other documents on behalf of the Council;
- 2.1.5 Receive copies of By-laws made by a Primary local authority;
- 2.1.6 Certify copies of By-laws made by the Council;
- 2.1.7 Sign summonses to attend meetings of the Council.
- 2.1.8 To receive documents in relation to Complaints received under The Members' Code of Conduct and report this at the next convenient meeting of the Council.
- 2.1.9 Ensure compliance with all legal requirements impacting upon the business of the Council

2.2 In addition, the Town Clerk has the delegated authority to undertake the following matters on behalf of the Council:

- 2.2.1 The day to day administration of services, together with routine inspection and control.
- 2.2.2 Authorisation to call any extra meetings of the Council or any Committee as necessary, having consulted with the Chairman of the Council and/or Chairman of the appropriate Committee.

- 2.2.3 Day to day supervision and control of any staff employed by the Council, for example, to recruit staff, manage development and training needs, record and monitor absences, approve leave arrangements and handle informal grievances and disciplinary matters;
- 2.2.4 Undertake training or attendance at Conferences as previously authorised within budget.
- 2.3 Delegated actions of the Town Clerk shall be in accordance with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and this Scheme of Delegation and with specific directions/policy given by the Council from time to time.

3. Council

The following matters are reserved to the Council for decision, notwithstanding that the appropriate Committee(s) may make recommendations thereon for the Council's consideration.

- (i) Setting the Precept;
- (ii) Borrowing money;
- (iii) Making, amending or revoking Standing Orders, Financial Regulations or this Scheme of Delegation and approving Terms of Reference for the Council's Standing Committees;
- (iv) Making, amending or revoking By-laws;
- (v) Making of Orders and entering into Contracts under any Statutory powers;
- (vi) Matters of principle or policy;
- (vii) Nomination and appointment of representatives of the Council to any other authority, organisation or body;
- (viii) Any proposed new undertakings;
- (ix) Prosecution or defence in a court of law;
- (x) Nomination or appointment of representatives of the Council at any inquiry on matters affecting the Town, excluding those matters specific to a committee;
- (xi) Approval of the Annual Return (Statement of Accounts) (at no later than the June Council meeting);
- (xii) Appointment or dismissal of the Town Clerk;
- (xiii) Any other matters not otherwise devolved/delegated to a Committee of the Council.

4 Standing Committees

Standing Committees are authorised to act at all times in accordance with their Terms of Reference as agreed by Council. In the event of a dispute regarding where authority for a specific issue may lie it will be the decision of Council which will determine.

5 Sub-Committees and Working Groups

Sub-Committees and Working Groups may be formed by resolution of the appropriate Standing Committee at any time but before being established a written report must first be prepared with evidence to the committee outlining why such sub-committee/working group is necessary and why the work cannot be undertaken by the committee itself. It will be for the standing committee to formally approve the terms of reference of such sub-committee/working party.

6 Delegation – Limitations

Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Groups shall, at all times, act in accordance with the Councils Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and this Scheme of Delegation and, where applicable, any other rules, regulations, schemes, statutes, By-laws or orders made and with any directions given by the Council from time to time.



Houghton Regis Town Council

Committee Functions & Terms of Reference

Date of Approval:	Town Council 20 th May 2015
Date of Review:	18 th May 2016; 24 th May 2017 (amendments to HRNPSG approved 9 th October 2017); 3 rd July 2018; 15 th May 2019; 5 th May 2021, 18 th May 2022

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Meetings of Houghton Regis Town Council are to be conducted in accordance with the approved Standing Orders of Houghton Regis Town Council.
- 1.2 Legislation requires certain statutory functions of Houghton Regis Town Council to be discharged by the council itself. Houghton Regis Town Council cannot delegate responsibility to a committee or sub-committee for:
 1. levying or issuing a precept,
 2. borrowing money,
 3. approving the council's annual accounts,
 4. considering an auditor's report made in the public interest,
 5. confirming (by resolution) that it has the statutory criteria to exercise the power of general competence or
 6. adopting or revising the council's code of conduct.

2. Committee Overview Houghton Regis Town Council		
Department	Areas of Responsibility	Democratic Management
Corporate Services	Policy review & development Financial management Personnel matters Democratic management Health & safety matters	Corporate Services Committee Disciplinary, Grievance and Appeals Sub-Committee Personnel Sub-Committee
Environment & Leisure Services	Facilities management Leisure services Recreation management Cemetery & churchyard management Allotments	Environment & Leisure Committee Allotment Working Group
Community Services	Community services Youth services Communications Events Mayoral services Community grants Community safety	Community Services Committee Events Working Group Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group Combating Crime Working Group
Planning	Planning applications Planning policy Strategic development Highways consultations	Planning Committee Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
Town	Town Centre Town development	Town Council Town Partnership Committee New Cemetery Sub Committee New Office Provisions Sub Committee Complaints Sub Committee Complaints Appeals Sub Committee

3. Functions & Terms of Reference

Town Council

Functions

At the Annual meeting to conduct business in accordance with Standing Orders as follows:

- a. The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the council shall be the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council.
- b. Following the election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:
 - i. In an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council of his acceptance of office form unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date;
 - ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the council;
 - iii. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
 - iv. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
 - v. Appointment of members to existing committees;
 - vi. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 6
 - vii. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
 - viii. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
 - ix. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

At other meetings of the Council:

- To annually review the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Health & Safety Policy, Equality & Diversity Policy, Banking Arrangements/Investment Policy, and the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference
- Before the end of January to determine the Council's overall budget for the forthcoming financial year and to set the precept accordingly.

- To receive auditors' reports and other comments and make recommendations to Corporate Services as to any policy matters arising from them.
 - To receive reports from committees and recommendations made therein.
 - To receive the Town Mayors announcements.
 - To consider and approve any short or long-term borrowing requirements including interest rates and borrowing period;
 - To approve a 4-year rolling programme of policy review
 - To receive conclusions drawn at any meeting of the Complaints and Complaints Appeals Sub-Committees.
- Terms of Reference
- The Town Council consists of all councillors.
 - The quorum shall be one third of all councilors (five)
 - In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office.
 - In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of a Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council may direct.
 - If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.
 - In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council directs.

Corporate Services Committee

Functions

- To consider any matters referred to it by the Council or other Committees.
- To respond on behalf of the Council to initiatives from other organisations relating to matters under the Committee's jurisdiction.
- To exercise management of health and safety issues in respect of all the services of this Committee.
- To consider and determine any new contracts and any renewals of existing contracts under the jurisdiction of this committee.
- Review of arrangements, including any charters, with other local authorities and review of contributions made to expenditure incurred by other local authorities.
- Review of the Council's and/or employees' memberships of other bodies.
- To manage and maintain the Council Offices including office equipment and furniture.
- Reviewing the Council's procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) and to take action to comply.
- To receive information relating to the number of Freedom of Information requests received by the Clerk
- Reviewing policies of the Council as required by the Policy Document Review Schedule
- To oversee and manage the financial obligations of the Council, including:

- To receive quarterly reports on investments containing a forecast of capital expenditure, investment opportunities and a recommendation for further investment including where, length and amount
- To receive bank and cash reconciliation statements.
- To receive and annual report (based on the previous financial year) on loans taken out, repayments made and outstanding liability
- To confirm the use of direct debits, standing orders, BACS, CHAPS
- Review and confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.
- To recommend to Council the writing off of irrecoverable amounts.
- To assemble and submit to the Town Council estimates of income and expenditure for each financial year in respect of all the services of this Committee no later than 30th November each year.
- To monitor periodically the income and expenditure of the Committee.
- To consider and determine any proposed expenditure or reduction in income for which no provision has been made in the approved budget.
- To set the level of charges for facilities in respect of all the services of this Committee.
- Monitor and review risk management issues
- To exercise overall responsibility for staffing issues, excluding the appointment of the Town Clerk, who shall be appointed by the Town Council
- To determine staff conditions of service including salary scales, working hours, employee assessments and evaluations etc
- To determine all matters relating to staff including staffing resources and structures
- To consider, determine and approve staff and Member training requirements
- To receive information relating to the number of freedom of information requests received by the Town Clerk.

Terms of Reference

- The Corporate Services Committee shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Corporate Services Committee shall consist of seven Councillors. The quorum shall be half of its members (four).
- To appoint sub-committees or working groups as necessary including setting out membership and terms of reference.

Environment & Leisure Committee

Functions

- To consider any matters referred to it by the Council or other Committees.
- To respond on behalf of the Council to initiatives from other organisations relating to matters under the Committee's jurisdiction.
- To exercise management of health and safety issues in respect of all the services of this Committee.
- To consider and determine any new contracts and any renewals of existing

contracts under the jurisdiction of this committee.

- To assemble and submit to the Town Council estimates of income and expenditure for each financial year in respect of all the services of this Committee no later than 30th November each year.
- To monitor periodically the income and expenditure of the Committee.
- To consider and determine any proposed expenditure or reduction in income for which no provision has been made in the approved budget.
- To set the level of charges for facilities in respect of all the services of this Committee and to control the collection of revenues thereof.
- Reviewing policies of the Council as required by the Policy Document Review Schedule
- Annually review its inventory of land and assets including buildings.
- To provide and maintain all recreation grounds and pavilions, open spaces and play areas in the control of the Council.
- To manage and maintain sports provision including football pitches, the bowls green and cricket table.
- To manage and maintain the Houghton Regis Town Cemetery and All Saints Churchyard.
- To provide and maintain seats, noticeboards, litterbins and dog waste bins.
- To purchase and maintain such vehicles and equipment as may be required to carry out the Council's duties in connection with the facilities under the control of the Committee.
- To monitor all matters relating to leases and bye-laws in connection with the facilities under the control of the Committee.

Terms of Reference

- The Environment & Leisure Committee shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Environment Committee shall consist of seven Councillors. The quorum shall be half of its members (four).
- To appoint sub-committees or working groups as necessary including setting out membership and terms of reference.

Community Services Committee

- To consider any matters referred to it by the Council or other Committees.
- To respond on behalf of the Council to initiatives from other organisations relating to matters under the Committee's jurisdiction.
- To exercise management of health and safety issues in respect of all the services of this Committee.
- To assemble and submit to the Town Council estimates of income and expenditure for each financial year in respect of all the services of this Committee no later than 30th November each year.
- To monitor periodically the income and expenditure of the Committee.
- To consider and determine any proposed expenditure or reduction in income for which no provision has been made in the approved budget.

-
- To set the level of charges for facilities in respect of all the services of this Committee.
 - To consider and determine any new contracts and any renewals of existing contracts under the jurisdiction of this committee.
 - Reviewing policies of the Council as required by the Policy Document Review Schedule
 - To encourage and regulate activities and events at Council properties, venues and locations.
 - To advise Environment & Leisure Committee of events using land / buildings
 - To award financial grants to local organisations within an overall budget approved by the Town Council
 - To review the grant application process as necessary
 - To oversee and manage the promotion of the Town and the Council, including the council's newsletter and website, Christmas lights, Pride of Houghton, events
 - Consider community service provision provided by outside organisations
 - To provide community support to enhance community service provision
 - To liaise with other organisations on community issues
 - To provide support and promotion of the Town centre and the retail offer

Terms of Reference

- The Community Services Committee shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Community Services Committee shall consist of seven Councillors. The quorum shall be half of its members (four).
- To appoint sub-committees or working groups as necessary including setting out membership and terms of reference.

Planning Committee

Functions

- To consider any matters referred to it by the Council or other Committees.
- To respond on behalf of the Council to initiatives from other organisations relating to matters under the Committee's jurisdiction.
- To exercise management of health and safety issues in respect of all the services of this Committee.
- To assemble and submit to the Town Council estimates of income and expenditure for each financial year in respect of all the services of this Committee no later than 30th November each year.
- To monitor periodically the income and expenditure of the Committee.
- To consider and determine any new contracts and any renewals of existing contracts under the jurisdiction of this committee.
- To consider and determine any proposed expenditure or reduction in income for which no provision has been made in the approved budget.
- Reviewing policies of the Council as required by the Policy Document Review Schedule

- To consider all planning related applications within the Parish and to make representations to the appropriate authority on behalf of the Town Council.
- To consider matters surrounding the growth proposals, including strategic development proposals and documents from local authorities and other agencies and bodies.
- To consider highways proposals from local authorities and other agencies and bodies and to make representations to the appropriate authority on behalf of the Town Council.
- To oversee the development and introduction of a Neighbourhood Plan for Houghton Regis.

Delegated Powers to Officers – Planning

- Delegated applications include all applications received for consultation purposes including all planning applications, advertisement and signs.
- All delegated decisions, which are recommended for approval, will be provided in writing, to Members of the Planning Committee.
- A list of proposed delegated decisions (relating to new or proposed listed buildings, conservation areas, tree preservation orders, building preservation orders, highways, byways, bridleways and footpaths) will be circulated to all Councillors. If a Councillor wishes an application to be decided by the Committee, a written request must be made to the Town Clerk prior to the meeting.
- No applications will be delegated that fall into the following categories:
 - a) To which a written objection from a member of the public has been received by the Town Council
 - b) Any application for more than five dwellings (including flats, apartments and maisonettes)
 - c) Any application for retail or employment space
- The Town Clerk or their nominated officer, must be fully aware of the location and possible planning considerations of an application.

Terms of Reference

- The Planning Committee shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Planning Committee shall consist of seven Councillors. The quorum shall be half of its members (four).
- To appoint sub-committees or working groups as necessary including setting out membership and terms of reference.

Houghton Regis Town Partnership

This is a joint Houghton Regis Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council committee. See Appendix A, attached, for relevant Committee Functions & Terms of Reference.

Complaints Sub-Committee (reporting to Town Council)*Functions*

To act as the Complaints Committee in accordance with the Council's approved Complaints Procedure, including:

- To consider and make recommendations on any complaints received which fall under the approved Complaints Policy;
- To report its deliberations to Town Council;

Terms of Reference

- The Sub Committee shall comprise 3 councillors;
- Membership of the Sub Committee shall be drawn from Town Council who have not been named within the complaint.
- The quorum shall be three members.

Complaints Appeals Sub-Committee (reporting to Town Council)*Functions*

- To consider and make recommendations on any appeals which relate to complaints received which fall under the approved Complaints Policy;
- To report its deliberations to Town Council;

Terms of Reference

- The Sub Committee shall comprise 3 councillors;
- Membership of the Sub Committee shall be drawn from Town Council who were not members of the original Complaints Sub-Committee and have not been named within the complaint.
- The quorum shall be three members.

Personnel Sub-Committee (Reporting to Corporate Services Committee)*Functions*

- Overview of staffing structure and staffing budget, ensuring that it is commensurate with objectives of the Council.
- Review staff sickness absence.
- Receive reports and review of Employee Assistance Programme
- Review staff training
- Identify and agree training needs for the Town Clerk and Members
- Ensure Council employees are working in a safe environment

- To consider and recommend to Corporate Services Committee any changes to employees pay, emoluments or terms and conditions of employment
- Review Job Description and Contract of Town Clerk annually or when there is a significant change
- Receive notification of the Town Clerk's annual leave and matters relating to overtime working and sickness.
- Succession plan for key staff who may wish to retire.
- Agree the recruitment process for the Town Clerk and other senior members of staff.
- If supported by the conclusion of a disciplinary process to consider the termination of contract for the Town Clerk and other senior members of staff.
- Act as interview panel for the posts of Town Clerk and other senior members of staff (final approval for the appointment of the Clerk rests with Council as per Standing Orders).
- Appoint one member of the Committee as the Clerks Appointed Person, preferably the Chair, to act as contact for day to day matters, support, handle leave requests, absence from work and to feed matters to Committee where any decisions/action is needed and to undertake the Clerks appraisal.
- Report any outcomes of employee complaints received.

Terms of Reference

- The Personnel Sub-Committee shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Personnel Sub-Committee shall consist of 4 Councillors (Submitted Motion suggested this be increased to 5 members).
- Membership of the Sub Committee shall be drawn from Town Council
- The quorum shall be three members.

Disciplinary, Grievance & Appeals Sub-Committee Group (reporting to Corporate Services)

Due to the sensitive nature of the matters raised under this Sub-Committee, these meetings are not open to the public.

Functions:

- Delegated powers to hear and action, as appropriate, employee disciplinary, grievance and appeal matters where these are beyond the authority delegated to the Clerk in the Scheme of Delegation;
- To consider and recommend to Town Council any disciplinary, grievance or appeal relating to the Clerk

Terms of Reference:

- The Disciplinary, Grievance and Appeals Sub-Committee shall consist of 3 Councillors.

- Membership of the Sub Committee shall be drawn from Town Council.
- The quorum shall be three members.

Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee (reporting to Town Council)

Functions

1. To consider any matters referred to it by the Town Council or any other Committee
2. To consider and determine matters surrounding the development of a new cemetery for Houghton Regis, including but not restricted to:
 - Environmental matters
 - Policy matters
 - Visual impact matters
 - Design matters
 - Public consultation matters
 - Future operation and management of the cemetery
3. To commission specialist services such as may be deemed appropriate in progressing options for future cemetery provision.
4. To report and to make such recommendations to Town Council as appropriate.

Terms of Reference

- The Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee shall consist of 6 members. The quorum shall be half of its members (three). (Submitted Motion suggested this be increased to 5 members).
-

Events Working Group (reporting to Community Services Committee) (meetings to be held within normal working hours)

Functions

- To set an annual programme of events and to request suitable funding from the Community Services Committee no later than October in each financial year
- To consider all aspects relating to planning and hosting of council events, including health and safety requirements
- To monitor and review each council event.
- Delegated authority is given to the Town Clerk and the Civic & Events Officer to take decisions on the arrangements for council events.
- To report to the Community Services Committee on the outcome of its deliberations.

Terms of Reference

- The Events Working Group shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Events Working Group shall consist *of up to* seven Councillors. As the Working Group has no delegated authority to take decisions there is no quorum of members required. (Submitted Motion suggested this comprise 5 members).
-

Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group (reporting to Community Services Committee) (meetings to be held within normal working hours)*Functions*

- To consider the nominations put forward from members of the public in relation to the Pride of Houghton Award scheme and determine the award winners.

Terms of Reference

- The Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group shall consist of 3 councillors. The quorum shall be three members.
- The Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group shall not comprise of any co-opted members or members of the Events Working Group.

Combating Crime Working Group (reporting to Community Services Committee) (meetings to be held within normal working hours)*Functions*

- To monitor the Council's Service Level Agreement with Bedfordshire Police for the provision of additional policing within the parish of Houghton Regis known as Operation Hanna
- To receive bi-monthly written reports and monthly verbal reports from Bedfordshire Police on the work completed under Operation Hanna
- To consider the forthcoming months actions by Bedfordshire Police under Operation Hanna
- To monitors the Council's Service Level Agreement with Central Bedfordshire Council for the management of the re-deployable CCTV cameras
- To manage the formulation and implementation of the Council's Community Safety Strategy
- To manage action under the Council's enviro crime project
- To report its decisions to Community Services Committee

Terms of Reference

- The Combating Crime Working Group shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Combating Crime Working Group shall consist of five councillors. The quorum shall be half its members (three).

~~New Office Provisions Sub Committee (reporting to Town Council)~~*~~Functions~~*

- ~~1. Reflecting on the growth agenda to give consideration to;

 - a) the suitability of the current office provision
 - b) the requirements of future office provision~~
- ~~2. To give consideration to future office provision including options for retaining or developing the current site, options for renting / leasing, purchasing or developing;~~
- ~~3. To commission specialist services such as may be deemed necessary in progressing options for future office provision;~~

~~Terms of Reference~~

- ~~1. The New Office Sub Committee shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders;~~
- ~~2. The New Office Sub Committee shall consist of five councillors, the quorum of which shall be 3;~~

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (reporting to Planning Committee)

The Steering Group comprises Members of Houghton Regis Town Council, a Member of Central Bedfordshire Council and representatives from the Community.

See Appendix B, attached, for relevant Committee Functions & Terms of Reference.

Allotment Working Group*Functions*

1. To consider all matters relating to the provision and management of allotments in Houghton Regis including:
 - New site specification
 - Allotment associations
 - Allotment tenancies
 - Management
 - Fees and charges

Terms of Reference

1. The Allotment Working Group shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
2. The Allotment Working Group shall consist of five Councillors. The quorum shall be half of its members (three)

APPENDIX A

Houghton Regis Town Partnership Committee ¹

Purpose

1. To influence decisions and help shape initiatives and their delivery for the benefit of the whole town taking into account the needs of the town, customers, employees, residents, visitors, traders, property owners and developers.
2. To develop and encourage public participation and engagement and take into consideration the resident voice in the work of the Committee

Objectives

1. Help improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural vitality of the town
2. Ensure a partnership and collaborative approach to achieve the delivery of town regeneration, including influencing Section 106 funding received for town improvements and community facilities.
3. Opportunities to delegate funding decisions to the Committees should be explored, such as Section 106 received to spend on community facilities.
4. The Committee will make decisions on any joint funding allocated to it.
5. Influence and help shape strategies / plans that impact on the future viability of the town.
6. Provide a forum for briefing Members of the Joint Committee on all key issues affecting the town, at the discretion of the Chairman and Vice Chairman.
7. Make recommendations on strategically significant projects to the relevant Council's decision-making committees, including Committees of the Town Council.
8. Develop and maintain joint branding of communication, agendas and minutes.
9. To enable communities to discuss services and influence decisions at the local level as to how these services are delivered
10. To provide a forum for two-way communication about public service delivery and the implementation and effectiveness of policies affecting the town.

¹ These were considered by the Partnership Committee at its meeting on 30th April. The Terms of reference remain to be formally approved by Central Bedfordshire Council.

11. Promote resilience by encouraging communities to do more for themselves and champion local solutions.
12. Consider the ways in which proposals and initiatives can help to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations.

Membership

1. Four Councillors from Central Bedfordshire Council and four Councillors from Biggleswade Town Council (Biggleswade Joint Committee).
2. Four Councillors from Central Bedfordshire Council and four Councillors from Houghton Regis Town Council (Houghton Regis Partnership Committee).
3. Five Councillors from Central Bedfordshire Council and five Councillors from Leighton-Linslade Town Council (Leighton-Linslade Partnership Committee).
4. Five Councillors from Central Bedfordshire Council and five Councillors from Dunstable Town Council (Dunstable Joint Committee).

Who must be elected representatives of the wards.

5. Two substitutes from each Council will be permitted to attend meetings as full Committee representatives. A Councillor who sits on both CBC and the Town Council can substitute. Central Bedfordshire Council Councillors shall not substitute a Town Councillor on the Committee and vice versa.
6. Substitutes for Central Bedfordshire Council Members on the Joint Committee must be a ward councillor in the town in the first instance or if not available a substitute must be an Executive Member. Substitutes for the Town Council Members of the Joint Committee will be a ward town councillor
7. Members are appointed annually.
8. All Members of the Committee should have the interests of the town as a priority, not their own wards.

Meetings and Quorum

1. At least 3 Members from each Council must be in attendance for the meeting to be quorate.
2. Meetings will be held a minimum of once per year and up to 4 per year and take place at venues in the area
3. The Committee may also organise extra ordinary meetings at the discretion of the Chairman and Vice Chairman.
4. In addition to the Committee meetings, the Committee can organise other forms of engagement to take place such as themed discussions / task and finish groups and community conferences, including joint meetings or events with other Joint Committees in Central Bedfordshire.
5. All meetings will be open to the public unless exempt items are discussed

Chairman and Vice Chairman

1. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be appointed from and by the Joint Committee's core membership; each Council must be represented in either role.
2. The appointed Chairman and Vice-Chairman will hold their post for a period of one year, after which they may stand for re-election.
3. The Vice Chairman will preside in the absence of the Chairman. If neither is present, the Committee members in attendance will appoint a Chairman from amongst them for the duration of that meeting.
4. The Chairman and Vice Chairman will be responsible for the content of the Committee agendas and will allow committee members and other stakeholders to submit agenda topics which will be included unless the proposed agenda item is not relevant to the Purpose and/or Objectives of the Joint Committee.

Secretariat

1. Either Council can administer the Joint Committee, according to their own Standing Orders. The Committee will decide annually which Council is to administer the Committee.
2. Agendas, minutes and press releases will be issued under joint branding.
3. The secretariat will prepare, monitor and keep up to date an annual work plan to set the broad direction and priorities for the Committee.

Decision making arrangements

1. Only members of the Committee can vote. Co-opted Members have no voting rights.
2. The Committee will not have any decision-making powers regarding planning applications and will not seek to duplicate or hinder the work of Central Bedfordshire Council as the Local Planning Authority.
3. The Committee will reach decisions by a simple majority. The Chairman will have the casting vote in the case of a tie.

Co-option

1. To support engagement with local stakeholders the Committee can co-opt members from local representative groups, as appropriate up to a maximum of 15. Each co-opted Member will be able to engage fully in all discussions but will not have any voting rights. Co-opted members can be removed from the Committee by joint agreement of the Chairman and Vice Chairman.
2. The list of Co-opted Members should be reviewed annually.

Governance

1. The Minutes and action log for the Joint Committee will be presented to Central Bedfordshire Council. The detail of where this will be presented will be determined by Central Bedfordshire Council and reported back to the Joint Committee.

APPENDIX B

Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE		
1.	Background	
1.1	Houghton Regis Town Council has resolved to produce a Neighbourhood Plan and has determined that it will cover the Parish of Houghton Regis.	
1.2	The Town Council, while retaining full responsibility for the Plan, recognizes that the content of the Plan must be driven by the community and the need to draw on skills and expertise from outside the Council.	
1.3	A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will lead the project to successful completion.	
2.	Name	
2.1	The name of the group will be Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. (HRNPSG)	
3.	Purpose	
3.1	The main purpose of the Group is to oversee the preparation of the Plan in order that it will be progressed to Independent Examination and a successful community referendum and ultimate adoption.	
3.2	The Steering Group will engage the local community to ensure that the Plan is truly representative of the ambitions of Houghton Regis. The Group will maximize support for the approach taken in the NP by ensuring high levels of community engagement throughout the plan-making process.	
3.3	Liaise with, and direct the work of, consultants and specialists engaged to further the Plan as appropriate.	
3.4	Consider the options and develop policies to inform the future development and use of land in the neighbourhood area.	
3.5	Be aware of the development areas identified in the Local Plan, including establishing further development areas if they are required.	
3.6	Ensure the NP is supported by effective on-going programmes of	

		communication and consultation with the community, CBC, businesses, adjoining parishes, developers and other key parties.
	3.7	Identify sources of funding.
	3.8	Liaise with statutory, and other, relevant authorities and organizations to ensure the Plan is as comprehensive and inclusive as possible.
	3.9	Identify ways of involving the whole community and gather the views and opinions of as many groups and organizations in the community as possible.
	3.10	Determine the types of consultation and information gathering to be used.
	3.11	Be responsible for the analysis arising from consultations and the production and distribution of the final reports.
	3.12	Conform to national policies and with EU and Human Rights legislation.
	3.13	Report back regularly to the Town Council on progress, significant issues and budgetary implications.
	3.14	Present key documents and the draft NP for consultation with the Town Council, local residents, CBC, businesses, the Independent Examiner, and assist in arrangements for the Referendum.
	3.15	Present recommendations for the implementation of The Plan.
4.	Membership and Conduct	
	4.1	The HRNPSG will be formed from current Town Councillors, CBC Councillors for the town and local members of the community. The Group will be comprised of up to 12 members, the composition of which to be 5 Town Councillors, (appointed by the full Town Council), 1 CBC Councillor and 6 representatives from the local community. The Town Clerk, or Senior Manager, will be present in an <i>ex-officio</i> , non-voting capacity at all meetings. The Group will only be quorate when 50% of its members are present.
	4.2	The HRNPSG may co-opt additional support to carry out specific task for as short or long a period as necessary.
	4.3	Membership is voluntary.
	4.4	All members of the HRNPSG must abide by the Code of Conduct of Houghton Regis Town Council and in doing so must submit a register of interests.
	4.5	All members of the HRNPSG must declare any personal interest that may be perceived as being relevant to the decisions or recommendations made by it. This may include membership of an organization, ownership or interest in land or business or any other matter likely to be relevant to the work undertaken by the HRNPSG.
	4.6	A person will cease to be a member of the HRNPSG upon notification to the Chairman in writing of their wish to resign.
5.	Meetings	
	5.1	The HRNPSG will elect a Chairman, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer from its membership to remain in these positions until the project is complete. If these positions should become vacant, the Group will elect an alternative.
	5.2	In the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the HRNPSG will elect a Chairman from its members present at the meeting, for that meeting.

	5.3	The HRNPSG will arrange its own meeting schedule and will meet as required.
	5.4	At least 7 days clear notice of meetings will be sent to members via email.
	5.5	The Secretary will keep a record of meetings and circulate the Minutes to HRNPSG members and the Town Council (via the Planning Committee Clerk) no more than 14 days after each meeting.
	5.6	Decisions made by HRNPSG will be by consensus at Group meetings. Where a vote is required, each member will have one vote. A simple majority vote will be required to support any motion. The Chairman will have one casting vote.
6. Working Groups		
	6.1	HRNPSG may establish working groups for dealing with specific issues, made up of Members of the Steering Group and volunteers from the community, to aid them in any NP related work.
	6.2	Each working group will have a lead person from the HRNPSG.
7. Affiliations, Interests and Contributions.		
	7.1	The HRNPSG will not itself be affiliated to any particular political party. It is recognized that Councillors and community members may have such affiliations, which will be declared where relevant.
	7.2	The Localism Act and Houghton Regis Town Council's Code of Conduct will apply to all members of the HRNPSG. All members of the HRNPSG must declare any pecuniary interest that may be perceived as being relevant to a decision of the HRNPSG. This may include membership of an organization, ownership of land or a business, or any other matter that may be considered to be relevant. Such declarations must be recorded and publically available.
	7.3	Having declared an interest, that member will not take part in a discussion or vote on the related issue. In event of disagreement, the Chairman's decision will be binding. Organizations and businesses may assist in the production of the NP and may contribute to the cost of producing it. Details of any donations or assistance must be made publicly available and must not influence the recommendations of The Plan.
8. Finance		
	8.1	Funding, including grants, will be applied for and held by the Town Council, who will ring-fence the funds for Neighbourhood Plan development work.
	8.2	HRNPSG will notify the Town Council (via the Planning Committee) of any planned expenditure before it is incurred
9. Conduct		
	9.1	It is expected that all HRNPSG members will abide by the principles and practice of the Town Council Code of Conduct, including the declaration of interests.
	9.2	Whilst members as individuals will be accountable to their parent organizations, the HRNPSG as a whole is accountable to the wider community for ensuring that

	9.3	The Plan reflects their collective expectations. HRNPSG will achieve this through applying the following principles:
	i	Be clear and open when their individual roles or interests are in conflict;
	ii	Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or religion and belief; and
	iii	Actively promote equality of access and opportunity.
10 Changes to the Terms of Reference		
	10.1	This document may be amended with the support of at least two-thirds of the current membership at a HRNPSG meeting and with the approval of the Town Council.
11 Dissolution of the HRNPSG		
	11.1	The HRNPSG will continue to operate until the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan.
	11.2	Upon dissolution of the HRNPSG, any remaining resources will be passed to the Town Council.

Motion put forward by Cllr Jones**Date received 6th March 2023**

“During the current Council year, there has been some difficulty with the operation of certain committees, principally those sub-committees with even numbers of Members on them. This has led to ill-feeling amongst Members and inefficient operation of the Council.

To avoid this, we believe that the Council should make the following principles clear:-

1. Standing Committees of the Council shall consist of 7 Councillors.
2. Sub-Committees and Working Groups of the Council shall consist of 5 Councillors, with the exception of the Complaints Sub-Committee, the Complaints Appeals Sub-Committee, the Disciplinary Grievance & Appeals Sub-Committee and the Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group, the membership of all of which shall consist of 3 Councillors.

To achieve this within the present structure, the following amendments are necessary to the Terms of Reference of the following Sub-Committees and Working Group:-

- Personnel Sub-Committee – Terms of Reference – Amend second bullet point (P10) to “The Personnel Sub-Committee shall consist of 5 Councillors.”
- Proposed New Cemetery Sub-Committee – Terms of Reference – Amend second bullet point (P11) to “The Proposed New Cemetery Sub-Committee shall consist of 5 Councillors. The quorum shall be half of its Members (three).”
- Events Working Group – Terms of Reference – Amend second bullet point (P12) to “The Events Working Group shall consist of 5 Councillors. As the Working Group has no delegated authority to take decisions, there is no quorum of Members required.””



Houghton Regis Town Council

Standing Orders

Date of Approval:	Town Council 22 nd June 2015
Date of Review:	18 th May 2016; 18 th July 2017; 3 rd July 2018; 8 th October 2018 (following advice from NALC); 15 th May 2019; 18 th May 2022

Based on NALC Model Standing Orders 2018 (Revised 2020) and updated April 2022 (Update to Model Standing Order 18 only).

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Appendix A – Procedure for Recording Meetings

PREFACE

This is a set of Standing orders based on the model set of Standing orders produced by NALC (April 2018), revised 2020 and updated April 2022. Standing Orders that are in **bold type** contain legal and statutory requirements and are to be adopted without changing them or their meaning. Standing Orders not in bold are designed to help councils operate effectively but do not contain statutory requirements therefore they may be adopted or amended to suit a council's needs.

If the words "Local Council's" are used, it means Parish and Town Council's in England and Community and Town Council's in Wales.

For convenience, the word "councillor" is used in model standing orders and, unless the context suggests otherwise, includes a non-councillor with or without voting rights.

It is, of course, recognised that local councillors can be male or female. Therefore, wherever the masculine gender is used this should be interpreted as also meaning the feminine gender.




The Chairman of a Town Council is entitled to use the title "Town Mayor". The title confers no additional powers on the chairman, and, in particular, has no implications for his conduct in meetings.

Notes:

- *The word "Chairman" includes "Town Mayor" and means the person actually presiding at a meeting*
- *The word "Vice-Chairman" includes "Deputy Town Mayor"*
- *Where appropriate use of the word "he" is to include the meaning "she"*
- *The word "Council" includes "committee," where any function has been delegated.*



STANDING ORDERS

1. MEETINGS

-  Full Council meetings
-  Committee meetings
-  Sub-committee meetings

Smoking is not permitted at any meeting of the Council.

All meetings of the Town Council shall be held at the Council Offices, Peel Street, Houghton Regis at 7pm unless the Council decides otherwise.

-  a **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**
-  b **The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the**

day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.


- c The minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice**
- d Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**
- e Members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.
- f The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 1(e) above shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- g Subject to standing order 1(f) above, a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.
- h In accordance with standing order 1(e) above, a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- i A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak.
- j A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the chairman of the meeting.
- k Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- l Subject to standing order 1(m), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To "report" means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting procedures, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is**


available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.


See Appendix A for the Procedure for Recording Meetings

- m** A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.
- n** The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.
- o** Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman of the Council may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman of the Council (if there is one).
- p** The Chairman of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman of the Council, (if there is one) if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.
- q** Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting.
- r** The chairman of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.
See standing orders 4(h) and (i) for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting of the council.
- s** Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.
- t** The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:
 - i. the time and place of the meeting;
 - ii. the names of councillors who are present (virtually or in person) and the names of councillors who are absent, with or without apologies;
 - iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;

- iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
- v. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
- vi. if there was a public participation session; and
- vii. the resolutions made.

 u **A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the Council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his right to participate and vote on that matter.**

 v **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.**
See standing order 6d(vii) for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.

 w **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted** and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.

x A meeting shall not normally exceed a period of 2.5 hours unless by agreement of those Members present.

2 **PROPER OFFICER**

a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.

b The Proper Officer shall:

- i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee or a sub-committee,**
 - **serve on councillors, by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such a manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda (provided the councillor has consented to service by email) and**
 - **Provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place**

and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the council convened by councillors is signed by them);

See standing order 1(b) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a full council and standing order 1(c) for a meeting of a committee.

- ii. subject to standing order 11, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least 5 days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it;
- iii. **convene a meeting of full council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office;**
- iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**
- v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
- vi. retain acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- vii. retain a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
- viii. assist with responding to requests made under the freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with and subject to the council's relevant policies and procedures;
- ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer (if there is one);
- x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- xi. assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980);
- xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;
(See also standing order 20);
- xiii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the council in accordance with the council's financial regulations;
- xiv. record every planning application notified to the council and the council's response to the local planning authority;
- xv. refer a planning application received by the council to the Chairman or in his absence Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of Planning Committee if an extension of time is not agreed by the Planning Department;
- xvi. manage access to information about the council via the publication scheme; and

- xvii. retain custody of the seal of the council (if any) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.

See also standing order 20.

- c. The Proper Officer or other staff member(s) nominated by the Council shall be present at every meeting of the council, committee or sub committee.

3 RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

- a The council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.

4 ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

- a **In an election year, the annual meeting of the council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office.**
- b **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of a council shall be held on such day in May as the council decides.**
- c **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the council shall take place at 6pm.**
- d **In addition to the annual meeting of the council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the council decides.**
- e **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the council shall be the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (if there is one) of the Council.**
- f **The Chairman of the Council, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the council.**
- g **The Vice-Chairman of the Council, if there is one, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next annual meeting of the council.**
- h **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the council, he shall preside at the annual meeting**

until a successor Chairman of the Council has been elected. The current Chairman of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.

- i **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chairman of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**

- j Following the election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:
 - i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council of his acceptance of office form unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**
 - ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the council;
 - iii. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
 - iv. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
 - v. Appointment of members to existing committees;
 - vi. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 6;
 - vii. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
 - viii. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
 - ix. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

5 DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

- a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is not adhered to, the chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.

- b If person(s) disregard the request of the chairman of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chairman of the meeting may move

that the person be no longer heard or excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.

- c If a resolution made under standing order 5(b) above is ignored, the chairman of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

6 COMMITTEES & SUB-COMMITTEES

- a **Unless the council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**
- b **The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the council.**
- c **Unless the council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**
- d The council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:
 - i. shall determine their terms of reference;
 - ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of full council;
 - iii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
 - iv. shall, subject to standing orders 6(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
 - v. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chairman of the standing committee;
 - vi. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chairman and vice chairman at the first meeting of the committee;
 - vii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which shall be no less than three;
 - viii. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
 - ix. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;
 - x. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-

- committee that they are permitted to attend; and
- xi. may dissolve a committee.
- e All committees may exercise on behalf of the Council any of the functions delegated to them as set out in their terms of reference and subject to any statutory provision. No committee shall be obliged to exercise the functions delegated to it, but can if it so wishes refer matters to the council for decision;
- f Each Committee shall submit to the Council a report of the proceedings of any meetings held since the Council last met.

7 PRESENCE OF NON-MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES AT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- a. Any Councillor may attend, and with the permission of the Committee Chair speak on particular matters at a meeting, not in private session, of a Committee or Sub-Committee of which he is not a member but may not vote.
- b. A member who has proposed a resolution, which has been referred to any committee of which he is not a member, may explain his resolution to the committee but shall not vote.
- c. A Member of a Committee, who is not able to attend for any reason, may appoint as a substitute a Councillor who is not a member of that Committee. Notification of such a substitution shall be given to the Town Clerk or the Chairman before the start of the meeting. This substitute Member may take part in the proceedings as if he were a member of it.

8 WORKING GROUPS

- a. The Council may create working groups, whose name, and number of members and the bodies to be invited to nominate members shall be specified.
- b. The Clerk shall inform the members of each working group of the terms of reference of the group.
- c. A working group may make recommendations and give notice thereof to the Council or Committee or Sub Committee
- d. A working group may consist wholly of persons who are not members of the Council.
- e. Working Group meetings are to be held in normal office hours (to start not earlier than 10am and to finish not later than 6.30pm)

9 EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

- a **The Chairman of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the**

council at any time.

- b **If the Chairman of the Council does not call an extraordinary meeting of the council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors.**
- c The chairman of a committee or a sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or the sub-committee at any time.
- d If the chairman of a committee or a sub-committee does not call an extraordinary meeting within 3 days of having been requested by to do so by 2 members of the committee or the sub-committee, any 2 members of the committee or the sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee and a sub-committee.

10 QUESTIONS

- a A councillor may seek an answer, at a meeting of the council, a question concerning any business of the Council provided 2 clear days notice of the question has been given to the Proper Officer.
- b Questions from a councillor not related to items of business on the agenda for a meeting shall only be asked during the part of the meeting set aside for such questions.
- c Every question shall be put and answered without discussion.

11 MOTIONS FOR A MEETING THAT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO THE PROPER OFFICER

- a A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and, in any event, shall relate to the performance of the council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the council's area or its residents.
- b No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 10 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- c The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 11(b), correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.

- d If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 11(b) is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it, in writing to the Proper Officer, so that it can be understood at least 8 clear days before the meeting.
- e If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- f The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- g Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received.
- h Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer for their rejection.

12 MOTIONS NOT REQUIRING WRITTEN NOTICE

- a The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer;
 - i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
 - ii. to move to a vote;
 - iii. to defer consideration of a motion;
 - iv. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
 - v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
 - vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
 - vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
 - viii. to require a written report;
 - ix. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
 - x. to extend the time limits for speaking;
 - xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
 - xii. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
 - xiii. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
 - xiv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
 - xv. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory or legal requirements);
 - xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - xvii. to close a meeting.

13 RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

- a Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chairman of the meeting.
- b A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chairman of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- e An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- f If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion (as amended) becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- g An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chairman of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chairman.
- h A councillor may move an amendment to his own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- i If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- j Subject to standing order 13(k), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- k One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chairman of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- l A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or

- substantive motion.
- m The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- n Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
- o Unless permitted by the chairman of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:
- i. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since he last spoke;
 - iii. to make a point of order;
 - iv. to give a personal explanation; or
 - v. to exercise a right of reply.
- p During the debate of a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he considers has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting he is concerned by.
- q A point of order shall be decided by the chairman of the meeting and his decision shall be final.
- r When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
- i. to amend the motion;
 - ii. to proceed to the next business;
 - iii. to adjourn the debate;
 - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
 - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
 - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - vii. to exclude the public and press;
 - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.
- s Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chairman of the

meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived his right of reply.

- t Excluding motions moved under Standing Order 13(r), the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 3 minutes without the consent of the chairman of the meeting.




14 RULES OF DEBATE – RESOLUTIONS

- a No discussion of the Minutes shall take place except upon their accuracy. Corrections to the Minutes shall be made by resolution and must be initialled by the Chairman.
- b. A member shall direct his speech to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or to a question of order.
- c. A member shall remain seated when speaking unless requested to stand by the Chairman.
- d. The ruling of the Chairman on a point of order or on the admissibility of a personal explanation shall not be discussed.
- e. Members shall address the Chairman. If two or more members wish to speak, the Chairman shall decide whom to call upon.
- f. Whenever the Chairman speaks during a debate all other members shall be silent.

15 PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS


- a A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 6 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 11, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 15(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

16 DRAFT MINUTES

-  Full Council meetings
-  Committee meetings
-  Sub-committee meetings

- a If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.

- b There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 12(a)(i).
- c The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- d If the chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:

“The chairman of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the () held on [date] in respect of () were a correct record but his view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”
-  e **If the Council’s gross annual income and expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.**
- f Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 16(e) and standing order 30(a) and following a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

17. ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

- a “Proper practices” in standing orders refer to the most recent version of “Governance and Accountability for Local Council’s – a Practitioners’ Guide”.
- b All payments by the council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the council’s financial regulations.
- c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each member a list of all receipts and payments.
- d The Responsible Financial Officer shall provide to each Standing Committee meeting a statement to summarise:
 - i. the committees’ income and expenditure for the year to date;
 - ii. the committee’s aggregate income and expenditure for the year to date;

- iii the balances held which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.
- e As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:
 - i. each councillor with a statement summarising the council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
 - ii. to the full council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 2 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- f The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and applying the form of accounts determined by the council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for a year to 31 March. A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to each councillor at least 14 days prior to anticipated approval by the Council. The annual governance and accountability return of the council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

18 FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

- a The Council's financial regulations may make provision for the authorisation of the payment of money in exercise of any of the Council's functions to be delegated to a committee, sub-committee or to an employee.
- b The council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
 - i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
 - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the council;
 - iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
 - iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
 - v. whether contracts with an estimated value below **£25,000** due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.
- c Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.

- d** A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds in standing order 18(g) is subject to the “light touch” arrangements under Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement).
- e Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
- i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the council’s specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the council’s written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
 - iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;
 - iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
 - v. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
 - vi. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- f Neither the council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- g** Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time, the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC’s procurement guidance contains further details.

19 ESTIMATES / PRECEPTS

- a. The Council shall approve written estimates for the coming financial year at its meeting before the end of January. Once the Estimates have been accepted they

shall be known as the Budget.

- b. Any committee desiring to incur expenditure shall give the Proper Officer a written estimate of the expenditure recommended for the coming year no later than 30th October.

20 EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b **Subject to standing order 20(a) above, any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.**

21 MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

See also standing order 31.

- a **The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.**
- b **The Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The Council's retention policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).**
- c **The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**
- d **Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**
- e To assist councillors and staff such information will normally be printed on pink papers and marked as confidential.

22 HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

- a Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat as confidential the written records of all meetings relating to their performance,

capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters.

- b The council shall keep all written records relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured and locked and electronic records shall be password protected and encrypted.
- c In accordance with standing order 21(a), persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing order 22(a).
- d Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in above shall be provided only to the Clerk.
- e The Clerk shall conduct an appraisal of all Council employees and shall keep a written record of it. The Chairman of the Council and the Chairman of Corporate Services Committee or in their absence, the Vice-Chairman of the Council shall conduct an appraisal of the Clerk and shall keep a written record of it. Significant outcomes of the appraisals shall be reported to the Corporate Services Committee.
- f Any grievance shall be handled in accordance with the Council's approved Grievance policy.
- g Any disciplinary matter shall be handled in accordance with the Council's approved Disciplinary policy.
- h Any staff sickness shall be handled in accordance with the Council's approved Sickness Management policy.

23 VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

- a Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chairman of the meeting.

24 CANVASSING OF AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY COUNCILLORS

- a. Canvassing of members of the Council or of any committee, directly or indirectly, for any appointment under the Council shall disqualify the candidate for such appointment. The Proper Officer shall disclose the requirements of this standing order to every candidate.
- b. A councillor or a member of a committee or sub-committee shall not solicit a person for appointment to or by the Council or recommend a person for such

appointment or for promotion; but, nevertheless, any such person may give a written testimonial of a candidate's ability, experience or character for submission to the Council with an application for appointment.

- c. This standing order shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for an appointment.

25 CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

See also standing order 1(u).

- a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the council.
- b Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has a disclosable pecuniary interest. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.
- c Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has another interest if so required by the council's code of conduct. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.
- d **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- e A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting of the council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required and that decision is final.
- f A dispensation request shall confirm:
 - i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
 - ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
 - iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
 - iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- g Subject to standing orders 25(d) and (f), dispensations requests shall be considered at the beginning of the meeting of the council, or committee or a sub-

committee for which the dispensation is required.

- h **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 25(e) if having regard to all relevant circumstances the following apply:**
- i. **without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business or**
 - ii. **granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the council's area or**
 - iii. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

26 CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

- a Code of conduct complaints will be received, investigated and decided upon by the District or Unitary Council (Central Bedfordshire Council).
- b Upon notification by the District or Unitary Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to standing order 21 above, report this to the council.
- c Where the notification in standing order 26(a) relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chairman of Council of this fact, and the Chairman shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 26(e).
- d The council may:
 - i. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to progress an investigation of the complaint or is a legal requirement ;
 - ii. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter;
- e **Upon notification by the District or Unitary Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the council shall consider what, if any, action to take against him. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

27 RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES

- a. Unless authorised by a resolution, no councillor shall:
 - i. inspect any land and/or premises which the council has a right or duty to inspect; or
 - ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.

28 COMMUNICATING WITH DISTRICT AND COUNTY OR UNITARY COUNCILLORS

- a An invitation to attend a meeting of the council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillor(s) of the Unitary Council representing the area of the council.

29 RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA

- a Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

30 RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

See also standing order 31.

- a **In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.**
- b **The Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.**

31. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION
(Below is not an exhaustive list).

See also standing order 21

- a The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer.
- b **The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his personal data.**
- c **The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.**
- d **The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial**

action taken.

- e. **The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**
- f. **The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.**

32 STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY

- a All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least 2 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 11.
- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible after he has delivered his acceptance of office form.
- d The decision of the chairman of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

33. VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE

- a A councillor who attends, virtually, a meeting of the council, or as an appointed member of a committee or sub-committee, may not take part in any discussion (unless specifically agreed to by the Chair) and has no right to vote.
- b Virtual attendance, by virtue of not being physically present, may render a meeting inquorate, see standing order 1w. Therefore, any councillor who intends to attend a meeting, virtually, must inform the Chair of their intention, prior to the meeting taking place, in order to avoid the meeting being inquorate.
- c An appointed member of a committee or sub-committee, who is unable to attend a meeting in person, in the first instance shall seek a substitute.

APPENDIX A

Procedure for recording meetings

The Openness of Local Bodies Regulations 2014 allows any person attending a public local government meeting to report proceedings by taking photographs, filming, audio recording, or by using social media.

It is courteous to advise the council or committee via the clerk that recording will take place.

Where the council has been notified of filming in advance a notice shall be displayed "Please note that filming, recording or photography may take place at this meeting when the public and press are not lawfully excluded"

1. The council and officers shall afford reasonable facilities for the recording of the meeting.
2. Any filming, recording or photography of meetings shall only be permitted from the Public Seating Areas.
3. No additional lighting or flash photography shall be used except by agreement of the chairman.
4. Recording equipment shall not be left unattended at meetings.
5. Devices that may emit an alarm tone shall be switched to silent mode.
6. Persons recording the meeting shall not interrupt or interfere, or cause to make such noise as the chairman regards as disruptive, while a meeting is in progress. The chairman may direct recordings to stop if the interruption, interference or noise prevents the smooth running of the meeting.
7. Commentary by the recording person(s) shall not be permitted during the recording.
8. Only council members and council officers may be expressly recorded. Permission to record other persons present must be agreed with those persons. Permission to record those under 16 must be given by their parent or guardian.
9. All recording shall be visible to anyone at the meeting.
10. The council shall not be liable for any publishing actions of the person(s) making the recording. Permission to publish content identifying a member of the public is advisable.
11. Recording will be suspended if a resolution is passed by the meeting to exclude the public.
12. Recording will be suspended if the Chairman suspends the meeting due to disorderly conduct.
13. Anyone reporting proceedings by making use of social media should not disturb the business of the meeting,
14. Any kind of reporting or filming of the meeting should be compliant with the Human Rights Act, the Data Protection Act and the laws of libel and defamation.
15. Only the official signed minutes of the council and its committees will be recognised as the formal, statutory and legally binding record of the meeting.



Houghton Regis Town Council

Financial Regulations

Date of Approval:	Town Council 29 th September 2014
Date of Review:	18 th May 2016; 18 th July 2017; 3 rd July 2018; 15 th May 2019; 5 th May 2021

Based on NALC Financial Regulations May 2014 and amended by NALC Financial Briefing F01E-16

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These Financial Regulations were adopted by the Council at its Meeting held on 29th September 2014.

1. GENERAL

- 1.1. These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. Financial regulations are one of the council's three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial regulations must be observed in conjunction with the council's standing orders¹ and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 1.2. The council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective, and that the council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3. The council's accounting control systems must include measures:
 - for the timely production of accounts;
 - that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
 - to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
 - identifying the duties of officers.
- 1.4. These financial regulations demonstrate how the council meets these responsibilities and requirements.
- 1.5. At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.6. Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.7. Members of Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of Councillor into disrepute.
- 1.8. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the council. The Clerk has been appointed as RFO for this council and these regulations will apply accordingly.
- 1.9. In accordance with the Council's Staffing Structure, the Clerk / RFO is supported by the Accounts Officer. Where RFO is referred to in the Financial Regulations the Accounts Officer may carry out part or all of the stated requirement under the supervision of the Clerk / RFO.
- 1.10. The RFO;
 - acts under the policy direction of the council;

¹ Model standing orders for councils © 2018, are available via NALC's website.

- administers the council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
 - determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and accounting control systems;
 - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
 - maintains the accounting records of the council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
 - assists the council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
 - produces financial management information as required by the council.
- 1.11. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the council's transactions and to enable the RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information prepared for the council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 1.12. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall in particular contain:
- entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;
 - a record of the assets and liabilities of the council; and
 - wherever relevant, a record of the council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.
- 1.13. The accounting control systems determined by the RFO shall include:
- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible;
 - procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;
 - identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
 - procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to the council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the RFO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
 - measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.
- 1.14. The council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular any decision regarding:
- setting the final budget or the precept (Council Tax Requirement);

- approving accounting statements;
- approving an annual governance statement;
- borrowing;
- writing off bad debts;
- declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
- addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors,

shall be a matter for the full council only.

1.15. In addition, the council must:

- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- approve any grant or a single commitment in excess of the revenue budget provided; and
- in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant Committee in accordance with its terms of reference.

1.16. In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations or ‘the regulations’ shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified.

In these financial regulations the term ‘proper practice’ or ‘proper practices’ shall refer to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners’ Guide (England)* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG), available from the websites of NALC and the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC) or *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales - A Practitioners’ Guide*, available from the websites of One Voice Wales (OVW) and SLCC as appropriate.

2. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

- 2.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate Guidance and proper practices.
- 2.2. On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, the Corporate Services Committee shall consider and verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The Corporate Services Committee chairman shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the council.
- 2.3. The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper

practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to the council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

- 2.4. The council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the council shall make available such documents and records as appear to the council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary for that purpose.
- 2.5. The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the council in accordance with proper practices.
- 2.6. The internal auditor shall:
 - be competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
 - report to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
 - to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council.
- 2.7. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
 - perform any operational duties for the council;
 - initiate or approve accounting transactions; or
 - direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 2.8. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms ‘independent’ and ‘independence’ shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.
- 2.9. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors’ rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.10. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

3. ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING

- 3.1 Each committee shall review its three year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments. Having regard to the forecast, it shall thereafter formulate and submit

proposals for the following financial year to the council not later than the end of November each year including any proposals for revising the forecast.

- 3.2 The RFO must each year, by no later than the end of November, prepare detailed estimates with explanations of all receipts and payments including the use of general and ear marked reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered by the relevant committees and the council.
- 3.3 The council shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to the council's three year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.
- 3.4 The council shall ensure that a minimum of 3 months net revenue expenditure is in general reserves.
- 3.5 The council shall fix the precept (council tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than by the end of January each year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.
- 3.6 The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

4. BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND

- 4.1. Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year.
- 4.2. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue code other than by resolution of the council, or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget codes or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement').
- 4.3. The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually in October for the following financial year at the Corporate Services Committee. The RFO will inform committees of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time.
- 4.4. In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services, the clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £1000. The Clerk shall report such action to the chairman as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.

- 4.5. No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.
- 4.6. All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 4.7. The RFO shall regularly provide each committee with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget and shall show explanations of material variances. For this purpose "material" shall be in excess of 15% of the budget.
- 4.8. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by council as part of the budgetary control process.

5. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS

- 5.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency.
- 5.2. On a regular basis, and not less than monthly, the RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, by two signatories, and present the schedule, together with the relevant invoices. The two signatories shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied themselves shall authorise payment. The approved schedule shall be signed (electronically or in person) by the two signatories.
- 5.3. A detailed list of all payments made shall be disclosed, to members, through the Corporate Services Committee. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) may be summarised to remove public access to any personal information.
- 5.4. All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the council.
- 5.5. The RFO shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted, and which are in order, within the suppliers payment terms.
- 5.6. The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items only in the following circumstances:
 - a) When a payment is necessary the Clerk / RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment a list of payments shall be submitted to authorised signatories for approval.;
 - b) An expenditure item relating to continuing contracts and obligations provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the authorised signatories;
 - c) fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £50,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the authorised signatories.

- 5.7. In respect of grants a duly authorised committee shall approve expenditure within any limits set by council and in accordance with any Policy statement approved by council.
- 5.8. Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.
- 5.9. The council will aim to rotate the duties of members in these Regulations so that onerous duties are shared out as evenly as possible over time.

6. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MAKING OF PAYMENTS

- 6.1. The council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.
- 6.2. Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5 above, the council, a duly delegated committee or, if so delegated, the Clerk or RFO shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.
- 6.3. All payments shall be effected by cheque or other instructions to the council's bankers, or otherwise, in accordance with a resolution of the Corporate Services Committee.
- 6.4. Cheques or orders for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented to the authorised signatories shall be signed by two members of council and countersigned by an authorised officer in accordance with a resolution instructing that payment. A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to the payment in question.
- 6.5. To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.
- 6.6. Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at the regular meeting (not less than monthly) of the authorised signatories. Any signatures obtained away from such meetings shall be reported to the authorised signatories.
- 6.7. Payments made by variable Direct Debit, Standing Order, BACS or CHAPS are to be signed by two members and an officer and payments are reported to the authorised signatories.
- 6.8. The approval of the use of Direct Debit, Standing Order, BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council every year.
- 6.9. If thought appropriate by the Clerk payment for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer provided evidence is retained and any payments are reported to the authorised signatories as made.
- 6.10. Where a computer requires use of a personal identification number (PIN) or other password(s), for access to the council's records on that computer, a note shall be made of the PIN and Passwords and shall be handed to and retained by the Clerk in a sealed dated envelope.

- 6.11. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
- 6.12. Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely off site.
- 6.13. The council shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall, software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.
- 6.14. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk /RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The Bank Mandate approved by the council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts. The bank mandate will state clearly the amounts of payments that can be instructed by the use of the Service Administrator alone, or by the Service Administrator with a stated number of approvals.
- 6.15. Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under “favourites”), and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.
- 6.16. Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking may only be changed on written notification by the supplier and supported by authority for change signed by the Clerk.
- 6.17. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk / RFO and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1000 unless authorised by council or committee in writing before any order is placed.
- 6.18. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month-end. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances.
- 6.19. The Clerk / RFO may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made shall be forwarded to the Clerk / RFO with a claim for reimbursement.
 - a) The RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of £250 for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate the payment.
 - b) The RFO shall maintain as postage float of up to £800 for the purpose of postage.
 - c) Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.
 - d) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on the schedule of payments presented to council under 5.2 above.

7. PAYMENT OF SALARIES

- 7.1. As an employer, the council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salary rates shall be as agreed by council, or duly delegated committee.
- 7.2. Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions must be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to the next available council meeting, as set out in these regulations above.
- 7.3. No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Corporate Services Committee.
- 7.4. Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record. This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:
 - a) by the internal auditor;
 - b) by the external auditor; or
 - c) by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.
- 7.5. The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations, to ensure that only payments due for the period have actually been paid.
- 7.6. Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by council.

8. LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

- 8.1. All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for Borrowing Approval, and subsequent arrangements for the Loan shall only be approved by full council.
- 8.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal Borrowing Approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.
- 8.3. All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the Council and shall be for a set period in accordance with council policy.
- 8.4. The Council shall ensure the approved Banking Arrangements, Investment Strategy and Investment Arrangements are in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance and shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

- 8.5. All investments of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- 8.6. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 8.7. Payments in respect of short term or long term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 (Authorisation of payments) and Regulation 6 (Instructions for payments).

9. INCOME

- 9.1. The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 9.2. Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the council, notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the council.
- 9.3. The council will review all fees and charges at least annually, following a report of the Clerk.
- 9.4. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council and shall be written off in the year.
- 9.5. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.
- 9.6. The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.
- 9.7. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 9.8. The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.
- 9.9. Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.
- 9.10. Any income arising which is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any council meeting (see also Regulation 16 below).

10. ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

- 10.1. A schedule of Purchase Orders shall be maintained by the RFO for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared.

- 10.2. All members and Officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any *de minimis* provisions in Regulation 11 (1) below.
- 10.3. A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 10.4. The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the Minutes can record the power being used.

11. CONTRACTS

- 11.1. Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:
 - a. Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:
 - i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
 - ii. for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
 - iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
 - iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the council;
 - v. for additional audit work of the external auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of council); and
 - vi. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.
 - b. Where the council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“the Regulations”) which is valued at £25,000 or more, the council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations².
 - c. The full requirements of The Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive 2014/24/EU (which may change from time to time)³.
 - d. When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the council.

- e. Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
- f. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
- g. Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Orders¹⁸ and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- h. When it is to enter into a contract of less than £25,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £3,000 and above £250 the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.2 above shall apply.
- i. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- j. Should it occur that the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision making process was being undertaken.

²The regulations require councils to use the Contract Finders website to advertise contract opportunities, set out the procedures to be followed in awarding new contracts and to publicise the award of new contracts

³Thresholds currently applicable are:

- a. For public supply and public service contracts 209,000 Euros (£189,330)
- b. For public works contracts 5,225,000 Euros (£4,733,252)

⁴Based on NALC's model standing order 18 © 2018 National Association of Local Councils

12. PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS

- 12.1. Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).
- 12.2. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum of 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the council.
- 12.3. Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the council and Clerk to the contractor in writing, the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

13. STORES AND EQUIPMENT

- 13.1. The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 13.2. Delivery Notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 13.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 13.4. The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores at least annually.

14. ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

- 14.1. The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 14.2. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £500.
- 14.3. No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, In each case a Report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 14.4. No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a Report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).

- 14.5. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

15. INSURANCE

- 15.1. Following the annual risk assessment (per Financial Regulation 17), the Clerk/ RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the council's insurers.
- 15.2. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 15.3. All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined annually by the council, or duly delegated committee.

16. CHARITIES

- 16.1. Where the council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Clerk and RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The Clerk and RFO shall arrange for any Audit or Independent Examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

17. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 17.1. The council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk shall prepare, for approval by the council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 17.2. When considering any new activity, the Clerk shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the council.

18. SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- 18.1. It shall be the duty of the council to review the Financial Regulations of the council from time to time. The Clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these financial regulations.
- 18.2. The council may, by resolution of the council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of council.

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Calendar of Meetings, Briefings and Events 2023 - 2024

Colour Key	Bank Holiday	No Scheduled meeting	Civic and Events Officer event	Community Development Officer Event
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Date	Month		Day	Committee meeting	Event
1st	May	2023	Monday	<i>Bank holiday Early May</i>	
6th	May	2023	Saturday		Coronation Celebrations
4th	May	2023	Thursday	Elections	
8th	May	2023	Monday	Bank Holiday (Coronation)	
9th	May	2023	Tuesday	<i>Leaders Briefing</i>	
15th	May	2023	Monday	Annual Towns Meeting	
17th	May	2023	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	
17th	May	2023	Wednesday	Town Council (AGM)	
22nd	May	2023	Tuesday	<i>Member Open Session</i>	
22nd	May	2023	Monday	Planning	
23rd	May	2023	Tuesday	Allotment Working Group	
29th	May	2023	Monday	<i>Spring Bank Holiday</i>	
30th	May	2023	Tuesday	Corporate Services	
3rd	June	2023	Saturday		Support my neighbour Car Boot sale
5th	June	2023	Monday	<i>Leaders Briefing</i>	
5th	June	2023	Monday	Environment & Leisure	
8th	June	2023	Thursday	Events Working Group	
12th	June	2023	Monday	Planning	
19th	June	2023	Monday	Town Council	
21st	June	2023	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	
26th	June	2023	Monday	XXXXXXXXXX	
3rd	July	2023	Monday	<i>Leaders Briefing</i>	
3rd	July	2023	Monday	Personnel Sub-Committee	
3rd	July	2023	Monday	Planning	
6th	July	2023	Thursday	Events Working Group	
8th	July	2023	Saturday		Carnival
10th	July	2023	Monday	XXXXXXXXXX	
11th	July	2023	Tuesday	Allotment Working Group	
12th	July	2023	Tuesday		LLSG Trip to garden Centre

17th	July	2023	Monday	Community Services	
18th	July	2023	Tuesday	Town Partnership	
19th	July	2023	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	
24th	July	2023	Monday		Skate Jam
24th	July	2023	Monday	Planning	
25th	July	2023	Tuesday		Outdoor Cinema
26th	July	2023	Wednesday		Inflatable Fun
31st	July	2023	Monday	XXXXXXXXXX	
2nd	August	2023	Wednesday		Magician
7th	August	2023	Monday	XXXXXXXXXX	
9th	August	2023	Wednesday		Crazy Golf
14th	August	2023	Monday	Planning	
16th	August	2023	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	
16th	August	2023	Wednesday		Mobile Farm
17th	August	2023	Thursday		Family Fun day Southend Trip
21st	August	2023	Monday	XXXXXXXXXX	
21st	August	2023	Monday	Leaders Briefing	
24th	August	2023	Thursday	Events Working Group	
28th	August	2023	Monday	Bank holiday Summer	
2nd	September	2023	Saturday		Houghton Rocks
4th	September	2023	Tuesday	Planning	
4th	September	2023	Monday	Leaders Briefing	
11th	September	2023	Monday	Corporate Services	
12th	September	2023	Tuesday	Allotment Working Group	
18th	September	2023	Monday	Environment & Leisure	
19th	September	2034	Tuesday		LLSG Southend Trip
20th	September	2023	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	
25th	September	2023	Monday	Planning	
28th	September	2023	Thursday	Events Working Group	
2nd	October	2023	Monday	Town Council	
9th	October	2023	Monday	Leaders Briefing	
16th	October	2023	Monday	Personnel Sub-Committee	
16th	October	2023	Monday	Planning	
17th	October	2023	Tuesday	Town Partnership	
18th	October	2023	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	
23rd	October	2023	Monday	Community Services (Grants)	
26th	October	2023	Thursday	Events Working Group	
30th	October	2023	Monday	Leaders Briefing	

5th	November	2023	Sunday		Fireworks TBC
6th	November	2023	Monday	Planning	
11th	November	2023	Saturday		Armistice Day
12th	November	2023	Sunday		Remembrance Sunday
13th	November	2023	Monday	Community Services	
14th	November	2023	Tuesday	Allotment Working Group	
15th	November	2023	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	
20th	November	2023	Monday	XXXXXXXXXX	
27th	November	2023	Monday	Planning	
29th	November	2023	Thursday	Events Working Group	
2nd	December	2023	Saturday		Christmas Carol Service
4th - 6th	December	2023	Mon - Weds		Santa Float
4th	December	2023	Monday	Leaders Briefing	
4th	December	2023	Monday	Corporate Services	
9th	December	2023			Santa's Grotto
11th	December	2023	Tuesday	Member Open Session	
11th	December	2023	Monday	Town Council	
12th	December	2023	Tuesday		LLSG - Pantomime
18th	December	2023	Monday	Planning	
19th	December	2023	Tuesday		LLSG - Christmas meal
20th	December	2023	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	
25th	December	2023	Monday	Bank Holiday Christmas Day	
26th	December	2023	Tuesday	Bank Holiday Boxing Day	
1st	January	2024	Monday	Bank Holiday New Year's Day	
2nd	January	2024	Tuesday	Member Open Session	
8th	January	2024	Monday	Leaders Briefing	
8th	January	2024	Monday	Planning	
15th	January	2024	Monday	Town Council	
16th	January	2024	Tuesday	Allotment Working Group	
17th	January	2024	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	
22nd	January	2024	Monday	XXXXXXXXXX	
23rd	January	2024	Tuesday	Town Partnership	
29th	January	2024	Monday	Personnel Sub-Committee	
29th	January	2024	Monday	Planning	
1st	February	2024	Thursday	Events Working Group	
5th	February	2024	Monday	Leaders Briefing	
5th	February	2024	Monday	Environment & Leisure	

6th	February	2024	Tuesday		LLSG Lunch Date
12th	February	2024	Monday	XXXXXXXXXX	
17th	February	2024	Saturday		Pride of Houghton Awards
19th	February	2024	Monday	Member Open Session	
19th	February	2024	Monday	Planning	
21st	February	2024	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	
26th	February	2024	Monday	Community Services	
29th	February	2024	Thursday	Events Working Group	
4th	March	2024	Monday	Corporate Services	
11th	March	2024	Monday	Leaders Briefing	
11th	March	2024	Monday	Planning	
18th	March	2024	Monday	Town Council	
19th	March	2024	Tuesday	Allotment Working Group	
20th	March	2024	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	
25th	March	2024	Monday	XXXXXXXXXX	
28th	March	2024	Thursday	Events Working Group	
29th	March	2024	Friday	Bank Holiday Good Friday	
1st	April	2024	Monday	Bank Holiday Easter Monday	
2nd	April	2024	Tuesday	Leaders Briefing	
2nd	April	2024	Tuesday	Planning	
8th	April	2023	Monday	Community Services	
15th	April	2024	Monday	Annual Towns Meeting	
17th	April	2024	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	
22nd	April	2024	Monday	Personnel Sub-Committee	
22nd	April	2024	Monday	Planning	
23rd	April	2024	Tuesday	Town Partnership	
25th	April	2024	Thursday	Events Working Group	
29th	April	2024	Monday	Environment & Leisure	
6th	May	2024	Monday	Bank holiday Early May	
13th	May	2024	Monday	Planning	
15th	May	2024	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	
15th	May	2024	Wednesday	Town Council (AGM)	
20th	May	2024	Monday	XXXXXXXXXX	
27th	May	2024		Bank holiday Spring Bank Holiday	
3rd	June	2024	Monday	Planning	



AGAR Line 9 - Total fixed assets plus long-term investments and assets

Fixed assets:

- 5.169. The term 'fixed assets' mean property, plant and equipment with a useful life of more than one year used by the authority to deliver its services. Fixed assets are also known as non-current assets.
- 5.170. Fixed assets acquired in any year should be added to the asset register for management purposes. For accounting purposes, acquisitions and disposals of fixed assets should be treated as any other purchase or sale and recorded as part of annual payments or receipts, expenditure, or income.
- 5.171. Section 2 states that the value of the cell at line 9 is taken from the authority's asset register which is up to date at 31 March and includes all capital acquisition and disposal transactions recorded during the year.
- 5.172. If for some reason the authority decides that the basis of valuation should be changed, the change must be applied consistently to all relevant classes of fixed assets. In such an event, the value shown in line 9 for the previous year should also be changed to the new basis and clearly marked as 'RESTATED'.
- 5.173. The authority should provide a justification and explanation for the change in the basis of reporting, which should be recorded in the minutes of the authority. It is not expected that the basis would change more than once or possibly twice.
- 5.174. Where assets have been revalued either during the year or between the year-end date and the date of approval of the AGAR using an existing basis, the prior year will not need to be restated.



Clare Evans
Town Clerk
Houghton Regis Town Council
Council Offices
Peel Street
Houghton Regis
Bedfordshire
LU5 5EY

27th February 2023

Dear Clare,

Report on Internal Audit carried out on 21 February 2023

An audit was carried out by Kevin Rose on Tuesday 21 February 2023. This was the interim audit visit, part of the annual internal audit coverage of the Council.

The audit was undertaken using our standard IAC Audit Checklist, used for all Local Councils, which has 198 items. A total of 86 items were tested during this audit, including items that were examined and tested as part of the pre-audit process. 18 additional items were checked and confirmed as being Not Applicable to your Council. The balance of 94 items will be checked during the Year End audit.

Areas subject to audit were;

the accounting system and records (Box A), the payment system (Box B), risk and insurance (Box C), budget and precept setting and monitoring (Box D), income billing, collection and VAT (Box E), petty cash (Box F), payroll (Box G), bank reconciliations (Box I), accounting Statements (Box J), the Exercise of Public Rights (Box M), and the publication of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (Box N).

Of the 86 items tested a Positive response was obtained in respect of 78 tests. There were 8 Negative responses identified and 10 Observations were made, details of which are set out in the attached Interim Internal Audit Observations.

A detailed breakdown of our audit testing and Responses is set out in our Internal Audit Summary and I would encourage Councillors to review this in order that they may have greater understanding of the scope of the audit and the areas tested.

I would like to express my thanks for the assistance provided to me during my audit.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Rose". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K" and a distinct "Rose" following.

Kevin Rose ACMA
Director

Houghton Regis Town Council Financial Year 2022-23



IAC Audit and Consultancy Ltd

Audit date: 21 February 2023

Interim Internal Audit Observations

B *This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.*

No.	Audit Test	Response	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	Do electronic bank payments require two authorisers for ALL Council bank accounts?	No	<i>It is understood that the Council has recently put in place arrangements for online authorisation of bank payments with its bank, which was a difficult and protracted process.</i>	The Council to consider whether, after the upcoming elections, it should review its banking arrangements as this will be a convenient opportunity to make any changes.	Low	The process for the council to move to a more suitable online banking set up has been protracted and has only just been resolved. Officers are currently undergoing training to enable them to set up and use the system. However it is apparent that whilst the new set up will be much more robust it will also be much more involved. Officers intend to liaise with other similar sized town councils to investigate their online banking processes and experiences before moving forwards. A report back to Council will be made in due course.
2	Have invoices been approved as required under Council Financial Regulations? (paragraph 5.2 of the Council's Financial Regulations)	No	<i>Invoices have not been approved as required under the Council's Financial Regulation 5.4</i>	Council to ensure that invoices are 'verified and certified' in accordance with Financial Regulations. The Council may wish to consider approving invoices as a batch, with the Clerk to sign a listing of invoices, rather than requiring each individual invoice to be signed.	Medium	This is accepted and steps will be taken to make this alteration with immediate effect.
3	Have payments been approved as required under Council Financial Regulations?	No	<i>Payments have not been approved as required under the Council's Financial Regulations 5.2 which requires a schedule of payments to be 'ruled off and initialled by two signatories'.</i>	The Council to review Financial Regulation 5.2 and ensure that the actual process for the approval of payments accords with Financial Regulations.	High	This is included on the Town Council agenda for March 2023.

4	Have tenders been obtained as set out in Financial Regulations?	No	<i>Council has awarded a contract for the development of a sports field. This was, unsuccessfully, advertised through Contracts Finder, then through a shortlisting process. It is understood that part of the this work has already been awarded and the contract and will be undertaken in the 2023-24 financial year. It is understood that funding for the project will involve three other funders. It is unclear how the council will monitor and supervise this project and how the cash flows of the project will be managed.</i>	The Council, as a priority, put in place robust arrangements for the management of this project. This should include arrangements to review and approve payments certificates, including any variations, and to manage the funding and cash flows of the project. The Council may wish to obtain professional advice on how this process should be managed.	High	This recommendation has already been actioned. External support for the projects cash flow has been obtained.
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D The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.

No.	Audit Test	Response	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	Reserves have been subject to review by Council	No	<i>It was noted that the Council has a high level of total Reserves which includes a number of Earmarked Reserves. From a review of the Earmarked Reserves it is unclear that these represent expenditure that the Council is likely to have to fund in the medium term.</i>	The Council to review its Earmarked Reserves and consider whether the values stated for the individual Reserves accurately states the expenditure that Council is likely to incur.	Medium	This will be undertaken at the June meeting of Town Council when it considers its year end accounts for 2022/23.

E Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

No.	Audit Test	Response	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	Does the investment policy clearly show an awareness of investment risk being taken?	No	<i>The investment policy in place at the Council does not formally set out the Councils policy on risk.</i>	The Council should ensure that the Investment Policy clearly sets out the Councils approach to Risk. The Council should refer, in particular, to paragraph 41 of the 'Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments'.	Medium	Consideration of this will be presented to the next meeting of Corporate Services Committee.

2	Is income due on investments subject to regular check and verification? (Is investment performance regularly reported to Council?)	No	<p><i>The Council holds funds as bank deposits, with the CCLA Public Sector Deposit fund and the CCLA Property Fund. It was not clear, from a review of records that the Council has been monitoring the returns on these investments. In particular it is not clear that the Council has monitored the change in Capital Value of the Property Fund.</i></p> <p><i>It was noted that the CCLA Property Fund advised investors in October 2022 that it was extending the redemption period for the Property Fund from 90 days to six months. It does not appear that this has been considered / noted to Council.</i></p>	The Council should put in place arrangements for the regular review and reporting of investment performance. This should consider both the interest / dividend yields and the change in the Capital Value of funds invested. This review should be recorded in Minutes of the appropriate meeting.	High	The council does, through Corporate Services Committee, review its investments with the CCLA. This report will be reviewed and extended as recommended.
3	If the Council raises a large number of invoices does the Council maintain a debtors ledger or some other appropriate means of recording amounts due?	No	<p><i>It was noted that there is some variation in how items of income of a similar nature is being recorded. For example some items of burial income has been recorded based on date of payment (as a cashbook receipt) rather than based on a Sales Invoice.</i></p>	The Council to review its process of the recording of income to ensure that income of a similar nature if recorded is the same way. Items of income which relate to the Councils formal prices lists should normally be expected to be recorded through sales invoices.	Medium	This is noted and will be actioned going forwards.

J Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and

No.	Audit Test	Response	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	Prior year accruals have been correctly reversed in the current year. (interim)	No	<p><i>It was noted that there is a balance of £3,783 on nominal code 510 - Accruals carried over from 2021-22, it is unclear why this has not been reversed in the 2022-23 financial year.</i></p>	Council to review the balance on nominal code 510 and confirm whether or not it should be reversed in the 2022-23 financial year.	Medium	This is noted and will be actioned.

N The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).

No.	Audit Test	Response	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
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1	The Council has published the External Auditors report on its website in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 13 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations	Yes	<i>As at the date of the Interim Audit visit the Council had not published the External Auditors report on its website in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 13 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations. Regulation 13 requires that this is published 'no later than 30th September'.</i>	The Council to review its compliance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations. The Council should consider what response it should give in respect of Assertion 3 of the 2022-23 Annual Governance Statement.	Non Compliance	A verbal update will be provided at the meeting, however the issue relates to a glitch in the council's website CMS where when officers replace a file with a more up to date file, where it has the same file name the CSM doesn't replace it.
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Interim Internal Audit Summary Houghton Regis Town Council



(shaded Internal Control Objectives are not applicable to your Council)

Interim Audit Date: 21 February 2023

Internal Control Objective		Tested	Positive	Negative	Recommendations
Box A	<i>Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.</i>	6	6	0	0
Box B	<i>This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.</i>	26	23	3	4
Box C	<i>This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.</i>	4	3	1	0
Box D	<i>The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.</i>	12	12	0	1
Box E	<i>Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.</i>	9	7	2	3
Box F	<i>Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.</i>	9	9	0	0
Box G	<i>Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.</i>	2	2	0	0
Box H	<i>Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.</i>	0	0	0	0
Box I	<i>Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.</i>	4	4	0	0
Box J	<i>Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.</i>	2	1	1	1
Box K	<i>If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2020/21 AGAR tick "not covered")</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Box L	<i>If the authority has an annual turnover not exceeding £25,000, it publishes information on a website/ webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the Transparency code for smaller authorities.</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Box M	<i>The authority, during the previous year (2021/22) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).</i>	5	5	0	0
Box N	<i>The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).</i>	7	6	1	1
Box O	<i>(For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Totals		86	78	8	10



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Cllr Yvonne Farrell**

Tel: 01582 708540

Town Clerk: **Clare Evans**

e-mail: info@houghtonregis.org.uk

15th March 2023

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

To: All Town Councillors

AGENDA – Additional Item

11. TITHE FARM RECREATION GROUND SPORTS PROJECT - BORROWING APPROVAL

Members may recall in March 2022 Town Council agreed to apply for borrowing approval (Minute 11993). As this project has progressed borrowing approval has been applied for, however feedback on the application requires an extension to the Resolution to confirm the annual loan repayments and comments on the precept increase.

Minute 11993 reads:

- Resolved:**
- 1. To seek the Secretary of State's approval for the proposed borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board of £500,000 as an annuity loan over 28 years;*
 - 2. To fund associated repayments from 299 4871 in 2022/23 and for subsequent repayments to be funded from a new code in cost centre 299 specifically set up for loan repayments associated with this project.*

Recommendation: To extend Minute 11993 as follows:

- 1. To note that an annuity loan of £500,000 over 28 years will invoke an annual loan repayment of £32,551.34;**
- 2. Repayments due in 2023/24 will be met through 299-4871, subsequent repayments will be budgeted for;**
- 3. It is not intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments.**

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