



# HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Cllr E Cooper**

Tel: 01582 708540

Town Clerk: **Clare Evans**

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3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024

## 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 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024 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](#)

**Clare Evans**  
Town Clerk

***THIS MEETING MAY BE  
RECORDED<sup>1</sup>***

### 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.

- 3. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

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<sup>1</sup> *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.*

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 5 - 9*

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

**Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2024.**

#### 5. COMMITTEE AND SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

*Pages 10 - 73*

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

Corporate Services Committee	10 <sup>th</sup> June, 23 <sup>rd</sup> July and 27 <sup>th</sup> August 2024
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minute number 12868               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Family Friendly Policy</li> <li>○ Flexible Working Policy</li> <li>○ Capability Policy</li> <li>○ Grievance Policy</li> <li>○ Officer/Member Protocol</li> <li>○ Training Agreement</li> <li>○ Training Statement of Intent</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Minute number 12870 (as agreed in private session) To request approval from Town Council for the use of General Reserves up to £4,000 for supporting IT</li> </ul>
Planning Committee	13 <sup>th</sup> May, 3 <sup>rd</sup> June, 24 <sup>th</sup> June, 15 <sup>th</sup> July, 5 <sup>th</sup> August, 27 <sup>th</sup> August 2024
Community Services Committee	8 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
Environment & Leisure Committee	29 <sup>th</sup> April & 29 <sup>th</sup> July 2024
Town Partnership Committee	23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2024
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 recommendation contained therein as follows:**

- **Minute number 12868**  
**Family Friendly Policy**  
**Flexible Working Policy**

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**Capability Policy  
Grievance Policy  
Officer/Member Protocol  
Training Agreement  
Training Statement of Intent**

- **Minute number 12870 (as agreed in private session)  
To request approval from Town Council for the use of  
General Reserves up to £4,000 for supporting IT**

**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. AUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2023/24**

*Pages 74 – 86*

To advise members of the outcomes of the external audit 2023/24.

- Recommendations:**
- 1. To approve and accept the Audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24.**
  - 2. To note the matters raised in the Completion Letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024.**

**9. INTERNAL CONTROLS POLICY**

*Pages 87 - 91*

During a recent internal audit, it was noted that the Town Council did not have a specific Internal Controls Policy.

In order to rectify this, members will find attached an Internal Controls Policy for approval.

Internal controls are set up by the Clerk/RFO, but members must ensure they have an understanding of those controls and are responsible for checking that they are operated effectively.

**Recommendation: To review and adopt the Internal Controls Policy**

**10. MARKET CHARTER**

At the Community Engagement Sub Committee it was requested that an update be provided on this agenda on the Dunstable Market Charter.

The holding update is that Dunstable Town Council are considering HRTC's request for them to consider their use of their Market Charter rights at their Community Services Committee meeting in November.

As such a more comprehensive update is anticipated to be provided to Council at the December 2024 meeting.

**11. 2025/26 BUDGET SETTING PROCESS**

*Pages 92 - 94*

To outline to members the anticipated budget setting process for the financial year 2025/26.

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# HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: E Cooper Town Mayor  
J Carroll  
E Billington  
P Burgess  
E Costello  
W Henderson  
M Herber  
D Jones  
T McMahon  
C Rollins  
A Slough  
C Slough  
D Taylor

Officers: Clare Evans Town Clerk  
Amanda Samuels Administration Officer

Public: 2

Apologies Councillor: Y Farrell

### 12902 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Farrell.

### 12903 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

### 12904 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

### 12905 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

**Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

### 12906 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE REPORT AND ACTION PLAN

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Members were updated on the Corporate Peer Challenge process and presented with an Action Plan reflecting on the Corporate Peer Challenge Report.

Members questioned whether the sum of £14,000 to support Amber-flagged projects would be adequate and suggested a sum of up to £20,000.

Members felt that the report contained much that would prove useful in the coming months and years. There was some disappointment, however, that there had been no opportunity to provide feedback to the team who carried out the Corporate Peer Challenge as there were some points for future consideration, as follows:

- At one of the meetings, 2 councillors suggested that groups within the council were not working together. One of the CBC councillors was not present at this meeting and were not subsequently invited to provide written comments to inform the process.
- At another meeting, one of the Chairs was unable to attend due to work commitments and the electronic communications were insufficient for their contributions. There was no opportunity to take part in the process and so the information provided may have been incomplete.

There was a need to ensure that working councillors had the opportunity to make the same contribution as other councillors.

- In addition, a member of the peer team had said they did not feel equipped to conduct their assigned role as it was not within the scope of their experience. An alternative Peer may have picked up on additional / pertinent issues.

It was emphasised these points did not, in any way, detract from the report.

A query was raised in relation to item 3.9 of the Action Plan which stated, 'develop a programme to increase the visibility of the town council in the new housing areas of Bidwell West and Linnere'. There was a sum of £60,000 allocated to this item and it was questioned whether this would be a one-off or an annual payment. It was confirmed that this was likely to be an annual payment to be funded in the first instance by s106 funding.

It was also questioned how the Town Council anticipated achieving higher visibility in the new housing areas, especially Linnere. The Town Clerk confirmed that Houghton Regis Town Council was working closely with Land Improvement Holdings and would increase the council's involvement over time.

Cllr Jones advised that the Liberal Democrat group did not accept all the contents of the report as there were certain items with which they disagreed. It was confirmed that the report was useful and had focussed the Town Council's attention on actions needed to implement the Corporate Plan. The Action Plan was thorough, but it was anticipated that the actions coming out of it would take time to be realised.

Councillor Carroll proposed an amendment to the recommendation to increase the sum of £14,000 for the Amber-flagged projects to £20,000.

Seconded by Cllr Herber

For: 5

Against: 6

The recommendation remained as presented.

**Resolved:**

- 1. To endorse the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan;**
- 2. To approve the use of General Reserves up to £14,000 to support the Amber flagged projects to enable delivery, subject to Committee approval, in 2024/25.**

**12907 MOTION RE OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR BEDFORDSHIRE**

The following Motion had been received from Cllr Herber:

This Council notes and shares the widespread public dissatisfaction in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire and that Houghton Regis Town Council fully supports the Motion Proposed by Liberal Democratic Councillor Leamen at Central Bedfordshire Council's meeting held 17<sup>th</sup> January '24.

Liberal Democratic Councillor Leamen's – Motions reads *That this Council notes the hard work of Bedfordshire's police officers, PCSOs and auxiliary staff in trying to keep our local communities safe.*

*Further notes that despite their best efforts, according to Home Office statistics, over 4,000 burglaries went unsolved between July 2021 and June 2023 in Bedfordshire with a 10% increase in car thefts in the year to June.*

*Believes that many more crimes could be prevented in Central Bedfordshire with an increased community policing presence and believes that many of our towns and villages have seen a drop in police visibility and presence in their local communities over recent years.*

*Notes that according to a Freedom of Information request, the Office of the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner, including staff running costs, came to £1,210,233 an increase of 13% on the previous financial year.*

*Further notes that since 2015, 67 Police Community Support Officers have been removed from Bedfordshire's streets.*

*Believes that the cost of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner could be better spent on providing frontline police services - the equivalent of 52 new Police Community Support Officers.*

*Further believes that regardless of the incumbents political allegiances it is clear that the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner is not a necessary role and calls on the*

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*Leader of the Council to write to the Home Secretary expressing this Council's view that the role should be abolished with the financial savings reinvested into frontline policing that would benefit Central Bedfordshire.*

Central Bedfordshire colleagues carried the above motion.

Therefore, I request a recorded vote of Houghton Regis Town Council to agree that we also believe that regardless of the incumbents political allegiances it is clear that the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner is not a necessary role and calls on the Town Clerk of the Council to write to the Home Secretary expressing this Council's view that the role should be abolished with the financial savings reinvested into frontline policing that would benefit residents in Houghton Regis.

Members were invited to consider the above Motion.

Cllr McMahon seconded the Motion

Cllr Jones advised that it was regrettable that it had not been possible to consider the Motion prior to the meeting of the Town Council. On behalf of the Liberal Democrats, Cllr Jones advised that it was felt that the post was not a suitable use of taxpayers' money; however, this was not a reflection on the new incumbent. The Liberal Democrats looked forward to working with the new PCC and seeing how he approached the role. Cllr Slough endorsed the comments relating to PCC Tizzard who had shown commitment to neighbourhood policing. While any savings would be welcomed, it was questioned, how the job would be carried out without a PCC. An amendment to the proposal describing how the work would be done and the associated cost, would, however, be supported. Cllr Slough was not in favour of abolishing the role without knowing what would take its place and felt that someone was needed who was familiar with the area and could guide the strategic development of the police. Cllr Slough felt unable to support the Motion.

Members continued to discuss the value of the role, the suitability of a town council voicing an opinion and how any released funding could be used.

Members were keen to state that this discussion was not a reflection on PCC Tizzard but was a discussion about the value, scope and suitability of the role of PCC.

Cllr Herber withdrew the Motion and advised that she would reconsider the Motion in light of the discussion and may resubmit at a future date.

## **12908 NALC SUPER COUNCILS NETWORK**

As a member of the NALC Super Council Network, the council was invited to nominate a councillor representative to attend network meetings.

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September between 18:00-19:15 (virtual).

NALC provided the following clarification on the frequency, timings and venue of these meetings:

- *Network meetings are open to officers and councillors from Super Councils. Councils are encouraged to nominate at least one councillor to join the network mailing list and attend meetings when they can.*



- *Meetings take place quarterly on Zoom, with four scheduled in a calendar year.*

There was no set day of the week for network meetings. They were previously scheduled to take place from 12:00-13:15, however NALC would be trialling a 18:00-19:15 slot for the next meeting.

Cllr Costello nominated Cllr Jones as representative.

The Town Clerk informed Members that the invitation was open to all councillors.

Cllr McMahon asked to be put forward as a representative.

It was suggested that to get a balance of view Group Leaders could be nominated.

**Resolved: To nominate Group Leaders as the Councils representatives to the NALC Super Councils Network.**

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 19.47pm**

**Dated this 14<sup>th</sup> day of October 2024**

**Chairman**

# HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

## Corporate Services Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

**Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 7.00pm.**

- Present:           Councillors:   D Jones                   Chairman  
   J Carroll  
   E Costello  
   W Henderson  
   M Herber  
   C Rollins  
   C Slough                 (Substitution)
- Officers:       Debbie Marsh       Corporate Services Manager  
   Amanda Samuels   Administration Officer
- Public:           0
- Apologies:       Councillor:   E Billington

### 12849 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr E Billington, Cllr C Slough substituted.

### 12850 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

### 12851 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

### 12852 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Members were invited to elect a Vice Chair for Corporate Services Committee for 2024/2025.

Nominee:	Cllr Henderson	Proposed by:	Cllr C Slough
		Seconded by:	Cllr J Carroll

No other nominations were received, accordingly, Cllr Henderson became the Vice-Chair of the Corporate Services Committee for the municipal year of 2024/2025.

### 12853 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

**Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**



**12854 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN**

Personnel Sub-Committee: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024

**Resolved:** To receive the Minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting of the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

**12855 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE**

In accordance with Standing Order 4.j.iv. Council was required to review its delegation arrangements to committees and sub committees.

These arrangements were set out in the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference. This document set out the system of delegation to the Committees, Sub Committees and Working Groups of the Council.

Members were presented with the extract from the approved Committee Functions & Terms of Reference which related to this committee.

It was highlighted that the item 'monitor and review risk management issues' could be omitted in the future as this function would come under the responsibility of Town Council.

**12856 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT**

Members were presented with the income and expenditure printout for the Corporate Services committee up to the end of the 2023/2024 financial year, and for the month of April 2024.

It was highlighted that the report indicated that rates for the year, for the council offices, had been paid in full when, in actuality, it was half that had been paid.

**12857 BANK AND CASH RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS**

Members received the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for February, March and April 2024.

**Resolved:**

- 1. To approve the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statement for February, March and April 2024.**
- 2. For these along with the original bank statements to be signed by the Chair of Corporate Services Committee and the Council's RFO.**

**12858 LIST OF CHEQUE PAYMENTS**

Members were provided with a list of payments for the period February to March 2024 and for April 2024.

*DNT*

**12859 INVESTMENT REPORT**

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

The Corporate Services Committee 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 confirmed that, following the last meeting of this committee, notice had been given to the CCLA in regard to the sale of the units held in the council's Local Authorities Property Fund.

**12860 RENEWAL OF DIRECT DEBIT, STANDING ORDER, BACS AND CHAPS PAYMENTS**

Members were advised, under Financial Regulation 6.8, the approval of the use of Direct Debit, Standing Order, BACS or CHAPS would be renewed by resolution of the council every year.

Members were provided with a list of Direct Debits and Standing Orders.

Members were informed that the town council uses BACS payment for staff salaries only.

Members were advised of an additional two standing orders. These were:

- CDS (cemetery monitoring)
- Cloudy IT

**Resolved:**

1. To approve the use of BACS method of payment.
2. To approve the use of Direct Debit, Standing Order and CHAPS method of payment.

**12861 PUBLIC WORKS LOAN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT**

In accordance with the committees Terms of Reference and Financial Regulation 8, Members were provided with an annual report of the council's loans.

Houghton Regis Town Council had three loans: two relating to the Moore Crescent Pavilion and another for the Tithe Farm Project.

**12862 INSURANCE CLAIMS**

Members were advised that there were no insurance claims since the last meeting.

Members were informed that this item would no longer appear on future agendas unless there was something to report.

#### 12863 APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

At the Town Council meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022 (minute number 11984) Members supported the recommendation from the Corporate Services meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022 that the Town Council appoint IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd, for a period of 3 years, as the Town Council internal auditor provider. This appointment covered accounting years 21/22, 22/23 and 23/24.

Members were requested to consider the appointment of the Internal Auditor for a period of 3 years (financial years 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/7).

**Resolved: To recommend to Town Council, at the meeting to be held on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024, that IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd be appointed as the Town Councils internal audit provider, for a period of 3 years (financial years 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/7), at a cost of £800 plus VAT per annum.**

#### 12864 TOWN COUNCIL INSURANCE PROVISION

In accordance with Financial Regulation 15 – Insurance.

Members were reminded that at the last Town Council meeting, held on the 18th March 2024, Members were advised that the Town Council's insurance provision was due for renewal on 1st June 2024. It had been proposed to present a recommendation directly to Town Council in March; however, timescales set by insurance providers, meant that insurance quotes were not able to be obtained. Members were requested and subsequently agreed (minute number 12760) to delegate the appointment of the Town Council's insurer to the Town Clerk, in conjunction with the Head of Corporate Services, and for the outcome to be reported at the next Corporate Services Committee.

Following the outcome of enquiries, Members were informed that the Town Council had entered into a long-term agreement with Zurich Municipal for a period of three years, starting from 1st June 2024, at a cost of £15,528.45 per annum. Entering into a long-term agreement had brought with it a level of discount. This cost did not include cover for the new Bidwell West Pavilion, as this building had not, as yet, been transferred to the council.

Budget allocation for this provision was £17,000.

Members were informed that the insurance premium provided cover for the new pavilion at Tithe Farm and the 3G pitch.

**12865 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN – CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE**

At the Town Council meeting held on the 11th December 2023, Members approved the HRTC Corporate Strategy for 2024-2028 (minute number 12645). At the March meeting of the Town Council, Members approved allocating the objectives to standing committees to enable more detailed consideration and progression. As Members were aware, the plan included 4 Pillars under which were a number of objectives, along with some suggestions as to how these objectives could be achieved. In order to progress the plan, Members agreed that these objectives would then be presented as committee workplans to the respective committees for more detailed consideration of delivery mechanisms and subsequent monitoring. Members were provided with the allocation of objectives for delivery by this committee. Members were asked to prioritise a number of objectives for consideration/delivery in the next twelve months.

Members felt that the objectives in progress, plus the financial plan were sufficient for the moment. This could be revisited as other items were decided.

IT cabling had been completed and could be removed for the work plan.

Members agreed that the costs relating to the Local Council Award Scheme and Investors in People accreditation should be explored and reported back at a future meeting.

The important items were the 5-year financial and staffing plan, and the succession planning, which had been picked up as a potential risk area by the Corporate Peer Challenge review.

**Resolved: To approve the Corporate Services Committee work plan and select those objectives for consideration/delivery in the next twelve months.**

**12866 VAT RETURNS**

Members were provided with the Town Council VAT returns for quarters 1,2,3 & 4 of the financial year 2023-2024.

**12867 POLICY REVIEW SCHEDULE**

Policies and procedures play an important role in governing the Town Councils responsibilities. Policies and procedures set out expectations, from both the Council and employees, and confirmed legal compliance.

This schedule was provided annually at the first Corporate Services meeting following the Town Councils Annual General Meeting.

Members received a list of suggested policy review dates that coincided with dates of the meetings for this committee for the municipal year 2024-2025.

**12868 POLICY UPDATES**

Policies and procedures play an important role in governing the Town Council's responsibilities. Policies and procedures set out expectations, from both the Council and employees and confirms legal compliance.

Members were provided with a report and details of amendments for the following policies:

- 1) Family Friendly Policy
- 2) Flexible Working Policy
- 3) Capability Policy
- 4) Grievance Policy
- 5) Officer/Member Protocol
- 6) Training Agreement
- 7) Training Statement of Intent

Three policies had been amended: the Flexible Working Policy, the Family Friendly Policy and the Training Statement of Intent. The most significant changes related to the Flexible Working Policy.

Members were questioned whether they were willing to accept reviewed policies under one agenda item rather than several separate items. It was agreed that since the listed policies followed HR protocol it was acceptable to agree them as one item; however, in future there should be the option to discuss more discretionary items individually.

**Resolved:** To recommend to Town Council, that the following policies be re-adopted:

- 1) Family Friendly Policy
- 2) Flexible Working Policy
- 3) Capability Policy
- 4) Grievance Policy
- 5) Officer/Member Protocol
- 6) Training Agreement
- 7) Training Statement of Intent

**12869 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

- Staff Plan
- Council Offices

**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.

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**12870 STAFFING PLAN**

Members discussed the officers report.

**Resolved: To support the recommendations contained in the report.**

**12871 COUNCIL OFFICES**

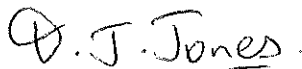
Members discussed the officers report.

Members supported, in principle, the conclusion and next steps as outlined in the report but requested that a further report be presented at a special meeting of this committee. It was agreed that a suitable date for this meeting be found in the month of July.

**Resolved: To defer this item and to reconsider it at a specially convened meeting of this committee.**

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.06pm**

**Dated this 9<sup>th</sup> day of September 2024**



**Chairman**



**HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Corporate Services Committee**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on**  
**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July at 7.00pm.**

Present:	Councillors:	D Jones E Billington J Carroll E Costello W Henderson M Herber C Rollins	Chair
	Officers:	Clare Evans Debbie Marsh Amanda Samuels	Town Clerk Corporate Services Manager Administration Officer
	Public:	0	

**12920 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS**

None.

**12921 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

**12922 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

None.

**12923 COUNCIL OFFICES**

At the Corporate Services Meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> June, Members considered opportunities to enhance the council's service provision to residents through the relocation of the council offices to more suitable (visible) premises.

A special meeting had been requested to discuss the relocation further; however, Members queried why the recommendations were now focussed on enhancing the current offices rather than relocating.

The Town Clerk informed Members that, in the process of gathering comparable reports to assess properties, it had become apparent that the space at All Saints View was substantially smaller than anticipated. While the site would provide higher visibility, it would fail to achieve all the desired objectives and it would also incur a significant cost. As a result, it was felt there was no real value in presenting a report of the nature previously intended, and further discussion was required on available options.

*QJS*

The objectives for relocation were:

- Fit for purpose
- Public visibility
- Potential for community benefit to be factored in

Members suggested and discussed various options as follows:

- Using the Day Centre or Townsend Centre. It was currently unclear what plans Central Bedfordshire Council had regarding the future of these sites, but it was highly likely that CBC would be looking at a commercial value for the properties. Both were ageing buildings that would come with significant remodelling/repair costs. Both sites would be large enough for community use. Members felt that it was still worth approaching CBC to discuss potential use by HRTC.
- Potential to increase office space by the addition of another storey to the existing building or extending into the car park area.
- A portion of the Chamber could be sectioned off for office space and smaller meetings could be held in the remaining Chamber area.
- The Chamber could be repurposed, with meetings being held at external venues that were able to provide the requisite technology to allow for hybrid meetings. This would likely incur hire charges, but there could be ways to keep these low. Using local facilities could potentially improve visibility and community engagement, thereby meeting some of the objectives laid out in the CPC report and the Corporate Plan. Maintaining a small meeting room at HRTC's offices would also limit costs.
- There were two small rooms on site that could be employed as additional office space.
- It was understood that the lease for the Bedford Square Community Centre was due to run out in 2025 and it was worth exploring this site further with CBC. This option could be brought forward for discussion at the next Town Partnership Committee.
- Use hotdesking and hybrid working to maximise space efficiency and explore ways to make the Chamber multi-purpose.

Members agreed that some remedial work could be carried out but questioned the feasibility of spending substantial sums on the present site if they were unlikely to accommodate anticipated increases in staff, or if the community centre was likely to become available. The Town Clerk responded by advising that relocation had already been delayed, and questioned the benefits of continuing to delay when potential sites were not guaranteed.



It was highlighted that HRTC owned the current offices and that these were an asset as they were owned, freehold. It was unlikely that offices would be available again in a central location, with freehold, and provide all the attendant benefits.

It was hoped to have quotes for each of the proposed 3 items by September. In the meantime, costings for room hire could be explored. Members were advised that a condition survey may need to be undertaken on the current building.

£8,000 had been budgeted for professional services to support asset transfers and/or development of community hub project. There was also the earmarked reserve for office provision.

£14,000 had been budgeted for the foyer and comprised of some of the following allocated amounts:

- £2,000 - maintenance and refurbishment of key assets
- £3,000 - communications strategy
- £3,000 - assessing the current use and availability of existing community centres and options for the future
- £3,000 - neighbourhood plan implementation

Members requested a complete breakdown of costs when this became available.

**Resolved: To obtain quotes from design architects for the development of comprehensive remodelling options aimed at:**

1. **Enhancing the functionality and aesthetics of the main foyer**
2. **Expanding office and administrative spaces, including the potential relocation of the council chamber if necessary**
3. **Improving the external visibility and public presence of the council offices**

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.44pm**

**Dated this 9th day of September 2024.**

*D. J. Jones.*

**Chairman** \_\_\_\_\_

**HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Corporate Services Committee**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on**  
**Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> August 2024 at 7.30pm.**

Present:	Councillors:	D Jones E Billington P Burgess J Carroll E Costello W Henderson M Herber	Chairman  Substitution
	Officers:	Clare Evans Debbie Marsh Louise Senior	Town Clerk Corporate Services Manager Head of Democratic Services
	Public:	0	
Apologies:	Councillor:	C Rollins	

**12951 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Cllr Rollins (Cllr Burgess substituted).

**12952 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

**12953 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

None.

**12954 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

- Staff Plan

**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.

**12955 STAFF PLAN**

Members received a proposed 5-year staffing structure to support the changing needs of the council.

The suggested staffing structure and its implementation was discussed at length, with some aspects of the structure supported, with concerns expressed regarding some aspects of the process required to enable implementation of the proposed staffing structure.

Some members advocated for separate discussions on specific items highlighted within the report.

Members voted on the recommendation contained within the report:

Members in favour: 2

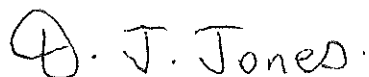
Members against: 3

Abstentions: 2

Accordingly, the recommendation contained within the report was not carried.

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.31pm**

**Dated this 9<sup>th</sup> day of September 2024**



**Chairman**

**HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Planning Committee**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on**  
**13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors: C Slough Chairman  
E Cooper  
D Jones  
D Taylor

Officers: Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services  
Amanda Samuels Administration Officer

Public: 2

Apologies: Councillors: E Billington  
J Carroll  
M Herber

Also present: Councillor: S Goodchild (virtual)

**12815 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Councillors E Billington, J Carroll and M Herber.

**12816 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

A local resident informed Members of an issue regarding a shed on a neighbouring site, which was too tall and encroached on their property. The shed had been built without planning permission, which had been sought retrospectively. Permission had been refused and had been referred to Enforcement. The enforcement process had been halted when the shed owner agreed to reduce the height; however, this reduction had not been carried out. The resident contacted the enforcement officer who advised that the process would recommence and papers were expected to be served by the end of January 2024. The resident contacted the officer again in February when there had still been no further action or communication. They were informed that the process took time, but it remained unclear how far this case had progressed.

Given that a significant amount of time had elapsed without further updates, Members advised the resident to contact the enforcement officer once again to establish the current situation.

**12817 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**12818 MINUTES**

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024.

**Resolved** To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

## 12819 PLANNING MATTERS

**(a) The following planning applications were considered:**

[CB/24/00531/FULL](#) [\(click for more details\)](#) Single storey side and rear extension. Change of use of amenity land to private residential garden land and reinstatement of a 1.829m high fence line. 11A Ashwell Walk, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5QA Mr & Mrs Carter

**Comments:** Members discussed the issues raised during the consultation process regarding parking, loss of public visibility, habitat connectivity and biodiversity

Houghton Regis Town Council raised an objection to this application on the following grounds:

- Did not meet current parking standards
- Encroachment on amenity land
- The removal of trees from amenity land
- Reduction in visibility to road users

[CB/24/01005/FULL](#) [\(click for more details\)](#) Single storey rear extension changes to fenestrations 19 Leafields, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5LT Ms Valerie Robertson

**Comments:** Members were informed that a previous application for additions to this property had also been in breach of planning guidance, but had been granted in view of the residents' needs and circumstances. It was felt that the current application, for a ground floor bedroom at the rear, should be viewed in the same light.

Members noted the comments of the Highways officer in relation to access and the current parking standards, to a breach of which the proposed development would lead. It was suggested that it might be advisable to have a dropped kerb along the width of the property, which would facilitate access to the wholly-hardstanding frontage with sufficient space to comply with the parking standards.

Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objections to this application.

[CB/24/00937/FULL](#) [\(click for more details\)](#) Front extension, part single/part two storey side and rear extensions. 8 East Hill Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5EQ Mr Sean Trainor

**Comments:** Members commented that this application had previously been refused on grounds of bulk, size and unsympathetic design. Members noted that there appeared to be no significant change in the size or design and no documentation to clarify changes.

**It was highlighted that Houghton Regis Town Council had raised no objections previously.**

**Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objections to this application.**

[CB/24/00940/FULL](#)  
(click for more details)

Erection of a 2.1m high x 36.9m long close-boarded fence along part of the southern boundary (retrospective)  
Dalziel, Chalk Hill, Dunstable, LU6 1RS  
Mr P Hannington

**Comments:** Members felt this application would not have been supported if the process had been properly observed. There was a perception that the planning officer was reluctant to remove the structure; however, Members felt this would set an unwanted precedent.

**Houghton Regis Town Council raised an objection to this application on the grounds of:**

- The structure was unsightly and oversized
- Severely impacted the openness of a green belt site.

[CB/24/00980/FULL](#)  
(click for more details)

Change of Use of existing grass verge and pedestrian footpath to allow for dropped kerb and vehicle crossover  
56 Enfield Close, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PL  
Mr Ferenc Kovacs

**Comments:** It was noted that there was a significant distance between the dropped kerb and the property. The tract would be hard core and tarmac and Members were requested to comment on this. Members highlighted that other properties in the area already had similar configurations in place.

**Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objections to this application.**

[CB/24/00968/FULL](#)  
(click for more details)

Laying of surface water drainage pipes and landscaping (to facilitate water attenuation system and outfall of the neighbouring site relating to approval of CB/22/04525/VOC)  
Land adjacent to Centurion Way Houghton Regis  
Lagan Homes

*MLL*



**Comments:** This application is made by the developer of the Bury Spinney site to run its surface water drainage off into the existing water attenuation system of its neighbouring site. As such, Members felt that this was a technical application on which they did not possess sufficient expertise to comment.

**Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objections to this application.**

**Noted:**

[CB/24/01148/DOC](#)  
[\(click for more details\)](#)

Discharge of Condition 28 against planning permission ref. CB/18/04471/FULL (48 new residential units)  
Land at Oakwell Park, Thorn Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JH

[CB/24/01204/DOC](#)  
[\(click for more details\)](#)

Discharge of Condition 26 against planning permission ref. CB/21/05575/REG3 (Development of a new leisure centre, incorporating landscaping and parking provisions. Demolition of the existing building and the construction of a new facility to include an eight-lane 25 metre community swimming pool, dedicated learner pool, confidence pool, fitness suite, exercise studio and two squash courts. Building to include a café, community space, creche, children's outdoor play zone and an outdoor fitness trail and public area)  
Houghton Regis Leisure Centre, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PX

[CB/24/01291/NMA](#)  
[\(click for more details\)](#)

Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/21/05552/RM (Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/12/03613/OUT Mixed Development, supported by an Environmental Statement, which was submitted to the council during the application's determination process. Reserved Matters sought for Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale for 100 homes and retail units (Use Class E) Amendment sought are various, refer to NMA comparison document V3.  
Parcels 1 and 2 of Phase 2 of Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

[CB/24/01242/DOC](#)  
[\(click for more details\)](#)

Discharge of Condition 7 against planning permission ref. CB/22/04024/LB (Listed Building: Conversion of a listed barn into detached dwelling including removal of dilapidated single-storey side addition)  
Red Cow Farm Cottage, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JP

*MCO*

- [CB/24/01052/DOC](#)  
([click for more details](#)) Discharge of Condition 2 against planning permission ref. CB/22/03938/FULL (Demolition of existing barn and garage, provision of a garage to the existing Listed building, conversion of Listed barn into a dwelling and construction of eight new dwellings with associated garages and new access road.) Cond 2 Materials.  
Red Cow Farm Cottage, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JP
- [CB/24/01079/DOC](#)  
([click for more details](#)) Discharge of Condition 4 against planning permission ref. CB/23/03093/FULL (Change of use from Class E(a) (retail) to Class B8 (self-storage), external alterations and associated works to car park and landscaping). Cond 4 Landscaping.  
Former Site of Morrisons, High Street, Houghton Regis
- [CB/24/01153/NMA](#)  
([click for more details](#)) Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/21/05575/REG3 (Development of a new leisure centre, incorporating landscaping and parking provisions. Demolition of the existing building and the construction of a new facility to include an eight-lane 25 metre community swimming pool, dedicated learner pool, confidence pool, fitness suite, exercise studio and two squash courts. Building to include a café, community space, creche, children's outdoor play zone and an outdoor fitness trail and public area.) amendment sought: 1. Amendments to the residential housing planted boundary. 2. Removal of trees from the Plaza raised planters. 3. Change of colour to the signage panels along the East elevation as noted on the DB3 drawing 20201. 4. Additional single door added to allow egress from the spectator seating area grid line J / 10 to 11.  
Houghton Regis Leisure Centre, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PX

### ***Permissions / Approvals / Consents***

#### ***Refusals:***

- [CB/23/04122/FULL](#)  
([click for more details](#)) Demolition of commercial building and erection of 4 dwellings with associated landscaping and boundary works
- [CB/23/04108/FULL](#)  
([click for more details](#)) Conversion of threshing barn to form three office units with associated external alterations, part demolition, extension, external alteration and conversion of stable to provide a single dwelling, demolition of existing commercial unit and erection of 6 dwelling houses including associated parking, landscaping and boundary treatments

MLL

**Comments:** Members highlighted that the refusal for this application and for CB/23/04122/FULL meant there remained one outstanding application for the proposed development. This was for the conversion of an abandoned stable block into a bungalow.

***Withdrawals:***

[CB/24/00782/RM](#) (click for more details) Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/21/00280/OUT (Erection of 4 chalet style bungalows). Approval sought for Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale, and the discharge of conditions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

**12820 STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING**

At the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> February, Members were provided with a notification of application for street naming and it was requested that the Town Council propose a street name for the below development:

8 new dwellings and 1 Barn conversion – 9 new addresses:  
Red Cow Farm Cottage, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, LU5 6JP

The developers had declined the proposed new names put forward by the Committee and had responded with the following suggestions:

- Belleview Drive

This suggestion did not find favour with the Members of the Committee. Further suggestions were put forward, as follows:" and add the list.

Members considered the position and debated these suggestions, concluding eventually that the name Buttermilk Close was the most preferable option and that this name should be proposed to Central Bedfordshire Council.

**Resolved:** To propose the name Buttermilk Close to the developers.

**12821 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.

MLC

**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**

**12822 CB/24/01002/TDM HOUGHTON PARK CAR PARK, PARKSIDE DRIVE, HOUGHTON REGIS**

Members had previously raised concerns regarding the above application and were unaware of any consultation having taken place. This was felt to be remiss of Central Bedfordshire Council as the land was leased by Houghton Regis Town Council from Central Bedfordshire Council.

An opportunity to put forward comments on this application had been requested and agreed.

The Location was confirmed as adjacent to the gate of the council carpark. It was noted that it was proposed to move the location of the mast 2m south-east to avoid and protect an ash tree.

It was questioned whether it would be preferable to move the mast to another site rather than the proposed two metres. Members agreed that if the reason for the move was to protect a tree, and there were no houses in the immediate vicinity, there appeared to be no reason to object.

**Resolved: To submit comments on the above application to Central Bedfordshire Council.**

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.57pm**

**Dated this 24<sup>th</sup> day of June 2024**

**Chairman**



**HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**

**Planning Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held on  
Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors: M Herber Chair  
J Carroll  
E Cooper  
D Jones  
C Slough  
D Taylor

Officers: Debbie Marsh Head of Corporate Services  
Amanda Samuels Administration Officer

Apologies: Councillors: E Billington

Also present: S Goodchild (virtual)  
T McMahan (virtual)

**12840 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Councillor Billington.

**12841 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

**12842 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**12843 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

Members were invited to elect a Vice Chair for Planning Committee for 2024/2025.

Nominee: Cllr Jones Proposed by: Cllr C Slough  
Seconded by: Cllr E Cooper

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote, Cllr Jones became the Vice-Chair of Planning for the municipal year of 2024/2025.

**12844 MINUTES**

It was stated that the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 required several amendments. It was, therefore, agreed to defer approval of the Minutes until the meeting scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> June 2024 in order that the necessary changes could be made.

**Resolved:** To amend the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 and to defer approval until the meeting on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

## 12845 PLANNING MATTERS

**(a) The following planning applications were considered:**

[CB/24/01322/FULL](#)  
(click for more details)

Change of use of a C3(a) dwellinghouse to a C2 children's home, for a maximum of two children.  
129 Bromley Gardens, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5RJ  
Mr Fredrick Akandi

**Comments: Members raised no objections to this application.**

**Noted:**

[CB/24/01299/NMA](#)  
(click for more details)

Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/19/04182/FULL (Erection of a new dwelling) - An amendment to install velux windows to roof of property Land Adjacent, 134 High Street, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5DT  
Mr Thomas Canter

**Comments: The application had already been refused and the Planning Officer had stated that a full application needed to be submitted.**

[CB/24/01301/NMA](#)  
(click for more details)

Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/23/01706/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);) Reserved matters for Parcel 1 and 2 - AMP3 for 236 dwellings, access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.) amendment sought to condition 18  
Parcels 1 & 2 Houghton Regis North 1, Sundon Park, Houghton Regis, LU5 5GX  
Stonebond Properties Ltd

[CB/24/01350/DOC](#)  
(click for more details)

Discharge of Condition 18 against planning permission ref. CB/22/04525/VOC (Removal of condition 10 and Variation of conditions 13,15 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

***Permissions / Approvals / Consents***

***Refusals:***

None received.

***Withdrawals:***

None received.

**12846    CB/23/03551/RM - BURY SPINNEY, THORN ROAD**

Members were advised that a response had been received regarding the Town Council's concerns regarding the proximity to water.

Members were presented with the response, which stated:

*I write in respect to the TC's objection to the above application.*

*Please be advised that a RoSPA risk assessment has been submitted for the application which has confirmed a low risk associated with the design and location of the LEAP/LAP. This has been confirmed by the Play Sites Officer and the Leisure Policy Officer*

**12847    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**

*MLL*

**12848 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Members were advised that minor modifications to the Neighbourhood Plan were required. Members were provided with a list of the modifications for approval and advised that these did not materially affect any policies.

The list of modifications were as follows:

- Page 39 top box Aspiration, there was a line missing at bottom, 3rd bullet point. This simply required the text box to be slightly expanded.
- Page 40 box was slightly too high so that the last line of the preceding paragraph was below it. Now moved down to fit.
- Page 47 at bottom of list stated, "the numbering in main document will need to be changed to conform to the new map." This was a note to the editor that should have been removed, and now has been. The renumbering in the main text had been done.
- Page 68 map is incorrectly numbered, changed "Map 6" to "Map 7" please also see below:
- Page 2 Section 15 is incorrectly showing "Map 6" changed to "Map 7".

Since there were no substantive amendments, approval of the modifications could be given by the Planning Committee, and these would be highlighted at the next Town Council meeting.

**Resolved:** To approve the list of modifications to Houghton Regis Town Councils Neighbourhood Plan as detailed and to submit this list, along with supporting resolution, to Central Bedfordshire Council in order that the Neighbourhood Plan can be updated.

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.15pm**

**Dated this 24<sup>th</sup> day of June 2024**

**Chairman**







[CB/24/01175/FULL](#)  
(click for more  
details)

Change of use from 16-bedroom C2 care home to F1 school (ground floor) and C2 residential institution (floors above ground floor).

Hillside, Chalk Hill, Dunstable, LU6 1RT

Bal Kandra

**Comments: Members noted that the BNG Exemption did not apply. It was questioned if the school would be for children outside of the area and, if so, would there be associated traffic problems?**

**Members felt that further information was required on this application.**

[CB/24/01505/RM](#)  
(click for more  
details)

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.). Reserved matters for access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for 189 dwellings at Parcel 5 pursuant to outline permission CB/12/03613/OUT and details to satisfy conditions: 8 (Surface Water Drainage), 25 (Construction Management Plan), 26 (Landscape Management Plan), 29 (Foul Drainage), 32 (Noise) and 33 (Noise)'.  
Parcel 5, Houghton Regis North 1, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis, LU5 5GX  
Dandara NHC

**Comments: Members noted that there were numerous technical issues which would need to be resolved by the Planning Office. Other areas that needed clarification were: accessibility, broadband, street lighting and Highways amendments.**

**Members requested that this application was referred back to CBC Planning and represented to HRTC once the outstanding issues had been addressed.**

[CB/24/01229/FULL](#)  
(click for more  
details)

Removal of existing fence and gates. Erection of a new fence and gates and alteration to fence location.

BPCC Meeting Hall, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, LU5 6JR  
Mr Brian Moffitt

*mlp*

**Comments:** An email from a neighbouring resident objecting to the application was read to Members. It highlighted that the current fence was in good repair, was suitable for purpose and was aesthetically in keeping with the surroundings. The Tree and Landscape Officer had objected to the fence being brought forward since it would encroach on a protected copper beech tree. The Ecologist had raised objections to the fence in order to safeguard established trees and hedgerows. The proposed works could cause damage to established root systems and affect biodiversity.

**Houghton Regis Town Council raised an objection to this application on the grounds of threat to protected and established trees and hedgerows.**

[CB/24/01548/REG3](#)  
(click for more details)

Erection of external fencing and enclosure. Alterations and extension to hardsurfacing and soft landscaping; and provision of external lighting.  
Chiltern UTC, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, LU5 5PX  
Ashe Group

**Members noted there was no change of use as the application would still be for an educational establishment. Fencing was needed for security purposes, and it was agreed that improvements to lighting were also needed**

**Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objections to this application.**

[CB/24/01622/FULL](#)  
(click for more details)

Single storey side and rear extension.  
11A Ashwell Walk, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5QA  
Mr & Mrs Carter

**The proposed extension would involve tree removal and was of a scale to create limited access or 'pinch points'. It was thought that this would result in a future application for the enclosure of amenity land.**

**Houghton Regis Town Council objected to this application on the grounds of overdevelopment.**

**Noted:**

M10

[CB/24/01563/DOC](#)  
[\(click for more details\)](#)

Discharge of Condition 1 against planning permission ref. CB/23/01706/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);) Reserved matters for Parcel 1 and 2 - AMP3 for 236 dwellings, access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale)  
Parcels 1 & 2, Houghton Regis North 1, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis. LU5 5GX

[CB/24/01530/DOC](#)  
[\(click for more details\)](#)

Discharge of Condition 35 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.)  
Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

[CB/24/01525/DOC](#)  
[\(click for more details\)](#)

Discharge of Condition 24 against planning permission ref. 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)  
Houghton Regis North Site 1, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis

MB

[CB/24/01646/DOC](#)  
(click for more details)

Discharge of Condition 1 against planning permission ref. CB/21/05552/RM (Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/12/03613/OUT Mixed Development, supported by an Environmental Statement, which was submitted to the council during the application's determination process. Reserved Matters sought for Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale for 100 homes and retail units (Use Class E)) Parcels 1 and 2 of Phase 2 of Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

[CB/24/01722/DOC](#)  
(click for more details)

Discharge of Conditions 2 and 9 against planning permission ref. CB/23/01706/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)) Reserved matters for Parcel 1 and 2 - AMP3 for 236 dwellings, access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) Houghton Regis North 1, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis

[CB/24/01626/LDCP](#)  
(click for more details)

Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Garage conversion 33 Manor Park, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5BU

[CB/24/01775/RG46](#)  
(click for more details)

Regulation 46 - Location Risk Assessment Elstree Home Care Ltd, The Dunstable House, 129 Bromley Gardens, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5RJ

***Permissions / Approvals / Consents***

None received.

***Refusals:***

None received.

***Withdrawals:***

None received.

**12893 CBC LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN**

Members were presented with a report on the Central Bedfordshire Council local transport plan.

The LTP outlined the Council's transport policies and guides long-term project decisions. Feedback to CBC was required by June end 2024 and Members were asked for the issues they would like to raise. Members suggested the following points should be included:

- bus services needed improvement to reduce effects on environment
- safer cycling and walkways required
- integration of amenities
- link road not currently being used
- impact of Linnere and Bidwell West on communities, especially in relation to increased and fast traffic
- Bedford Road in a state of disrepair.

#### **12894 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITES/LOCAL PLAN– UPDATE/PROGRESS**

**Woodside Link** – No substantive update to report.

**A5 M1 Link** – For information this major road project opened on the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

**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 7.45pm**

**Dated this 15<sup>th</sup> day of July 2024**

**Chairman**



**HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL****Planning Committee****Minutes of the meeting held on  
Monday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors: M Herber Chairman  
 J Carroll  
 E Cooper  
 D Jones  
 C Slough  
 D Taylor

Officers: Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services  
 Amanda Samuels Administration Officer

Public: 1 (virtual)

Apologies: Councillors: E Billington

Also present: T McMahan (virtual)

**12895 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Cllr Billington.

**12896 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

**12897 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**12898 MINUTES**

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

**Resolved:** To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2024  
 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

**12899 PLANNING MATTERS**

**(a) The following planning applications were considered:**

[CB/24/01693/FULL](#)  
[\(click for more details\)](#) Erection of 4 chalet style bungalows on land to the north of Highfield House  
Highfield House, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JP  
Mr Denis Carroll

**Comments: Members discussed the following issues regarding this application:**

- the application did not qualify as self- or custom-build housing
- failed to comply with Local Plan Policy H2, Housing Standards
- protection of Chiltern beechwoods
- the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was out of date
- there was a public right of way issue
- there were access issues relating to the site

**Houghton Regis Town Council objected to this application on the grounds that:**

- the proposed access road was single track and unsuitable for purpose
- failure to meet H2 Housing standards
- the third bedroom was excessively large

[CB/23/04003/FULL](#)  
[\(click for more details\)](#) Erection of single storey front & rear extensions and extension of vehicle crossover.  
1 Grasmere Walk, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5NH  
Mr Marius Timus

**Comments: Members noted that Highways required clarification on one of the consultation documents, and that the dropped kerb did not relate to the property. The aggregate pathway needed to be resurfaced to comply with regulations.**

**Houghton Regis Town Council agreed that the application needed to be returned but was likely to be approved once these issues had been addressed.**

[CB/24/01672/ADV](#)  
[\(click for more details\)](#) Advertisement: Display of six non-illuminated poster frames  
Unit 2, All Saints View, High Street, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5LQ  
D Kemp

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

[CB/24/01438/FULL](#)  
[\(click for more details\)](#) Dropped kerb  
139 Sundon Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5NL  
Mrs Janosne Horvath



**Comments: Members noted the following issues:**

- the Tree and Landscape Officer had reported that special construction methods would be required in order to preserve the tree on site.
- the ecologist report had requested further information as a BNG was required on the application or reasons for exemption provided.
- Highways had objected to the application as it didn't meet current width standards for a dropped kerb

**Houghton Regis Town Council objected to this application due to its failure to meet Highways standards.**

[CB/24/01770/FULL](#)  
(click for more details)

Erection of a detached house, associated parking and amenity space.  
Land at Midway Cottage and The Cottage, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JP  
R O'Neil

**Comments: Members noted that a Contamination Assessment was required and an Agricultural Impact Assessment.**

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

- failure to meet parking standards.
- Potential damage to trees close to the site.

**Noted:**

[CB/24/01422/PABF](#)  
(click for more details)

Prior Approval for the construction of 1 additional storey on existing block of detached flats to create additional dwellings, along with associated works and operations: To provide three additional 1 bedroom, 2 person self-contained residential units. 17-25 The Quadrant, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5EJ

[CB/24/01865/DOC](#)  
(click for more details)

Discharge of Conditions 4,5,9 and 34 against planning permission ref. CB/22/03938/FULL (demolition of existing barn and garage, provision of a garage to the existing Listed building, conversion of Listed barn into a dwelling and construction of eight new dwellings with associated garages and new access road).  
Red Cow Farm Cottage, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JP

***Permissions / Approvals / Consents***

None received.

**Refusals:**

<a href="#"><u>CB/23/00166/FULL</u></a> (click for more details)	Erection of a side and rear extension to industrial building. Unit 3, Arianne Business Centre, Blackburn Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5DZ
<a href="#"><u>CB/24/00940/FULL</u></a> (click for more details)	Erection of a 2.1m high x 36.9m long close-boarded fence along part of the southern boundary (retrospective) Dalziel, Chalk Hill, Dunstable, LU6 1RS

Members are advised that an appeal process has been started.

**Withdrawals:**

<a href="#"><u>CB/24/00259/FULL</u></a> (click for more details)	Erection of cast iron period compliant front entrance gate with railings (retrospective) 23 Sundon Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5LL
<a href="#"><u>CB/24/00344/FULL</u></a> (click for more details)	Erection of an end of terrace two storey new dwelling, attached to host dwelling. Demolition of a lean to and a brick garage for access and associated works. 72 Cemetery Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5DE
<a href="#"><u>CB/24/00531/FULL</u></a> (click for more details)	Single storey side and rear extension. Change of use of amenity land to private residential garden land and reinstatement of a 1.829m high fence line. 11A Ashwell Walk, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5QA

**12900 CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE NO WAITING TIME IN TITHE FARM ROAD AND CHURCHFIELD ROAD, HOUGHTON REGIS**

Members were presented with the public notice proposing the introduction of no waiting in Tithe Farm Road and Churchfield Road.

Comments were to be submitted by 24<sup>th</sup> July 2024 and Members were requested to provide their response.

Members concurred that the traffic conditions in the area were hazardous and necessitated a solution. However, there was ambiguity regarding how the proposed plans would mitigate the existing traffic issues. It was deemed essential to address the following concerns and provide clarification:

- What is the anticipated effectiveness of the proposed measures in resolving the traffic problem?
- Considering traffic may be redirected, what provisions are in place for managing displaced vehicles?

- Would this simply transfer the danger to another location?
- The success of the measures is contingent upon the enforcement of the proposed restrictions. Is there a guarantee of enforcement?

Comments included in the report would be made at a future meeting on traffic management and it was suggested that it might be advisable for a member of the committee to attend.

It was agreed that the Head of Democratic Services would collate these comments and share with Members prior to submission.

**Recommendation:**     **To consider the Town Council’s response to the proposed introduction of no waiting time in Tithe Farm Road and Churchfield Road.**

**12901 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 7.34pm**

**Dated this 5<sup>th</sup> day of August 2024**

**Chairman**



**HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**

**Planning Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held on**

**5<sup>th</sup> August 2024 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors: M Herber Chairman  
 J Carroll  
 E Cooper  
 D Jones  
 C Slough

Officers: Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services  
 Amanda Samuels Administration Officer

Public: 2

Apologies: Councillors: E Billington  
 D Taylor

Also present: S Goodchild (virtual)

**12938 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Cllr Billington and Cllr Taylor.

**12939 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

**12940 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**12941 MINUTES**

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

**Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> July and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

**12942 PLANNING MATTERS**

**(a) The following planning applications were considered:**

[CB/24/01771/FULL](#)  
 (click for more details)

Single storey rear extension and enlargement of rear dormer.  
 29 Dunstable Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5DB  
 Mrs M Federico

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

[CB/24/00801/FULL](#)  
(click for more details)

Erection of a Class B8 (self-storage) building on southern boundary and associated works to car park and landscaping. Former Site of Morrisons, High Street, Houghton Regis Cinch Self-storage

**Comments: Members noted that consultation documents raised the following issues:**

- the red line boundary on the site plan appeared to conflict with that shown on the illustrative landscape plan.
- An archaeological evaluation was recommended.
- The necessity of protecting trees and shrubs in the surrounding area.

**This application had previously been objected to due to overdevelopment and the impact of noise on local properties.**

**Members agreed that the proposed building would encroach into a residential area. It was suggested that residents would be afforded some protection if the building line was reduced to match that of the industrial units behind it.**

**Houghton Regis Town Council raised an objection to this application on the grounds of:**

- **Overdevelopment**
- **Potential for residents to experience significant overnight noise pollution from a 24/7 operation**
- **Failure to comply with the neighbourhood plan**

[CB/24/02041/FULL](#)  
(click for more details)

Two front dormers  
25 Leafields, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5LT  
Mr & Mrs Hold

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

[CB/24/01623/FULL](#)  
(click for more details)

Change of use of amenity land to garden land and creation of a new boundary line with a new 2m fence  
29 Constable Close, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5ST  
Mr Iulian Abuzatoaiei

**Comments: Members noted this this application had previously been objected to (Minute number 12558). Although the original plans had been amended to enclose a smaller area, Members highlighted that proposal to enclose amenity land still stood.**



**Houghton Regis Town Council raised an objection to this application on the grounds of:**

- **Enclosure of amenity land**
- **A significantly detrimental effect on the outlook would be experienced by neighbours**
- **Obstructed view for drivers and pedestrians.**

**Noted:**

CB/24/02036/DOC  
(click for more details)

Discharge of Condition 24 against planning permission ref. 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)  
Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis  
Brickhill Homes (Linmere) Ltd

CB/24/02096/NMA  
(click for more details)

Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/23/01706/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);) Reserved matters for Parcel 1 and 2 - AMP3 for 236 dwellings, access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.) Amendment sought to approved plans via conditions 3 and 8.  
Parcels 1 & 2, Houghton Regis North 1, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis  
Stonebond Properties (St Albans) Limited

CB/24/02071/DOC  
(click for more details)

Discharge of Condition 8 against planning permission ref. 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)

Local Centre Parcel, Phase 1, Linnere, Waterslade Way and Lime Tree Drive, Houghton Regis, LU5 7AS

[CB/24/02120/NMA](#)  
[\(click for more details\)](#)

Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/12/03613/OUT (Mixed Development, supported by an Environmental Statement, which was submitted to the council during the application's determination process. Reserved Matters sought for Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale for 100 homes and retail units (Use Class E)) Amendment sought: External doors for refuse and cycle store amended to include louvres  
Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the Northern Edge of Houghton Regis

***Permissions / Approvals / Consents***

[CB/24/01622/FULL](#)  
[\(click for more details\)](#)

Single storey side and rear extension.  
11A Ashwell Walk, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5QA

***Refusals:***

None received.

***Withdrawals:***

None received.

**12943 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN – PLANNING COMMITTEE**

At the Town Council meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023, Members approved the HRTC Corporate Strategy for 2024-2028 (minute number 12645). At the March meeting of the Town Council, Members approved allocating the objectives to standing committees to enable more detailed consideration and progression. The plan included 4 Pillars under which were a number of objectives, along with some suggestions as to how these objectives may be achieved.

In order to progress the plan, Members were reminded of the objectives that fell under the Planning Committee. Members were asked to take these into consideration when planning applications were discussed.

**Resolved:** **To note the information.**

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**12944 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.

**Linmere** – 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 7.17pm**

**Dated this 27<sup>th</sup> day of August 2024**

**Chairman**

*Neil Barber*



**HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL****Planning Committee****Minutes of the meeting held on****27<sup>th</sup> August 2024 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors: M Herber Chairman  
 E Billington  
 J Carroll  
 E Cooper  
 D Jones

Officers: Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 2

Apologies: Councillors: C Slough  
 D Taylor

Also present: CBC Councillor: S Goodchild (virtual)

**12945 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Cllr Slough and Cllr Taylor.

**12946 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

**12947 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**12948 MINUTES**

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024

**Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

**12949 PLANNING MATTERS**

**(a) The following planning applications were considered:**

[CB/24/02084/FULL](#) [\(click for more details\)](#) Erection of single storey rear conservatory and conversion of loft space with new windows and rooflights to the front, side and rear.  
 34 Aylesbury Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6FX  
 Mr Jan Wurszt

**Comments: Members noted that, while the application did not specify this was a retrospective application, the project had already been completed.**

**Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.**

[CB/24/02057/FULL](#)  
[\(click for more details\)](#)

Two storey side extension and part single and part two storey rear extension.  
18 Olma Road, Dunstable, LU5 5AF  
Mr Korab Lala

**Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.**

[CB/24/02290/OUT](#)  
[\(click for more details\)](#)

Outline Application: Permission for the construction of an end of terrace dwelling with reserved matters for access, landscaping and layout.  
9 Woodlands Avenue, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5LJ  
Mr Charles Simao

**Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.**

While the majority of councillors voted not to object to this application, Cllr Carroll requested that his objections be formally recorded within the minutes of the meeting.

His concerns were as follows:

- o The site is located within a conservation area.
- o The limited space at the front of the property, particularly concerning the turning circle.
- o The need for satisfactory resolution of parking issues.

**Noted:**

[CB/24/02148/DOC](#)  
[\(click for more details\)](#)

Discharge of Condition 14 against planning permission CB/22/03938/FULL (Demolition of existing barn and garage, provision of a garage to the existing listed building, conversion of listed barn into a dwelling and construction of eight new dwellings with associated garages and new access road.)  
Red Cow Farm House, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JP

[CB/24/02346/GPDE](#)  
[\(click for more details\)](#)

Prior Notification of Householder Extension: Single storey rear extension, 5.4m beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling, maximum height of 3.25m & 2.8m to the eaves  
12 Drury Lane, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5E

[CB/24/02209/DOC](#)  
(click for more details)

Discharge of Conditions 7 and 27 against planning permission ref. CB/21/05575/REG3 (Development of a new leisure centre, incorporating landscaping and parking provisions. Demolition of the existing building and the construction of a new facility to include an eight-lane 25 meter community swimming pool, dedicated learner pool, confidence pool, fitness suite, exercise studio and two squash courts. Building to include a café, community space, creche, children's outdoor play zone and an outdoor fitness trail and public area.) SUDs drainage installed as per the attached information. Sustainable transport plan to be managed in accordance with the attached report.  
Houghton Regis Leisure Centre, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PX

[CB/24/02345/DOC](#)  
(click for more details)

Discharge of Conditions 13, 18 and 19 against planning permission CB/21/02467/VOC (Variation of condition 17 of planning permission CB/20/03300/REG3 (Erection of a three storey secondary school and sports hall providing 6 forms of entry (900) pupils, together with a 220 pupil sixth form, sports pitches including an all-weather pitch, Change condition from an Above Ground Level condition to a Pre-Occupation Condition) Kingsland Secondary School, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5TH

### ***Permissions / Approvals / Consents***

[CB/24/01229/FULL](#)  
(click for more details)

Removal of existing fence and gates. Erection of a new fence and gates and alteration to fence location.  
BPCC Meeting Hall, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, LU5 6JR

[CB/23/04003/FULL](#)  
(click for more details)

Erection of single storey front & rear extensions and extension of vehicle crossover.  
1 Grasmere Walk, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5NH

### ***Refusals:***

[CB/24/01693/FULL](#)  
(click for more details)

Erection of 4 chalet style bungalows on land to the north of Highfield House  
Highfield House, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JP

Members highlighted that the original outline permission had now lapsed. There had also been a proposal for 22 homes in the area, which had also lapsed, and it was this application on which Houghton Regis had based their comments about access. If this application came forward again, the access problem would continue to be an issue.

[CB/24/01438/FULL](#)  
(click for more details)

Dropped kerb  
139 Sundon Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5NL

**Withdrawals:**

None received.

**12950 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 7.15pm**

**Dated this 16th day of September 2024**

**Chairman**



**HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Community Services Committee**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on**  
**8<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors: Y Farrell Chairman  
P Burgess  
J Carroll  
T McMahon  
C Rollins  
A Slough  
C Slough (Substitute)

Officers: Ian Haynes Head of Environmental &  
Amanda Samuels Community Services  
Administration Officer

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillors: E Billington

**12770 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Cllr Billington (Cllr C Slough substituted).

**12771 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

**12772 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

None.

**12773 MINUTES**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024

**Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Community Services Committee meetings held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

**12774 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING WORKING GROUPS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN**

Events Working Group 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024

Combatting Crime Working Group 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023, 17<sup>th</sup> January and 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024

**Resolved: To receive and approve the minutes detailed above.**

**12775 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUB COMMITTEE**

Following deliberations at the Town Council meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March (Minute 12756), Members were requested to provide preliminary feedback on the creation of a new Community Engagement Sub Committee. The proposed subcommittee would monitor and review the Council's events and community activities. Members were provided with a draft Terms of Reference for discussion prior to going before the Town Council.

Members were informed that the subcommittee would replace the Events Working Group and would be more encompassing by covering town-wide events rather than those solely led by Houghton Regis Town Council.

*The Community Services Manager joined the meeting via Teams to update Members on the boat trip which was in progress.*

The subcommittee would not encompass the youth work element and would be clerked by the Civic and Events Manager, with the involvement of the Community Services Manager, as required, but not every meeting. It was proposed that meetings would take place every 2-3 months and would be in person. Members would steer officers on what they hoped to achieve, while officers would retain responsibility for the operational aspects.

It was highlighted that it would be possible to co-opt members and it would be possible for these to join for one specific event; however, co-opted members would not have voting rights. The subcommittee would have the ability to create a working group; however, following Members' discussions, it was agreed to remove the ability to create a subcommittee.

Following these discussions it was agreed that the Terms of Reference would be amended slightly before presentation to the Town Council.

**12776 THE MILLION HOURS FUND UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICATION**

Members were informed that the application to the Million Hours Fund had been unsuccessful. Feedback had been requested regarding this decision but had not been forthcoming; however, applications had exceeded expectations which had resulted in a high number of unsuccessful applications. Members were advised that this decision would have no impact on the budget as the funds had been purely aspirational.

**12777 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN**

Members were reminded that at the March meeting of Town Council, the allocation of objectives to standing committees was approved (Minute 12755). Members were asked to consider prioritising a number of objectives for future consideration/delivery in the next four years. Any suggestions would form part of a live document that would be updated as these objectives were achieved, or new ones created.

Suggestions for immediate attention were:

- The pack for new arrivals to Houghton Regis should contain a document mapping places of town assets and available facilities.

- To improve the appearance of Bedford Square and make approaches to the landlord and Central Bedfordshire Council to this effect.
- For Houghton Regis to apply immediately for its own market licence. Markets could then be held in time for Christmas and be integrated with other planned events.

**Resolved: Approve the Community Services workplan and select a number of objectives for consideration/delivery in the next twelve months.**

## **12778 HOUGHTON REGIS SPORTS HALL**

At the March meeting of the Town Council, it was highlighted to Members that there was concern regarding the lack of indoor sports hall access in Houghton Regis (Minute 12749).

Members reiterated concerns that the proposed relocation to Houghton School would be detrimental to residents using the current facilities. Available hours for use would be significantly impacted by after school clubs, examinations and other school events. This was in contradiction of CBC's own leisure strategy which promised to provide 'equal or better' replacements.

Members discussed how the Town Council could best support the Houghton Regis Sports Hall users and suggestions included:

- To write to CBC in support of sports hall users
- To meet with the new CBC administration to highlight the local changes since the plans were put forward
- Mobilising local groups to voice their concerns about the proposed changes
- To propose continued use of the current sports hall rather than it remaining empty.

It was suggested that the feasibility of retaining the sports hall required further investigation. There had been a resolution at the Town Council meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> January (Minute 12675) to look at the adoption of community assets and it was suggested that consideration be given to adding the sports hall to this list.

It was agreed that the Head of Environmental and Community Services would carry out further investigation to clarify the situation. They would then report back to the Committee and an appropriate plan of action could be made.

**Resolved: To consider what we, as a Town Council, can do to support the Houghton Regis Sports Hall users.**

## **12779 HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL YOUTH SERVICES**

Members were presented with an update on recent youth and community work provided by Houghton Regis Town Council.

The recent knife-free event received positive feedback.

It was queried whether attendance numbers could be improved at youth facilities. Members were informed they would be presented with a breakdown of funding at the

next Community Services meeting by the Head of Environmental and Community Services. CBC funding for facilities would expire soon, with no guarantee that this would be continued, and the Youth Investment fund would also expire in May 2025. This would present the opportunity for Members to decide the future model for youth services and how they would like this to be funded. Future funding was also raised and whether self-delivery would be an option as opposed to external funding. Members could prioritise growth options in the budget, which would ideally include full-time youth workers, who could visit schools, and, additionally, to provide the team with a permanent site.

Members were informed that all three wards would be holding events in the coming months. All community events would form part of the proposed Community Engagement Sub Committee in the future, while the youth work aspect would remain separate.

The Youth Investment Fund allowed for a residential fund, which had been used for a 3-day sailing trip. The Sailing Trust had also provided a 50% bursary for this event. A camera had been purchased and would be used during the trip to produce a short video. This could then be used to promote the youth work to the Town Council and the Youth Investment Fund

## **12780 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT**

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

Grand income was slightly behind budget; however, the expenditure had balanced as expected. The year end would be in May, which provided time to produce a final version of the report.

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.34pm**

**Dated this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of July 2024**

**Chairman**



**HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Environment & Leisure Committee**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on**  
**29<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillors: A Slough Chairman  
P Burgess  
J Carroll  
E Cooper  
E Costello  
Y Farrell  
W Henderson  
T McMahon

Officers: Ian Haynes Head of Environmental &  
Community Services  
Amanda Samuels Administration Officer

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillors: 0

**12796 APOLOGIES**

None.

**12797 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

**12798 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**12799 MINUTES**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

**Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Environment & Leisure Committee meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

**12800 TITHE FARM RECREATION GROUND SPORTS PROJECT UPDATE**

Members were provided with a verbal update on the Tithe Farm Recreation Ground Sports Project, as follows:

- A date for the transformer to be installed was still awaited from UKPN. The legal contractual date is for the end of June/beginning of July.

- The water is connected.
- A quote had been received from CBC for Section 278 highway works.

With the contractor off-site, there had been more ASB incidents, and the surrounding fence had been scaled. It was suggested that a nearby storage cupboard was providing a foothold and could be moved to deter future incidents.

#### 12801 TERRA CROFT LEISURE GARDENS UPDATE

Members were informed that the waiting list had increased from 176 to 216. At the most recent inspection, Forty-six allotments had been rated 'green', 1 was the plot was vacant, and there had been one recent termination.

It was felt that the rules and regulations of tenancy should be reviewed and shortened. Clarity about what constituted a 'structure' was needed, especially in relation to wind protection.

Members agreed that there was merit in obtaining costings for a composting toilet, and it was suggested that an amendment be made to the resolution to include water butts in the costings.

Proposed by: Cllr Mc Mahon  
Seconded: Cllr Farrell

Members voted unanimously in favour of the amendment.

**Resolved: 1) To Consider reviewing the Tenancy Agreement and Rules and Regulations, ensuring that allotment holders are consulted to ensure that they are fit for purpose.**

**2) To instruct officers to obtain quotes for supplying and installing a suitable composting toilet and water butts for Terra Croft Leisure Gardens.**

#### 12802 GROUNDS MACHINERY RENEWAL

Members were presented with the anticipated machinery renewals programme for 2024/25. During the budget setting, it had been proposed that new equipment could be procured on hire purchase to replace the following items on the schedule:

- Trimax Snake
- Kubota ride on mower x 3
- Kubota flail decks x 2

The proposed new items were a flail mower and a tri-deck roller mower. These replacements' merits were that for the same carbon output, productivity would be significantly increased. Additionally, in some instances, expenditure on parts would be reduced.

**Resolved:** To support the Machinery Renewals Programme for 2024/25 and recommend to Council on the 15th May '24 the planned renewal/replacement funding through a hire purchase scheme. Additional funding is being sought to support additional machinery to enable the grounds team to expand their services into the growth area.

Hire purchase agreement/loan supported by Internal Auditor.

#### 12803 'LETTERS TO HEAVEN' POST BOX

Members were asked to consider a request to install a 'Letters to Heaven' post box in Houghton Regis Cemetery.

Letters posted in the cemetery would be collected regularly and then composted. Members were generally in favour but requested that the resulting compost should be used within the cemetery or the Garden of Remembrance.

**Resolved:** To endorse purchasing and installing a white 'Letters To Heaven' post box within Houghton Regis Cemetery.

#### 12804 CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL BIODIVERSITY INITIATIVES

Central Bedfordshire Council wanted to support more town and parish councils to increase biodiversity and enhance the local environment by managing road verges for the benefit of wildlife.

Members were advised that HRTC could work with Central Bedfordshire Council to:


- Trial no-mow sites as part of Plantlife's No Mow May campaign
- Reduce the frequency of grass cutting in urban areas
- Promote wildflower growth on suitable road verges

Members were requested to suggest sites to be included in the project, for review by Central Bedfordshire Council Officers, and to voice any concerns. Suggested sites were:

- Parkside Drive along its length and the area at Park Road North
- Windsor Drive
- Trident Drive
- The Link

The project was scheduled to commence in the 2025 growing season. It was felt that residents should be advised of the proposed project and asked for feedback.

**Resolved:** To consider and recommend suitable sites to Central Bedfordshire Council.



**12805 ANGLIA IN BLOOM ENTRIES 2024**

Members were provided with a list of 2024 Anglia in Bloom campaign entries. They were informed that Anglia in Bloom plans to visit and conduct face-to-face judging on all main categories, while additional categories will be judged virtually using 8 photographic images of each site.

The 2024 Houghton Regis in Bloom entries will be;

Main Category

- 1) Large Town – Houghton Regis
- 2) Historic Parks and Gardens – Houghton Hall Park

Virtually Judged

- 3) Cemeteries – Houghton Regis Cemetery
- 4) Churchyard – All Saints Church
- 5) Public Park – The Village Green
- 6) Public Park – Parkside Recreation Ground
- 7) Public Park – Linnere Park
- 8) Nursing/Care Home – All Saints View Assisted Living
- 9) Nature Conservation Area/nature Reserve – Windsor Drive
- 10) Nature Conservation Area/nature Reserve – Dog Kennel Down
- 11) Nature Conservation Area/nature Reserve – Houghton Brook and Flood Storage Area

Three hours would be dedicated to showcasing the town, and the proposed route would include All Saints View, the Village Green, the Memorial Hall, Houghton Hall Park, Lime Avenue, and Windsor Drive. Final details need to be established, but Parkside Drive, Thornhill Primary, Linnere Park, Farmstead, and potentially Chiltern School would also form part of the route.

**Resolved: To endorse the eleven 2024 Anglia in Bloom campaign entries.**

**12806 VILLAGE GREEN – CIRCUS AND FAIR VISITS 2024**

Members were advised to consider the amended date for Tom Smith's Fun Fair, which had previously been declined at the February meeting (Minute 12696) due to a clash with the Houghton Rocks event. The amended proposal was as follows:

*Tom Smith's Fun Fair – The Village Green*

Pull on site 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Open 11<sup>th</sup> September till 15<sup>th</sup> September 2024 – 5 days of opening

Pull off-site 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Members voiced concerns about the parking issues arising from these events and enquired how this could best be managed. Members were informed that HRTC had no jurisdiction regarding parking and deferred to Central Bedfordshire Council in these matters. However, there were byelaws applying to the Village Green, and ensuring these were observed could be delegated to the police. It was also agreed that members of the public should be encouraged to use available car parking facilities and to put this request on the website.

**Resolved: To determine the additional fair visit date on The Village Green.**

**12807 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT**

Members were provided with the income and expenditure report highlighting significant variances for the Environment & Leisure Committee date. They were advised that everything would balance as expected if the costs for Tithe Farm—which skewed the figures somewhat—were omitted. A calculation minus the Tithe Farm costs could be produced for Members to demonstrate this.

**12808 CEMETERY FEES 2024/2025 AND REVIEW OF RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Members were advised that the budget for 2024/25 had been set based on fees as of 2023/24.

Members were requested to consider a zero increase in 2024/25 Cemetery Fees; however, due to a number of complaints and concerns about the charges contained within the fees, Members were asked to instruct officers to undertake a review of both the fees and the rules and regulations.

**Resolved: To set Cemetery fees at zero increase under the control of the Environment & Leisure Committee for 2024/2025 and instruct officers to review the fees and the rules and regulations to ensure that they are fit for purpose.**

**12809 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

At the March meeting of the Town Council, Members approved allocating the objectives to standing committees to enable more detailed consideration and progression (Minute 12755).

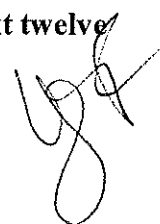
Members were provided with the allocation of objectives for delivery by the Committee. Members were asked to prioritise a number of objectives for consideration/delivery in the next twelve months.

Members suggested the following objectives:

- To improve the signage between key sites/destinations
- To improve integration between existing and new communities
- Play equipment and an inclusive playground to be incorporated
- Sporting provision
- Community action days

These suggestions would be taken away and the methods of funding would be considered.

**Resolved: Approve the Environment & Leisure Services work plan and select a number of objectives for consideration/delivery in the next twelve months.**



**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.31pm**

**Dated this 29<sup>th</sup> day of July 2024**

**Chairman**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Farrell', written in a cursive style.

**HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Environment & Leisure Committee**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on**  
**29<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillors: E Billington (Substitution)  
P Burgess  
Y Farrell  
T McMahon  
C Rollins  
C Slough (Substitution)  
D Taylor

Officers: Ian Haynes Head of Environmental &  
Community Services  
Amanda Samuels Administration Officer

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillors: W Henderson  
A Slough

Also present: J Carroll

Absent: 0

**12924 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Cllr Henderson, Cllr Billington substituted and Cllr A Slough, Cllr C Slough substituted.

**12925 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

**12926 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**12927 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

Members were invited to elect a Vice-Chair for Corporate Services Committee for 2023/2024.

Nominee: Cllr Farrell Proposed by: Cllr Taylor  
Seconded by: Cllr C Slough

Nominee: Cllr McMahon Proposed by: Cllr Rollins  
Seconded by: Cllr Burgess

A recorded vote was requested.

AS

Members in favour of Cllr Farrell: Cllr C Slough, Cllr Billington, Cllr Farrell and Cllr Taylor

Members in favour of Cllr McMahon: Cllr Rollins, Cllr McMahon and Cllr Burgess

Accordingly, Cllr Farrell was duly appointed as Vice-Chair of the Environment and Leisure Committee for the municipal year of 2024/2025.

**12928 MINUTES**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

**Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Environment & Leisure Committee meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

**12929 TITHE FARM RECREATION GROUND SPORTS PROJECT UPDATE**

A verbal update was provided to Members on the progress of the Tithe Farm Recreation Ground Sports Project.

Members were informed that UKPN works had been completed. A date for the installation of the electricity meter was awaited, after which contractors would need to return to complete enabling works on the floodlights, pavilion, and car park lighting.

Members were advised that Section 278, relating to site access, had not progressed as quickly as hoped.

**12930 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE ACTION PLAN**

At its meeting on the 16th July 2024, the Town Council endorsed the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan. The Environment & Leisure Services Committee was allocated a number of small projects to be funded through general reserves. The first for delivery was:

Develop a long-term financial plan.	Consider external support to assess maintenance and refurbishment requirements for key assets	Budget availability	£2,000	Autumn 2024	E&L Committee	Head of E&C
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The £2,000 would be used to seek professional advice regarding HRTC key assets. Costs would be broken down according to mechanical and electrical factors, plus the fabric of buildings

**Resolved: To delegate authority to the Head of Environmental & Community Services to deliver these projects in liaison with the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair, who will agree on the required detail and scope.**



**12931 NOTICEBOARDS**

*Pages 11 - 13*

Members were asked to consider purchasing 6 corporately branded noticeboards for The Village Green, Tithe Farm Recreation Ground, Parkside Recreation Ground, Houghton Hall Park, Orchard Close Recreation Ground, and Houghton Regis Cemetery.

Members questioned whether consideration had been given to purchasing electronic noticeboards and what factors had influenced the decision not to pursue this option. The Head of Environmental and Community Services responded that the purchased noticeboards had three bays, which could be used to display council notices, HRTC events, and external events. Available funds also meant that six noticeboards could be purchased, as opposed to one electronic noticeboard and strategically placed.

Members also questioned whether personnel costs had been factored in. It was confirmed that updating the noticeboards would be covered by existing staff as most of the sites were visited regularly.

- Resolved:**
- 1) **To agree to the purchase of 6 x Contemporary green aluminium noticeboards for The Village Green, Tithe Farm Recreation Ground, Parkside Recreation Ground, Houghton Hall Park, Orchard Close Recreation Ground, and Houghton Regis Cemetery. Funds to be taken from the Environment and Leisure schedule earmarked reserves (324) Street Furniture with available funds of £11,251.00**
  - 2) **To agree on the removal of all existing noticeboards (excluding the Council Office one).**
  - 3) **To agree where possible, the branded noticeboards should be re-used on suitable sites, i.e., allotments.**

**12932 ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE COMMITTEE FINANCIAL REPORT 2024/25**

In accordance with the Committee's functions, a periodic review of the Committee's income and expenditures should be undertaken.

Members were provided with the budget report for the Environment & Leisure Services Committee alongside the Budget Explanation.

Of note was the overspending of the street furniture. This was for the purchase of planters, barrier baskets and hanging baskets which the UKSPF would fund.

**12933 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT**

Members were provided with the income and expenditure report, with appropriate commentary, for the Environment & Leisure Services Committee.

**12934 TERRA CROFT LEISURE GARDEN UPDATE**

Members received an update on the management of the Town Council-owned allotment.

The allotment had done well over the past year, with 223 people currently on the waiting list.

Following a recent allotment inspection, figures were as follows:

45 plots were rated green

1 plot was rated amber

1 plot was rated red and likely to be terminated

1 plot was vacant

It was questioned whether support was provided to those struggling to maintain their allotment. It was explained that the traffic light system in place allowed adequate time and flexibility for improvement to be made and that those who failed to maintain their allotment often voluntarily surrendered the tenancy. Legislation meant that the allotments needed to crop once per year and were required to be weed-free for the remainder of the year. A groundsman carried out the inspections to ensure compliance with the regulations.

**12935 UKSPF APPLICATION**

Members were provided with an update on the UKSPF applications.

Given the objectives of the corporate plan and the unsuccessful application in round 1, it was felt prudent to consider what project could be resubmitted and how 'Men in Sheds' would tie in with Tithe Farm.

The application has been returned to CBC for submission.

**Resolved: To support the application made under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Community Grant Fund – Round Two 2024/2025.**

**12936 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Members voted on the exclusion of the press and public:

Proposed by: Cllr McMahon

Seconded by: Cllr Taylor

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.**

**12937 JVA DELIVERY**

Members considered a proposal for the operational management of Houghton Hall Park to be transferred from CBC to HRTC.

**Resolved:** To approve that the operational management of Houghton Hall Park be transferred from CBC to HRTC to deliver a more sustainable service with no alterations to the existing governance structures and local percentage of authority financing;

- i.) Approve that the Chair of Environment and Leisure sign the Deed of Variation, as this will be an appropriate way to ratify the changes.
- ii.) To commence with the TUPE transfer of the three CBC employees to HRTC.
- iii.) The Park Manager post (currently vacant) will be deleted, and the Head of Environment and Community Services will undertake the park management role.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.57pm

Dated this 30<sup>th</sup> day of September 2024

Chairman



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP  
COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET**

**ON 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

23rd C/A

Present: Town Cllrs: E Costello (sub), Y Farrell, M Herber (sub) and D Jones

CBC Cllrs: T McMahon (Chair), C Alderman, S Goodchild and P Hamill

CBC Officers: Sarah Hughes, Community Engagement Manager  
Chloe Brennan, Youth Support Service Manager  
Martin Westerby, Head of Public Health Programmes

HRTC Officers: Clare Evans, Town Clerk  
Amanda Samuels, Administration Officer

Co-opted members: D Gibbons  
J Anderson  
C Reagan

Also in attendance: Cllr R Hares

Members of the Public: 2

**1019 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Cllr Carroll (Cllr Herber substituted) and Cllr Slough (Cllr Costello substituted).

**1020 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

An update was given on sports hall provision in Houghton Regis, an item previously raised at Town Council on 18<sup>th</sup> March (Minute 12749). Andrew Selous had received a response from the Director of Place and Communities that was felt to be inconsistent between CBC's own leisure strategy and what appeared to be taking place. It was thought that provision of sports hall facilities within Houghton school would be insufficient to meet demand and HRTC was requested to help facilitate a solution. Members of the public were encouraged to attend the CBC committee to express these concerns. The Town Clerk confirmed that HRTC was following up this item from the Town Council meeting in March and requested a copy of the correspondence from the Director of Place and Communities.

**1021 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR  
DISPENSATIONS**

None.

C/A

## 1022 MINUTES

Members were requested to:

Approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024.

**Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

## 1023 NEET UPDATE

Members were provided with an update on NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training) by the Youth Support Service Manager at CBC.

There were four primary functions:

- Track and report to the Department of Education on school leaver participation
- Information advice and guidance
- Youth workers
- Delivery of youth work

The latest figures were slightly higher compared to Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard and related predominately to 17-year-olds and males. The breakdown was as follows:

- 35 NEETS
- 0 unknown (which was positive as it meant that all young people were accounted for)
- 19 were engaged with services
- 17 continue to be tracked every three months and contacted
- 9 of the 17 had refused support or advise they do not require support at this stage
- 9 had mental health needs
- 7 had special educational needs
- 7 were not ready for education, employment or training
- 3 were new to the area
- 2 had experience of care
- 2 were known to the Youth Offending Service

Members were informed that there were points of contact for young people within all schools and further education providers. Data was received from the schools to help track those young people with no destination for September.

Community Services currently received grant funding from Youth Support Services to support their youth work and young people's access to positive activities.

There was a new, shared mobile engagement van to widen interaction with the youth workers (and Youth Careers Advisors) in the Youth Support Service, this would be needed.

The Skills for All Strategy consultation had just ended, this would inform future work and partnerships. It was agreed, however, that more needed to be done and further ongoing analysis was required to establish trends and tackle issues earlier. It was suggested that HRTC might be able to assist by offering work experience, helping create connections with local businesses, and involving the youth council.

CA

CA

**1024 TIME 2 CONNECT UPDATE**

An update was provided by the Head of Public Health Programmes, CBC, who confirmed that funding for this service had been extended twice.

The original aim of the scheme had been to deliver sustainable improvement in wellbeing and reduce inequality through community-centred and asset-based means. It looked at ways to improve assets, build resilience and improve community connections and capacity. It was hoped these targets would be achieved by:

- Recognising skills and assets locally
- Making and maintaining community connections
- Mobilising, sharing and co-producing assets

This would facilitate communities to do more for themselves by utilising and strengthening the skills, experience and abilities that already existed.

Time 2 Connect had been effective at what it had done, but delivery had been intended to reach a smaller number of people. Anticipated numbers had been exceeded due to complex community needs. This had been the unforeseen repercussions of the pandemic and T2C had filled a void to meet these needs without making wellbeing more sustainable in the long term.

Following an evaluation, it was decided that it would not be possible to fund a scheme along the same lines because a) the project had not fulfilled its original purpose due to the impact of the pandemic and local need, and b) funding pressures meant that it was not sustainable in its current form.

The scheme would need to transition after July and would need to meet the following criteria:

- It needed to be a sustainable model that was financially resilient
- The new model would need to be flexible, shaped and driven by the community
- Driven by a developing Community Engagement Strategy
- Link the future model to key community assets
- Measure progress and outcomes
- Develop a future Time 2 Connect with partners

It was necessary to get the engagement timing and the partnership right and it was suggested that local groups should be invited to contribute to the process. Local groups had previously been involved in Houghton Regis Together and the Community Engagement Manager would look to reconvene this.

**1025 CBC UPDATE REPORT**

A Representative from CBC presented an update.

CA

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**Leisure, Libraries & Countryside**

- The issue of sports hall facilities had been raised with CBC and was being followed up
- Everyone Active had hit pre-Covid figures
- The library had worked with HRTC on Easter events
- Houghton Hall Park had been working with Houghton Regis Town Council for the first Houghton Regis in Bloom
- The new play equipment for Houghton Hall Park would be going to tender following a period of consultation
- The Full House Theatre had provided workshops for children with special needs. This had been funded by UKSPF
- The Housing Team were holding monthly drop-in sessions
- The Culture Grant Scheme had been launched for those working within the cultural sector. A consultation would be held for Central Bedfordshire's first cultural strategy
- Highways had reported the repair of 129 potholes and 64 streetlights in Houghton Regis
- 72 PCNs had been issued in the last quarter and 110 visits had been carried out by the Community Safety team
- The Electric Car Club had launched in Bidwell West and Linmere
- An investment plan for the town centre with UKSPF funds was being drafted

**Supporting Local Business**

- 4 businesses had signed up for the Entrepreneurship Programme
- There had been an increase in enquiries for commercial property
- Vacancy rates had remained stable

**Social Care, Health & Housing**

- Phase two had reached practical completion at All Saints, providing 57 additional apartments

**Environmental Services**

- 50 abandoned vehicles had been reported

Members felt that parking issues were not being dealt with effectively. Parking at All Saints View remained a problem, and it was requested that the planned planters were put in place to combat damage incurred by vehicles. It was highlighted that parking was still available at All Saints View, which was not being utilised and could potentially be used by local workers.

A breakdown of the leisure centre figures was requested, detailing who used what facilities and at what times. Currently there were waitlists for activities like swimming due to high demand.

The Community Engagement Manager highlighted the current Have Your Say consultations which included the Local Nature Recovery Strategy were other avenues to highlight local issues.

CA

**1026 HRTC UPDATE REPORT**

It was agreed to accept the report as read and questions were invited from Members regarding the report.

A progress report was requested following the Peer Review Challenge. Members were informed that a draft report was awaited. Houghton Regis Town Council were obliged to publish the report within three months of the review and formulate an action plan in response to the report within five months. An action plan would be put forward at the June meeting of the Town Council.

**1027 POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS**

HRTC had completed a corporate plan, the three aspirations of which were to:

- Improve the visual appearance of the town centre
- Work with partners to improve the quality and accessibility of the public realm in the town centre
- Stimulate local business development and employment and training opportunities.

HRTC requested that the Partnership Committee consider the objectives of the HRTC Corporate Plan Objectives and provide feedback.

This was supported by the committee. It was advised that more detailed reports would be presented.

**1028 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN**

Members were invited to consider the Partnership Committee workplan for 2023/24 and to consider any changes for 2024/25.

Members were also provided with the CBC Forward Plan of Key Decisions which would be included on future agendas for consideration.

It was confirmed that a calendar of meetings had been drafted and would be checked with CBC prior to final agreement.

**1029 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION**

It had been requested that potential co-option onto the Town Partnership Committee remained as a Standing Agenda Item.

This would be the last meeting of the Committee in the council year. The Town Clerk would contact the current co-opted members to determine whether they would like to continue in their role, and whether there were any other members of the community who would benefit the Committee.



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**1030 ITEMS REQUESTING ATTENTION BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

Members were invited to identify and confirm whether there were any requested items for CBC's attention.

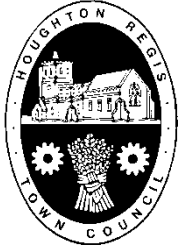
Cllr Hamill informed Members that a colleague was looking at ways that Partnership Committee minutes could be presented to CBC.

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.08pm**

**Dated this 30<sup>th</sup> day of July 2024**

**Chairman**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chloe Alderson', written in a cursive style.



<b>Date:</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>AUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2023/24</b>
<b>Purpose of the Report:</b>	<b>To advised members of the outcomes of the external audit 2023/24.</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Clare Evans, Town Clerk</b>

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## **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1. To approve and accept the Audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24;**
- 2. To note the matters raised in the Completion Letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024.**

## **2. BACKGROUND**

The Audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 was submitted for external audit on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

The external audit has to be completed by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The audited return was received on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024.

## **3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

Members will find attached the following:

- Completion Letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024, Appendix A
- Audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24, Appendix B

Members will note that the external auditor has not raised any matters under Section 3 of the Return.

The completion letter does raise the following issues as *Minor scope for improvement in 2024/25*:

The Council has left the name of the Council blank. Although the answer could be inferred from other answers on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return

(AGAR) the Council should ensure all boxes are filled in, marking nil or not applicable where appropriate.

**This advice is noted and accepted.**

The internal control objective (L), 'the authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation' was ticked 'not covered' by the internal auditor when some legislation relating to publication is applicable. Therefore, the objective should have been covered. In future, the Council should ensure the Internal Audit covers objective L.

**Members may recall that this was also raised as a *Minor scope for improvement in 2023/24*. Members were advised that this was raised with the Internal Auditor during his year-end visit in June 2024. In response he provided the attached letter of Explanation of 'Not Covered' responses, Appendix C. In response to the External Audit it is suggested that the Internal Auditors Letter of Explanation be shared with the External Auditor and their further advice sought.**

### ***Accessibility Regulations***

We are aware that the Accounts and Audit Regulations requirement for a physical 'wet ink' signature on the original AGAR, does not allow parish council's to fully comply with the Accessibility Regulations. The National Audit Office are aware that the two pieces of legislation are not compatible, therefore smaller authorities are advised to make it clear on their website that the document is a scan and will not be fully compliant with the Accessibility Regulations.

**This advice is provided on the Council's website.**

## **4. COUNCIL VISION**

### **Aspirations**

A5 To ensure the **council** is fit for purpose and efficient in its delivery of services

## **5. IMPLICATIONS**

### **Corporate Implications**

- There are no corporate implications arising from the recommendations.

### **Legal Implications**

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

### **Financial Implications**

- There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations

### **Risk Implications**

- There are no risk implications arising from the recommendations

### **Equalities Implications**

Houghton Regis Town Council has a duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in

respect of nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

This project / issue does not discriminate.

### **Climate Change Implications**

- There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations

### **Press Contact**

There are no press implications arising from the recommendations

## **6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS**

Members are requested to receive the external auditor's completion letter and Audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2023/24.

## **7. APPENDICES**

- Appendix A, Completion Letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024
- Appendix B, Audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24
- Appendix C, **Internal Auditor letter of Explanation of 'Not Covered' responses**

The Corner  
Bank Chambers  
26 Mosley Street  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 1DF



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[forvismazars.com/uk](http://forvismazars.com/uk)

Mrs C Evans  
Houghton Regis Town Council  
Council Offices  
Peel Street  
Houghton Regis  
Bedfordshire  
LU5 5EY

Direct line: +44 (0)191 383 6348

Email: [local.councils@mazars.co.uk](mailto:local.councils@mazars.co.uk)

Date: 23 September 2024

Dear Mrs Evans

### Completion of the audit for the year ended 31 March 2024

We have completed our audit for the year ended 31 March 2024 and I have pleasure in enclosing the certified Annual Governance and Accountability Return. The External Auditor's Certificate and Report is given in Section 3.

If there are any significant matters arising from the audit, they are summarised in the External Auditor's certificate in Section 3. If we have identified minor scope for improvement we have recorded this on page 2 of this letter. The Council must consider these matters and decide what action is required. In most cases this will be self-evident. In some instances we have referred to further guidance available, in particular, in the publication "*Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – A Practitioners' Guide (England) 2023*". This can be obtained via your NALC or SLCC branch, or downloaded free of charge.

#### Action you are required to take:

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 set out what you must do at the conclusion of the audit. In summary, you are required to:

**Publish (which must include publication on the authority's website) a statement on or before 30 September to confirm:**

- that the audit has been concluded and that the statement of accounts has been published;
  - the rights of inspection conferred on local government electors by section 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; and
  - the address at which, and the hours during which, those rights may be exercised.
- Keep copies of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for purchase by any person on payment of a reasonable sum.
  - Ensure that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return remains available for public access for a period of not less than five years beginning with the date on which the Annual Governance and Accountability Return was first published.

Forvis Mazars LLP

Forvis Mazars LLP is the UK firm of Forvis Mazars Global, a leading global professional services network. Forvis Mazars LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales with registered number OC308299 and with its registered office at 30 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7AU. Registered to carry on audit work in the UK by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. Details about our audit registration can be viewed at [www.auditregister.org.uk](http://www.auditregister.org.uk) under reference number C001139861. VAT number: GB 839 8356 73

*The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 do not specify the period the Completion Notice needs to be on the council's website but this period must be reasonable.*

**Minor scope for improvement in 2024/2025**

The Council has left the name of the Council blank. Although the answer could be inferred from other answers on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) the Council should ensure all boxes are filled in, marking nil or not applicable where appropriate.

The internal control objective (L), 'the authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation' was ticked 'not covered' by the internal auditor when some legislation relating to publication is applicable. Therefore, the objective should have been covered. In future, the Council should ensure the Internal Audit covers objective L.

**Accessibility regulations**

We are aware that the Accounts and Audit Regulations requirement for a physical 'wet ink' signature on the original AGAR, does not allow parish council's to fully comply with the Accessibility Regulations. The National Audit Office are aware that the two pieces of legislation are not compatible, therefore smaller authorities are advised to make it clear on their website that the document is a scan and will not be fully compliant with the Accessibility Regulations.

**Audit fee**

Our fee note for the audit, which is in accordance with the audit fee scales set by SAAA, and available at [Audit Fees | Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments \(saaa.co.uk\)](https://saaa.co.uk) will follow.

We would be grateful if you could arrange for this to be paid at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely



**James Collins**

Director

For and on behalf of Forvis Mazars LLP

# Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Form 3

## To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities\*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
  - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
  - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

## Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
  - The **Annual Internal Audit Report must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
  - **Sections 1 and 2 must** be completed and approved by the authority.
  - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2024**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2024**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
  - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
  - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2024
  - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
  - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
  - Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

## Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2024 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2023/24**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2023/24**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2024 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review. It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

\*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

## Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide\** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2024.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- **You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide\**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2023) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2024).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2024**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?		
	Has all additional information requested, including <b>the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights</b> , been provided for the external auditor?		
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?		
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?		
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?		
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?		
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?		
	Has the bank reconciliation as at <b>31 March 2024</b> been reconciled to Box 8?		
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?		
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? <b>NB:</b> do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		

\**Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices*, can be downloaded from [www.nalc.gov.uk](http://www.nalc.gov.uk) or from [www.ada.org.uk](http://www.ada.org.uk)



Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

Houghton Regis Town Council

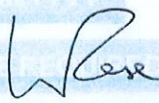
ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE ADDRESS [www.houghtonregis.org.uk](http://www.houghtonregis.org.uk) ENTER PAGE ADDRESS

During the financial year ended 31 March 2024, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2023/24 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	Yes		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	Yes		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	Yes		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	Yes		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	Yes		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	Yes		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	Yes		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	Yes		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	Yes		
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 creditors were properly recorded.	Yes		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. <i>(if the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")</i>			N/A
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.			N/A
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations <i>(during the 2023-24 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2022-23 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set)</i> .	Yes		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR <i>(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes)</i> .	Yes		
<b>O. (For local councils only)</b> Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable
			N/A

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken: 07/06/2023 29/11/2023  
 Name of person who carried out the internal audit: Kevin Rose ACMA- IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd  
 Signature of person who carried out the internal audit:   
 Date: 09/06/2024

\*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

\*\*Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

## Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, that:

	Agreed			'Yes' means that this authority:
	Yes	No*		
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓			<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓			<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓			<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓			<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓			<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓			<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓			<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓			<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A	<i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>
			✓	

**\*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

17/06/2024

and recorded as minute reference:

12883

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

www.houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

NEED PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
1. Balances brought forward	746,279	826,230	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	1,119,236	1,196,781	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	422,331	2,573,167	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	-571,106	-749,067	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	-24,069	-12,034	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	-866,441	-3,201,958	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	826,230	633,119	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	577,485	667,405	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	4,196,414	6,873,900	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	202,202	686,557	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

**Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval**

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date 06/06/2024

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

17/06/2024

as recorded in minute reference:

12884

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

## Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2023/24

In respect of

**Houghton Regis Town Council**

### 1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02 as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/> .

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2024; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

### 2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2023/24

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

Not applicable.

### 3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2024.

\*We do not certify completion because:

Not applicable.

External Auditor Name

**Forvis Mazars LLP, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1DF**

External Auditor Signature

*Forvis Mazars LLP*

Date

**23 September 2024**

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

09-Jun-24

### Explanation of "Not Covered" responses

Further to our Internal Audit of your Council for the financial year 2023/24 I am pleased to submit the signed Internal Report for your Annual Return. We have completed our work and I can confirm that we have not given a Negative response for any of the Internal Control Objectives.

You will note that we have given 'Not Covered' responses in respect of Control Objective K, L and O and we are required to explain why we have done this.

- *The reason for the "Not Covered" response for Objective K is that it is not applicable to your Council as the Council did not certify itself exempt from limited assurance review for the 2022/23 financial year.*
- *At present no specific guidance has been provided to set out what the 'relevant legislation' is in respect of Control Objective L. We have tested against the requirements of Statutory Instruments 2015/480 The Local Government (Transparency Requirements) and 2015/494 The Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements), neither of which apply to your Council. The publication requirements of Statutory Instrument (2015/234) The Accounts and Audit Regulations are covered in our responses to Internal Control Objectives M and N. The Council should note that we have not considered any additional publication requirements that may apply, for example those set out in the ICO Model Publication Scheme for Parish Councils.*
- *The reason for the Not Covered response for Objective O as it is our understanding that the Council does not act as Trustee.*

---

The External Auditor may query why we have responded 'Not Covered' and, if so, you should provide them with a copy of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

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

Kevin Rose ACMA  
Director



## HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

### Internal Control Policy

Date of Adoption:	14 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
Date of Review:	
Date of Re-adoption	

### 1. Scope of Responsibility

Houghton Regis Town Council is a Local Authority funded largely by public money. It is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk. The Council is required, by regulation 6.1 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, to review each financial year the effectiveness of its system of financial control.

### 2. The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

### 3. The Internal Control Environment

#### **The Council**

- The Council has adopted Financial Regulations which set parameters for the Council's financial operations.
- The Council has appointed a Chairman who is responsible for the smooth running of meetings and for ensuring that all Council decisions are lawful, and in accordance with its Standing Orders.
- The Council meets six times per year to monitor and review its obligations, aims and objectives, and receive reports from the Clerk/RFO, committees and members of the Council.
- The Council has appointed Committees who monitor progress against objectives and budgets
- The Corporate Services committee monitors financial systems and procedures, budgetary control and regularly reviews financial matters.



- The Council met in January to approve the budget and precept for the coming year 2024/25.
- The Council carries out regular reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures.
- Payroll is processed by an external payroll provider using payroll software and checked by the Responsible Finance Officer.
- Banking services are provided by NatWest.
- The Council uses a computerised accounting system Rialtas to complete the management accounts and financial returns for the Council.

### **Clerk to the Council / Responsible Financial Officer**

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's advisor and manager and Responsible Financial Officer and who is responsible for the administration of the Council's finances.

The Clerk is responsible for advising on the day-to-day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also provides advice to help the Council ensure that its procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.

### **Payments**

All expenditure (the incurring of costs) must be authorised by the Council, or by a committee having delegated authority, or (in accordance with the Financial Regulations) by other delegated authority.

All payments from the Council's banks accounts are only to be made with dual authorisation.

All payments are reported to the Corporate Services Committee. The RFO is responsible for checking the legality of each payment and that payments are within the powers of the Council.

### **Risk Assessments/Risk Management**

The Council carries out regular risk assessments in respect of actions and regularly reviews its systems and controls. The insurance cover is regularly reviewed to ensure the correct level of cover has been provided.

### **Internal Auditor**

The Council has appointed IAC Audit and Consultancy Ltd, as Independent Internal Auditor who reports to the Council on the adequacy of:

- records
- procedures
- systems of internal control
- regulations
- risk management
- governance processes

The effectiveness of internal audit is reviewed annually by the Council.

### **External Auditor**

The Council's external auditors, as appointed by SAAA Ltd, submit an annual certificate of audit which is presented to the Council.

### **Professional Advice**

Additionally, the Council seeks and receives appropriate property, legal, insurance, VAT, personnel/human resources and health & safety advice as appropriate to manage risk.

#### **4. Review of Effectiveness**

The Council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by:

- The full Council
- The work of officers reporting to the Council and its committees

- The Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer to the Council who are responsible for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment and managing risk.
- The Independent Internal Auditor who reviews the Council's system of internal control and reports to the Council.
- The Council's External Auditor who makes a final check using the Annual Return, a form completed and signed by the Responsible Financial Officer, the Chairman, the Town Clerk and the Internal Auditor. An Audit Certificate is issued.
- The number of significant issues that are raised during the year

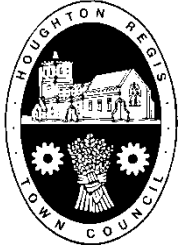
#### 5. Significant Internal Control Issues

Whilst no significant internal control issues were identified during the year the Council strives for the continuous improvement of the system it has adopted at all times.

Approved by Council

Date:

Minute Reference:



**Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024

**Title:** 2025/26 BUDGET SETTING PROCESS

**Purpose of the Report:** To outline to members the anticipated budget setting process for the financial year 2025/26.

**Contact Officer:** Clare Evans, Town Clerk

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### 1. RECOMMENDATION

*This report is provided for information purposes.*

### 2. BACKGROUND

In line with the Corporate Plan and the CPC Action Plan, the budget setting process has been slightly brought forward and adjusted to enable earlier consideration and feedback from Members.

### 3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

The following sets out the anticipated timetable for the budget setting process:

Member Briefings

22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 - Budget process & engagement in the process by Members – a presentation will be prepared and shared electronically with Members to review

5<sup>th</sup> November 2024 - Draft Budget presentation to Members (this will only cover budget lines of over £1,000) - a presentation will be prepared and shared electronically with Members to review

19<sup>th</sup> November 2024 – Members Open Session: Preliminary Feedback session for members to seek points of clarification from officers

20<sup>th</sup> November to 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024 - Group feedback to officers to enable group proposals to be developed if desired

3<sup>rd</sup> January 2025 - submission date of group alternative budgets to enable sharing / consideration by other groups

9<sup>th</sup> January 2025 – Publication of Town Council agenda

20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 – Council meeting for approval of budget and setting of precept

Members will be circulated the following information by 5<sup>th</sup> November:

1. Officer draft budget 2025/26
2. Budget explanation 2025/26 including suggested budget savings
3. Budget forecast to 2029
4. General Reserves Note
5. Possible budget savings
6. Anticipated EMR movements 2024/25
7. Draft EMR movements 2025/26

The documents will remain a work in progress during the course of the budget setting process and will be adjusted as required.

The draft budget will be presented to Town Council for consideration and approval on 20<sup>th</sup> January. Additionally at this mtg members will be required to set the precept to support the budget.

#### **4. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN**

##### **4 Management and Operations: To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Town Council as the key local service provider**

- 4.1 Develop a 5-year financial & staffing plan.
- 4.5 Enhance the role of the council.
- 4.6 To actively consider and weight the impact of new and existing initiatives and services.

#### **5. IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Corporate Implications**

- There are no corporate implications arising from the recommendations.

##### **Legal Implications**

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

##### **Financial Implications**

- There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations

##### **Risk Implications**

- There are no risk implications arising from the recommendations

##### **Equalities Implications**

Houghton Regis Town Council has a duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

This issue does not discriminate.

**Climate Change Implications**

- There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations

**Press Contact**

There are no press implications arising from the recommendations

**6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS**

Members feedback on the revised process is welcomed.

**7. APPENDICES**

**None**