

Town Mayor: Cllr M Herber Town Clerk: Clare Evans

Tel: 01582 708540

14th October 2025

To: Town Mayor and all Members of the Partnership Committee

Town Councillors: M Herber, D Jones, C Slough, D Taylor

C Alderman, S Goodchild, P Hamill, T McMahon

CBC Councillors Mrs Hughes, Community Engagement Manager

CBC Officers Copies, for information, to:

 Cllr Baker, Executive Member for Finance and Highways CBC

• Cllr Watkins, Executive Member for Assets Business & Housing, CBC

• Cllr Smith, Deputy Leader & Executive Member Adult Social Care & Health, CBC

• Cllr R Goodchild, CBC

• all Houghton Regis Town Councillors

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **Partnership Committee** to be held on **Tuesday 21st October 2025** commencing at **7.00pm** at The Council Offices, Peel Street.

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

To attend remotely through Teams please follow this link: <u>MEETING LINK</u>

Clare Evans Town Clerk THIS MEETING MAY BE RECORDED *

AGENDA

- 1. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS (to 7.05pm)
- 2. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC (3 minutes per person; maximum 15 minutes) (to 7.20pm)

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

^{*}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.

To receive questions and statements from members of the public in respect of any item of business included in the agenda, as provided for in Standing Order No.s 1(f) and 1(h).

3. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS (to 7.25pm)

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** (to 7.30pm)

Pages 6 - 12

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th July 2025.

Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th July

2025.

5. HOUGHTON REGIS SPORTS HALL (to 8pm)

As Members are aware the CBC Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny (OSC) made a commitment to review the effectiveness of the Community Use Agreement (CUA) Houstone Sports Hall in 6 months' time from its June 2025 meeting if it were deemed necessary. Link to the Minutes <u>1 250612 Minutes of the Meeting.pdf</u>, however for ease the Resolution reads:

RECOMMENDED that the Executive Member liaise with Houghton Regis Town Council to address the concerns raised during the meeting, with a future update being delivered to the Committee in six months to assess progress in line with the community use agreement if necessary.

Although the process is not defined as to how Sustainable Communities OSC will decide if meeting time in December is required, it was deemed that collated feedback from this meeting would be a good opportunity for the Partnership Committee to make its case to CBC.

Members were invited to submit comments relating to the current level of accessibility of the Houstone Sports Hall ahead of this meeting to enable CBC to consider and provide a provide a full response at the meeting. Cllr Watkins will be attending the meeting virtually to respond to the points raised.

Response collated related to these themes:

- 1. Community Use Agreement
- 2. Joint Management Committee
- 3. Usage Data
- 4. Access / Booking Arrangements

6. TOWN CENTRE BENCHMARKING & HIGH STREET RENTAL AUCTION (to 8.30pm)

By invitation, Stephen Mooring, Head of Sustainability at Central Bedfordshire Council will attend the meeting to provide an update on town centre benchmarking and High Street Rental Auction.

7. COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE (to 8.35pm)

At the last meeting the HR Partnership Committee supported a report being presented to the October Partnership meeting on the Committee Functions and Terms of Reference (CF&TofR) (Minute 1092).

In preparation for this meeting the CBC Community Engagement Manager has sought advice on the appetite within CBC to review the CF&TofR and in what form the review should take place. Unfortunately, CBC have been unable to confirm these points ahead of this meeting. As such it is suggested that this work remains on the Work Plan until such a time as CBC are able to provide clarity.

It is, however, suggested that contact be made with the other Partnership Committees to gauge their appetite for changing the CF&TofR as a joint approach to CBC would be supportive.

Recommendation: To request that the Partnership Committees in Biggleswade,

Dunstable and Leighton Linslade be contacted to explore their views on the suitability of the current Partnership Committee

Functions and Terms of Reference

8. SCHOOL ORGANISATIONAL PLAN (to 8.40pm)

At the last meeting it was requested that a report be included on this agenda on the CBC School Organisational Plan.

A copy of the approved School Organisational Plan and the School Places Implementation Plan can be found here (Item 10): **Meetings**

Within the Implementation Plan pages 3-4 provide detail on new provision in Dunstable and Houghton Regis. However this is the extract:

Dunstable and Houghton Regis Provision Short term 1-2 years, academic years 2025-2026 None.

Medium Term – 3 to 5 years Academic years 2026-2029

Provision of first new primary school (3FE) on the Bidwell West development, will be required for September 2027.

4FE of secondary school places are needed by September 2027. Site appraisals commissioned to look at expansion options.

4FE of secondary school places are needed by September 2029.

Long Term – 5 to 10 years Academic years 2030-2035

Provision of 3FE primary school on the Land East of Houghton Regis, date will depend on housing completions, but likely to be September 2030.

Expansion of 1FE at Tithe Farm Primary School, this will not be required until September 2033

Beyond 2035

Two 3FE primary schools will be required, additional school sites and expansion options to be considered to meet the pupil demand from the new area.

Members are advised that CBC are currently completing this year's review to ensure that it aligns with local need.

9. TOWN CENTRE MONITORING & MANAGEMENT (to 8.45pm)

At the last meeting Members considered the Town Centre Action Plan and there was some discussion over the desirability of progressing some of the Actions. This Committee is advised that it is with the HRTC Corporate Plan that at least 2 key action areas be identified. The Town Council has undertaken various pieces of work to support and enhance the town centre in line with the Action Plan, possibly the most apparent and visual is the planting and hanging baskets along High Street. Other ongoing areas of HRTC work also align with the Action Plan.

10. COMMUNITY BUILDINGS IN HOUGHTON REGIS (to 8.50pm)

The Committee's workplan include reference to the following community buildings, an update is provided:

HRN 2 Community Building - A verbal update will be provided by the CBC Community Engagement Manager on the planned community centre in Bidwell.

HR Day Centre – A verbal update will be provided by Cllr Alderman.

Townsend Centre – A verbal update will be provided by the CBC Community Engagement Manager.

Please note that where there is no further update to be provided, the community building has been removed from the list until such time as there is an update available.

11. PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN (to 8.55pm)

Pages 13 - 14

Members are invited to consider the Partnership Committee workplan for 2025/26. Please note that this has been extended to include the following items:

- Sports hall provision
- Review of the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference

At the last meeting it was requested that Health remains on the Workplan; this is confirmed.

There was also some discussion on 'communications' specifically around the need for residents to be able to access timely and accurate information, whether this is through

their CBC Ward Cllrs or through publicly accessible CBC communications generally. Members are invited to discuss how this matter could be taken forward.

12. HRTC UPDATE REPORT (to 9pm)

Pages 15 - 18

The HRTC update report will be circulated ahead of the meeting.

13. PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION (to 9.05pm)

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

Co-option

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

14. ITEMS REQUESTING ATTENTION BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL (to 9.10pm)

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

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

As such, Members are requested to identify and confirm if there are any requested items for CBC's attention.

Members of the Committee are advised that there is a special meeting arranged for Wednesday 26th November to enable the committee to consider the CBC Highways improvement Plan.

Town Mayor: Cllr M Herber Town Clerk: Clare Evans

Tel: 01582 708540

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET ON 29th July 2025

Present: Town Cllrs: Y Farrell, D Jones, M Herber, C Slough

CBC Cllrs C Alderman, S Goodchild, P Hamill

CBC Mrs Hughes, Community Engagement Manager

Officers:

HRTC C Evans, Town Clerk

Officers: A Samuels, Administration Officer

Co-opted J Anderson, D Gibbons, C Regan, T Haines, R Turner

members:

Also in attendance: 0

Apologies: CBC Cllrs T McMahon

Members of the public: 1

1085 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Members were invited to elect a Chairman for Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2025/26.

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

Nominee: C Alderman Proposed by: C Slough

Seconded by: D Jones

There were no other nominations.

Accordingly, Cllr Alderman was elected as Chair of the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for the municipal year of 2025/2026.

1086 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr McMahon. Cllr R Goodchild had also advised that he would not be attending this meeting as his preliminary work with town and parish councils and partnership committees continues.

1087 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

Members were invited to elect a Vice Chairman for Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for the municipal year of 2025/2026.

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

Nominee: D Jones Proposed by: C Slough

Seconded by: Y Farrell

No further nominations were received.

Accordingly, Cllr Jones was elected as Vice Chair of the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for the municipal year of 2025/2026.

1088 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

1089 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

1090 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th April 2025.

Following on from her email, the Chairman took the opportunity to remind Members that Cllr Watkins had declined the suggested open public meeting to discuss sports hall provision. It was suggested that Cllr Watkins' decision to decline the meeting should be noted.

The Town Clerk emphasised that Cllr Watkins had declined to attend an open public meeting but would be willing to participate in the October Town Partnership meeting when the sports hall would be on the agenda.

The October Town Partnership meeting would be used to gain feedback from councillors and members of the public on strategic matters relating to the new Leisure Centre, on whether there were continued issues with access to the Houstone Sports Hall and whether there remained a demand for sports hall access during school hours.

Members were reminded that CBC's Sustainable Communities Committee were anticipating reviewing the suitability of Houstone Sports Hall to serve Houghton Regis at its meeting on 6th November 2025. Any issues raised at the October HR Partnership meeting would be fed into the CBC meeting on 6th November 2025.

A formal request would be extended to Cllr Watkins to attend the next Town Partnership meeting.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th April 2025.

1091 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION

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

Members had received applications for co-option from:

- David Gibbons
- Jo Anderson
- Carole Regan
- Roger Turner
- Tim Haines

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

Co-option

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

Resolved: To approve the Co-optee applications from:

- David Gibbons
- Jo Anderson
- Carole Regan
- Roger Turner
- Tim Haines

1092 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members were provided with the Terms of Reference which related to this committee.

As requested at the April 2025 Partnership meeting, a report on the Terms of Reference for the Partnership Committee had been included in the Committee Workplan (October).

1093 CONFIRMATION OF THE SECRETARIAT

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the Committee were required to confirm the secretariat for the Partnership Committee for 2025/26.

It was agreed that Houghton Regis Town Council would continue to act as the secretariat for the Partnership Committee for the municipal year 2025/26.

1094 TOWN CENTRE MONITORING & MANAGEMENT

Members had requested an exploration with CBC of their intentions and aspirations for developing a Town Centre Management Plans for towns within the authority's area. CBC had responded that funding and capacity constraints currently prevented them from developing or updating Town Centre Management Plans.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that Houghton Regis had previously had a Town Centre Management Plan which was now very outdated and more recently developed Town Centre Action plan (2023). Although more recent, the Action Plan may require an update to reflect the changes that had subsequently taken place within the town. The plan did, however, contain a number of actions that were worth revisiting and updating.

Members were also reminded that HRTC had previously commissioned a benchmarking survey of the town centre. A repeat survey had recently been commissioned by CBC to facilitate an evaluation of the "new normal" high street economy. With this in mind, Members queried what the current priorities should be and the relevance of town centre development, especially with the Bidwell and Linmere sites being established.

During discussion, the following suggestions were made:

- Adoption of a phased approach to achieve some of the aspirations for the town centre within the Action Plan.
- To explore funding possibilities.
- To set up a task and finish group to establish specific needs within the town especially in relation to deprivation and establish costings.
- Establish cross-sector engagement.
- The creation of a dedicated role (grant assisted) to promote the town centre and pursue funding opportunities.

The Community Engagement Manager informed Members that they had spoken to the Lead Officer regarding the benchmarking survey. The officer was happy to come to the Partnership Committee to discuss the findings which could potentially inform how the Partnership could move forward on this topic.

The proposed actions were:

- Establish which items from the Town Centre Action Plan could potentially be taken forward.
- The Town Clerk and the Community Engagement Manager To discuss eligibility for funding ahead of the next meeting.
- Establish the Terms of Reference for a potential task and finish group.
- To establish what the mechanisms may be to take actions forwards within CBC and / or HRTC.
- Consider the benchmarking report at the next meeting to help inform what could be achieved with the Town Centre Action Plan.

1095 COMMUNITY BUILDINGS IN HOUGHTON REGIS

Members were provided with a verbal update on community buildings as follows:

HRN2 Community Building in Bidwell

The CBC Community Engagement Manager informed Members that a project team was now in place, with input also being provided by the CBC Planning and Assets teams. A business plan had been produced which supported the delivery in a phased approach.

A representative from Bidwell highlighted that this was a charity delivering a community facility partially funded by S106 money as such there had been arising complications to resolve; however, it was hoped that a planning application for the first phase would be submitted by September 2025.

Bedford Square Community Centre

The Town Clerk informed Members that there was no further update on that provided at the April 2025 Partnership meeting (Minutes 1080).

Parkside Community Space

The town council had considered a request from the Parkside Action Group to site a cabin on Parkside recreation ground to serve as a local community space. The following was Resolved:

- 1. To provide permission in principle for Parkside Action Group to site a cabin on Parkside recreation ground to serve as a local community space
- 2. To request that Parkside Action Group provide detail on the following matters: planning and building control; legal issues including a lease; safety & technical matters; utilities; operational details; and finance.

The Red House

The HR Heritage Society had approached the town council to suggest a way forward and this was being considered by HRTC.

HR Day Centre

The Community Engagement Manager had no update. An update on plans for the site was requested.

Townsend Centre

The future of the building would be considered at Executive in August. It would not be possible to reutilise the building until the transfer of occupants had been completed. It was requested that a consultation be carried out to help shape future plans for the site.

1096 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members were invited to consider the Partnership Committee workplan for 2025/26. This had been extended to include the following items on the October agenda:

- Sports hall provision
- Review of the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference

The Town Clerk had confirmed that Health remained on the Workplan, in line with a request from Members.

Members wished to pursue the matter of school provision within Bidwell West. A School Organisation Plan was adopted by CBC in April. Members requested that this

was discussed at Town Partnership at the earliest opportunity. Members also requested clarity on the delivery of the primary school and the anticipated number of available school places.

Regarding sports hall provision, it was felt that the report should focus on the actions that had been requested rather than historical detail. The Chair confirmed that the Town Partnership would consider any continuing issues and formulate a comment for Sustainable Communities.

The committee discussed various ways to structure the agenda item. The Chair confirmed that these suggestions were noted and would be taken into account.

It was highlighted that a number of substantial items had been requested for the next agenda and concern was expressed that there may be insufficient meeting time available.

To assist it was suggested that in relation to a review of the Committee Functions and Terms of Reference that this item presented a consideration to set up a Task & Finish Group to undertake this work. It was hoped that this would reduce the discussion time enabling a full discussion on the other matters scheduled for the meeting.

Members highlighted that Economy and Retail was a bullet point on the workplan 2025/25 and questioned whether this should read Town Centre Plan. The Town Clerk confirmed this could be added to the same line.

1097 CBC UPDATE REPORT

The Chair asked if Members had any questions or observations relating to the report. The following points were raised:

- Emphasised the need to keep Health on the agenda.
- CBC were keen to support the doctor's practice in relocating to within the Bedford Square centre however the rooms were not fit for purpose and did not allow for examinations or certain procedures to be carried out.
- Since 2022 Drury Lane had been due to have drainage and resurfacing works carried out but this remained outstanding. The cost of the works had escalated significantly.
- Roundabouts were overgrown and CBC was not maintaining them. It was felt that HRTC could take this on at a cost.
- Nuisance bikes continued to be a significant issue.
- There was an encroachment by a resident into the land within Windsor Drive. Planning Enforcement were involved. Details were to be shared.

In response to a question from Members, the Chair confirmed they would investigate whether it would be possible to have a police presence at Town Partnership meeting.

There was general dissatisfaction with the police response to problems in the area and it was felt by some that the cost of HRTC's high visibility policing initiative, Op Hana, did not represent good value. Members expressed disappointment that the Combating Crime Working Group had not become a Sub-Committee to improve transparency and provide an opportunity to address a police representative directly.

Members questioned whether the camera at Tithe Farm Road was operational. There were continuing parking problems at this location and it did not appear that tickets were being issued. This would be investigated.

The Community Engagement Manager drew Members' attention to the following current live consultations:

Changes to the Licensing Policy Community Governance Review Local Nature Recovery Strategy Refresh of the SEND Strategy

Members were encouraged to review these items.

1098 ITEMS REQUESTING ATTENTION BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

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

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

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

Although not an item to forward for CBC's attention, concerns were expressed over road repairs.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.19 pm

Dated this 21st day of October 2025

Chairman

Houghton Regis Partnership Committee





Town Clerk: Clare Evans Email: info@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2025/26

Meeting Date	Regular Updates	Work Plan 2025/26	Reports already received / completed
21st October 2025	Election of Chair Election of Vice Chair Partnership Committee Co- Option approval Confirmation Of The Secretariat Committee Functions & Terms Of Reference CBC Update report Work Plan Items Requesting Attention By CBC HRTC Update report Work Plan Items Requesting Attention By CBC Sports hall provision Review of the Committee Functions & Terms Of Reference CBC Update report	The following suggestions are put forward, the timings of these reports / presentations will be confirmed once the content of the work plan has been agreed: • Health & Wellbeing (inc primary health care) • Place Delivery • Community Buildings in Houghton Regis (inc. HRN 2 Community Building, Bedford Square Community Centre, Parkside community space, Red House, HR Day Centre, Townsend Centre) • Housing And Engagement • Kingsland / HR Leisure Centre • Education (inc Primary School places) & Youth Work • Leisure inc Chalk Pit / Quarry • Economy & Retail inc Town Centre • Highways & Transport	
2026	Work Plan Proposed Dates For Meetings for following year Council Budgets		

Houghton Regis Partnership Committee





Town Clerk: Clare Evans Email: info@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

	Items Requesting Attention By CBC
28 th April 2026	HRTC Update report Work Plan
	Items Requesting Attention By CBC

Town Clerk: Clare Evans

Tel: 01582 708540

Email:info@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL UPDATE

Purpose of report: For information

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1. Corporate Services

HRTC Budget 2026/27

The HRTC budget setting process has started, albeit with an officer's draft so far. Once completed and agreed by Council, Central Bedfordshire Council will be advised of the Town Council's precept requirement. The budget will not only reflect the Town Council's existing commitments but also the funding of the delivery of the Corporate Plan and the CPC Action plan.

<u>corporate-plan-2024-2028.pdf (houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk)</u> <u>CPC Action Plan FULL July 2024.pdf (houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk)</u>

S106 monies (developer contributions)

The Town Council has received a sum of over £3m in developer contributions for maintenance of the open space, sports field, pavilion and play areas within the Bidwell West development (Thorn Park). The Town Council is proactively seeking investment opportunities that will generate returns sufficient enough to deliver the commitments made in the Corporate Plan and CPC Action plan.

2. Environment & Leisure

Houghton Chalk Pit

Officers are negotiating the draft lease for Houghton Chalk Pit, which includes the transfer of the commuted sum of approximately £1.15m.

Tithe Farm Sports Project

The S278 agreement has been finalised, and we are awaiting a date for the completion of the final works to the entrance.

Public Realm Improvements

Our 'See It Sort It' service continues to make Houghton Regis an attractive and vibrant place to live and work. This, combined with improvements made with the support of the UKSPF scheme, is having a real impact on the town.

Houghton Regis in Bloom

The results are in, and the Houghton Regis in Bloom team couldn't be prouder! We've had a blooming brilliant day at this year's Anglia in Bloom Awards, bringing home an incredible collection of medals and recognitions across our town's cherished spaces.

Our Award Wins

Large Town – Houghton Regis → Silver-Gilt

Historic Parks & Gardens – Houghton Hall Park → Gold

Cemeteries – Houghton Regis Cemetery → Silver

Churchyard – All Saints Parish Church → Silver-Gilt

Public Park – The Village Green → Gold and Joint Category Winner

Public Park – Parkside Recreation Ground → Gold

Public Park – Linmere Park → Gold

Nursing/Care Home – All Saints View Assisted Living (CBC) → Silver-Gilt

Special Award Nominations & Wins

This year, Houghton Regis also celebrated four Special Award nominations – a huge honour, as these highlight only the very best projects in the entire Anglia region.

Nominations:

Julie at Houghton Regis Memorial Hall - Best Floral Display by an Individual

All Saints View Assisted Living – Best Sheltered Housing/Assisted Living

Winners:

Houghton Hall Park - Best Community Special Award

The Chiltern School – Best Young People's Project (12–18 yrs)

3. Community Services

Community Services

HRTC delivers a variety of community initiatives, including Town Centre Initiatives, Summer and Easter Family Fun Days and trips, promoting the delivery of the Welcome Pack to residents moving into the new development, and partnering with various groups and organisations.

Summer Fun Activities

The staff are currently planning summer fun activities using a format similar to last year's. We aim to deliver six events at various locations in Houghton Regis, featuring activities such as inflatable fun and birds of prey (subject to availability). Additionally, we are organising a Skate Jam and a coach trip to Southend.

Events

The Town Council continues hosting various community events throughout the year, which are free for visitors and residents. The current programme of events is as follows;

Halloween at Houghton Hall Park - An event will be taking place at Houghton Hall Park on Friday 31st October for Halloween. The event will comprise of a Halloween Trail based on Mark Bolan's children's book 'The Witch and the Moon', Fancy Dress Competitions, Face Painting, Crafts / Colouring and Ghost-themed activities from Bowerbirdy.

Fireworks Display - The annual Fireworks Display will be taking place on Saturday 1st November at Thorn Park. There will be food retailers and fairground rides from 2pm, and then the main fireworks display from 6.30pm. The event will be hosted again by Billy Lee, who will be performing from 5.30pm.



Christmas at Houghton Hall Park - The details for Santa's Grotto on Saturday 13th December, are still being confirmed, but the event will include activities in the Visitors Centre and the Grotto in the Kitchen Gardens. To date, live Reindeer have been hired in for the day, and marquees are being investigated.

Project H (Working Title)

The town council has agreed to secure the lease on Unit 1, All Saints View, to establish this as a vibrant community and youth centre, including a council chamber. This is an exciting project, not only for the town council, residents, and stakeholders, but it will also serve as a model within the town and parish council sector.

We are looking to reach out to all our stakeholders to share news and details of this exciting project.

4. Planning

Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub-Committee will hold its next meeting on Tuesday 18th November 2025.

Since our inaugural meeting in May, the committee has been submitting planning comments and objections in line with the Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan, which was officially adopted in May 2024 following overwhelming community support (87.62% of voters).

We are pleased to share that an expression of interest has been received from a prospective cooptee, who was also a member of the original Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. It is really positive to see members of the community continuing to stay involved and showing a keen interest in helping to see the plan delivered.

For those wishing to review the complete Neighbourhood Plan document, please visit: <u>Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan</u>