



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Cllr M Herber**
Town Clerk: **Clare Evans**

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15th September 2025

To: Members of the Community Engagement Sub-Committee

Cllrs: E Cooper, Y Farrell, T McMahon, C Rollins, C Slough

(Copies to other Councillors for information)

Notice of Meeting

You are hereby summoned to a Meeting of the **Community Engagement Sub-Committee** to be held at the Council Offices, Peel Street, on **Tuesday 23rd September 2025 at 7.00 pm.**

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

<i>THIS MEETING MAY BE RECORDED¹</i>
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Agenda

- 1. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**
- 2. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

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

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

¹ This meeting may be filmed by the Council for subsequent broadcast online and can be viewed at <http://www.houghtonregis.org.uk/minutes>

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

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

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

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

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

4. MINUTES

Pages 4 - 8

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 24th June 2025.

Recommendation: **To confirm the minutes of the Community Engagement Sub Committee meeting held on 24th June 2025, and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

5. EXTERNAL COMMUNITY EVENTS

Representatives are invited to provide updates regarding community events.

This report is provided for information purposes.

6. EVENT MANAGERS REPORT

Pages 9 - 11

Members will find attached a report from the Events Manager regarding past and forthcoming events.

This report is provided for information purposes.

7. REPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY SERVICES MANAGER

Pages 12 - 14

Members will find attached a report from the Community Services Manager regarding the recent Summer Fun Activities.

This report is provided for information purposes.

8. CARNIVAL 2026

The Houghton Regis Carnival 2026 will be taking place on Saturday 11th July 2026. Members are asked to consider calling the event 'Houghton Regis Carnival' instead of changing the theme each year.

Unfortunately, there has been a disappointing response to the carnival parade over the past few years, and the number of groups has been declining. The safety surrounding the parade is also

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Community Engagement Sub-Committee
Draft Minutes of the meeting held on
24th June 2025 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: Y Farrell Chair
E Cooper
T McMahon
C Rollins
C Slough

Officers: Sarah Gelsthorp Events Manager
Amanda Samuels Administration Officer

Apologies: Councillors: 0

Other: K Wattingham
E Farrier
Bedfordshire Police

CESC50 ELECTION OF THE CHAIR

Members were invited to elect a Community Engagement Sub-Committee Chair for 25/26.

Nominee: Cllr Farrell Proposed by: Cllr McMahon
Seconded by: Cllr Cooper

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote, Cllr Farrell became the Chair of the Community Engagement Sub-Committee for the municipal year of 2025/2026.

CESC51 ELECTION OF THE VICE-CHAIR

Members were invited to elect a Community Engagement Sub-Committee Vice-Chair for 25/26.

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

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote, Cllr McMahon became the Vice-Chair of the Community Engagement Sub-Committee for the municipal year of 2025/2026.

CESC52 CO-OPTION

An application from Ken Wattingham to be Co-opted on to the Community Engagement Sub-Committee for 2025/2026 had been received and had been circulated to members of the sub-committee under separate cover. Members were requested to consider the co-option.

Resolved: To Co-opt Ken Wattingham on to the Community Engagement Sub Committee for 2025/26.

CESC53 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from K Wattingham, E Farrier of Land Improvement Holdings Linnere Development, and Bedfordshire Police.

CESC54 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

CESC55 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

CESC56 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th March 2025. An amended version of the minutes, showing Ken Wattingham as having sent apologies, had been circulated among Members.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Community Engagement Sub-Committee meeting held on 25th March 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed accordingly.

CESC57 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

In accordance with Standing Order 4, j.v., the council was required to review its delegation arrangements to committees and sub committees.

These arrangements are set out in the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference. This document sets out the system of delegation to the Committees, Sub Committees and Working Groups of the Council. This was presented to the Town Council at the Annual Meeting on 14th May 2025.

The Community Engagement Sub Committee reports to the Community Services Committee and supports the strategic development of Town Council events as follows:

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|------------------------------|--|
| • Carnival | Saturday 12 th July 2025 |
| • Open Air Cinema at HHP | Wednesday 23 rd July 2025 |
| • Open Air Theatre at HHP | Thursday 26 th August 2025 |
| • Summer Fun Activities | July-August 2025 |
| • Houghton Rocks | Saturday 6 th September 2025 |
| • Heritage Day at HHP | Saturday 20 th September 2025 |
| • Halloween at HHP | Friday 31 st October 2025 |
| • Fireworks Display | Saturday 1 st November 2025 |
| • Santa Float | TBC |
| • Santa's Grotto at HHP | Saturday 13 th December 2024 |
| • Winter Warmer event at HHP | January 2026 |

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- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| • February Half Term at HHP | 18 th – 20 th February 2026 |
| • Easter Egg Hunt | Saturday 28 th March 2026 |
| • Easter events | March / April 2026 |
| • Pride of Houghton Awards | May 2026 |

The Town Council was keen to work with the wider community, and representatives from the Bidwell West Community Association, Linnere, and other local community groups would be invited to share their forthcoming events at the meetings.

Resolved: To note the report

CESC58 COMMUNITY EVENTS

The representatives from Linnere and Bidwell West were unavailable to provide an update. The representative from Linnere would provide a report after the meeting for circulation.

The representative for All Saints Church advised Members of the following events:

28th June A fundraiser for a brain injury charity was being held. This would include a talk on the All Saints rood screen.

26th July A coffee morning to raise funds for Hospices at Home. This would include a talk from a local beekeeper.

It was also hoped that All Saints Church would have stalls at the Carnival and Houghton Rocks events.

The representative for the Memorial Hall advised Members that a race night and a Halloween event were planned for October.

Resolved: To note the report

CESC59 CARNIVAL 2025

The Civic and Events Manager updated Members on progress for the Carnival 2025, which would include the following:

- A dog show would take place, 10.00am – 2.00pm.
- Bowerbirdy would attend and have themed activities and mascots
- Stalls
- Soft archery
- Test your strength

Displays, including dance and children's entertainment, would continue until 3pm. It was anticipated that catering options would include: Greek food; burgers; Caribbean food; Ice cream; doughnuts; candy floss; coffee and slushy drinks. Jewels would also be providing tea and cake in the pavilion.

The Carnival programme had been printed and would be placed in key locations around Houghton Regis. Promotion would also be carried out via social media and email.

Volunteers for the day were still needed, especially for the afternoon. Members confirmed that they would attempt to recruit extra volunteers for the day. The Civic and Events Manager would circulate all relevant documentation and additional details in the coming week.

Members questioned whether volunteers required safeguarding training and were informed that the nature of the event meant this was not a requirement. It was also queried whether councillors should be DBS checked. Members were advised to contact the Town Clerk who would be able to answer any queries regarding regulations on these matters.

Resolved: To note the report

CESC60 OPEN-AIR CINEMA AND THEATRE EVENTS

Open-Air Cinema and Open-Air Theatre Events were planned for July and August at Houghton Hall Park as follows:

- 23rd July Paddington and Dogman would be screened
- 26th August Quantum Theatre Group would present *Jemima Puddleduck* and *Alice Through the Looking Glass*

Tickets were free and available from Eventbrite: 600 for the Open-Air Cinema (per screening) and 300 for the theatre events (per show).

Resolved: To note the report

CESC61 HOUGHTON ROCKS 2025

The Civic and Events Manager informed Members that there was now a full complement of bands for this event. The headline act would be QE2, a Queen tribute band.

The fair rides had been organised and the bar, stalls, food outlets and cars for the car show were all progressing. Members were requested to forward details if they knew of anyone able to provide vegan food.

Toilet facilities for those with additional needs had been confirmed for this (and other) events. It was agreed that this facility would be promoted.

Resolved: To note the report

CESC62 REPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY SERVICES MANAGER

Members had been provided with a report from the Community Services Manager regarding the Summer Fun Activities.

The Civic and Events Manager confirmed that the venue for one of the family fun days needed amending and that an up-to-date list of activities would be circulated. The correct details would also appear in the Carnival brochure.

It was confirmed that Three Star Coaches would be managing the bookings for the planned coach trip.

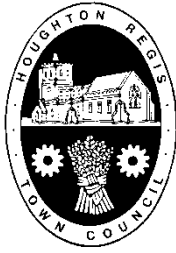
Resolved: **To note the report**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.33 pm

Dated this day of 23rd September 2025

Chairman

DRAFT



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 6

Date:	1st September 2025
Title:	Event Managers report
Purpose of the Report:	To provide Members with an update on forthcoming events.
Contact Officer:	Sarah Gelsthorp, Events Manager

1. RECOMMENDATION

This report is provided for information purposes.

2. BACKGROUND

Houghton Regis Town Council delivers a variety of community events throughout the year, on Town Council land and also at Houghton Hall Park.

This report sets out the work delivered and plans for future initiatives.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 Past events:

Houghton Regis Carnival

The Carnival took place on 12th July, and it was an exceptionally hot day, which would have affected the attendance.

For the 2026 event, further discussions around theming, and the parade will need to take place, and musical entertainment is also much needed for future years. However, the event was run safely, despite the hot weather, and there were some new stallholders in attendance.

Open Air Cinema at Houghton Hall Park

The Open-Air Cinema took place on 23rd July 2025, and two films were shown (Paddington in Peru and Dog Man). There were over 500 people at each showing and the event was a big success.

Open Air Theatre at Houghton Hall Park

Quantum Theatre put on a performance of Jemima Puddle-Duck and Alice Through the Looking Glass on 26th August, and both performances attracted audiences of 500 people, combined. The shows were well received and there was excellent feedback received on the day.

Quantum Theatre has been provisionally booked again for August 2026.

Houghton Rocks at Parkside Rec, and the Heritage Day at Houghton Hall Park

At the time of preparing the agenda, both events were still to take place.

3.2 Future events:

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 the 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.

4. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

None

5. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

1 Town and Community: To unify all areas of the parish as one community and foster civic pride in our town

- 1.1 Improve integration between existing and new communities.
- 1.4 Develop an annual programme of community events across the Parish.
- 1.6 Promotion and protection of the cultural and heritage assets

6. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications - There are no corporate implications arising from the recommendations.

Legal Implications - There are no legal implications.

Financial Implications—Some funding opportunities will naturally end during the new financial year. Therefore, during the 2025/26 budget-setting process, consideration must be given to whether these activities will continue.

Risk Implications - There are no risk implications.

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.

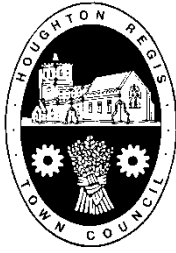
These projects/issues do not discriminate.

Climate Change Implications - There are no climate change implications.

Press Contact - Deliveries of these projects will continue to be communicated to the press.

7. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

This report summarises the ongoing projects being delivered and plans for future initiatives provided by the Community Services Manager.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUB COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 7

Date:	22nd August 2025
Title:	Houghton Regis Town Council Community Services Update
Purpose of the Report:	To provide Members with an update on recent community work.
Contact Officer:	Tara Earnshaw, Community Services Manager

1. RECOMMENDATION

To note the report

2. BACKGROUND

Houghton Regis Town Council 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.

This report sets out the work delivered and plans for future initiatives.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Family Fun Days

The planned summer fun activities were delivered across Houghton Regis during the summer holidays:

Activity	Date	Time	Location	Additional Information
Skate Jam	24 th July	11.00-15.00	Tithe Farm Recreation Ground	Youth Services have been delivering scooter and BMX sessions with a trained coach in the lead-up to this event.

Crazy Golf	29 th July	13.00-16.00	Houghton Hall Park	The Traditional Game Hire
Inflatable Fun	31 st July	13.00-16.00	Parkside Recreation Ground	Perfect Personalised Parties delivered five inflatables, including a slide and garden games.
Mobile Farm	5 th August	13.00-16.00	Thorn Park	Delivered by Animal Edge
Birds of Prey and garden games	8 th August	13.00-15.00	Village Green Pavilion	Delivered by Bird on the Hand.
Laser Tag	12 th August	13.00-16.00	Thorn Park	Delivered by Bee-Line, the package included garden games.
Southend	13 th August	9.00-17.00	Coach Trip	Three Star Coaches will manage the booking for this.
Magician	14 th August	13.00-15.00	Houghton Hall Park	Delivered by Krisgar Entertainment

All the activities were well received by the residents. Inflatable Fun was rescheduled to the 21st August due to a yellow weather warning on the 31st July.

4. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

To maintain the delivery of summer fun activities throughout the 2025/2026 financial year in the same format across various locations in Houghton Regis. There are no alternative options presented in this report.

5. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

1 Town and Community: To unify all areas of the parish as one community and foster civic pride in our town

- 1.1 Improve integration between existing and new communities.
- 1.4 Develop an annual programme of community events across the Parish.

3 Quality of Life: To enhance the quality of life of our residents

- 3.3 Improve access to services and support through the provision of a network of Parish-wide community hubs.
- 3.4 Improve existing and develop new opportunities for young people across the parish.

6. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications - There are no corporate implications arising from the recommendations.

Legal Implications - There are no legal implications.

Financial Implications—Some funding opportunities will naturally end during the new financial year. Therefore, during the 2025/26 budget-setting process, consideration must be given to whether these activities will continue.

Risk Implications - There are no risk implications.

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.

These projects/issues do not discriminate.

Climate Change Implications - There are no climate change implications.

Press Contact - Deliveries of these projects will continue to be communicated to the press.

7. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

This report summarises the ongoing projects being delivered and plans for future initiatives provided by the Community Services Manager.