



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Cllr M Herber**

Tel: 01582 708540

Town Clerk: **Clare Evans**

e-mail: info@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

21st April 2026

To: Members of the Community Services Committee

Cllrs: T McMahon (Chair), P Burgess, E Cooper, Y Farrell, A Slough, C Slough, D Taylor

(Copies to other Councillors for information)

Notice of Meeting

You are hereby summoned to a Meeting of the **Community Services Committee** to be held at the Council Offices, Peel Street on **Monday 27th April 2026 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

**THIS MEETING MAY
BE RECORDED ***

Agenda

- 1. APOLOGIES & 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.

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

**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 - 7

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd February 2026.

Recommendation: To confirm the minutes of the Community Services Committee meetings held on 23rd February 2026, and to have them signed by the Chairman.

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

Pages 8 - 21

Community Engagement Sub-Committee 20th January 2026

Community Safety Sub-Committee 17th December 2025, 21st January & 18th March 2026.

Recommendation: To receive the Minutes detailed above.

6. COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Pages 22 - 23

Members will find attached a workplan for the municipal year 2025/26.

The attached workplan provides a structured approach to the committee's business for 2025/26, ensuring that all statutory requirements and governance obligations are met in a timely manner.

This report is provided for information purposes only.

7. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Pages 24 - 26

Members will find attached the income and expenditure report for the Community Services Committee to date.

This report is provided for information purposes only.

8. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Pages 27 - 34

Members will find attached a newly created Communications Strategy, incorporating a draft Annual Marketing Plan (January – December).

Recommendation: To approve the draft Communications Strategy and recommend its adoption via the Corporate Services Committee.

9. THE REGIS GROUP UPDATE

Pages 35 - 38

To inform Members of the formation of the Regis Group, outline Houghton Regis Town Council's involvement in the inaugural meeting, and present the agreed actions and next steps arising from that meeting.

Recommendation:

1. To note the formation and purpose of the Regis Group.
2. To support officer engagement in the ongoing development of the group.
3. Endorse the agreed actions and proposed collaborative approach outlined in this report.
4. To support the proposal for Houghton Regis Town Council to explore securing or appointing a Town Crier, with a view to participating in the Bognor Regis Town Crier Competition as part of the Regis Group collaboration and civic promotion activities.

10. ANNUAL REVIEW OF COMMITTEE SERVICE CONTRACTS

Pages 39 - 42

To provide an annual review of key service contracts and partnership agreements, and to identify any required actions.

Recommendation:

1. To note the annual review of key service contracts and partnership arrangements.
2. To note that the Town Centre Public Toilets contract is currently out of contract and endorses officers proceeding with an updated tender exercise.
3. To note the confirmed Bulk Waste Collection pricing and budget provision for 2026/27.
4. To note that the Christmas Lights contract is in place until 31 October 2029.

- 5. To note that funding for Operation Hanna 2026/27 is subject to consideration of a new Service Level Agreement by the Community Safety Sub-Committee.**

11. FORMAT AND FUNCTION OF COMMITTEE SUB-COMMITTEES

Members are requested to discuss and decide on the future format and frequency of the Community Engagement Sub-Committee and the Community Safety Sub-Committee. Both sub-committees have discussed potential changes, and officers have reviewed the suggestions and recommend the following:

Recommendation: 1 To approve that the Community Engagement Sub-Committee stays a sub-committee, and that it meets in the evenings, and is provided with the required officer support to ensure it achieves its purpose and meets a maximum of six times a year.

2 To approve that the Community Safety Sub-Committee stays a sub-committee, and that it meets in the daytime, and meets a maximum of six times a year.

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HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Community Services Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on
23rd February 2026 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: T McMahon Chairman
P Burgess
E Cooper
Y Farrell
A Slough
C Slough

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

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillors: D Taylor

Also present: J Carroll

13531 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Taylor.

13532 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13533 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

13534 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2025.

Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Community Services Committee meetings held on 10th November 2025, and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13535 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING WORKING GROUPS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

Community Engagement Sub-Committee 23rd September & 25th November 2025

Combating Crime Working Group 15th October 2025

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

13536 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members were provided with the workplan for the municipal year 2025/26.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services informed Members that the main points to note were that the Central Community Hub had been removed and now sat with the Community Venue Task and Finish Group, and that the Community Conference had been deferred until Project H was up and running.

13537 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Members were provided with a copy of the income and expenditure report for the Community Services Committee to date.

Generally, figures were as expected; however, some income targets would be missed, and there was an underspend on revenue to balance the budget. The appointment of the Project Manager was still outstanding, resulting in an underspend on Staff Salaries.

13538 COMMUNICATIONS COMMUNITY STRATEGY

The Head of Environmental and Community Services provided Members with a verbal update on the improvements made to the town council's communications strategy following the delegation of authority at the Community Services Committee meeting on 22nd July 2024.

Members were informed that there had been slight amendments to the IT Policy and that the Accessibility Statement had been updated.

A set of house rules for social media, setting out guidelines, would be produced. A Communication Strategy would be documented to formalise core objectives and the position of HRTC.

New noticeboards had been ordered and would provide a platform for community groups and volunteers to advertise their activities.

A clear brand for HRTC Internal communications and marketing would be introduced.

Members would be provided with updates on these items when details were finalised.

13539 SMALL CAPITAL GRANTS UPDATE

Members were advised that the following Small Project Grants had been awarded under delegated authority.

- Houghton Regis Helpers - £200

13540 HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL YOUTH SERVICES

The Head of Environmental and Community Services informed Members that attendance figures for youth engagement and detached youth work were not yet available.

There was some disappointment with the attendance figures for Tuesday night activities at Houghton Hall Park, and consideration would be given to the future format. Thursday evenings at the 3G pitch at Tithe Farm were exceptionally popular with over forty attendees.

Members suggested working with other groups to improve the activities provided and the attendance figures. There was also a wish to see some form of provision being established at Parkside.

13541 REVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

Members had been asked to request that the Community Engagement Sub-Committee consider ways to increase community engagement and partnership working. It had been suggested that consideration should be given to following the format of the Community Safety Sub-Committee.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services stated that the meetings were not working as well as hoped and had not increased community engagement. By moving to a daytime meeting, it was hoped that:

- Representatives from the library would attend meetings
- There would be greater community engagement
- Both the Events Manager and the Youth and Community Manager would clerk the meeting jointly rather than alternating
- Co-optee numbers would potentially improve

Members expressed concern that scheduling another sub-committee during the day might potentially exclude some councillors/political groups. It was felt that expense should not be an overriding factor in decision-making and that suitable consideration should be given to increased diversity. Members were generally supportive of adopting a combination of evening and daytime meetings.

Members agreed that the CESC should review its format at the meeting on 24th March 2026.

Resolved: To consider and request that the Community Engagement Sub-Committee review its current format.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.52 pm

Dated this 27th day of April 2026

Chairman

**HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Community Engagement Sub-Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
20th January 2026 at 7.00pm**

Present:	Councillors:	Y Farrell J Carroll E Cooper T McMahon	Chair (Sub)
	Co-opted members	K Wattingham	
	Also in attendance:	Emma Farrier Tim Haines	Land Improvement Holdings, Linnere Devt Bidwell West
	Officers:	Sarah Gelsthorp Saffron Cooper-Hughes Amanda Samuels	Events Manager Events Support Officer Administration Officer
	Members of the public:	1	
Apologies:	Councillors:	C Rollins C Slough	

CEC80 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Rollins (Cllr Carroll substituted) and Cllr Slough.,

CEC81 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

CEC82 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

CEC83 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th November 2025.

The officer recommendation of confirmation of the minutes was not proposed; therefore, the minutes of the meeting held on 25th November 2025 will be deferred to the next meeting for approval.

CEC84 EXTERNAL COMMUNITY EVENTS

Representatives were invited to provide updates regarding community events.

Linnere

The Christmas event had been well attended, and a similar event was being planned for 2026. Additional Christmas events were being considered and HRTC would be informed when dates were confirmed.

Upcoming events included:

- Breakfast on the Bus was being held in conjunction with Grant Palmer to promote the expanded Jo bus service.
- Soft Play would be held during half term and would be a free event for 100 children.
- A Love Bug Trail was planned around the Farmstead.
- Fit 26 was a series of free fitness classes showcasing what was available and encouraging people to take part
- Silver Birch Park and Oasis Park were due to open in the spring and summer. It was hoped the Town Mayor would be available to open both spaces.

Memorial Hall

The representative from the Memorial Hall informed Members that numbers had increased and there had been several parties for adults and children.

The following events were planned:

- An Easter fair in March
- Afternoon Tea for the over 65s at the end of May
- Two race nights in June and September
- Craft Fair planned for Christmas

The last of the S106 funding had been spent on the hall

Houghton Regis Helpers

Cllr Farrell gave the following update on behalf of Houghton Regis Helpers:

- The AGM was scheduled for Friday 13th February
- Houghton Regis Helpers were working in partnership with the Town Council to distribute HSF funding to households struggling with the cost of living.
- A programme of training had been planned for volunteers
- 4210 jobs were recorded as completed for residents in 2025, which exceeded all previous figures.

T Haines, the representative from Bidwell West, joined the meeting

Bidwell West

- Work was underway for the Easter Egg Hunt
- Activities were planned for every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in August
- Community Engagement Days were planned
- It was hoped a large community event would take place in late summer
- Carols would be held in the square with the Salvation Army brass band also taking part.

It was highlighted that some Bidwell West residents remained unaware of available events, and it was suggested that HRTC could perhaps install a community notice board at the pavilion area.

It was hoped that the first phase of the community centre building would open in 2026, but this would be confirmed once details were available.

A member of the public expressed enthusiasm for the events that had taken place but was keen to ensure that areas of the town did not feel excluded from events, referring especially to the Christmas event which had moved to Houghton Hall Park.

The Events Manager responded that dates would be provided for all of the planned events at the next meeting, and that events organised by the Youth and Community Manager would be taking place at a number of sites around the town to encourage optimal involvement.

The Events Manager stressed that this was the first year that the Christmas event had been held at HHP and consideration would be given to the changes required and ways to raise awareness in the community.

The representative from Bidwell West informed Members that the Houghton Regis - Better Together initiative (Peabody and the Houghton Regis Community Development Charity) was able to provide funding for local community groups. The Events Manager requested details of the scheme in order to help promote its availability.

CESC85 EVENT MANAGER'S REPORT

The Events Manager provided a report to Members on past and forthcoming events.

The switching on of the Christmas lights and the tree had both been held on the same date for the first time.

The feedback from Santa's Grotto had been positive; however, it was acknowledged that there was a need for an improved booking system and that the event required more effective promotion. The event had been extremely busy with all 200 tickets for the Santa's Grotto requested within 2 hours. On the day, nobody was turned away if they attended without prior booking.

Members enquired whether information had been gathered on the demographics of attendees. The Events Manager responded that the system had not allowed for this and information had been limited to numbers and times. Members expressed a wish for this information to be available in the future, which the Events Manager confirmed would be referred back to the Head of Environmental and Community Services.

Members also expressed a wish to have more involvement in the choice of events and decision making. The Events Manager suggested that a conversation with the Head of Environmental and Community Services to discuss these matters further. Members agreed they would welcome the opportunity.

Members proposed a 'Festival of Christmas' which would bring together all the different Christmas events taking place around Houghton Regis. It was stated that a more cohesive approach, involving a range of groups and organisations, was needed.



Upcoming events at HHP were:

- 18th-20th February: Teaching Talons
- 28th March: Easter Egg Hunt

A co-opted member requested that – following feedback from businesses - an event should be held at Bedford Square.

The representative from Bidwell West suggested that pop-up stalls and activities could potentially take place in Bedford Square during the school holidays. Funding for traders could be sourced, and it would be an opportunity to get the community involved.

The Events Manager confirmed that these points had been noted but might be better addressed at the Community Services Committee.

CEESC86 YOUTH AND COMMUNITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Members were presented with a report from the Youth and Community Manager regarding past and forthcoming events.

- Family Fun Days were planned
- Town centre initiatives were in the planning phase
- The Later Living Social Group numbers were growing

The Events Manager informed Members that they would be co-clerking this committee with the Youth and Community Manager. Members enquired if a schedule was available to say who would clerk each meeting. Members suggested that the officers alternated meetings or clerked each meeting together.

The Events Manager confirmed this would be referred back to the Head of Environmental and Community Services.

CEESC87 NEW EVENT – MAY 2026

Members were provided with a report from the Events Manager regarding suggestions for a new event for May 2026.

- Houghton's Got Talent
- 1940's themed event
- Cultural festival
- Festival of Spring

Members questioned whether a 1940's event would be too close to the VE Day celebrations in 2025. It was highlighted that a Festival of Spring had been held previously and the format mirrored that of Carnival.

Following further discussion, a festival of food and arts was proposed as a potential event. This could involve the businesses in Bedford Square and provide an opportunity to celebrate the cultural variety within the town.

A Member informed the committee that 15th May was the International Day of Families and suggested celebrating this by holding a number of family activities on the Village Green.

The Events Manager stressed that a decision on the location needed to be made and Members expressed a preference for a food and arts event in Bedford Square. The proposed date was 9th May but this would conflict with Dunstable Pride. The Events Manager confirmed that 16th May would be a suitable alternative.

Resolved: To confirm a new event for May 2026.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.37pm

Dated this 24th day of March 2026



Chairman

Houghton Regis Town Council
Community Safety Sub-Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
17th December 2025 at 11.00 am

Present: Councillors: Y Farrell (Chairman)
E Cooper
M Herber
C Slough

Police: Sgt M Payne Bedfordshire Police

Officers: Ian Haynes Head of Environmental &
Community Services
Bianca Nagle Cemetery and Allotments Officer

Absent: Councillors: T McMahon

CS1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Members were invited to elect a Chair for the Community Services Sub-Committee for 2025-2026.

Nominee: Y Farrell Proposed by: E Cooper
Nominee: M Herber Proposed by: M Herber

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

CS2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Members were invited to elect a Vice-Chair for the Community Safety Sub-Committee for 2025-2026.

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

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote, Cllr Slough became the Vice-Chair of Corporate Services for the municipal year of 2025/2026.



CS3 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

CS4 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

CS5 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

CS6 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the final Combating Crime Working Group held on 15th October 2025.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the final Combating Crime Working Group held on 15th October 2025, and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

CS7 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

In accordance with Standing Order 4.j.iv. Council is 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 Council's Committees, Sub-Committees, and Working Groups.

Members were provided with an extract from the approved Committee Functions & Terms of Reference relating to this sub-committee.

The ToRs would be agreed upon and reported to Community Services and Town Council, and updated at the AGM in May 2026. The meetings would continue to take place in working hours.

CS8 PRIORITY SETTING MEETING

Members were asked to discuss issues they wished the attending representative to raise on behalf of the community at the next Priority Setting meeting.

Following the change of venue for the previous meeting, Cllr Herber asked for confirmation of the venue for the next meeting. The representative from Bedfordshire Police apologised for the venue change and confirmed that the meeting would be held at Dunstable Police Station on 14th January 2026. The time was yet to be confirmed, but Cllr Herber would be informed.



Members were invited to submit any items they would like included at the meeting. The representative from Bedfordshire Police confirmed that they would supply data prior to the meeting to inform decision making. Members requested data for the previous three months, as the absence of police representation at previous meetings meant figures had not been made available.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services suggested that topics for the Priority Setting meeting be prioritised to ensure the most important items were addressed. Members were requested to provide feedback on priorities ahead of the January meeting.

Resolved: To agree on issues to be raised at the next Priority Setting Meeting.

CS9 CBC COMMUNITY & PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

An officer from Central Bedfordshire Council's Safer Communities & Partnership Team was not available to provide an update.

The Chair informed Members that an officer from CBC had stated that it was unlikely that a representative would attend future meetings. It was expected that the Head of Environmental and Community Services would be contacted regarding this matter.

CS10 REDEPLOYABLE CCTV CAMERA LOCATIONS

Members received a schedule of redeployable camera locations.

In light of the police report, Members considered whether to move the redeployable cameras to alternative locations or keep them in place. Members agreed to leave the cameras in situ:

- Sundon Road (an application had been submitted to relocate this camera to Thorn Park)
- Parkside Drive
- Tithe Farm Road
- Village Green Pavilion

The representative from Bedfordshire Police informed Members that a map would be generated identifying areas likely to benefit from camera surveillance. It was suggested that cameras should also be placed in areas identified through the Priority Setting process.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services had been tasked with reviewing CCTV options available to HRTC. The review was being undertaken, and the results would be brought back to this sub-committee. If it were decided that additional cameras were required, this proposal, including costings, would go to the Town Council for consideration.

Resolved: To agree, on the advice of the Police or other reliable information, on the location of the redeployable cameras.



CS11 "WATCH" SCHEMES UPDATE

Members provided a verbal update in respect of the "Watch" schemes within the Parish. Members suggested that the schemes be held at a set location with high footfall rather than engage in patrols.

It was highlighted that shoplifting and ASB were both regular incidents, especially in the Bedford Square units. The Head of Environmental and Community Services stressed the need to report incidents, thereby improving the accuracy of crime statistics and potentially freeing up police resources.

It was suggested that HRTC should engage with members of the various existing 'watch' schemes and encourage representatives to attend meetings to provide Members with updates. Members expressed a wish to improve engagement with schemes and were keen to see increased publicity. The representative from Bedfordshire Police informed Members that they could assist with promoting the schemes and suggested that residents could access the Beds Connected site, which showed upcoming events.

CS12 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Members voted on the exclusion of the press and public:

Proposed by: Cllr Herber Seconded by: Cllr Cooper

Votes in favour: 3

Resolved: In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press are to 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.

CS13 POLICE REPORT

Members received a report regarding Operation Hana.

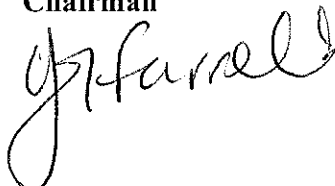
Members were updated on total crime figures and ASB figures for the previous month. The report also provided information on current High Demand Locations and officer updates following Op Hana patrols.

Members agreed on the areas of focus for Op Hana to remain the same.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 12:15 pm.

Dated this 21st day of January 2026

Chairman



Houghton Regis Town Council
Community Safety Sub-Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
Wednesday 21st January 2026 at 11.00 am

Present: Councillors: Y Farrell (Chairman)
J Carroll (Sub)
E Cooper
T McMahon
C Slough

Police: PC Umar Ajaz Bedfordshire Police

Officers: Ian Haynes Head of Environmental & Community Services
Bianca Nagle Interim Project Manager

CS14 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Herber (Cllr Carroll substituted).

CS15 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

CS16 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

CS17 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th December 2025

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the first Community Safety Sub-Committee held on the 17th December 2025, and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

CS18 REDEPLOYABLE CCTV CAMERA LOCATIONS

Members received a schedule of redeployable camera locations.

In light of the police report, Members considered whether there was a need to move the redeployable cameras to different locations or whether they should remain where they were.

There was a continued delay in relocating the Sundon Road camera while CBC completed its assessments.

Members agreed to leave the cameras in situ:



Resolved: To agree, on the advice of the Police or other reliable information, on the location of the redeployable cameras.

“WATCH” SCHEMES UPDATE

Streetwatch reported an incident of fly tipping, which had since been cleared.

Bedfordshire Police had held an engagement event in Bedford Square.

Nuisance bikes remained an issue. To clarify the current situation, the Head of Environment and Community Services confirmed that a consultation is underway on a Public Space Protection Order regarding nuisance vehicles.

CS19 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Members voted on the exclusion of the press and public:

Proposed by: Cllr Slough

Seconded by: Cllr Carroll

Votes in favour: 5

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.

CS20 POLICE REPORT

Members received a report regarding Operation Hana and were updated on total crime figures and ASB figures for the previous month.

The report provided information on current High Demand Locations and officer updates following Op Hana patrols.

Members agreed for the areas of focus for Op Hana to remain the same.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 12:30 pm

Dated this 18th day of March 2026



Chairman

Houghton Regis Town Council
Community Safety Sub-Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
Wednesday 18th March 2026 at 11.00 am

Present: Councillors: Y Farrell (Chairman)
E Cooper
M Herber
T McMahan
C Slough

Officers: Ian Haynes Head of Environmental &
Community Services
Bianca Nagle Project Manager

Also Present: J Carroll

CS21 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

CS22 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

CS23 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

CS24 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 21st January 2026.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 21st January 2026, and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

CS25 REDEPLOYABLE CCTV CAMERA LOCATIONS

Members received a schedule of redeployable camera locations.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services had been in contact with Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) regarding the Service Level Agreement (SLA) and the delays in responding to requests for camera relocations. Members were informed that a number of issues within CBC had caused the delay, but that the situation was likely to improve in the near future.



Members questioned whether Houghton Regis Town Council could withdraw from the contract if CBC were failing to deliver on the SLA, and whether there were alternatives worth pursuing. The Head of Environmental and Community Services reminded Members that ongoing discussions were underway on an outstanding resolution regarding CCTV. HRTC had already expressed disappointment with service provision and informed CBC that alternatives were being explored following a recommendation from Bedfordshire Police. Members were advised that HRTC could request the work to be done at pace, and the situation would be revisited in May.

Members enquired whether consideration should be given to purchasing a more sophisticated camera model. The Head of Environmental and Community Services acknowledged that this could be explored, but advised making a final decision on potential alternatives to CCTV before proceeding.

Cllr McMahon proposed that the addition of 'to request CBC proceed at pace with the current request and provide an update ahead of the May meeting' be made to the resolution.

Seconded by Cllr Slough
In favour: 5

Members were requested to vote on the substantive:

Proposed by: Cllr McMahon Seconded by: Cllr Slough

Members voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

Resolved: To agree, on the advice of the Police or other reliable information, on the location of the redeployable cameras.

CS26 "WATCH" SCHEMES UPDATE

Members received a verbal update on the "Watch" schemes within the Parish.

Cllr Herber had formed part of Street Watch patrols in Bedford Square. There had been continued incidences of shoplifting. ASB and damage, especially during the half-term.

CS27 ACCESS FOR THE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES

Members were asked to discuss potential target areas where poor parking might prevent Fire & Rescue Services' access in an emergency.

HRTC had been in contact with the local Fire Service Manager who had requested Members discuss the areas where access was an issue and to decide on those to be targeted.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services suggested that, to maximise impact, focus should be on those streets with a single route of access. After some discussion,

Members agreed that precedence should be given to the following locations: Cumberland Street, Clarkes Way, St Michaels Avenue, Houghton Park Road and Elm Park Close.

Proposed by MH Seconded by: EC

Voted in favour: 5

Resolved: To agree on the advice on priority areas.

CS28 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Members voted on the exclusion of the press and public:

Proposed by: Cllr Herber Seconded by: Cllr McMahon

Votes in favour: 5

Cllr Carroll left the meeting.

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.

CS29 POLICE REPORT

Members received an update regarding Operation Hana.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 12:05 pm

Dated this 15th day of April 2026

Chairman





HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Community Services Committee Workplan 2025/26

The following Workplan indicates anticipated specific reports in addition to regular/standard reports¹:

Committee date	Report Heading	Completed/deferred/removed
21st July 2025	Vice Chair	Completed
	Committee Functions & Terms of Reference	Completed
	Staff (Community Services) Forecast	Completed
	Town Crier Review	Completed
3rd November 2025	Budget Requests inc staff salaries	Completed
	Community Services Fees & Charges	Completed
10th November 2025	Grants (Key Partner, Small Capital grants)	Completed
	Review of Grants Scheme 2026/27	Completed
23rd February 2026	Central Community Hub	To be removed, as this now sits with the Community Venue T&F Group under Project H.
	Community Conference (Corp Plan 116)	To be deferred until Project H is up and running.
	Communications: Community Strategy Review of the effectiveness of established methods of communications, including social media, website and residents' newsletter	Completed

¹ Include: Draft Minutes, Income & Expenditure Report, Minutes from Sub Committees, Working groups and Committee Workplan

	Grants (Small Capital grants)	Completed
27th April 2026	Heritage open days (Corp Plan 47) & links to other Regis towns and villages (Corp Plan 100)	Completed
	Annual review of contracts inc Town Centre toilets, bulk waste, Christmas lights, and Bedfordshire Police	Completed

20/04/2026

Houghton Regis Town Council Current Year

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 20/04/2026

Month No: 12

7. Income and Expenditure Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available
<u>Community Services</u>					
<u>302 Community Services</u>					
1078 Grants & Donations Received	12,500	0	(12,500)		
1087 External Grant - CBC Youth Wor	5,000	0	(5,000)		
1091 Income Miscellaneous	699	2,500	1,801		
Community Services :- Income	18,199	2,500	(15,699)		
4042 Equipment Repairs & Maintenance	4,236	5,000	764	821	(57)
4221 SUMMER PLAYScheme	5,085	6,000	915	750	165
4226 Youth services	24,708	28,500	3,792	1,550	2,242
4227 Community Services	14,509	6,000	(8,509)		(8,509)
4230 Public Toilets	22,355	22,000	(355)		(355)
4232 Christmas Lights	13,000	13,000	0		0
Community Services :- Indirect Expenditure	83,893	80,500	(3,393)	3,121	(6,514)
Net Income over Expenditure	(65,694)	(78,000)	(12,306)		
<u>303 Communications</u>					
4029 Promotional Material	554	5,000	4,446		4,446
4033 NEWSLETTER	1,612	7,000	5,388		5,388
Communications :- Indirect Expenditure	2,166	12,000	9,834	0	9,834
Net Expenditure	(2,166)	(12,000)	(9,834)		
<u>304 Events</u>					
1094 Income from Sponsors	1,021	1,000	(21)		
1097 Income - Council Events	3,294	4,000	706		
Events :- Income	4,315	5,000	685		
4222 COMMUNITY EVENTS	63,545	64,500	955	(208)	1,163
Events :- Indirect Expenditure	63,545	64,500	955	(208)	1,163
Net Income over Expenditure	(59,230)	(59,500)	(270)		
<u>305 Community Grants</u>					
4203 MAYORS CHRISTMAS APPEAL FUND	5,260	5,500	240		240
4218 Grants (WB) Project Scheme	2,890	4,000	1,110		1,110
4220 Grants (WB) Key Partners	14,988	15,000	13		13
4235 Cost Of Living Crisis Donation	5,760	7,200	1,440		1,440
Community Grants :- Indirect Expenditure	28,898	31,700	2,802	0	2,802
Net Expenditure	(28,898)	(31,700)	(2,802)		

Continued over page

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 20/04/2026

Month No: 12

7. Income and Expenditure Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available
<u>306 Community Safety</u>					
4046 Enviro - Crime	9,033	10,000	967		967
4059 OTHER PROFESSIONAL FEES	38,043	40,000	1,957		1,957
5033 Tfr from CBC Bulk Waste Res	(4,800)	0	4,800		4,800
Community Safety :- Indirect Expenditure	42,276	50,000	7,724	0	7,724
Net Expenditure	(42,276)	(50,000)	(7,724)		
<u>307 Civic Services</u>					
4101 MAYORS ALLOWANCE	1,847	4,500	2,653		2,653
4106 Mayors Civic Events	3,416	4,000	584	435	149
4121 CIVIC REGALIA	423	1,400	977	530	447
4122 Civic Fund Expenses	82	200	119		119
Civic Services :- Indirect Expenditure	5,768	10,100	4,332	965	3,367
Net Expenditure	(5,768)	(10,100)	(4,332)		
<u>392 Comm Serv Staff Costs</u>					
4001 STAFF SALARIES	200,634	221,000	20,366		20,366
4002 EMPLOYERS N.I	25,460	27,120	1,660		1,660
4003 EMPLOYERS SUPERANN.	51,675	60,568	8,893		8,893
4005 STAFF OVERTIME	9,041	10,000	959		959
Comm Serv Staff Costs :- Indirect Expenditure	286,810	318,688	31,878	0	31,878
Net Expenditure	(286,810)	(318,688)	(31,878)		
<u>399 Community Capital & Projects</u>					
4034 WEBSITE COSTS	695	1,000	305		305
4228 Community Facilities	0	6,800	6,800		6,800
4804 CAP-New Christmas Lights	4,848	6,000	1,152		1,152
Community Capital & Projects :- Indirect Expenditure	5,543	13,800	8,257	0	8,257
Net Expenditure	(5,543)	(13,800)	(8,257)		
Community Services :- Income	22,514	7,500	(15,014)		
Expenditure	518,899	581,288	62,389	3,878	58,511
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(496,385)	(573,788)	(77,403)		

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 20/04/2026

Month No: 12

7. Income and Expenditure Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available
Grand Totals:- Income	22,514	7,500	(15,014)		
Expenditure	518,899	581,288	62,389	3,878	58,511
Net Income over Expenditure	(496,385)	(573,788)	(77,403)		
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(496,385)	(573,788)	(77,403)		



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Communication Strategy

Date of Approval:	
Date of Review:	
Date of Re approval:	

Contents

- 1. Introduction & Purpose**
- 2. Strategic Objectives**
- 3. Current Position & Areas for Improvement**
- 4. Key Audiences & Message Framework**
- 5. Internal Communications Process**
- 6. Supporting Tools & Templates**
- 7. Governance & Compliance**
- 8. Monitoring & Review**

1. Introduction & Purpose

This Communications & Engagement Strategy outlines how Houghton Regis Town Council will communicate effectively with residents, businesses, partners, the media, and other stakeholders.

Effective communication is fundamental to building trust, strengthening relationships, and ensuring transparency in local governance. This strategy establishes clear principles, objectives, and processes to ensure communications are consistent, timely, inclusive, and aligned with the Council's values and statutory responsibilities.

2. Strategic Objectives

This strategy aims to:

- Ensure clear, timely, and consistent communication across all channels.
- Support meaningful community engagement and transparency in decision-making.
- Improve internal processes so communications are planned, complete, and delivered efficiently.
- Align all external messaging with the Council's policies, values, and statutory obligations.
- Strengthen the Council's reputation as a trusted and accessible local authority.

Core Objectives

- Strengthen relationships with the community through accessible and inclusive messaging.
- Use the most appropriate channels for each audience, maximising reach and relevance.
- Provide staff with clear processes and tools to submit complete and timely communication requests.
- Maintain compliance with relevant legislation and Council policies.
- Ensure communications remain politically neutral, accurate, and proportionate.

3. Current Position & Areas for Improvement

The Council recognises opportunities to strengthen its communications framework to ensure consistency, efficiency, and proactive engagement.

Areas identified for improvement include:

- Formalising communication request processes to ensure clarity and consistency.
- Embedding structured planning and lead times to support proactive delivery.

- Strengthening consistency in tone, branding, and formatting across all communications.
- Reducing reactive communications by improving forward planning.
- Enhancing internal coordination to support timely and complete information sharing.

4. Key Audiences & Message Framework

The Council recognises that different audiences require different channels, tone, and emphasis. Communications will be tailored accordingly.

Audience	Preferred Channels	Key Themes / Priorities	Core Messaging Approach
Residents	Facebook, website news, printed newsletters, email updates	Transparency, service updates, local events, and community involvement	“We are committed to keeping residents informed and involved in local decisions.”
Local Businesses	Email newsletters, LinkedIn, and networking events	Economic development, business support, and partnership	“We value our local businesses as a vital part of our community.”
Partner Agencies	Direct email, Microsoft Teams, joint press releases	Collaboration, shared objectives, service alignment	“Working together for the benefit of our residents.”
Media	Press releases, email briefings, statements	Accuracy, accountability, data-led information	“Houghton Regis Town Council is dedicated to transparency and providing accurate information.”
Visitors	Website ‘Visit’ section, event promotions, tourism	Attractions, hospitality, events	“A warm welcome awaits you in Houghton Regis.”

	partnerships		
Community Groups & Volunteers	Email updates, social media tagging, volunteer bulletins	Grants, opportunities, recognition	“Your contribution makes a real difference.”

All messaging will reflect the Council’s commitment to openness, respect, inclusivity, and professionalism.

5. Internal Communications Process

To ensure quality and efficiency, all communication activities will follow a structured process.

Process Overview

1. **Request Submission**
Staff must complete the Marketing Content Request Form **5 working days** before delivery of simple social media posts, and 8-12 weeks in advance of seasonal or major events.
 - a. *This allows adequate time for design, review & advertisement scheduling. Please ensure all content, dates, and approvals are ready before submitting, as incomplete requests may delay delivery.*
2. **Review & Acknowledgement**
The Communications Officer will review submissions within **2-5 working days** and confirm acceptance or request additional information.
3. **Content Development**
Drafts and designs will be produced in line with branding guidelines, accessibility standards, and approved wording.
4. **Approval**
In most cases, final content must be approved by the requester or relevant manager before publication.
5. **Publication / Distribution**
The Communications Officer will schedule and publish content through the agreed channels.

6. Supporting Tools & Templates

To support consistency and efficiency, the following tools will be implemented:

- **Marketing Content Request Form (Microsoft Forms)**
Captures purpose, key messages, target audience, deadlines, approvals, and required assets.
- **Approved Wording Bank**
Pre-drafted content for:
 - Meeting notices
 - Service updates
 - Event promotion
 - Emergency communications
 - Volunteer recognition
 - Seasonal messaging
- **Audience & Message Framework Guide**
Quick-reference tool for selecting the correct tone and channel.

7. Governance & Compliance

This strategy operates alongside the Council's statutory and policy framework, including:

- Social Media Policy
- IT Policy
- Data Protection Policy (UK GDPR compliance)
- Accessibility requirements (WCAG 2.2 AA where applicable)

All communications must be:

- Accurate and factually correct
- Lawful and compliant
- Politically neutral
- Accessible and inclusive
- Respectful and proportionate

Failure to adhere to these standards may result in communications being delayed or withheld.

8. Monitoring & Review

This strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains fit for purpose and responsive to community needs, digital developments, and legislative changes.

Performance indicators may include:

- Engagement metrics (reach, click-through rates, feedback)
- Adherence to lead times
- Reduction in incomplete submissions
- Stakeholder satisfaction feedback

Appendix A

Annual Marketing Plan (January – December)

Core Strategy – All Year Round

- **Channels:** Website, Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), LinkedIn, local press, community noticeboards, email newsletters.
- **Content Mix:**
 - **Informative:** Service updates, council meetings, consultations, planning notices.
 - **Engagement-focused:** Polls, Q&As, “meet your councillor” spotlights.
 - **Celebratory:** Resident achievements, awards, local success stories.
 - **Event Promotion:** Seasonal events, activities, public meetings, consultations.
 - **Campaigns:** Health & wellbeing, environmental initiatives, safety, volunteering.
- **Brand Consistency:** Use agreed colours, fonts, logos, and tone of voice.
- **Performance Tracking:** Monthly analytics review — reach, engagement, click-throughs, event attendance.

Month-by-Month

January – “New Year, New Opportunities”

- **Key Themes:** New year greetings from the Mayor, community resolutions, council budget consultations.
- **Campaigns:** Promote volunteering opportunities; call for community grant applications.
- **Content:** “What’s on in 2026” preview; meet the staff/councillor features.
- **Event Focus:** Winter health tips, recycling reminders after Christmas.

February – “Community Connections”

- **Key Themes:** Local history month, Valentine’s “We Love Houghton Regis” social campaign.
- **Campaigns:** Share local business spotlights; push for spring event sign-ups.
- **Content:** Highlight warm spaces and cost-of-living support.
- **Event Focus:** Half-term family activities.

March – “Spring into Action”

- **Key Themes:** Spring clean-ups, environmental volunteering.
- **Campaigns:** Great British Spring Clean; garden competition launch.
- **Content:** Promote green bin collections and recycling schemes.
- **Event Focus:** International Women's Day / Mother's Day activities.

April – “Celebrating Our Community”

- **Key Themes:** Easter, school holiday activities.
- **Campaigns:** Promote upcoming summer events, youth engagement projects.
- **Content:** Showcase council-funded projects.
- **Event Focus:** Easter trails, park activities.

May – “Your Voice, Your Town”

- **Key Themes:** Local democracy and civic pride.
- **Campaigns:** Promote Annual Town Meeting; encourage participation in consultations.
- **Content:** Election or mayoral announcements (if applicable).
- **Event Focus:** Bank holiday events, local fairs.

June – “Summer of Engagement”

- **Key Themes:** Health, well-being, and outdoor events.
- **Campaigns:** Volunteer Week, Bike Week, Carers Week.
- **Content:** Park use guides, summer safety messages.
- **Event Focus:** Summer fête, music events, Armed Forces Day.

July – “Schools Out, Fun's In”

- **Key Themes:** Youth & family engagement.
- **Campaigns:** Promote free/low-cost summer activities.
- **Content:** Share parks & play areas map, summer holiday programmes.
- **Event Focus:** Community sports days, summer reading challenge.

August – “Pride in Place”

- **Key Themes:** Environmental and heritage.
- **Campaigns:** Promote heritage open days; photo competition for residents.
- **Content:** Share summer recap stories.
- **Event Focus:** Allotment open days, summer clean-ups.

September – “Back to Business”

- **Key Themes:** Skills, learning, and local economy.
- **Campaigns:** Promote adult learning, skills workshops, and Anglia in Bloom Results
- **Content:** Share council projects starting in autumn.
- **Event Focus:** Heritage Open Days, autumn events.

October – “Community Spirit”

- **Key Themes:** Safety, Halloween, autumn events.
- **Campaigns:** Fire safety tips, Bonfire Night safety.
- **Content:** Warm space updates; prepare for winter campaigns.
- **Event Focus:** Halloween events, autumn litter picks.

November – “Remembrance & Reflection”

- **Key Themes:** Remembrance, kindness, community giving.
- **Campaigns:** Poppy Appeal support, volunteer recruitment for Christmas events.
- **Content:** Winter service updates (gritting, bin collections).
- **Event Focus:** Remembrance Day services, Christmas lights switch-on promotion.

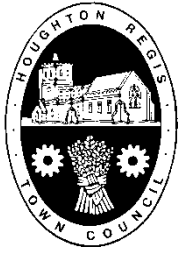
December – “Festive Houghton Regis”

- **Key Themes:** Celebration, community warmth.
- **Campaigns:** Festive events, charity drives.
- **Content:** Mayor’s Christmas message, “Year in Review” post.
- **Event Focus:** Christmas markets, carol services, New Year’s Eve messages.

Quarterly Reviews

At the end of each quarter (March, June, September, December), review:

- Engagement metrics
- Event attendance
- Campaign outcomes
- Adjust the next quarter’s focus.



COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 9.

Date: 27th April 2026

Title: The Regis Group Update

Purpose of the Report: To inform Members of the formation of the Regis Group, outline Houghton Regis Town Council's involvement in the inaugural meeting, and present the agreed actions and next steps arising from that meeting.

Contact Officer: Ian Haynes

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Members:

- 1. To note the formation and purpose of the Regis Group.**
- 2. To support officer engagement in the ongoing development of the group.**
- 3. To endorse the agreed actions and proposed collaborative approach outlined in this report.**
- 4. To support the proposal for Houghton Regis Town Council to explore securing or appointing a Town Crier, with a view to participating in the Bognor Regis Town Crier Competition as part of the Regis Group collaboration and civic promotion activities.**

2. BACKGROUND

The Regis Group is a newly formed informal network of town and parish councils linked by the shared use of "Regis" within their council names. The group aims to foster collaboration, share good practice, promote civic identity, and develop joint opportunities for engagement and promotion.

The first meeting of the Regis Group was held online and attended by representatives from:

Houghton Regis Town Council
Bere Regis Parish Council
Lyme Regis Town Council
Bognor Regis Town Council

The meeting was also supported by staff from the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

Following the meeting, Grafton Regis Parish Council and Beeston Parish Council were invited to join future discussions and initiatives.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

The initial meeting focused on establishing early, practical actions to create momentum and visibility for the Regis Group. The following actions and next steps were agreed:

Social Media and Website Links - It was agreed that the first step would be to create mutual links between each council's digital platforms to raise awareness of the Regis connection.

Houghton Regis Town Council shared its platforms as follows:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/HoughtonRegisTC>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/houghtonregiste>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/houghton-regis-town-council>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@houghtonregis-tc>

Each participating council will share details of its own platform so connections can be established. Once links are in place, each council will provide one event poster or promotional item for mutual sharing across platforms (one event per council).

Community Communications - The group agreed to promote the Regis connection through traditional and digital communications, including:

- Town criers
- Newsletters
- Bulletins and booklets

Houghton Regis Town Council will include an article on the Regis Group in the next edition of the Town Crier and will share this with the wider group once published.

Civic Gifts - It was agreed that any civic gifts exchanged should be modest and symbolic. Houghton Regis Town Council will send a Regis Lion to each participating council once they have been delivered. Upon receipt, councils will create a social media post acknowledging the gift and tagging the relevant Regis councils.

Civic Days - Councils with upcoming Civic Days were invited to share dates with the group. Although Houghton Regis Town Council's Civic Day has already taken place,

Members and officers may be able to support or attend other Regis civic events where appropriate.

Joint Events - In the longer term, the group expressed a desire to:

- Attend or arrange a shared event on a common date
- Involve mascots, Mayors/Chairs, councillors, and staff
- Promote civic pride and the unique Regis identity

Councils were invited to suggest existing events that could provide an opportunity for collective attendance.

4. NEXT STEPS

Once:

- Social media connections are established, and
- One proposed event has been received from each council.

A further virtual Regis Group meeting will be arranged to review progress and agree on future activities.

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.

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

4.2 Identify external/ partnership funding sources for council projects.

4.6 To actively consider and weigh the impact of new and existing initiatives and services.

6. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- There are no corporate implications arising from the recommendations.

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations.

Crime and Disorder Implications

- There are no crime and disorder implications arising from the recommendations.

Financial Implications

- At this stage, financial implications are minimal and limited to officer time and the provision of small civic gifts already approved within existing budgets. The

appointment of a Town Crier may be considered during the 27/28 budget-setting process.

Risk Implications

- The initiative presents low risk. Reputational risk is mitigated through positive collaboration, shared promotion, and alignment with civic values.

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.
- The review does not introduce or propose any actions that would discriminate against any protected characteristic.

Climate Change Implications

- Meetings are being held virtually where possible, reducing travel and associated carbon emissions. Any future joint events will be assessed individually..

Press Contact

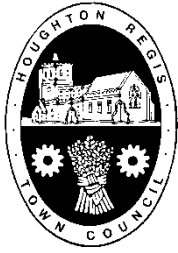
- There are no press implications arising from the recommendations

7. CONCLUSION

The Regis Group presents a positive and proportionate opportunity for Houghton Regis Town Council to strengthen civic identity, share best practice, and collaborate with similarly named councils across the country. The initial actions agreed are practical, low-cost, and focus on visibility, community engagement, and celebrating shared heritage.

Participation in wider civic traditions, including the potential appointment of a Town Crier and competing in the **Bognor Regis Town Crier Competition**, would further enhance Houghton Regis's civic presence, strengthen links within the Regis Group, and support pride of place through a highly visible and well-established ceremonial role.

Members are therefore asked to note the progress made to date, support continued involvement in the Regis Group, and endorse further exploration of civic opportunities arising from this collaboration.



COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 10.

Date: 27th April 2026

Title: Annual Review of Committee Service Contracts

Purpose of the Report: To provide an annual review of key service contracts and partnership agreements, and to identify any required actions.

Contact Officer: Ian Haynes

1. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

1. Notes the annual review of key service contracts and partnership arrangements.
2. Notes that the Town Centre Public Toilets contract is currently out of contract and endorses officers proceeding with a tender exercise.
3. Notes the confirmed Bulk Waste Collection pricing and budget provision for 2026/27.
4. Notes that the Christmas Lights contract is in place until 31 October 2029.
5. Notes that funding for Operation Hanna 2026/27 is subject to consideration of a new Service Level Agreement by the Community Safety Sub-Committee.

2. BACKGROUND

Houghton Regis Town Council delivers several services through contractual arrangements and partnership working to support residents, visitors, and the town centre. An annual review supports transparency, good governance, and assurance that services continue to represent value for money and align with council priorities.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 Town Centre Public Toilets

The Town Centre public toilets provide an essential facility for the town centre.

- The previous contract has ended, and the service is currently **out of contract**.

- Officers are preparing to **undertake a tender exercise** to secure a new contract and ensure continued service provision and compliance with procurement requirements.

Benefits:

- Continuity of an essential public facility.
- Improved contractual clarity and service monitoring.

Risks:

- Short-term procurement risk mitigated through timely tendering.

3.2 Bulk Waste Collection

The Bulk Waste Collection service assists residents with the disposal of large household items and helps reduce fly-tipping.

2026/27 Financial Position:

- Contractor price: **£69.80 per collection**
- Resident charge with 50% subsidy: **£34.90 per unit**
- Confirmed budget (April 2026 – March 2027): **£3,600**
- This equates to **103 bulk waste collections**

Benefits:

- Affordable access for residents.
- Environmental benefits and reduction in fly-tipping.

3.3 Christmas Lights

The Christmas Lights contract supports seasonal activity, town centre vitality, and civic pride.

- The service has been **tendered**.
- The current contract runs until **31 October 2029**, providing long-term certainty.

Benefits:

- Budget certainty and reduced procurement risk.
- Continued enhancement of the town centre during the festive season.

3.4 Bedfordshire Police – Operation Hanna

The Council works in partnership with Bedfordshire Police to support community safety initiatives, including Operation Hanna.

- Funding has been requested for **2026/27**.
- A **new Service Level Agreement (SLA)** has been requested.
- The SLA will be considered by the **Community Safety Sub-Committee** at the appropriate time.

Benefits:

- Supports reassurance, engagement, and partnership working.
- Aligns with the Council’s community safety priorities.

4. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

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

1.3 Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.

2 **Local Services and Facilities: To provide a broad range of high quality services and facilities for our residents, visitors and businesses**

2.1 Work with partners to improve the quality and accessibility of the public realm in the town centre.

2.2 Continue to work with key partners to address crime and anti-social behaviour.

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

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

- Procurement and contract management are undertaken in line with the Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders. Tendering of the Town Centre toilets will ensure compliance.

Crime and Disorder Implications

- aligns with the HRTC Corporate Plan priority 2.2

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations

Risk Implications

- Routine contract monitoring mitigates service delivery and reputational risk. The toilets contract risk is being addressed through procurement.

Equalities Implications

Include this statement:

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.

The services reviewed are accessible and do not disadvantage any protected group.

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

This annual review confirms that key service contracts and partnership arrangements continue to provide essential services and community benefits. Clear actions are in place to address the Town Centre Public Toilets procurement; bulk waste provision remains affordable and within budget; Christmas lighting is secured long term; and community safety funding will be considered through the appropriate governance route.