

**Town Council**  
**Minutes of the meeting held**  
**5<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 7.00pm**

Present:	Councillors:	C Copleston J Carroll D Dixon-Wilkinson Y Farrell S Goodchild D Jones M S Kennedy T McMahan R Morgan A Slough S Thorne K Wattingham	Town Mayor       Retiring Town Mayor
	Officers:	Clare Evans Louise Senior Sarah Gelsthorp	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Services Civic and Events Officer
	Public:	7	

**11592 ELECTION OF THE TOWN MAYOR**

The retiring Town Mayor, Cllr McMahan, invited nominations for the position of Town Mayor for the period May 2021 to May 2022.

Nominee	Cllr C Copleston	Nominated by:	Cllr M Kennedy
		Seconded by:	Cllr A Slough

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote Cllr Copleston was duly elected.

The new Town Mayor read and signed the 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office'. The new Town Mayor retired to receive the Chain of Office.

At this point the new Mayor adopted her role as Chairman and thanked councillors for giving her the opportunity and gave an acceptance speech.

*Councillors, friends, family members and members of the public, I would like to thank my fellow councillors for electing me as your mayor to serve for the forthcoming year. May I take this opportunity to thank Cllr McMahan for her contribution as Mayor, and Cllr Thorne as deputy mayor of Houghton Regis over the past year. I also look forward to working with the new Deputy Mayor in the year ahead.*

*I feel it is both an honour and a privilege to accept this position as Mayor and I very much look forward to this coming year, meeting and greeting members of the community, attending events and functions both locally and further afield as requested. I will carry out my duties with pride and dignity and to the best of my ability. It has been a challenging and difficult time as we all faced a global pandemic over the past year, but as we move*

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*forwards, towards better and brighter times, it is essential that we continue to work together, to stay safe and be kind to one another.*

*I look forward to working with the staff of Houghton Regis Town Council who are an exceptional and dedicated team and who do an outstanding job here at the town council.*

A vote of thanks to the retiring Mayor was invited.

Cllr Carroll proposed a vote of thanks to the retiring Town Mayor, Cllr McMahon, noting that the term was initially for four months which led on to the following year due to Covid, with a special acknowledgment for all her fundraising achievements during this difficult year, much of which had been virtual.

Cllr McMahon gave a retiring speech.

Highlighted was the exceptionally difficult year it had been with the serious impact Covid had had on lives. Despite many events being moved online, money had been raised for her chosen charities with additional support given to extra charities in response to the pandemic. Events had been a stay at home quiz, a honour based plant sale from her home, a Christmas card competition, a Halloween pumpkin carving competition and a Christmas raffle held live from her living room. The launch of the poppy appeal in October was attended and she was privileged to have attended the wreath laying ceremony in person. Christmas gifts had been sent to schools as Santa's Grotto had been cancelled, but it was hoped that the Santa float had brought some cheer to local residents. Easter eggs had been sent to local schools both in 2020 and 2021. Cllr McMahon had been honoured to attend some online events which included the High Sherriff's Commissioning Service for the Deputy Lieutenant and High Sherriff's award ceremony and had created several videos for Houghton Regis Town Council social media sites. Despite the limitations of the term, through fundraising and donations, £1,000 was donated to Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, £1,000 to shelter, £100 to Royal British Legion, arts and craft equipment was sent to the children's centre and a further £200 to the food bank.

Special thanks went to the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Thorne. Cllr Thorne received the Past Mayors Badge in appreciation of the services provided during the course of her deputy mayoral year to the Town Council and its community.

Cllr McMahon advised members that the consort badge would be given to her niece for her support, however further thanks and gratitude went to Cllrs Carroll, Wattingham, Farrell, Goodchild and Copleston for their support throughout her term. Additional thanks went to former Cllr David Abbott and his wife who attended and supported events. Special thanks also went to Civic and Events Officer who kept her on track. Final words were to wish the new Town Mayor the very best of luck.

The Town Mayor, Cllr Copleston, welcomed her appointment and announced that her charities for the year were the Firefighters Charity and SSAFA. She had also chosen a theme for the coming year of dignity and kindness. Cllr Copleston announced that her husband would be her consort for her year in term.

## **11593 ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR**

The Town Mayor invited nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor for the period May 2021 to May 2022.

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Nominee	Cllr Y Farrell	Nominated by:	Cllr Jones
		Seconded by:	Cllr Kennedy

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote Cllr Farrell was duly elected as the new Deputy Town Mayor.

The new Deputy Mayor read and signed the 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office' and adorned the Chain of Office.

#### **11594 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

#### **11595 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

#### **11596 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

None.

#### **11597 MINUTES**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021.

**Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

#### **11598 COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP MINUTES**

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

Corporate Services Committee	None to present
Community Services Committee	None to present
Environment & Leisure Committee	None to present
Planning Committee	8th March 2021 and 29th March 2021
Partnership Committee	26th January 2021

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

New Office Provisions Sub Committee	None to present
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To receive the minutes of the following working group and consider any recommendations contained therein

Proposed New Cemetery Working Group	None to present
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**Resolved: To receive the Minutes detailed above.**

#### **11599 COUNCIL CALENDAR FOR 2021-22**

The draft Council Calendar, including meeting dates, member training and briefing dates, and council and civic event dates, for 2021/22 was presented at the Town Council meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021. At this meeting Members noted the draft Council Calendar and recommended its approval at the Annual Meeting of Town Council, subject to some alterations as listed under Minute 11563, Strategic Policies 2021/22. In addition, the following alterations had been included:

Town Council changed from 28<sup>th</sup> June 2021 to 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021

Community Services Committee changed from 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021 to 28<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Members requested that two additional anomalies be amended:

Meetings shown on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021 should show as Monday

Members open session shown as 21<sup>st</sup> February 2021 changed to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021

It was queried whether it was the Town Council's intention to offer member training, in-house or training offered by the BATPC.

*Cllr Dixon-Wilkinson joined the meeting (7.25pm)*

Members were advised that NALC would continue to offer extensive training which should cover most training requirements, however in-house training could be organised for specific requirements.

The approval of the calendar of council meetings including the time and place of ordinary meetings of the council up to an including the next annual meeting of the council was in accordance with Standing Order 4.j.ix.

From 7<sup>th</sup> May the provision under 'The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020' for the council to be able to meet remotely was removed. However, the difficulty was that for a period of time after 7<sup>th</sup> May national restrictions were in place which sought to limit the number of households who could meet inside. If the roadmap was followed hopefully this period would only be until 21<sup>st</sup> June. There were a number of council meetings scheduled to take place during this period.

Members were requested to consider how the council should operate during this interim period and were referred to the received report.

Members were advised that for the full Town Council meeting scheduled for the 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021, the Memorial Hall had been booked to allow for social distancing.

- Resolved:**
- 1. To approve the Council Calendar for 2021/22;**
  - 2. From 7<sup>th</sup> May and until national restrictions are lifted for meetings of the council to be held:**
    - in person with restrictions in place on the number of public who can be present and to offer remote access to other Cllrs and members of the public who wish to attend**
    - in accordance with the Guidance Notes for Covid Secure Meetings**

## 11600 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

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

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

The approved Committee Functions & Terms of Reference were reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021. As detailed under Minute 11563, Strategic Policies 2021/22. The amendments suggested were discussed and considered suitable. As such the attached revised Committee Functions & Terms of Reference was presented for formal approval.

**Resolved: To approve the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference.**

## 11601 COMMITTEE, SUB-COMMITTEE & WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Members were requested to:

1. Nominate and approve membership on the Town Council's Committees, Sub Committees, Working and other Groups;
2. To appoint Chairs of Standing Committees accordingly.

The following summarises the committee structure and associated membership:

### *Standing Committees*

Corporate Services Committee	7 members
Environment & Leisure Committee	7 members
Community Services Committee	7 members
Planning Committee	7 members

### *Joint Committees*

Partnership Committee	8 members (4 Town Cllrs & 4 CBC Cllrs)
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### *Sub-Committees*

Complaints Sub-Committee*	3 members
Complaints Appeal Sub-Committee*	3 members
Personnel Sub-Committee*	4 members
Disciplinary, Grievance & Appeals Sub-Committee*	3 members (To be appointed as required)
New Office Provisions Sub Committee	5 members
Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee	6 members

### *Working Groups*

Events Working Group	7 members (up to)
Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group**	3 members
Combating Crime Working Group	5 members

### *Steering Groups*

Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan	5 members
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\* To be appointed from Corporate Services Committee

\*\* To comprise Members who do not sit on Events Working Group

Members were referred to proposed membership details as requested by councillors.

Cllr Jones proposed that he sit on Events Working Group, for the interim, to fill one of the vacancies.

Cllr Kennedy proposed that he sit on Events Working Group to fill one of the vacancies, leaving.

It was suggested that the appointment of Chairs to Standing Committees be deferred and delegated to the first meeting of the Standing Committee. It was highlighted that deferring the appointment of Chairs could cause an administrative issue when composing agendas.

Members suggested for the interim an informal arrangement be agreed for the Standing Committee Chairs from 2020/21 to be the officer point of contact. To enable this to happen the following was proposed:

Suspension of Standing Order 6 D V in order to defer the appointment of committee Chairs until the first meeting of the Standing Committee.

Proposed by: Cllr Wattingham seconded by: Cllr Slough  
All in favour.

Members considered and voted on Recommendation 1:

Proposed by: Cllr Kennedy seconded by: Cllr Jones  
All in favour.

**Resolved: To nominate and approve membership on the Town Council's Committees, Sub Committees, Working and other Groups, as attached.**

## **11602 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

The Town Council was invited to appoint representatives to outside organisations to act as a link between the Town Council and the organisation.

Members received the list of outside organisations with nominations to which the Council appointed representatives in 2021/22. Members were invited to appoint representatives to these outside organisations for 2021/22.

### *Reporting Mechanisms*

Members who were appointed as representatives were requested to attend meetings of the organisations and to report to them items / issues of relevance from Houghton Regis Town Council and in turn to report back to the Town Council or the specified committee on the activities of the organisation. There was a standing item on Town Council agendas to facilitate this.

Members were advised that there was a vacancy on the Bedfordshire Association Town and Parish Councils (BATPC).

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Members were advised that one member of council was invited to sit on the Houghton Regis North Stakeholder Group Committee, however, two members had requested to represent Houghton Regis Town Council: Cllr Carroll and Cllr Jones.

Members agreed to defer the appointment of a representative for the Houghton Regis Aspirations Group until the next Town Partnership Committee meeting.

Cllr Slough stated that she was unable to continue attending CHEWS meetings as they were held during the working day, Cllr Kennedy agreed to attend the next CHEWS meeting scheduled for 8<sup>th</sup> June in lieu of a member being appointed at the Town Council meeting 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021.

Cllr Carroll advised members that he withdrew his interest on sitting on the Houghton Regis North Stakeholder Group Committee.

Cllr Jones was duly appointed to the Houghton Regis North Stakeholder Group Committee.

**Resolved:**

- 1. To appoint the councillor representatives for the listed outside organisations for 2021/22, as attached;**
- 2. To note the reporting back mechanism as set out.**

#### **11603 STANDING ORDERS**

In accordance with Standing Order 4.j.vii. Council was required to review its Standing Orders.

Standing Orders are ‘the written rules of a local council. they are used to confirm a council’s internal organisational and administrative procedures, procurement and procedural matters for meetings’. <sup>1</sup>

The approved Standing Orders were reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021. Standing Orders were presented for formal approval.

**Resolved:**      **To approve Standing Orders.**

#### **11604 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

In accordance with Standing Order 4.j.vii. Council was required to review its Financial Regulations.

Financial Regulations were ‘the “standing orders” of a local council that regulate and control its financial affairs and accounting procedures’. <sup>2</sup>

The approved Financial Regulations were reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021.

Amendments were suggested in relation to the public procurement threshold values which had been altered due to the departure of the UK from the EU. As such the revised Financial Regulations were presented for formal approval.

**Resolved:**      **To approve Financial Regulations.**

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<sup>1</sup> Local Councils Explained, NALC

<sup>2</sup> Local Councils Explained, NALC

**11605 SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

In accordance with Standing Order 4.j.v. Council was required to review its Scheme of Delegation.

The Scheme of Delegation authorises the Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer, Council and Standing Committees of the Council to act with delegated authority in the specific circumstances detailed.

The approved Scheme of Delegation was reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021. The Scheme of Delegation was presented for formal approval.

**Resolved: To approve the Scheme of Delegation.**

**11606 GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE**

In order for the Town Council to continue to use the General Power of Competence it needs to resolve that it met the eligibility criteria (specified below) as contained in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011:

- At least 2/3 of Members are elected at ordinary elections or at a by-election
- The clerk holds the following recognised qualifications
  - (i) The Certificate of Higher Education in Local Policy;
  - (ii) The CiLCA module on the General Power of Competence

**Resolved: To confirm that Houghton Regis Town Council meets the eligibility criteria for the General Power of Competence as contained in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.**

**11607 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS & ON TRAINING SESSIONS ATTENDED**

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

Cllr McMahon provided feedback on queries raised at the Town Partnership Committee meeting regarding parking at Houghton Hall Park, the reopening of toilet facilities and the reopening of the visitor centre.

Cllr McMahon had attended Houghton Hall Park MAG meeting and provided members with an update on the issues raised at the Town Partnership Committee meeting. The car park was currently leased by Whitbread, Central Bedfordshire Council were looking to cease that contract which would allow CBC to utilise this section of the car park. The toilet facilities remain unopened due to Covid restrictions and the need for the building to be Covid compliant.

Cllr Kennedy attended Houghton Hall Park Project Board meeting, a Central Bedfordshire Council Executive member was in attendance and members were advised that discussions were being held regarding the reopening of the visitor centre.

Cllr Thorne updated members on Dial-a-Ride who were hoping to purchase two newer buses and retire the oldest of their fleet.



**11608 WELCOME BACK FUND**

Members were advised that CBC had invited town councils to take advantage of the Government's Welcome Back Fund.

A response to CBC was required by 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

Points to highlight include:

1. Revenue funding only
2. Not to replace committed expenditure
3. Can support neighbourhood centres
4. £15,000 has been allocated to Houghton Regis
5. CBC will require the Council to sign a SLA based around the submitted bid
6. Completion date of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022
7. Can be used for:
  - Communications and public information activity to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely – High Street Ambassadors / Wardens
  - Business facing awareness raising activities to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely
  - Temporary public realm changes to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely
  - Support to promote a safe public environment for a local area's visitor economy – includes events such as a town relaunch, market stall covering, gazebos, signage, lights, benches, green spaces, websites and apps
  - Support local authorities to develop plans for responding to the medium-term impact of Covid-19 including trialling new ideas particularly where these relate to the High Street

Due to the timing of this information being received and the publication of the agenda only preliminary thought had been given to a suitable funding bid. These suggestions were put forward:

1. Welcome back Events in Bedford Square (£4,000), Neptune Square (£2,000) and Hillborough Crescent (£2,000) comprising family-based activities / entertainment
2. Local retail and business app / website to promote the local offer, promote special offers

Other suggestions were welcomed.

Members were requested to nominate two councillors to meet with the Clerk to develop these ideas further and to put forward the bid to CBC.

Members acknowledged that funding would be beneficial for the town. Members highlighted that this funding could be used to develop a town plan.

Members expressed disappointment at the funding allocations with other towns receiving more funding than Houghton Regis.

Members were advised of a revised deadline date for bid submissions of 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

Members agreed for three councillors to work with officers to develop the Houghton Regis Welcome Back Fund bid: Cllr Thorne, Cllr McMahon and Cllr Kennedy.

- Resolved:**
- 1. To support the CBC Welcome Back Fund initiative;**
  - 2. To nominate Cllr Thorne, Cllr McMahon and Cllr Kennedy to work with officers to develop the Houghton Regis Welcome Back Fund bid.**

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.24pm**

**Dated this                      day of                      2021**

**Chairman**



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**HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**  
Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire LU5 5EY

**COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2021/2022**

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**STANDING COMMITTEES – 2021/2022**

**Corporate Services**

Cllrs:

J Carroll, C Copleston, S Goodchild, D Jones, M Kennedy, K Wattingham, **Vacancy**

**Environment & Leisure**

Cllrs:

D Dixon Wilkinson, Y Farrell, T McMahon, R Morgan, A Slough, S Thorne, **Vacancy**

**Planning**

Cllrs:

J Carroll, D Dixon Wilkinson Y Farrell, D Jones, M Kennedy, R Morgan, **Vacancy**

**Community Services**

Cllrs:

C Copleston, T McMahon, S Goodchild, A Slough, S Thorne, K Wattingham, **Vacancy**

**OTHER COMMITTEES – 2021/2022**

**Town Partnership**

Cllrs:

T McMahon, D Jones, K Wattingham, M Kennedy

**SUB-COMMITTEES – 2021/2022**

**Complaints Sub-Committee**

**(Reporting to Town Council)**

Cllrs: To be appointed as required.

**Complaints Appeal Sub-Committee**

**(Reporting to Town Council)**

Cllrs: To be appointed as required.

**Disciplinary, Grievance & Appeals Sub-Committee**

**(Reporting to Corporate Services, comprising members of Corporate Services)**

Cllrs: To be appointed as required.

**Personnel Sub Committee**

**(Reporting to Corporate Services, comprising members of Corporate Services)**

Cllrs:

J Carroll, D Jones, M Kennedy, K Wattingham,

**New Office Sub Committee**

Cllrs:

D Dixon Wilkinson, D Jones, T McMahon, A Slough, S Thorne

**New Cemetery Sub Committee**

**(Reporting to Town Council)**

Cllrs:

J Carroll, Y Farrell, M Kennedy, R Morgan, A Slough, S Thorne

**WORKING GROUPS – 2021/2022**

**Events Working Group**

**(Reporting to Community Services)**

Cllrs:

Y Farrell, T McMahon, A Slough, D Jones, K Wattingham, M Kennedy, **Vacancy**

**Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group**

**(Reporting to Community Services)**

Cllrs:

J Carroll, D Dixon Wilkinson, S Thorne,

**Combating Crime Working Group**

**(Reporting to Community Services)**

Cllrs:

C Copleston, Y Farrell, M Kennedy, T McMahon, K Wattingham,

**Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

**(Reporting to Planning)**

Cllrs:

J Carroll, D Dixon Wilkinson, S Goodchild, D Jones, M Kennedy



## HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire LU5 5EY

### Outside Organisations – 2021/22

Outside Organisations	Member	Meetings details
<b>All Saints View Stakeholder Group</b>	Cllr McMahon	
<b>Bedfordshire Association of Town &amp; Parish Councils</b>	Cllrs: D Jones, S Goodchild, <i>1 vacancy</i>	
<b>Chews Foundation</b>	<i>Vacancy</i>	Mtgs in June and December. Currently held via Zoom but will revert to being held at Chew's House, High Street South, Dunstable  Next two meetings are Tuesday 8th June and Tuesday 7th December at 10am 6th May, 16th Sept, 4th Nov at 2pm Virtual
<b>Citizens Advice</b>	Cllr S Thorne	
<b>Hospice at Home Volunteers</b>	Cllr Copleston	
<b>Houghton Hall Park Project Board</b>	Cllr Kennedy	
<b>Houghton Hall Park MAG</b>	Cllr T McMahon	
<b>Houghton Regis North Stakeholder Group*</b>	Cllr Jones	
<b>Memorial Hall Committee</b>	Cllrs: Y Farrell & S Thorne	Tuesday 11th May at 7pm Then meetings every other Month
<b>Houghton Regis Aspirations Group</b>		Agreed by Partnership on 27 <sup>th</sup> April. One cllr to be nominated from those sitting on Partnership Committee
<b>SORTED</b>	Cllr S Goodchild	
<b>South Beds Dial-a-Ride</b>	Cllr S Thorne	TBC at mtg on 28 <sup>th</sup> April

\*One seat is available on this group