

# HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: P Burgess  
J Carroll  
E Cooper  
C Copleston  
Y Farrell Chair  
S Goodchild  
D Jones  
M S Kennedy  
T McMahon  
A Slough  
C Slough  
S Thorne  
K Wattingham

Officers: Clare Evans Town Clerk  
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 15

Apologies: Councillor: R Morgan

### 12022 ELECTION OF THE TOWN MAYOR

The retiring Town Mayor, Cllr Copleston, invited nominations for the position of Town Mayor for the period May 2022 to May 2023.

Nominee: Y Farrell Nominated by: D Jones  
Seconded by: K Wattingham

Nominee: J Carroll Nominated by: T McMahon  
Seconded by: Pam Burgess


There were no other nominations.

Those in Favour of electing Cllr Farrell as Town Mayor: 8  
Those in Favour of electing Cllr Carroll as Town Mayor: 2

On being put to the vote Cllr Farrell was duly elected as Town Mayor for the municipal year 2022 – 2023.

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

The new Mayor adopted the role of Chairman and thanked councillors for the opportunity and gave an acceptance speech.



In the Mayors acceptance speech, attendees were thanked, and fellow councillors were thanked for the opportunity to be mayor and pride was expressed in becoming elected with further thanks to the retiring Mayor. The Mayor was invited to choose a consort, Cllr Farrell acknowledged that family support was strong and as such could not name just one consort, but would be accompanied by various members of her family and friends over the coming year.

Cllr C Slough proposed a vote of thanks to the retiring Mayor, Cllr Copleston. In his vote of thanks Cllr C Slough highlighted the achievements and accomplishments of the retiring Mayor during her mayoral year.

The Town Mayor, Cllr Farrell, welcomed her appointment and announced that her charities for the year would be the Carers of Bedfordshire, Headway and Hub Café.

### **12023 ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR**

The Town Mayor invited nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor for the period May 2022 to May 2023.

Nominee:	S Thorne	Nominated by:	D Jones
		Seconded by:	M Kennedy
Nominee:	P Burgess	Nominated by:	J Carroll
		Seconded by:	T McMahan

Those in favour of electing Cllr Thorne as Deputy Town Mayor: 5  
Those in favour of electing Cllr Burgess as Deputy Town Mayor: 3

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

The new Deputy Mayor read and signed the 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office' and received the Chain of Office from the Town Mayor.

Cllr Thorne thanked fellow members for their support in her role as Deputy Mayor.

### **12024 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr Morgan.

### **12025 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

A question had been received via email: As inflation had risen from 7% to 9%, Eastbourne Borough Council had declared a cost of living emergency, with the intention to encourage other councils to do the same, to increase pressure on the government to take action, would Houghton Regis Town Council consider implementing the same approach to support the residents of Houghton Regis in these difficult times?

The Friends of Windsor Drive would like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing Mayor Cllr Copleston for her help and support over the last 12 months, it had been very much appreciated. The Group look forward to working with the new Mayor Cllr Farrell, going forward and wished her every success.



Friends of Windsor Drive Action Group asked, what do FoWD need to do to gain the support of not just the majority, but all of the HRTC Councillors and staff?

Presently, it felt like only some of HRTC wanted to listen and work with the Group. For example, some of the questions asked in previous meetings had not received a response. The group had written to the council offering members of the Friends of Windsor Drive as co-opted members of the Partnership Committee and were still awaiting a response.

It was requested that they be made aware of any issues that are delaying responses.

Members were advised that a trial exercise had been conducted on Saturday morning, knocking on the doors of residents close to Windsor Drive. The response was overwhelmingly in support of not building on Windsor Drive. Residents wanted to understand what support was being received from HRTC Councillors. Due to the success of this trial, it would be rolled out further over the coming weeks.

#### **12026 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

None.

#### **12027 MINUTES**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

**Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

#### **12028 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	4 <sup>th</sup> April and 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2022
Town Partnership Committee	25 <sup>th</sup> January 2022

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

Personnel Sub-Committee	17 <sup>th</sup> January 2022
New Office Provisions Sub-Committee	None to present
New Cemetery Sub-Committee	None to present

**Resolved: To receive the Minutes detailed above.**

#### **12029 COUNCIL CALENDAR FOR 2022-23**

The draft Council Calendar, including meeting dates, member briefing dates, and council and civic event dates, for 2022/23 was presented at the Town Council meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022. At this meeting Members noted the draft Council Calendar, made some suggested alterations and recommended its approval at the Annual Meeting of Town Council.

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.

**Resolved: To approve the Council Calendar for 2022/23.**

### 12030 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 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022. As detailed under Minute 11987, Strategic Policies 2022/23.

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

### 12031 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 (Standing Order 6d);
2. To appoint Chairs of Standing Committees accordingly Groups (Standing Order 6dv).

The following summarised 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 received an additional document which provided membership details as requested by councillors. It was highlighted that there remained a vacancy on Planning Committee and on Partnership Committee.

Concerns were raised over the vacancies highlighted on the report. After discussion it was agreed for Cllr C Slough to fill the vacancy on Town Partnership Committee, and Cllr Goodchild to fill the vacancy on the Planning Committee.

Members appointed chairs of Standing Committees:

*Chair of Corporate Services Committee*

Nominees:	Cllr Jones	Nominated by:	Cllr Wattingham
		Seconded by:	Cllr Kennedy

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote Cllr Jones was elected as Chair of Corporate Services Committee.

*Chair of Environment & Leisure Committee*

Nominees:	Cllr A Slough	Nominated by:	Cllr Jones
		Seconded by:	Cllr C Slough

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote Cllr A Slough was elected as Chair of Environment & Leisure Committee.

*Chair of Community Services Committee*

Nominees:	Cllr Wattingham	Nominated by:	Cllr Jones
		Seconded by:	Cllr Thorne

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote Cllr Wattingham was elected as Chair of <sup>Community</sup> Environment & Leisure Committee.

*Services*  
*WJH* Chair of Planning Committee

Nominees: Cllr Kennedy Nominated by: Cllr Jones  
 Seconded by: Cllr C Slough

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote Cllr Kennedy was elected as Chair of Planning Committee.

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

#### 12032 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 2022/23.

##### *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.

**Resolved:** 1. To appoint the councillor representatives for the listed outside organisations for 2022/23;  
 2. To note the reporting back mechanism as set out.

#### 12033 STANDING ORDERS

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

Standing Orders were 'the written rules of a local council, they were used to confirm a

*WJH*

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 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022. Following on from this meeting, further work had been completed and a report presented some additional revisions.

Members received a report which highlighted changes to Standing Orders as set out by NALC (National Association of Local Councils) and to propose inclusion of a new Standing Order to cover Virtual Attendance at meetings.

Members were advised that the values for contracts had been updated.

It was requested that the Corporate Services Committee review policies to ensure they were all gender inclusive.

**Resolved: To adopt the Town Councils Standing Orders noting the following revisions and additions:**

- a) Revision to Standing Order 1t(ii) to include 'virtually or in person'
- b) Revision to Standing Order 18 – as advised by NALC (April 2022)
- c) New Standing Order number 33 - Virtual Attendance

#### 12034 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 regulated and controlled its financial affairs and accounting procedures'.<sup>2</sup>

The approved Financial Regulations were reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022. Members were advised of the updated values for public contracts.

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

#### 12035 SCHEME OF DELEGATION

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

The Scheme of Delegation authorised 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 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022 and were recommended for approval.

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

#### 12036 GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

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



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In order for the Town Council to continue to use the General Power of Competence it needed 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 were elected at ordinary elections or at a by-election
- The clerk held 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.**

### **12037 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 Kennedy updated members on Houghton Hall Park, the structure of their strategy board had changed, the chair was now an elected councillor, which was Cllr Kennedy, it was advised that there was unfortunately no tender in place for the catering contract. There was a new head gardener in post.

Cllr Thorne updated members on Dial-a-Ride, they had settled into their new offices in the Incuba, they were searching for a new manager. Citizens Advice were due to meet in two weeks, and were training staff in EDI which Cllr Thorne was undertaking.

Cllr Farrell updated members on the Memorial Hall. There were grant applications in place but the main focus was the anniversary of the hall, with an afternoon function by invitation only and a ticketed evening function.

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.16pm**

**Dated this 20<sup>th</sup> day of June 2022**

**Chairman**





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**COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2022/2023****STANDING COMMITTEES – 2022/2023****Corporate Services**

Cllrs: J Carroll, C Copleston, E Cooper, S Goodchild, D Jones (Chair), M Kennedy, K Wattingham

**Environment & Leisure**

Cllrs: P Burgess, E Cooper, Y Farrell, T McMahon, R Morgan, A Slough (Chair), S Thorne

**Planning**

Cllrs: J Carroll, E Cooper, D Jones, S Goodchild, M Kennedy (Chair), C Slough, S Thorne

**Community Services**

Cllrs: P Burgess, C Copleston, Y Farrell, S Goodchild, T McMahon, A Slough, K Wattingham (Chair)

**OTHER COMMITTEES – 2022/2023****Town Partnership**

Cllrs: D Jones, T McMahon, C Slough, K Wattingham

**SUB-COMMITTEES – 2022/2023****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)**

Cllrs: To be appointed as required.

**Personnel Sub Committee (Reporting to Corporate Services)**

Cllrs: J Carroll, C Copleston, S Goodchild, D Jones

**New Office Sub Committee (Reporting to Town Council)**

Cllrs: P Burgess, D Jones, T McMahon, C 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 – 2022/2023****Events Working Group (Reporting to Community Services)**

Cllrs: E Cooper, Y Farrell, M Kennedy, T McMahon, A Slough, C Slough, K Wattingham

**Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group (Reporting to Community Services)**

Cllrs: J Carroll, C Copleston, 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, Y Farrell, S Goodchild, D Jones, A Slough

**Allotments Working Group (Reporting to E&L)**

Cllrs: E Cooper, Y Farrell, T McMahon, R Morgan, C Slough

