

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 17th May 2023 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: J Carroll
N Batchelor
E Billington
E Costello
E Cooper
Y Farrell
W Henderson
M Herber
D Jones
T McMahan
C Rollins
A Slough
C Slough
Town Mayor

Officers: Clare Evans
Louise Senior
Sarah Gelsthorp
Town Clerk
Head of Democratic Services
Civic and Events Manager

Public: 9

Apologies Councillor: P Burgess

12422 ELECTION OF THE TOWN MAYOR

The retiring Town Mayor, Cllr Farrell, invited nominations for the position of Town Mayor for the period May 2023 to May 2024.

Nominee: J Carroll
Nominated by: Cllr McMahan
Seconded by: Cllr M Herber

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote Cllr Carroll was duly elected as Town Mayor for the municipal year 2023 – 2024.

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.

Cllr Jones proposed a vote of thanks to the retiring Mayor, Cllr Farrell. Highlighted were the extensive number of events, both held and attended, over the course of the year and the professionalism shown throughout. Also highlighted was the funds of £5,000 raised for

Cllr Farrell's chosen charities of Headway, the Hub Cafe and Carers in Bedfordshire. The retiring Town Mayor, spoke of her mayoral year, and shared some highlights and thanked her fellow councillors for the support they had offered throughout her year.

The Town Mayor, Cllr Carroll, welcomed his appointment and announced that his charities for the year were to be confirmed.

12423 ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR

The Town Mayor invited nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor for the period May 2023 to May 2024.

Nominee:	Cllr Cooper	Nominated by:	Cllr Jones
		Seconded by:	Cllr Farrell

On being put to the vote Cllr Cooper 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 Cooper thanked fellow members for their support in her role as Deputy Mayor.

12424 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Burgess.

Cllr C Slough advised the Chair that he would need to leave part-way through the meeting.

12425 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

12426 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

12427 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20th March 2023.

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20th March 2023 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12428 COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP MINUTES

Members received the minutes of the following committees and considered any recommendations contained therein

Corporate Services Committee	None to present
Community Services Committee	None to present

Environment & Leisure Committee	13 th February 2023
Planning Committee	13 th March and 3 rd April 2023
Town Partnership Committee	None to present

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

New Office Provisions Sub-Committee	None to present
New Cemetery Sub-Committee	None to present

Resolved: To receive the Minutes detailed above.

12429 COUNCIL CALENDAR FOR 2023-24

The draft Council Calendar, including meeting dates, member briefing dates, and council and civic event dates, for 2023/24 was presented at the Town Council meeting held on the 20th March 2023. 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 in accordance with Standing Order 4.j.ix.

Further amendments were suggested and agreed.

Members requested that the timing of working groups be included on the next Town Council agenda for consideration to allow for work commitments of members.

Resolved: To approve the Council Calendar for 2023/24.

12430 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 20th March 2023, as detailed under Minute 12403, Strategic Policies 2023/24.

Under Minute 12403, Members noted that consideration was given to the following points:

- Sub-Committees and Working Groups of the Council shall consist of 5 Councillors, with the exception of the Complaints Sub-Committee, the Complaints Appeals Sub-Committee and the Disciplinary Grievance & Appeals Sub-Committee, the membership of all of which shall consist of 3 Councillors. This was now reflected in the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference.
- Conclusion of the New Office Sub Committee. This Sub Committee last met on 27th September 2022 where it was agreed that the revised Chamber layout was suitable for meetings and as such the building would continue to be maintained as required. It was suggested that the office accommodation for the Town Council be placed under the Corporate Services Committee. It was felt that this option provided the most efficient use of time and as such, amendments had been made in the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference.

Resolved: To approve the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference as presented for 2023/24.

12431 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 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 ¹	3 members
Complaints Appeal Sub-Committee ²	3 members
Personnel Sub-Committee ²	5 members
Disciplinary, Grievance & Appeals Sub-Committee ²	3 members
Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee	5 members

¹ To be appointed as required

² To be appointed from Town Council

Working Groups

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

Steering Groups

Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan	5 members
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Members confirmed the below memberships on the Town Council's Committees, Sub Committees, Working and other Groups, and appointed Chairs.

STANDING COMMITTEES – 2023 - 2024*Corporate Services*

Cllrs: D Jones (Chair), J Carroll, E Costello, W Henderson, M Herber, C Rollins and C Slough

Cllr D Jones was proposed as Chair by C Slough, seconded by Cllr Farrell
Members voted in favour, accordingly Cllr Jones was appointed as the chair of Corporate Services Committee.

Environment & Leisure

Cllrs: A Slough (Chair), P Burgess, E Cooper, E Costello, Y Farrell, W Henderson and T McMahon

Cllr A Slough was proposed as Chair by C Slough, seconded by Cllr Jones
Members voted in favour, accordingly Cllr A Slough was appointed as the chair of Environment and Leisure Committee.

Planning

Cllrs: C Slough (Chair), N Batchelor, E Billington, J Carroll, E Cooper, M Herber and D Jones

Cllr C Slough was proposed as Chair by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr A Slough
Members voted in favour, accordingly Cllr Slough was appointed as the chair of the Planning Committee.

Community Services

Cllrs: Y Farrell (Chair), N Batchelor, E Billington, P Burgess, T McMahon, C Rollins and A Slough

Cllr McMahon was proposed as Chair by Cllr Herber, seconded by N Batchelor

- Cllr McMahon received 4 votes in favour

Cllr Farrell was proposed as Chair by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Cooper

- Cllr Farrell received 7 votes in favour

³ To comprise Members who do not sit on Events Working Group

Accordingly, Cllr Farrell was appointed as the chair of the Community Services Committee.

OTHER COMMITTEES – 2023 – 2024

Town Partnership

Cllrs: To be deferred to the June Town Council meeting

SUB-COMMITTEES – 2023 - 2024

Complaints Sub-Committee (Reporting to Town Council)

Cllrs: To be appointed as required.

Personnel Sub Committee (Reporting to Corporate Services)

Cllrs: E Costello, W Henderson, M Herber, D Jones and T McMahon

New Cemetery Sub Committee (Reporting to Town Council)

Cllrs: J Carroll, Y Farrell, T McMahon, C Rollins and A Slough

WORKING GROUPS – 2023 - 2024

Events Working Group (Reporting to Community Services)

Cllrs: N Batchelor, Y Farrell, T McMahon, C Rollins and A Slough

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

Cllrs: E Billington, P Burgess, E Costello, M Herber and D Jones

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.

Combating Crime Working Group (Reporting to Community Services)

Cllrs: E Cooper, Y Farrell, M Herber, T McMahon and C Slough

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (Reporting to Planning)

Cllrs: N Batchelor, J Carroll, Y Farrell, W Henderson and D Jones

Allotments Working Group (Reporting to E&L)

Cllrs: E Billington, J Carroll, E Cooper, T McMahon and C Rollins

- 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.**

12432 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.

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 appointed to the organisations as below:

All Saints View Stakeholder Group	Cllr C Slough
Bedfordshire Association of Town & Parish Councils	Cllr Carroll, Cllr Jones and Cllr C Slough
Bedfordshire Bus Users	Cllr McMahon
Chews Foundation	Cllr Carroll
Citizens Advice	Cllr Cooper
Hospice at Home Volunteers	Cllr Jones
Houghton Hall Park Project Board	TBC
Houghton Hall Park MAG	TBC
Houghton Regis North Stakeholder Group	Cllr Jones
Memorial Hall Committee	Cllr Cooper and Cllr Farrell
SORTED	Cllr Billington
South Beds Dial-a-Ride	Cllr Henderson
Friends of Windsor Drive Community Open Space	Cllr A Slough

Resolved:

- 1. To appoint the councillor representatives for the listed outside organisations for 2023/24;**
- 2. To note the reporting back mechanism as set out.**

12433 **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 council’s internal organisational and administrative procedures, procurement and procedural matters for meetings’.⁴

The approved Standing Orders were reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on the 20th March 2023 and considered suitable. However, since the meeting held on the 20th March 2023, members were advised that the Government had increased the threshold where councils intend to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“the

⁴ Local Councils Explained, NALC

Regulations”), from £25,000 to £30,000 or more. Therefore, members were requested to note amendments to values stated in Standing Orders 18bv and 18d.

Resolved: To approve Standing Orders as presented.

12434 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 controlled its financial affairs and accounting procedures’.⁵

The Financial Regulations were reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on the 20th March 2023.

Since the meeting held on the 20th March 2023, members were advised that the Government had increased the threshold where councils intend to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“the Regulations”), from £25,000 to £30,000 or more. Previously, the threshold was £25,000 including VAT however, as of the 22nd December 2022 the threshold is £25,000 plus VAT.

Members received updated values for public contracts.

Members were also requested to note that the regulations now included an e-notification service to advertise contract opportunities, as highlighted on the footer of the document.

Resolved: To approve Financial Regulations as presented.

12435 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 20th March 2023 and was recommended for approval.

Resolved: To approve the Scheme of Delegation as presented.

12436 GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

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:

⁵ Local Councils Explained, NALC

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- At least 2/3 of Members were 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.

12437 BANKING & SIGNING ARRANGEMENTS

Banking Arrangements

Under Town Council Minute 11683 (June 2021) the signing arrangements for the councils bank accounts was approved as follows:

To confirm the above and to approve the bank mandate be set up as follows:

- 2 signatories from Group A (members) and 1 signatory from Group B (officers);
- Group A to comprise current serving councillors
- Group B to comprise Clerk & RFO, Democratic Services Officer, Head of Grounds Operations, Corporate Services Manager

To remove all other signatories.

In order to update the bank mandate to reflect the new council and some alterations to staffing, the council was asked to approve the recommendation below.

Signing arrangements / Authorisation of Payments

In accordance with Financial Regulation 5.2 it was requested that Council authorise 2 councillors to receive, check and authorise the payment of invoices.

Tithe Farm Sports Project

Members were requested to note under Minute 11653 that authority had been given to the Chair of Environment & Leisure Committee to sign related contracts in conjunction with the Clerk. The opportunity to highlight this delegation arrangement was taken as in the next few weeks the Chair of Environment & Leisure Committee would be asked to sign the contract for the all-weather playing pitch.

This was provided for information only.

Resolved: Banking Arrangements

To approve the bank mandate be set up as follows:

- 2 signatories from Group A (councillors) and 1 signatory from Group B (officers);
- Group A to comprise current serving councillors
- Group B to comprise Clerk & RFO and Heads of Service

To remove all other signatories.

To accord with banking requirements the following resolution is also passed:

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- **if we add or remove Authorised Signatories in the “Add or Remove Authorised Signatories” section on the “About your request” page of this form, the Bank will update our mandate accordingly for the accounts we specify in this form's “About your business” section**
 - **if we change the Signing Rules in the “Change the Signing Rules on the Mandate” section on the “About your request” page of this form, the Bank will update our mandate**
 - **accordingly for the accounts we specify in this form's “About your business” section**
 - **and the current mandate will continue as amended.**

Signing Arrangements

To nominate Cllr Jones and Cllr Herber to receive, check and authorise the payment of invoices.

12438 HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

At the Town Council’s Planning meeting held on the 24th April 2023 members of the committee resolved to recommend to Council the approval, for submission to Central Bedfordshire Council, of the final version of Houghton Regis Town Council’s Neighbourhood Plan.

The committee requested that this recommendation be presented to Town Council at its meeting in May in order to not wait until after the planning meeting held on the 22nd May 2023. Recommendations to either Council or other Committees, were usually considered following the approval of the minutes of the meeting where the recommendation was made. However, due to the length of time this project had taken to get to this submission stage (the Town Council appointed a planning consultant to support the development of the plan on the 16th May 2016), members of the planning committee felt it imperative to gain support for this recommendation as soon as possible. Members were advised, that this item may be deferred due to the business to be conducted at the Council meeting in May.

Members received a copy of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Resolved: To recommend to Council the approval, for submission to Central Bedfordshire Council, of the final version of Houghton Regis Town Councils Neighbourhood Plan

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.58pm
Dated this 19th day of June 2023**

Chairman

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2023 / 2024

STANDING COMMITTEES – 2023 - 2024

Corporate Services

Cllrs: **D Jones (Chair)**, J Carroll, E Costello, W Henderson, M Herber, C Rollins, C Slough

Environment & Leisure

Cllrs: **A Slough (Chair)**, P Burgess, E Cooper, E Costello, Y Farrell, W Henderson, T McMahon

Planning

Cllrs: **C Slough (Chair)**, N Batchelor, E Billington, J Carroll, E Cooper, M Herber, D Jones

Community Services

Cllrs: **Y Farrell (Chair)**, N Batchelor, E Billington, P Burgess, T McMahon, C Rollins, A Slough

OTHER COMMITTEES – 2023 - 2024

Town Partnership

Cllrs: *TBC at June Town Council meeting*

SUB-COMMITTEES – 2023 - 2024

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: E Costello, W Henderson, M Herber, D Jones, T McMahon

New Cemetery Sub Committee (Reporting to Town Council)

Cllrs: J Carroll, Y Farrell, T McMahon, C Rollins, A Slough

WORKING GROUPS – 2023 - 2024

Events Working Group (Reporting to Community Services)

Cllrs: N Batchelor, Y Farrell, T McMahon, C Rollins, A Slough

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

Cllrs: E Billington, P Burgess, E Costello, M Herber, D Jones

Combating Crime Working Group (Reporting to Community Services)

Cllrs: E Cooper, Y Farrell, M Herber, T McMahon, C Slough

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (Reporting to Planning)

Cllrs: N Batchelor, J Carroll, Y Farrell, W Henderson, D Jones

Allotments Working Group (Reporting to E&L)

Cllrs: E Billington, J Carroll, E Cooper, T McMahon, C Rollins

OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS – 2023 / 2024

All Saints View Stakeholder Group	Cllr C Slough
Bedfordshire Association of Town & Parish Councils	Cllr Carroll, Cllr Jones, Cllr C Slough
Chews Foundation	Cllr Carroll
Citizens Advice	Cllr Cooper
Hospice at Home Volunteers	Cllr Jones
Houghton Hall Park Project Board	TBC
Houghton Hall Park MAG	TBC
Houghton Regis North Stakeholder Group	Cllr Jones
Memorial Hall Committee	Cllr Cooper, Cllr Farrell
SORTED	Cllr Billington
South Beds Dial-a-Ride	Cllr Henderson
Friends of Windsor Drive Community Open Space	Cllr A Slough