

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP
COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET
ON 18th July 2023**

Present: Town Cllrs: **C Slough (Vice-Chair), J Carroll, Y Farrell and D Jones**
CBC Cllrs: **T McMahon (Chair), C Alderman, S Goodchild and P Hamill**
HRTC Clare Evans, Town Clerk
Officers: Louise Senior, Head of Democratic Services

Co-opted members: D Gibbons
J Anderson
C Reagan

Also in attendance: Jemma McClean, Community Engagement Manager
HRTC Cllr M Herber

Apologies: Mrs Hughes, Community Engagement Manager, CBC

Members of the public: 1

989 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Members were invited to elect a Chairman for Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2023/24 in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference this could be a member from either authority.

Nominee	T McMahon	Proposed by:	P Hamill
		Seconded by:	J Carroll

No further nominations were received.

Accordingly, Cllr McMahon was elected as Chair of the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for the municipal year of 2023/2024.

990 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Sarah Hughes, CBC Community Engagement Manager.

991 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

992 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

993 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 24th January 2023.

Members requested some amendments to the minutes of the 24th January 2023.
The minutes were approved subject to the amendments.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 24th January 2023, as amended, and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

994 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Members were invited to elect a Vice-Chairman for Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2023/24 in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference this should be a member from the other authority to the Chairman.

Nominee	C Slough	Proposed by:	D Jones
		Seconded by:	Y Farrell

No further nominations were received.

Accordingly, Cllr C Slough was elected as Vice-Chair of the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for the municipal year of 2023/2024.

995 CONFIRMATION OF THE SECRETARIAT

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the Committee were required to confirm the secretariat for the Partnership Committee for 2023/2024.

It was agreed for Houghton Regis Town Council to continue to act as the secretariat for the Partnership Committee for the municipal year of 2023/2024.

996 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION

The Terms of Reference required the list of Co-opted Members to be reviewed annually, by the Town Joint Committee.

Members had received applications for co-option from:

- David Gibbons - a co-opted member during 2022/2023, confirmed would like to be co-opted again

- Jo Anderson – a co-opted member during 2022/2023, confirmed would like to be co-opted again
- Carole Regan – a co-opted member during 2022/2023

Members were invited to consider whether they would like to explore the possibility of seeking to co-opt local stakeholders onto the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee. In this regard the Terms of Reference for the Committee state:

Co-option

To support engagement with local stakeholders the Town Joint Committee could co-opt members from local representative groups, as appropriate up to a maximum of 15. Each co-opted Member would be able to engage fully in all discussions but would not have any voting rights. Co-opted members could be removed from the Town Joint Committee. Decision making around removals could either be taken by the whole Town Joint Committee or by joint agreement of the Chair and Vice Chair, depending on each Town Joint Committee's preference.

Members agreed for the co-optee applicants to be co-opted onto the committee for the municipal year of 2023/2024.

The co-optees joined the meeting.

Resolved: To confirm the following co-opted members of the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2023-24:

- **David Gibbons**
- **Jo Anderson**
- **Carole Regan**

997 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members received the Terms of Reference which related to this committee.

Concerns were raised that the Town Partnership Committee's Terms of Reference were not in alignment with the way the committee operated. It was suggested that consideration of change be given either to the objectives or changes to the way the committee operated. It was highlighted that the minutes of the Partnership meeting do not get presented anywhere within Central Bedfordshire Council for action.

It was suggested that with new administrations in place at both councils, that the relationship between Houghton Regis Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council may improve over the term of office.

It was requested that other towns who also had a partnership committee with Central Bedfordshire Council be contacted with a view to discussing the Partnership Committees Terms of Reference.

998 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members were invited to consider the Partnership Committee workplan and were invited to discuss what items to include. Members agreed for the headings to be the same as the workplan of 2022/2023, less the items of Tithe Farm Sports Provision and future Cemetery Provision as these were ongoing projects and would be reported in the HRTC Update report going forwards.

It was requested that the work plan include reference to the future use / management of Bedford Square Community Centre. It was suggested that a report be included on the next agenda the option of moving the college (currently using Bedford Square Community Centre) to the University Technical College to enable community use again of the Centre.

Concerns were also raised regarding the condition of the centre due to the use of the facility by Central Bedfordshire College. Updates were requested on the future use of the Community Centre.

Members expressed concerns that with the growth of the town primary care and school places would need to be considered. The option of a police hub was also referred to.

Members highlighted that, as some matters were discussed at other committee meetings, there seemed to be some duplication within the workplan and felt it could be presented in a manner to avoid replication. However it was highlighted that without the feedback provided at Town Partnership Committee Meeting, the opportunity to raise any issues highlighted in other meetings of the council with Central Bedfordshire Council would be missed.

**999 IMPROVING HEALTH & WELLBEING IN HOUGHTON REGIS:
TIME 2 CONNECT*****Agenda item 13 - brought forward***

Jemma McClean, Community Engagement Manager, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) was in attendance to update members and respond to any queries or comments on this project.

Members were advised that the open access sessions had been well attended and 53 1:1 sessions had been held. A tea dance project had been running in Leighton Buzzard and grant money had been awarded for to trial a similar activity in Houghton Regis.

Maths courses had been offered and arts and crafts sessions were being offered over the summer. Time2Connect had a hot desk based in Linnere, although it had been fairly quiet as the café has not been open.

Time2Connect were undergoing an evaluation by Central Bedfordshire Council to look at the impact and benefit the project has had for local residents which would influence future funding opportunities.

There had been enquiries to book additional space at All Saints View to hold Jazz up Your Life sessions, however contact had proven difficult to confirm any bookings.



1000 CBC UPDATE REPORT

Members received the Central Bedfordshire Council update report.

Members raised concerns regarding the accuracy of crime figures as stated within the report and felt that inaccurate figures showed a misrepresentation of the town and any arising issues it faces.

It was suggested that shoplifting figures were not a true representation of the issue in Houghton Regis as shopkeepers were reluctant to report incidents as they had a lack of confidence of action being taken.

Also of concern was traffic parking infringements and the lack of priority from Central Bedfordshire Council in focussing on Houghton Regis despite Traffic Enforcement Officers frequenting the town.

It was suggested that schools within Houghton Regis be encouraged to become more eco-friendly. The report highlighted that 7 schools were eco-friendly, however only 2 of these were within Houghton Regis. It was requested that through the advertising of events participants be encouraged to walk to events instead of driving.

Members were advised of the recruitment status of staff for Houghton Hall Park, and that interviews had been arranged.

Concerns were raised regarding the Primary Care in Houghton Regis and the health inequalities throughout the town.

1001 HRTC UPDATE REPORT

Members received the HRTC update report, including:

Corporate Services

- 23/24 Budget highlights
- Corporate Plan process

Environment & Leisure

- Tithe Farm
- New cemetery investigations
- VG Pavilion decoration in partnership with Morgan Sindall Community services


Community services

- Youth services
- Events

Planning

- NHP

Members received an update on some of the work the Town Council had completed, the positive work was acknowledged by members and it was highlighted that it had felt more like an equal partnership.



A member raised concerns that the land in front of The Gables in Houghton Regis was looking unkempt, it was requested of the Town Council this area be tidied up. The Town Clerk confirmed the location and extent of Common Land in Houghton Regis would be looked into and feed back to members. In some instances it was difficult to determine as historic land marks / features had changed.

A member questioned the planting of trees on the Village Green, highlighting concerns that this had taken away amenity land. There was some discussion around the definition of recreation and open space and common land.

The placement of 'No Parking' signs on the land around the entrance to The Brambles were queried, and whether these had been placed by the Town Council. This was to be investigated and fed back accordingly.

Agenda item 13 – discussed earlier in the agenda

1002 ITEMS REQUESTING ATTENTION BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

Members had been advised of the CBC process to determine further consideration, at CBC committee level, of items and issues.

Members of this committee were able to use this process to forward items for CBC's attention via the CBC Joint Committee Chair or CBC Joint Committee Vice Chair.

As such members were requested to identify and confirm if there were any requested items for CBC's attention.

Members requested the following items be considered for Central Bedfordshire Council's attention:

- Booking and hire arrangements of All Saints View
- Challenges around the Terms of Reference for this committee
- Bedford Square Community Centre and options with the UTC.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.21pm

Dated this 14th day of November 2023

Chairman

