

# HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: P Burgess  
J Carroll  
E Cooper Chair  
E Costello  
Y Farrell  
W Henderson  
D Jones  
T McMahon  
C Rollins  
A Slough  
C Slough  
D Taylor

Officers: Clare Evans Town Clerk  
Ian Haynes Head of Environmental &  
Amanda Samuels Administration Officer

Public: 4

Apologies: Councillors: E Billington  
M Herber

### 12823 ELECTION OF THE TOWN MAYOR

The retiring Town Mayor, Cllr Carroll, invited nominations for the position of Town Mayor for the period May 2024 to May 2025.

Nominee: E Cooper Nominated by: D Jones  
Seconded by: C Slough

There were no other nominations.

Those in Favour of electing Cllr Cooper as Town Mayor: 11.

On being put to the vote Cllr Cooper was duly elected as Town Mayor for the municipal year 2024 – 2025.

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

The new Mayor adopted the role of Chairman and gave an acceptance speech.

The Mayor expressed her thanks for being given this opportunity. Thanks were made to the outgoing Mayor, Cllr Carroll, for all his help, hard work, generosity and kindness.

Having moved to Houghton Regis over twenty years ago, the Mayor felt that it was a great place to live and chose as her theme for the coming year 'Our Town'. Reference was made to recent and upcoming events, including the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan, Houghton in Bloom and the new football pitches at Tithe Farm. There was much to be proud of.

A recorded vote of thanks from Cllr Herber was played to the retiring Mayor, Cllr Carroll. In her vote of thanks, Cllr Herber highlighted the record number of events attended by Cllr Carroll during his mayoral year and monies raised for his charitable causes. Thanks were also given to Cllr Carroll for his promotion of the town's history and for his hard work and dedication.

Cllr Carroll was presented with the Past Mayor's Badge and a mayoral yearbook.

Cllr Carroll thanked everyone for an incredible year that had seen fourteen organisations and eight schools benefit from monies raised. It had been a privilege to serve as mayor and notable highlights had been meeting with the community, the Neighbourhood Plan and the visit to Chiltern School.

The Town Mayor, Cllr Cooper announced that her charities for the year would be The Down's Syndrome Association and The Keech Hospice.

## **12824 ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR**

The Town Mayor invited nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor for the period May 2024 to May 2025.

|          |          |               |           |
|----------|----------|---------------|-----------|
| Nominee: | M Herber | Nominated by: | J Carroll |
|          |          | Seconded by:  | D Jones   |

Those in favour of electing Cllr Herber as Deputy Town Mayor: 12  
On being put to the vote Cllr Herber was duly elected as the new Deputy Town Mayor.


Cllr Herber was not in attendance but would sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office on her return.

## **12825 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr Billington and Cllr Herber.

### **12825.1 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

The Friends of Windsor Drive took the opportunity to thank the outgoing Mayor for his help and support to clubs and organisations across Houghton Regis over the last 12 months. Cllr Carroll had made a difference in his mayoral year.



**12826 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

None.

**12827 MINUTES**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

Amendments were requested to the minutes to include Cllrs Henderson and Taylor and for these councillors to be included in the recorded votes.

Members were happy to accept the minutes with these amendments.

**Resolved: To approve the amended minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

**12828 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    | 26 <sup>th</sup> February 2024   |
| Environment & Leisure Committee | 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2024  |
|                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minute numbers 12690 Pleasure Grounds, Public Walks and Open Spaces: Byelaws</li> <li>• Minute number 12692 Complying with Biodiversity</li> <li>• Minute number 12695 Purchase of Land off Cemetery Road – Members were reminded that this was considered and agreed by Town Council on 18<sup>th</sup> March</li> </ul> |
| Planning Committee              | 19 <sup>th</sup> February, 11 <sup>th</sup> March and 2 <sup>nd</sup> April 2024   |
| Town Partnership Committee      | 23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2024  |

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

|                            |                 |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| New Cemetery Sub-Committee | None to present |
|----------------------------|-----------------|

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

- **Minute number 12690 Pleasure Grounds, Public Walks and Open Spaces: Byelaws**
- **Minute number 12692 Complying with Biodiversity**

**12829 COUNCIL CALENDAR FOR 2024-25**

The draft Council Calendar, including meeting dates, member briefing dates, and council and civic event dates, for 2024/25 had been presented at the Town Council meeting held on the 18th March 2024. 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 and including the next annual meeting of the council was in accordance with Standing Order 4.j.ix.

**Resolved: To approve the Council Calendar for 2024/25.**

**12830 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 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024. As detailed under Minute 12756, Strategic Policies 2024/25.

One amendment was requested in regard of a typographical error.

**Resolved: To approve the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference as presented for 2024/25.**

**12831 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)

*Sub-Committees*

|   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
|   | To be appointed as and when required |
| Complaints Sub-Committee                        | 3 members                            |
| Complaints Appeal Sub-Committee                 | 3 members                            |
| Disciplinary, Grievance & Appeals Sub-Committee | 3 members                            |
| Personnel Sub-Committee                         | 5 members                            |
| Community Engagement Sub-Committee              | 5 members                            |
| New Cemetery Sub Committee                      | 5 members                            |

*Working Groups*

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group | 5 members |
| Combating Crime Working Group          | 5 members |

It was highlighted that there remained a vacancy on the Pride of Houghton Working Group.

Members appointed chairs of Standing Committees:

*Chair of Corporate Services Committee*

|           |            |               |               |
|-----------|------------|---------------|---------------|
| Nominees: | Cllr Jones | Nominated by: | Cllr C Slough |
|           |            | Seconded by:  | Cllr Carroll  |

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 C Slough |
|           |               | Seconded by:  | Cllr D Jones  |

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 Costello | Nominated by: | Cllr Jones    |
|           |               | Seconded by:  | Cllr C Slough |

|           |              |               |              |
|-----------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| Nominees: | Cllr McMahon | Nominated by: | Cllr Carroll |
|           |              | Seconded by:  | Cllr Rollins |

Those in favour of electing Cllr Costello:  
Cllrs E Cooper, Y Farrell, W Henderson, D Jones, A Slough, C Slough and D Taylor

Those in favour of electing Cllr McMahon:  
Cllrs P Burgess, J Carroll, T McMahon and C Rollins

On being put to the vote, Cllr Costello was elected as Chair of Community Services Committee.

*Chair of Planning Committee*

|           |             |               |                |
|-----------|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| Nominees: | Cllr Herber | Nominated by: | Cllr C Slough  |
|           |             | Seconded by:  | Cllr Henderson |

|           |              |               |              |
|-----------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| Nominees: | Cllr Carroll | Nominated by: | Cllr Burgess |
|           |              | Seconded by:  | Cllr McMahon |

There were no other nominations.

Those in favour of electing Cllr Herber:  
Cllrs E Cooper, Y Farrell, W Henderson, D Jones, A Slough, C Slough and D Taylor

Those in favour of electing Cllr Carroll:  
Cllrs P Burgess, J Carroll, T McMahon and C Rollins

On being put to the vote, Cllr Herber 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.

**12832 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 were provided with a list of outside organisations to which the Council was invited to appoint representatives for 2024/25 along with Cllrs who have expressed an interest in being appointed as the Council representative.

*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 an amendment to the agenda and Cllr Farrell was nominated as representative on the Memorial Hall Committee in place of Cllr Costello.

- 
- Resolved:**
- 1. To appoint the councillor representatives for the listed outside organisations for 2024/25 as attached;**
  - 2. To note the reporting back mechanism as set out.**

### 12833 STANDING ORDERS

In accordance with Standing Order 4.j.vii. Council is 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’.

- Resolved: To approve Standing Orders as presented.**

### 12834 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’.

The approved Financial Regulations were reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

Members had previously been advised that NALC intended to release amended model Financial Regulations. These were received on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024. Officer consideration would be given to the revised model Regulations and a report would be presented in due course.

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

### 12835 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, Heads of Services, Council and Standing Committees of the Council to act with delegated authority in the specific circumstances detailed.

A revised and more detailed Scheme of Delegation was reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and was recommended for approval subject to amendments.

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

### 12836 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:

- 
- 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.

## 12837 BANKING & SIGNING ARRANGEMENTS

At the Town Council meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2023 the banking arrangements for the council's bank accounts were approved as follows (minute number 12437).

### *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 Head of Service

To remove all other signatories.

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

- 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*

Councillor Jones and Councillor Herber were nominated as the 2 members to receive, check and authorise the payment of invoices.

Members are advised that the following signatories are now authorised on the banks mandate:

#### Group A (councillors)

J Carroll  
E Cooper  
E Costello  
Y Farrell  
W Henderson  
M Herber  
D Jones  
T McMahon  
A Slough  
C Slough





Group B (officers)  
Town Clerk  
Head of Corporate Services  
Head of Environmental & Community Services  
Head of Democratic Services

Financial Regulation 5.1 states:

The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency.

**Resolved: Bank Mandate**

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

**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**

**For Councillor Jones and Councillor Herber as the 2 members to receive, check and authorise the payment of invoices.**

**12838 RESOLUTION FROM ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE COMMITTEE ON 29<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024 RE GROUNDS MACHINERY RENEWAL**

Members were provided with the report with supporting papers and draft Minutes from the Environment & Leisure Committee meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

The resolution from the Committee reads (Minute 12798):

*To support the Machinery Renewals Programme for 2024/25 and recommend to Council on the 15<sup>th</sup> May '24 the planned renewal/replacement funding through a hire purchase scheme. Additional funding is being sought to support additional machinery to enable the grounds team to expand their services into the growth area.*

*Hire purchase agreement/loan supported by Internal Auditor.*

**Resolved:** 1. **To approve the Resolution from Environment & Leisure Committee (Minute 12798), as follows:**

*To support the Machinery Renewals Programme for 2024/25 and recommend to Council on the 15<sup>th</sup> May '24 the planned renewal/replacement funding through a hire purchase scheme. Additional funding is being sought to support additional machinery to enable the grounds team to expand their services into the growth area.*

*Hire purchase agreement/loan supported by Internal Auditor.*

2. **To delegate authority to the Head of Environmental & Community Services to finalise the details of the equipment  
To delegate authority to the Mayor to sign the finalised Hire Purchase in due course.**

#### 12839 TOWN BRANDING SCHEME UPDATE

Following feedback from Members on the development of a town branding scheme at the Town Council meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 (Minute 12677), further work had been undertaken. Members were invited to consider the revised branding mock up.

**Resolved:** **To agree on the final branding mock-up, which encourages a sense of place and community.**

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.53pm**

**Dated this 17th day of June 2024**

**Chairman**



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**COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2024 / 2025**

***STANDING COMMITTEES – 2024 / 2025***

**Corporate Services**

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

**Environment & Leisure**

Cllrs: A Slough (Chair), P Burgess, Y Farrell, W Henderson, T McMahon, C Rollins, D Taylor

**Planning**

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

**Community Services**

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

***OTHER COMMITTEES – 2024 / 2025***

**Town Partnership**

Cllrs: J Carroll, D Jones, Y Farrell, C Slough

***SUB-COMMITTEES – 2024 / 2025***

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

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

Cllrs: A Slough, J Carroll, D Jones, T McMahon, D Taylor

**Community Engagement Sub Committee (Reporting to Community Services)**

Cllrs: E Cooper, Y Farrell, T McMahon, C Rollins, A Slough

***WORKING GROUPS – 2024 / 2025***

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

Cllrs: D Jones, D Taylor, A Slough, M Herber

**Combating Crime Working Group (Reporting to Community Services)**

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

**OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS – 2024 / 2025**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Bedfordshire Association of Town &amp; Parish Councils</b> | Cllrs: M Herber, Cllr Jones, Cllr C Slough |
| <b>Bedfordshire Bus Users</b>                                 | Cllr McMahon                               |
| <b>Chews Foundation</b>                                       | Cllr Carroll                               |
| <b>Citizens Advice</b>  | Cllr Cooper                                |
| <b>Hospice at Home Volunteers</b>                             | Cllr Jones                                 |
| <b>Houghton Hall Park Project Board</b>                       | Cllrs: D Jones, D Taylor                   |
| <b>Houghton Hall Park MAG</b>                                 | Cllr Carroll                               |
| <b>Houghton Regis North Stakeholder Group</b>                 | Cllr Jones                                 |
| <b>Memorial Hall Committee</b>                                | Cllrs: Carroll, Farrell                    |
| <b>South Beds Dial-a-Ride</b>                                 | Cllr Herber                                |
| <b>Friends of Windsor Drive Community Open Space</b>          | Cllr A Slough                              |

*[Handwritten signature]*