

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 29th September 2025 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors: M Herber Town Mayor
J Carroll
E Billington
P Burgess
E Cooper
E Costello
Y Farrell
D Jones
T McMahon
C Rollins
C Slough

Officers: Clare Evans Town Clerk
Ian Haynes Head of Environmental & Community
Services
Debbie Marsh Head of Corporate Services
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 2

Apologies: Councillor: W Henderson
A Slough
D Taylor

13343 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Henderson, Councillor A Slough and Councillor D Taylor.

13344 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13345 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

13346 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 16th June 2025.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th June 2025 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13347 PUBLIC SESSION ON THE POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A TOWN CENTRE COMMUNITY VENUE

Town council was asked to consider in more detail the report presented under agenda item 9 which set out considerations for the establishment of a town centre community venue. It was envisaged that this venue would provide a vibrant hub for residents, local stakeholders and service providers, would support enhanced youth and community work and provide space for a larger more inclusive council chamber. This subsequent report was presented in private session due to the commercial sensitivities that were involved.

To facilitate community and stakeholder input, this agenda item had been included to encourage public participation on this matter. The following points were highlighted:

- The HRTC Corporate Plan supported improved services in the town centre and the stronger development of a 'sense of place'. To view the Corporate Plan, please follow this link [Council Plans](#). Consultation feedback on the Corporate Plan was supportive of the creation of modern, vibrant community spaces.
- The CPC Action Plan supports strategic work with CBC and the development of a plan to support improved council offices and community centres. To view the CPC Action Plan, please follow this link [Council Strategies](#).
- By HRTC utilising additional investment income, the establishment of a town centre community venue could be delivered at no additional cost to the taxpayer.

Members of the public and local stakeholders were invited to feed in their thoughts on the establishment of a town centre community focused venue for residents, local stakeholders and service providers, which would support significantly enhanced youth and community work and provide space for a larger more inclusive council chamber.

Members of the town council are respectfully requested to listen to the views expressed and to consider them under Agenda item 9.

A member of the public spoke of his own work towards delivering a community centre in Thorn. The importance of having more than one community facility across the town was emphasised, highlighting that such provision would be well utilised. It was noted that investment in Thorn would help to encourage further investment in the area. Also stated was that residents often assumed community facilities were already the responsibility of the Town Council, and welcomed the positive progress being made in areas such as Bidwell West and Thorn.

13348 PARKSIDE AND TITHE FARM RECREATIONS GROUNDS

Members were asked to consider pursuing the transfer of these open space areas from CBC to HRTC under freehold ownership.

- Resolved:**
- 1. To approve a formal approach to CBC to seek the freehold transfer of Parkside and Tithe Farm recreations grounds.**
 - 2. To use 190-4059, Central Services, Other Professional Fees to cover associated legal fees.**

13349 MAINTENANCE OF SPECIFIED AREAS OF OPEN SPACE

Members were asked to consider securing the maintenance of planted roundabouts to enable the council to promote the Houghton Regis identity (sense of place) and offer sponsorship options to local businesses, secure the maintenance of grass cutting at East End, secure the maintenance and community involvement in the Woodside Orchard.

It was highlighted that residents had expressed both curiosity and concern regarding the Woodside Orchard, some recalled its original planting and voiced disappointment over how it had been managed. However, there was confidence in the grounds team's knowledge and commitment to implementing the recommendations.

The number of roundabouts potentially involved was queried. It was noted that some would fall under the Highways Agency's responsibility, leaving approximately three to potentially manage.

- Resolved:**
- To enable the council to promote the Houghton Regis identity (sense of place), support Anglia in Bloom and offer sponsorship options to local businesses, to approve a formal approach to CBC to secure:**
- the maintenance of planted roundabouts**
 - grass cutting at East End**
 - the maintenance and community involvement in the Woodside Orchard**

13350 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

- Town Centre Community Venue**

- Resolved:**
- In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the item set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.**

13351 TOWN CENTRE COMMUNITY VENUE

Members were requested to consider options for the development of a town centre community venue as supported by the HRTC Corporate Plan and the CPC Action Plan.

This report was presented in private session due to commercial and legal sensitivities and to enable open discussions between members.

Members considered proposals relating to the establishment of a town centre community venue in Houghton Regis. The discussion included considerations on the importance of providing accessible facilities locally, potential lease arrangements, and the need for flexibility in negotiations. It was acknowledged that officers should progress the work, with members providing advice where appropriate.

Members were fully supportive points highlighted within the report, with unanimous agreement on each recommendation.

Resolved: To support the suggested way forward in the agenda report.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.37 pm

Dated this 13th day of October 2025

Chairman