HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Community Engagement Sub-Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
Tuesday 8th September 2026 at 7.00pm

Present:	Councillors:	T McMahon	Chair
		E Cooper	
		Y Farrell	
		M Herber	
		A Slough	
	Co-opted members	C Slough	
	Officers:	Sarah Gelsthorp	Events Manager
		Tara Earnshaw	Youth & Community Manager
		Amanda Samuels	Administration Officer
Apologies:		E Farrier	Land Improvement Holdings, Linmere Devt
		K Wattingham	Co-optee

CESC110 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Emma Farrier and Ken Wattingham.

CESC111 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

CESC112 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

CESC113 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 9th June 2026.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th June 2026 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

CESC114 COMMUNITY EVENTS

Representatives from local organisations were invited to provide updates regarding community events.

Linmere
The representative from Linmere had sent apologies but had supplied an update on local events:

- Pumpkin Trail, October half-term
- Silver Birch Park – now open. Event planned for October

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- Resident Christmas event – early December
- Roam – a variety of events were being held every weekend up until Christmas
- Over 200 people had attended the summer picnic

All Saints Church

- Two fundraising events had recently been held. £142.00 had been raised for the local food bank and £125.00 for Macmillan
- Attended Carnival and Linmere's Picnic on the Park with a stall introducing All Saints Church
- Attended Arts and Culture event
- Would be participating in Heritage Day on 19th September. The church would be holding a week of activities from 12th September, including weekday tours of the church between 2-4pm when a different feature of the church would be focussed on each day.
- Christmas events would include Carols by Candlelight

Resolved: To note the report

CESC115 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

Members were provided with a copy of the workplan for the municipal year 2026/27.

The workplan provided a structured approach to the committee's business throughout 2026/27, ensuring all statutory requirements and governance obligations were met in a timely manner.

It was questioned when the deferred meeting to discuss the draft programme of future events would be held. The Events Manager confirmed that they would discuss this with the Head of Environmental and Community Services.

Resolved: To review and approve the Community Engagement Sub Committee Workplan for 2026/27, which outlines anticipated specific reports for the municipal year.

CESC116 REPORT FROM THE EVENTS MANAGER

For information, Members were provided with a report from the Events Manager regarding past and forthcoming events.

Carnival: the event was generally successful and received positive feedback on the new format, layout and atmosphere. It was hoped that the walking parade would continue to grow in the future. There was some discussion on the provision of cover and shaded areas for future events.

Arts and Culture: The event was commended for the variety of activities and the food selection available. A variety of venues had attempted to include as many sites around Bedford Square as possible. With the exception of Jewels, there had not been as much participation from local businesses as hoped; however, Members wondered if this was because of uncertainty as to what the event would entail.

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Open Air Cinema: It was thought that exceptionally hot weather had affected attendance. The event had sold out and 500 attendees were expected at each performance; however, it was estimated that approximately 500 had attended across both.

Open Air Theatre: This had gone well with an estimated 400 attendees across both shows.

Houghton Rocks: The event had been well attended and went as well as possible given the extreme weather conditions. Members were positive in their feedback on the bands, staging and sound system, and security was praised for the excellent service provided. It was felt that the youth arena had also been a success.

Members requested consideration was given to the following items:

- Provision of vegan food
- Better toilet facilities – the portable toilets and pavilion had both been disappointing
- Shelter from sun/rain, plus logoed umbrellas and cagoules
- Provision of a safe space
- Contingency plan for bar provision
- Budgeting for new radios or alternative communications system
- Documentation protection/covers

The Events Manager noted these items and confirmed that they would maintain communication with the Head of Service regarding the pavilion toilet facilities.

The Events Manager suggested that, because of the impact of the heavy rain, all the participating bands should be invited to perform for 2027's event. Members unanimously agreed with the proposal (Cllr A Slough proposed, Councillor Herber seconded).

Future events:

- Heritage Day, 19th September: School of Jestering, Ringworm (Viking reenactors), free coin strike demonstration (depending on ground dryness), Rebellion Reenactment (including two horses) and Knights of Honour. Cllr Herber volunteered assistance and Cllr Cooper would be attending in the capacity of Deputy Mayor
- Halloween Fun at Houghton Hall Park (including Youth Council participation), 30th October: Halloween trail based on the Witch and the Moon by Mark Bolan, facepainting, arts and crafts, storytelling
- Fireworks at Thorn Park, 6th November: Display at 6.30pm, hosted by local swing singer, fairground rides
- Services of Remembrance events, 8th and 11th November – invitations had been sent out and refreshments, sound system etc. had been booked

CESC117 REPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY SERVICES MANAGER

Members were provided with an update from the Community Services Manager regarding past and forthcoming events.

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Skate Jam: The event had not been as busy as previous years with fewer families attending. Consideration was being given to providing an evening session involving the local youth.

Crazy Golf: There had been fewer participants compared to the numbers attending the same event at Houghton Hall Park the previous year.

Sensory Day: This had gone well and had been a very positive day with a good atmosphere.

Inflatable Fun: Due to safety concerns, this event had been relocated to the Village Green and had proved extremely popular.

Roller Disco: A well-attended event with 30 people attending each of the 4 sessions.

Go-Karting: While this had proved popular, it was thought that either extra go-karts were required in future years, or an additional activity needed to be provided.

Southend Trip: This was always popular with residents and tickets had gone quickly. Due to budgetary issues, only two coaches had been provided this year but it was hoped that it would be possible to return to three in the future.

Beach Day: This was a new event in Bedford Square which had been very well received. The sand pits, balloons and bubble machine had all been a success and the atmosphere had been positive. It was proposed that a similar event could be held at the start of the summer holidays in 2027 themed on an alternative holiday destinations.

Crafty November: This was in the planning process.

LLSG: This was now the only group of its kind in Houghton Regis. The group had grown significantly and met more regularly than in its original iteration. The group met on the first and third Tuesday of the month for tea and a chat, with activities occasionally being scheduled. It was hoped that the budget could be increased to reflect the growing popularity of the group.

The Youth and Community Manager expressed the need for activities to be spread across all the different wards and to include a Send activity. There were plans to investigate having a dedicated Send session for each activity.

The representative from All Saints Church and the Youth and Community Manager agreed to discuss collaborating on the craft event.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.04 pm

Dated this day of 24th November 2026

Chairman

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