

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Environment & Leisure Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

6th July 2026 at 7.00 pm

Present:	Councillors:	A Slough	Chair
		E Billington	
		E Cooper	
		E Costello	
		Y Farrell	
		T McMahon	

Officers: Ian Haynes Head of Environmental & Community Services

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillors: W Henderson

Absent: C Rollins

13608 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Henderson (Cllr Billington Substituted).

13609 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13610 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13611 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Nominee: Cllr Y Farrell Proposed by: Cllr E Billington
Seconded by: Cllr E Costello

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote, Cllr Farrell became the Vice-Chair of Environment and Leisure for the municipal year of 2026/2027.

13612 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21st April 2026.

Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Environment & Leisure Committee meeting held on 21st April 2026, and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13613 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

Houghton Hall Park Board 22nd January 2026

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

13614 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

In accordance with Standing Order 4.j.iv. 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.

Members were provided with the extract from the approved Committee Functions & Terms of Reference which related to this committee.

13615 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

Members were provided with a 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.

Members questioned when an update would be provided on the asset transfers relating to Tithe Farm and Parkside. The Head of Environmental and Community Services confirmed this would be discussed with the Town Clerk and an update would be provided at the next suitable meeting.

Resolved: To review and approve the Environment and Leisure Services Committee Workplan for 2025/26, which outlines anticipated specific reports for the municipal year.

13616 STAFFING FORECAST 2027-2028

Members were provided with the staffing forecast for 2027-2028.

Members were informed that there were plans to improve the Grounds Team structure by establishing supervisory roles.

Members highlighted the good work done by the grounds team and the Head of Environmental and Community Services confirmed they would pass on the commendation.

Resolved: 1 - To support the projected staff changes within the Environment and Leisure Services team for the years 2027-2028, and to recommend to the Staffing Committee that these changes be included as part of the 2027-2028 budget setting process.

2 - To receive the staffing forecast for 2028-2032.

13617 HOUGHTON HALL PARK

A verbal update was provided to Members on the day-to-day operations of Houghton Hall Park management.

Houghton Hall continued to progress and events held in the park had been well received. The gardens had been entered into Anglia in Bloom.

There were two main projects: removal of the box hedge; and replacement of the bed edging

13618 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Members were provided with the income and expenditure report for the Environment & Leisure Services Committee, up to the end of the 2025/2026 financial year.

For information, Members were also provided with the income and expenditure report for the Environment & Leisure Services Committee to 26th June 2026.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services provided Members with additional detail on the larger expenses, and amounts carried forward. Figures were as expected.

Members were keen to explore potential measures in response to rising costs, especially in regard to utilities. The Head of Environmental and Community Services responded that there was a need to future-proof infrastructure and that it would be most beneficial to invest in sites where HRTC owned the freehold.

13619 TITHE FARM RECREATION GROUND SPORTS PROJECT UPDATE

Members were provided with a verbal update on the Tithe Farm Recreation Ground Sports Project.

The S278 had been completed and the requirements now formed part of a legal document which was with Central Bedfordshire Council for the final sign off.

The bond had been secured for the protection of the road network. HRTC were still waiting for the scheduling team to provide a space within the network. Three months' notice was required for this; therefore, completion would not be completed during the summer break.

13620 ASSET TRANSFERS IN THORN/BIDWELL UPDATE

A verbal update was provided to Members on the latest position on assets due to be transferred to the town council.

Progress was being made on the transfers of the play areas that were additional to the three that came with Thorn Park. HRTC solicitors had been advised to act on the transfers. In line with the S106 agreement, the play areas would be transferred first to CBC and then to the town council. It was hoped that three would have been transferred by the end of the municipal year.

The allotment site was currently in use as a temporary store area. Members would be advised when this was no longer the case.

13621 LINMERE ALLOTMENTS

A verbal update was provided to Members on the Tithe Farm Recreation Ground Sports Project.

HRTC and the Houghton Regis Management Company had signed an interim allotment management agreement. HRTC would run the allotments for the management company for a period of twelve months. Following this time, it was hoped that this would become a freehold transfer.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.45pm

Dated this 19th day of October 2026

Chairman