

Town Council Calendar of Meetings



Please find below the calendar of meetings for the Town Council from 1st September – 30th November 2011. All council meetings are open to the public and are held in the Council Offices in Peel Street at 7.30pm unless otherwise stated. The agendas for forthcoming meetings can be found on the notice boards outside the offices, Houghton Regis Library and on the Town Council website. Copies can also be obtained from the office.

Date	Day	Committee	Time
26th September	Monday	Accounts Sub Committee + Policy & Resources Committee	6.30pm
3rd October	Monday	Town Council Meeting	
10th October	Monday	Accounts Sub Committee + Planning & Licensing Committee	6.30pm
31st October	Monday	Accounts Sub Committee + Planning & Licensing Committee	6.30pm
7th November	Monday	Environment Committee	
14th November	Monday	Grants Sub Committee	
21st November	Monday	Accounts Sub Committee + Policy & Resources Committee	6.30pm
28th November	Monday	Policy & Resources Committee	

Christmas Card List

Every year the Town Mayor sends Christmas cards to residents aged over 65 years of age. The time is approaching again to ensure that your details are on the list.

To register or to check that your details are included on the 2011 list please call Sarah on 01582 708523.



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Contact Details

Houghton Regis Town Council, Peel Street,
Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY
Telephone: 01582 708540

Fax: 01582 861102

Email: info@houghtonregis.org.uk

Website: www.houghtonregis.org.uk

Officers:

Clare Evans, Town Clerk 01582 708542
Stuart Oliver, Deputy Town Clerk 01582 708543
Sarah Gelsthorp, Promotions & Communications Officer 01582 708523
Sonia Stennett, Accounts & Administration Officer 01582 708541
John Lawson, Projects and Assignments Officer 01582 708544
Beverley Turner, Administration Officer 01582 708540
Jan Cooper, Community Organiser 01582 132780

Councillor contact details:

Houghton Hall Ward:

Clr Edward Costello 01582 515854
 1 Clarks Way, Houghton Regis
Clr David Jones **
 2 Halleys Way, Houghton Regis, LU5 5HY 01582 655162
Clr Robin Hines *
 5 Bidwell Hill, Houghton Regis, LU5 5DR 01582 759026
Clr Andrew Roberts *
 40 Manor Park, Houghton Regis, LU5 5BX 01582 868288
Clr Tony Swain *
 19 Roslyn Way, Houghton Regis, LU5 6JX 01582 522952
Clr James Patterson-Waterston *
 24 Northview Road, Houghton Regis, LU5 5AH 01582 750520

Parkside Ward:

Clr Peter Carrington *
 38 Dolphin Drive, Houghton Regis, LU5 5QE 01582 866314
Clr Mrs Ruth Harris-Small
 28 Kirton Way, Houghton Regis, LU5 5PZ 01582 758483
Clr Robert Shimmin *
 4 Dell Road, Houghton Regis, LU5 5HT 01582 739170
Clr Alan Winter *
 100 Westminster Gardens, Houghton Regis, LU5 5RU 01582 514654

Tithe Farm Ward:

Clr Mrs Shirley Gilchrist *
 129 Sundon Road, Houghton Regis, LU5 5NL 01582 519087
Clr Michael Hunting *
 6 Cherry Tree Walk, Houghton Regis, LU5 5JJ 01582 526630
Clr Mrs Kim Ireland
 8 Alsop Close, Houghton Regis, LU5 5JT 01582 865693
Clr Peter Williams **
 25 Dalling Drive, Houghton Regis, LU5 5EF 01582 865358

Central Bedfordshire Councillors:

Clr Dr Rita Egan (Houghton Hall) ** 0300 300 8518
 4 Bidwell Close, Houghton Regis, LU5 5TP
Clr Mrs Susan Goodchild (Houghton Hall) ** 0300 300 8525
 21 Roslyn Way, Houghton Regis, LU5 6JX
Clr David Jones (Parkside) ** 0300 300 8535
 2 Halleys Way, Houghton Regis, LU5 5HY
Clr Peter Williams (Tithe Farm) ** 0300 300 8567
 25 Dalling Drive, Houghton Regis, LU5 5EF

* Photo courtesy of Councillor Alan Winter

** Photo courtesy of Central Bedfordshire Council

Houghton Regis Councillors



Clr Alan Winter



Clr Andrew Roberts



Clr David Jones
Central Bedfordshire Councillor



Clr Rita Egan
Central Bedfordshire Councillor



Clr Edward Costello



Clr James Patterson-Waterston



Clr Michael Hunting



Clr Mrs Shirley Gilchrist



Clr Mrs Kim Ireland



Clr Peter Carrington



Clr Mrs Susan Goodchild
Central Bedfordshire Councillor



Clr Robin Hines



Clr Tony Swain



Clr Peter Williams



Clr Mrs Ruth Harris-Small



Clr Robert Shimmin

Houghton Regis TOWN CRIER



Houghton Regis Town Council

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Telephone: 01582 708540 Fax: 01582 861102

E-mail: info@houghtonregis.org.uk

Web: www.houghtonregis.org.uk

Delivered to all properties in Houghton Regis

Carnival 2011

The Houghton Regis Carnival was a terrific success with lots of sunshine! The event was kicked off by the colourful and energetic arrival of the Carnival procession on the Village Green. It is estimated that between 3,000 and 4,000 people attended the event throughout the day.

There was a record breaking number of stalls on the Green, ranging from Caribbean food to jewellery to charity fundraising stalls and a tea room in the pavilion provided by the Houghton Regis WI.

The winners of the procession competition were All Saints' Academy who won £300 plus the Yvonne Corkerton Memorial Trophy and the runners up were 1st/3rd Houghton Regis Beavers and Cubs who won £150 and a trophy cup.

The Town Council would also like to hear from residents who are interested in becoming co-opted on to the Carnival Working Group. The Carnival Working Group meets six times a year for approximately two hours to discuss ideas for the event. No experience is necessary, just enthusiasm and some time to spare on Carnival Day itself. For more details, please contact Sarah.

The Town Council and Carnival Working Group would like to thank Nisa, Aldwyck Housing, BAM Nuttall, Vauxhall Heritage Centre and all our advertisers for assisting with the event.



Goodneighbours coming to Town

Working with BRCC The Town Council is to support a group of volunteers in setting up a Good Neighbour Scheme.

The scheme is managed by local volunteers who have got together to offer their time and talents to help fellow residents. They can tackle the things you might ask of a neighbour-such as a lift to the doctors or to the shops; collecting prescriptions and library books; dog walking; practical help such as changing a light bulb; or even just popping round for a chat over a cup of tea. They do not undertake services best left to qualified professionals but they will try to signpost people to other sources of help if they cannot help themselves.

If you would like to be part of the Good Neighbour Scheme, please contact Jan at The Town Council Offices.

Enhancing Our Services To Our Community

It has been well publicised that Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) have had to make far reaching decisions on ways to achieve financial savings and efficiencies. For our community, potentially the effects were set to be dramatic. CBC have ceased to provide Community Development Services, have threatened to close the new state of the art town centre toilets, threatened to close the Leisure Centre, and have withdrawn from providing summer activities for young people. It is feared that other savings may be forthcoming.

When the Town Council set its budget in January very detailed consideration was given as to how the effects of the CBC efficiencies and savings could be mitigated without increasing the Town Council's share of the Council Tax.

Community Support / Development

A 'Community Organiser' is now working for the Town Council to work with existing community and voluntary groups to develop their role and scope, to provide an effective link between the community, HRTC and Central Bedfordshire Council and to work within the community, developing community cohesion, projects and initiatives. To date work has begun on supporting community groups, developing a Good Neighbour Scheme, enhancing the Community Services element of the Town Council's website, supporting the Houghton Regis Leisure Centre Action Group and setting up the Houghton Regis Networking Group. If you are interested in any of these projects or would like further information you can contact the Community Organiser, Mrs Cooper, either phone at the Council offices (01582 708540) or e-mail theway@houghtonregis.org.uk.

Town Centre Toilets

These were due to close to save CBC in the region of £60,000 per annum. The Town Council were very concerned over the impact this would have on town centre users and retailers and feared that their closure might jeopardise the long term sustainability of the town centre. However thanks to a sizable financial contribution from the Town Council this financial year (£7,500) and the offer for the Town Council to manage the toilets from April 2012 they will now be kept open.

Houghton Regis Leisure Centre

The complete closure of the Leisure Centre was due to save CBC £172,000. The Town Council objected to its closure and residents formed an action group to seek to keep the centre open. The future is still in question but the closure has at the least been delayed and it is hoped that as work progresses measures can be put in place to keep it open. The Action Group should be proud of its' achievements to date and it is hoped that by working closely together in the future the centre can be saved. To contact the Action Group e-mail HRLCAG@houghtonregis.org.uk.

Summer Activities

For the previous few years the Town Council has worked with Extended Schools (CBC) to provide a range of summer activities for young people. With the closure of Extended Schools this provision has been left solely to the Town Council. A separate report in this newsletter covers the programme for this summer.

All this has been provided at no additional cost to the Council Tax payer.

Annual Report 2010/11

The Town Council's Annual Report was approved on 27th June 2011. The report contains the Chairman's Foreword, Chairman's Overview, Review of Town Council meetings, the Policy & Resources Committee, the Environment Committee and the Planning & Licensing Committee, a look forward to 2011 / 2012, a Summary of Accounts (as detailed below), contact details for Houghton Regis Town Council including office contact details, town councillor contact details and areas of responsibility and contact details for Central Bedfordshire Council including office contact details, Central Bedfordshire Councillor contact details and areas of responsibility.

A full copy of the Annual Report can be found on the Town Council's website, www.houghtonregis.org.uk or from the council offices.

The Summary of Accounts in the Annual Report provides the following information:

INCOME 2010 - 2011

	Income (£)
Precept	662,000
Agency	17,146
Loan & capital receipts	2,080
Interest & investment income	8,799
Leisure & recreation, including pavilions	19,879
Cemetery fees & Churchyard	14,664
Miscellaneous income	658
Community Development	6,889

TOTAL INCOME 732,115

EXPENDITURE 2010 - 2011

	Expenditure (£)
Establishment/general administration	365,676
Agency Costs	2,000
Election expenses	0
Grants	16,066
Capital expenditure	251,691
Loan Interest and Capital repayments	37,961
Leisure & recreation – play areas & pavilions	82,845
Cemetery & Churchyard	4,220
Christmas lights	8,632
Highways	1,541
Democratic representation & management	15,828
Town security	31,791
Community development	12,330

TOTAL EXPENDITURE 830,581

* The Year End Accounts are yet to be finalised, so the above figures are an estimate.

Council Meetings

Town Council

The meeting at the end of June approved the Year End Accounts for 2010/11 and received the Internal Auditor's report. The Council were pleased to note that the Internal Auditor had been satisfied with his finding and had only made two recommendations. The first was to review the recording and accounting processes for capital expenditure and the second to undertake a professional valuation of council properties for insurance purposes. Both these actions are being dealt with. The Annual Report for 2010/11 was approved.

A second Special Meeting of the Council was held in July to consider the announced closure of the Houghton Regis Leisure Centre. At this meeting many members of the Houghton Regis Leisure Centre Action Group and residents turned up to voice their concerns and objections to the closure. At this meeting the Council agreed to support the Action Group and interested local residents to formulate and implement an action plan and to explore opportunities for community management, not to pursue a legal challenge unless evidence comes to light to question the validity of the CBC decision or decision making process to close the Leisure Centre, and to welcome discussions with CBC over the continued operation of the HRLC.

Policy & Resources Committee

This Committee met on 20th June. A response was drafted to the consultation on the future of Local Council Audit and consideration was given to the future operation and management of the town centre toilets where it was agreed to make a financial contribution this year and to take on the management of the facility from 1st April.

Environment Committee

The Environment Committee has met only once. It considered proposals from Central Bedfordshire Council to become a partner and therefore more actively involved in the management of countryside sites and public paths within the Parish. The response to this was favourable and more detailed discussions with Central Bedfordshire are to take place. The Committee also agreed to the erection of dog fouling warning signs on all Town Council owned land and this is in the process of being put in place.

Planning and Licensing Committee

The Planning & Licensing Committee has considered 13 applications and had no objections to 10 of them. It has also submitted 12 suggestions for street names in the new housing development adjacent to the quarry on Houghton Road and also commented on a street trading application.

Bedfordshire
Police
Authority

More Officers To Tackle Crime in Our Communities

Bedfordshire Police have drawn up ambitious plans to improve the service provided by the Force while also saving taxpayers' money.

From October 2011, the Force and the Police Authority will deliver a more streamlined process to improve both operational capacity and capability. This means that more officers will be available to deal with incidents reported to us by the public.

The Force carried out a detailed review of the way it organised key departments to identify areas where costs could be cut and performance improved. During the process, residents confirmed they were happy for structural matters to be dealt with by the Force so long as they received an appropriate police response when needed and crime continued to fall.

The new changes will see the number of police officers dedicated to local policing double from 92 to 185. This means a larger number of officers will be available to tackle local crime, anti-social behaviour and other community concerns while PCSOs will carry out more patrols.

There will no longer be any geographic boundaries or divisions separating communities. Instead, a Chief Superintendent will oversee Local Policing while another will be responsible for Tackling Crime.

Through reorganisation, the Force and the Police Authority will speed up response times. A new centralised team will respond to incidents, county-wide officers will get to where they are needed more quickly, as well as save money.

Meanwhile, a greater number of incidents will be resolved over the telephone to reduce demand on frontline staff thanks to a new appointment system for non-emergency issues. A recent survey found that people accepted this as a good way of dealing with non-urgent matters. A new three digit non-emergency number will be introduced in the autumn, after which time all you will need to dial is 101 for non-urgent situations.

Peter Conniff, Chair of Bedfordshire Police Authority, said: "We've listened to our residents throughout the review process and their comments have very much informed our strategic decisions. The changes have been made to promote greater access to police services and deliver a more effective response that meets the expectations of our communities."



Fix My Street



Fix My Street is an easy to use website set up to assist members of the public with reporting issues of concern to their local councils.

If you are unsure of which department or council to report your concerns to, Fix My Street will locate the correct council and pass on the concerns on your behalf. There are four simple steps to complete as detailed below:

- Enter the UK postcode, or street name and area
- Locate the problem on a map of the area
- Enter details of the concern
- Fix My Street will then report the issue on your behalf

For further info please check out the website:

www.fixmystreet.com



Young people get to make a difference!

Make a Difference (MaD) is coming to Houghton Regis to deliver new and exciting opportunities for young people aged 12 to 18. Having been awarded the youth service contract by Central Bedfordshire Council, MaD are now working to challenge and inspire young people to get involved in activities and to better their lives.

MaD aims to inspire young people to strive for a better life through engaging them in sports, arts and urban activities, youth centre sessions, volunteering and training. Activities will be provided from the Bedford Square Community Centre on Tithe Farm Road and across other venues in Houghton Regis.

To support young people in Houghton Regis MaD is also looking to recruit local volunteers that can inspire young people through sharing their skills. MaD are keen to speak to inspirational figures that have skills in sport, music, art and engaging young people.

For more information on Make a Difference and how to get involved in anyway please visit our website www.mad-uk.org, phone MaD on 01908 231312, email info@mad-uk.org or find us on Facebook.

'B+involved'

Houghton Hall Park

Heritage Lottery Fund 'Parks for People' application

Did you know that you have some very important wildlife areas right on your doorstep? There are some fantastic plants, animals and birds practically in your back garden!! Houghton Hall Park is owned by Central Bedfordshire Council and is managed by the Greensand Trust and contains important areas of chalk grassland which we are working hard to look after.

Houghton Hall Park plays an important role in the history, culture and landscape of the area and forms an integral and important part of local peoples' lives. It is widely used by local people; the primary use tends to be by dog walkers and there is a clear need to expand the use of the area, and encourage greater access from families and the neighbouring communities.

Central Bedfordshire Council and Houghton Regis Town councils with the Greensand Trust are preparing a Heritage Lottery Fund bid to carry out the following areas of work:

- 1) Building on previous public funding bids to restore the designed landscape, improving access and creating necessary infrastructure at the site to attract local communities and increase the use of Houghton Hall Park.
- 2) Create educational opportunities and develop an 'outdoor classroom' for schools and families. The project will develop links with local schools and families to create activity packs, lesson plans, guided nature walks, downloadable trails, school visits and campaigns to promote awareness of learning opportunities.
- 3) Creating a tailored package of activity to specifically engage groups that wouldn't or don't normally use the site, to include cultural days, themed open days, guided health or themed walks, structured activities and visits to other countryside sites.
- 4) Develop opportunities for participation and volunteering to encourage a sense of community ownership of Houghton Hall Park. To ensure that the project survives after the money has been spent, the project will support a "Friends of Houghton Hall Park" community group. It will also train community leaders and volunteers to run activities, developing literature, maps and self-guided activities and achieving recognition through the Green Flag scheme.

We would like the opportunity of contacting and inviting groups to a meeting to discuss the project further, get further ideas and how you can get involved in the future development and management of Houghton Hall Park. We want to hear from as many groups as possible - please contact any of the following people:

Bob Holland – Greensand Trust Senior Ranger – 01234 743666
Stuart Oliver – HRTC Deputy Town Clerk – 01582 708542
Paul Burgess – Central Bedfordshire Council – 0300 300 8000



Summer Fun for 5-12 year olds

August has seen some great activities for the little ones down at the Cricket Pavillion.

Subsidised by the Town Council and run by The Way over 80 little ones have taken part in rounders, football, kwik cricket, painting, modelling, collaging and much more.

Many thanks to everyone who took part.



DisabledGo provides online access guides to 90,000 venues across the UK and Ireland.

Here you can find detailed information about the access to all kinds of places - hotels, restaurants, colleges, tourist attractions, libraries, hospitals, leisure centres - the list goes on! All access information has been collected in person by DisabledGo's team of surveyors.

You can also use DisabledGo to find a job, catch up on the latest disability news, advertise events, post articles and join discussions on the forum. The website has been designed in constant consultation with disabled people. Feedback and ideas is welcome so please get in touch.

In October Houghton Regis, along with the rest of Central Bedfordshire will be included on the website.

The Town Council has been working with Central Bedfordshire Council and DisabledGo to ensure the town is included. The website is up and running now with the nearest town included being St. Albans.

www.disabledgo.com

Have a look and let Jan at the Town Council know what you think.