



Houghton Regis Helpers

Annual Report 2019

Houghton Regis Helpers
Our volunteers are here to help local residents in need


Houghton Regis Helpers
07587 004514
Phone us & we will call you back

We can provide short term help such as transport to a medical appointment or social event, shopping, gardening, minor DIY jobs indoors or outside, form-filling and we can offer advice and advocacy support.

Feeling lonely? Our volunteers are happy to befriend our neighbours - calling round for a chat and a cup of tea or go for a walk!

Our volunteers are DBS checked and insured.

www.houghtonregishelpers.co.uk
houghtonregishelpers@hotmail.co.uk

Find us on
Facebook


We have no political affiliations.
Supported by Houghton Regis Town Council and
Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity

Houghton Regis Helpers - your local Good Neighbour Scheme,
helping others in need

WE NEED YOU!
CAN YOU HELP?

Do you have any spare time?



As a **Volunteer** you can help make a difference!

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Welcome from the Chair

AGM 12 February 2020

Welcome to the 8th Annual General Meeting of Houghton Regis Helpers.

As we grow year on year, we continue to see a rise in the number of individual residents, their families and other professionals requesting and receiving help. On behalf of the Honorary Officers and Committee I cannot thank our volunteers enough for their hard work and support, freely giving up their time to help our local residents and the community.

In 2019 Houghton Regis Helpers continued to work in partnership with several other groups and professionals for the benefit of vulnerable residents, many of whom need support to continue living independently. We have seen an increase in befriending, help with shopping, outdoor DIY and gardening, and our volunteer drivers have been busier in 2019 than in previous years.

One of the highlights for me in 2019 was the presentation of the Good Neighbour Award at the Dunstable and Houghton Regis Business and Community Gala Awards evening in November. Awarded collectively as a group for all our volunteers in recognition of the help they give to our community – well deserved!

Looking ahead to 2020 we hope to see more people coming along to our monthly Open House coffee mornings. Formerly 'Mainly for Men' we now invite you all to attend these free events, which has a varied programme of quizzes, games, guest speakers and other activities planned for the year. In 2019 members of the coffee morning group enjoyed, among other activities, a talk on Scams; a presentation on Recycling; an outing to Houghton Hall Park; and raising money for Macmillan Nurses.

I hope you enjoy reading about our work during 2019 in this Annual Report. Regular updates and news of Houghton Regis Helpers can be found on our website, our Facebook page and via our bi-monthly electronic newsletter *E-News*.

Eric Gallucci (Chair)

Who's Who in 2019

Honorary Officers 2019				Committee members 2019			
Chair	Eric Gallucci (2018 to 2020)	Vice-Chair	Terry Jones (2019 to 2021)	Rae Bird	Carol Butler	Yvonne Farrell	Ange Kings
Treasurer (interim)	John Byrne (2019 to 2020)	Secretary	Jenny Gallucci (2019 to 2021)	James Stroebel	Sue Thorne	Betty Todd	Peter Todd

Volunteers 2019 – at the time of our AGM in 2019 thirty-nine volunteers were signed up with Houghton Regis Helpers. During the year we said farewell to Jo and Beka as they moved to make a new start in Cheshire, and we welcomed three new volunteers – Jane, Ged and Colin, who have been fantastic, hard-working additions to our team. Safeguarding of vulnerable adults is key to the work we do when helping others - training is offered to all our volunteers for Safeguarding Awareness, First Aid and in 2019 several volunteers completed a Level 2 Food Safety and Hygiene course.

Volunteering with Houghton Regis Helpers

As we move forward with succession planning, we have been encouraged by the continuing interest in volunteering by younger people and applications of interest are currently being followed up as we enter a new year and a new decade. We continue to strive to recruit volunteers of all ages, abilities and diversity to ensure the sustainability of the group. As a volunteer with our good neighbour scheme you CAN help make a difference! With any time to spare to help others, no matter how little, we welcome applications from anyone over the age of 18 to join us. If you are under the age of 18 you are still welcome to join the group as a volunteer helping at community events or helping clients under the supervision of a DBS-checked volunteer.



Gardening: before



....after!



Fund-raising!



Teamwork

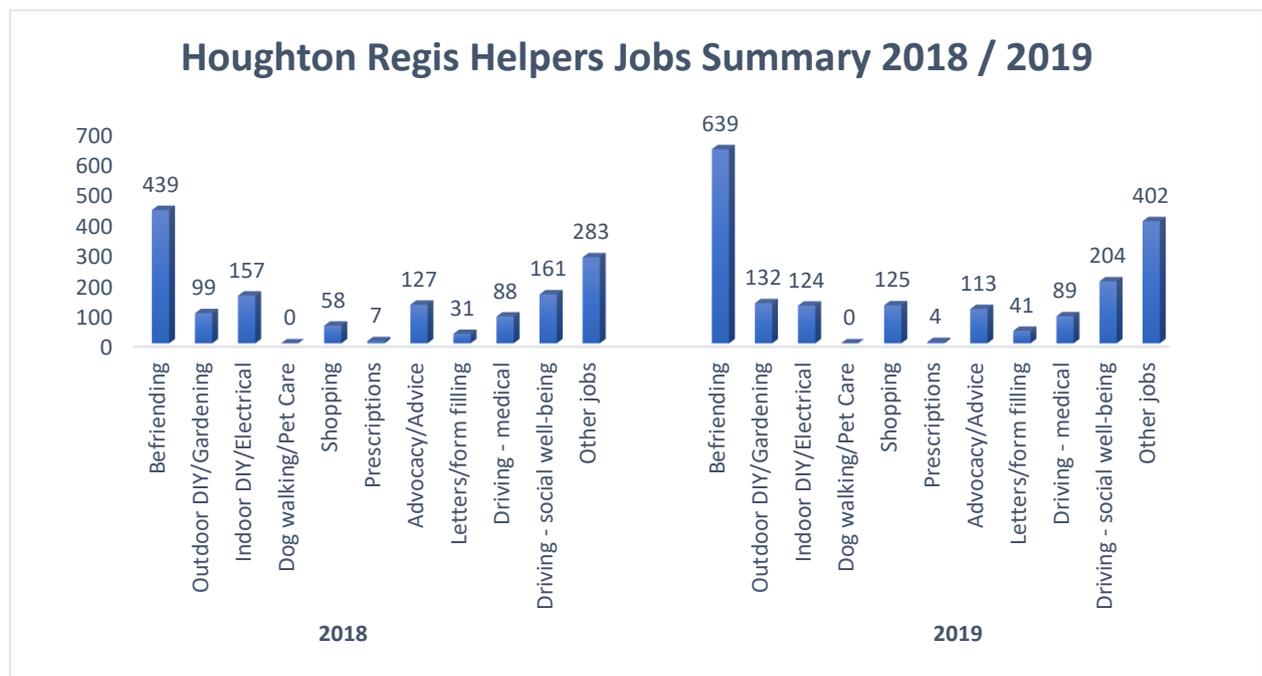


Entertaining!

The Honorary Officers and Committee thank all our volunteers for their care, commitment and goodwill, and dedication to helping others

Houghton Regis Helpers is your local Good Neighbour Scheme, a voluntary organisation now entering our ninth year. Set up in 2011, under the guidance of Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) and support from Houghton Regis Town Council, our volunteers provide help to residents who are in need. We offer a range of services from gardening to befriending; from light DIY (indoors and outdoors) to giving residents lifts to appointments; from shopping to form-filling and letter writing; from collecting prescriptions to accompanying residents to social events. We organise monthly Open House coffee mornings and occasional Afternoon teas – all free - as well as volunteer events, training and inviting guest speakers. We offer advice and can act as advocates if family or friends are unavailable and we can often be seen at community events. **Our volunteers** are covered by Public Liability Insurance and carry photo ID. Those who work directly with vulnerable adults have enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks.

The total number of recorded ‘jobs’ for 2019 was 1873, which is a 22% rise on 2018.



Clients 2019 – our volunteers supported 158 residents during 2019, with 39 individuals requesting help for the first time. In addition to the help given to individual residents in Houghton Regis we have responded to requests for assistance, advice and information from callers from out of the area and from more than 50 other professionals, other organisations and community groups. These include professionals in the field of health and social care, such as social workers, family support workers, staff from the L&D Hospital social care team, as well as callers from the Community Mental Health team, Central Bedfordshire Housing team, Tenancy Officers and Beacon House. Partnership working with Houghton Regis Town Council, Red House Court and Habinteg Housing Association in Clarkes Way is on-going and the ‘Helpers’ have been involved in several community events during the year – some of these are highlighted in this report.

During the year our phoneholders and volunteers have signposted individuals, including the callers from other areas, to a wide range of services and other sources of help and supported the family and friends of our vulnerable residents. The positive response we receive from many of our callers makes volunteering so worthwhile... *‘you are angels’; ‘I don’t know what I’d do without you’; ‘thank you for helping my Mum’; ‘I didn’t even know you existed, I am so happy now’; ‘the volunteer was so caring and put me at ease’*

Challenges...

In our Annual Report 2018 we highlighted the work we had to do, as an organisation, to ensure we are compliant with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) We have an obligation to comply with current law when collecting, processing and sharing personal data and we now have robust procedures in place when signing up new clients, new volunteers and for IT and email use.

During 2019 we were challenged by a number of more complex issues being experienced by residents and our designated safeguarding officer has responded to more than one safeguarding concern this year. Working with volunteers with specialist knowledge and with other professionals these issues have been managed effectively.

This year the committee reviewed and revised, as needed, the following documents: Safeguarding Policy; Equality & Diversity Policy; Risk Assessment for the activities of volunteers; Risk Assessment for the provision of refreshments; and Risk Assessment for stalls at outdoor events. All the policy documents can be downloaded from our website: www.houghtonregishelpers.co.uk

... and Achievements 2019

Well attended **7th AGM in February** with a buffet and volunteers and guests enjoyed a talk on **SAFE AND WELL VISITS** by Laraine from the Beds Fire and Rescue Service Community Safety Team.



Winners of the Wooden Spoon for being the losing team at Town Mayor's Quiz Night!

MAY FAIR – a cold, windy day, with a hailstorm, meant Houghton Regis Helpers prepared more hot drinks than ever before! Here serving Afternoon Tea to Town Mayor Cllr Ken Wattingham, May Queen and her attendant.



June 2019 – Volunteers' Week

CELEBRATING WITH OTHER
VOLUNTEERS AT CHEERING
VOLUNTEERING AT THE
GROVE THEATRE IN
DUNSTABLE



Another buffet!

Volunteers' Thank You lunch and presentation of Certificates





**BRC Good Neighbour Scheme Celebration
September 2019**

Jenny giving presentation on 'Promotion and Partnerships'



Representatives from almost 40 village care and good neighbour schemes across Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough



November 2019



Laying a wreath on behalf of Houghton Regis Helpers at the Memorial Stone during the Remembrance Service on Armistice Day



Winners of Good Neighbour of the Year Award at Dunstable and Houghton Regis Business and Community Awards Gala night in November – well deserved



recognition of all our volunteers hard work and commitment to others.

1st December 2019

Christmas Afternoon Tea, complete with Santa and Entertainment – singing, recitations and magic tricks!



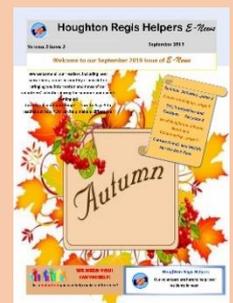
We thank all the volunteers who helped at the Tea and **special thanks** to the nine volunteers and supporters who served Christmas lunch to residents at Red House Court on Christmas Day.



E-News is our bi-monthly electronic newsletter with an email circulation of over 100 subscribers (volunteers, supporters, other professionals, and organisations). The newsletter includes news of volunteers' work, photos, events – recent and coming up, articles and any interesting facts or news from the local community. The newsletter is also available to read on our website and paper copies are posted to those who cannot access *E-News* electronically.

If you wish to subscribe to the mailing list, and give GDPR consent to your email address being used in this way, or would like to contribute to *E-News* you are welcome to contact the editor by phone or email.

Contact details are on the back page of this Annual Report.



TRAINING NEWS

During the year volunteers took part in a variety of training

Six volunteers completed on-line training and achieved **Level 2 Food Safety and Hygiene Certificates**

One volunteer completed **Level 2 Safeguarding Adults** training

Fourteen volunteers completed in-house **Safeguarding (Vulnerable Adults) Awareness training**. All new volunteers attend a course and we offer 2 yearly refresher training.



Seventeen volunteers attended **CPR/AED training with East Anglian Air Ambulance**, an excellent session giving volunteers confidence to manage emergency situations.

FUND RAISING 2019

We are grateful for the generosity of clients who have donated to Houghton Regis Helpers during the year – thank you!



We thank Morrisons, Houghton Regis, for donating vouchers and goodies for the Christmas Afternoon Tea in December.

THANK YOU ASDA!

Houghton Regis Helpers are extremely grateful for the support of the Dunstable store and for giving us the opportunity to raise funds this year. For being part of the Green Token Scheme from January to March 2019, raising £200, for allowing our volunteers to hold a cash collection day in October 2019, which raised over £100 and for the generous grant of £250 towards our Christmas Afternoon Tea for 55 residents who may otherwise have been on their own at Christmas.



Funding from Asda helped purchase new sweatshirts for volunteers!



We thank all the volunteers who gave up their time to walk the streets of Houghton Hall Ward delivering two issues of the Town Crier during 2019 and for delivering the Carnival programme to every household in Houghton Regis this year! All on behalf of Houghton Regis Town Council.

FINANCE REPORT



Thank you to John, our Treasurer for 2019 for managing the accounts. The independently examined **end of year accounts 2019** will be presented at the AGM.

Coffee Mornings



Each month we continued to hold our 'Mainly for Men' coffee mornings. In addition to quizzes, an outing to Houghton Hall Park and a Macmillan coffee morning which raised over £110 we enjoyed speakers from NatWest Banking 'Friends against Scams' and CBC Recycling team. Coffee mornings are a great chance to socialise, enjoy a drink and biscuit, play board games or dominoes or simply sit and chat and make new friends. Held on the first Wednesday in the month, from 11 to 12.30, in the Red Room at Red House Court, Clarks Way our coffee mornings are free to attend.



In November 2019 we opened the coffee mornings up for EVERYONE, re-launched as **OPEN HOUSE**.

No age limit and still free!

A varied programme is planned for 2020, including guest speakers, quizzes and VE Day Remembrance.

**For more information on our coffee mornings please do get in touch!
Contact details below.**

Interested in Volunteering?

Helping others, individually or as part of a team.

Fancy getting involved.

Ask us for a Volunteer Welcome Pack!

The pack includes an Expression of Interest Form;

Guidelines for Good Practice and keeping yourself safe;

GDPR and Data Protection Privacy Notice; Volunteer Driver declaration.

You CAN make a difference

How to contact us...

By phone: **07587 004514**

Email: houghtonregishelpers@hotmail.co.uk

Website: www.houghtonregishelpers.co.uk

Facebook: [Houghton Regis Helpers group page](#)

By post: Houghton Regis Helpers, c/o Houghton Regis Town Council,
Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Beds, LU5 5EY

Annual Report edited by the Secretary February 2020

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