

Houghton Regis Helpers

Annual Report 2020



A Year of Challenge and Change!

Your local Good Neighbour Scheme, helping others in need
As a **Volunteer you DO help make a difference!**



Annual Report 2020

Houghton Regis Helpers

Page 2	Welcome from the Chair	Who's Who in 2020
Page 3	Volunteers 2020	Job Summary and Clients 2020
Page 4	The impact of Covid-19	
Page 5	Finance Support and Thanks	Contact Details
Page 6	Finance Report 2020	

Welcome from the Chair

AGM 9 February 2021



As Chair of Houghton Regis Helpers I would like to thank all our volunteers for your commitment to helping others, especially during this unprecedented and challenging year. A year that has been busier than ever before; a year during which we have learnt to wash our hands more, use plenty of hand sanitiser, to wear face coverings and socially distance ourselves from others so that we all stay safe.

I thank the volunteers who joined us from March 2020 when Coronavirus 'hit' – your support has been exceptional. No-one knew back in March how long the pandemic would last and I am delighted you are still committed to volunteering to help others. I thank our volunteers who, with underlying conditions or due to age, made the sensible decision to shield and self-isolate – we appreciate you have stayed in contact and mostly stayed safe and well.

I give huge thanks to the volunteers who helped with the packing and delivery of food and gift parcels at the Tithe Farm Christmas Foodbank project during the Christmas period; to the volunteers who took a Christmas dinner to residents on their own on Christmas Day; and to the volunteers now working with Titan Primary Care Network to support the vaccination programme on site and helping with transport for patients.

At the start of 2021 we are looking forward to the success of the Covid vaccines and we are hopeful for a better, healthier future as we enter our 10th year as your local Good Neighbour Scheme. I hope you enjoy reading about our work during 2020 in this Annual Report and I trust everyone stays safe and well.

Eric

Eric Gallucci (Chair)

Who's Who in 2020

Honorary Officers 2020				Committee members 2020	
Chair	Eric Gallucci (2020 to 2022)	Vice-Chair	Terry Jones (2019 to 2021)	Rae Bird John Byrne Yvonne Farrell	Ange Kings Sue Thorne Betty Todd
Treasurer (interim)	Jenny Gallucci (2020 to 2021)	Secretary	Jenny Gallucci (2019 to 2021)		

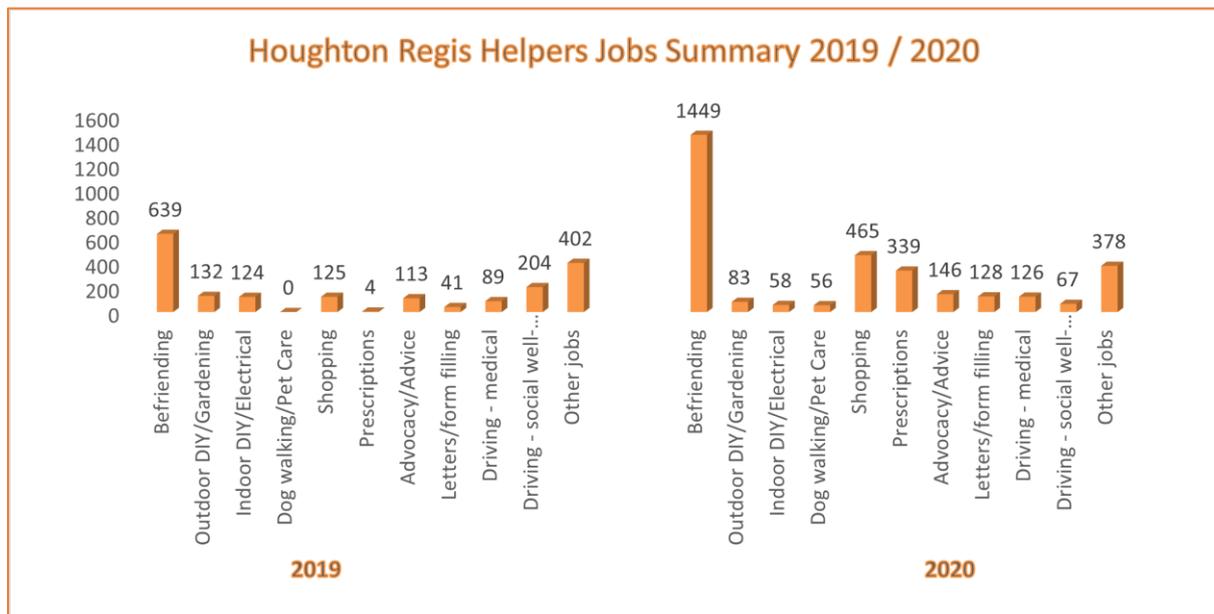
Volunteers 2020 – at the start of 2020 we were fortunate to have a great team of 40 volunteers. When the Coronavirus pandemic began in early 2020 and England was placed into its first lockdown we were approached by a number of individuals offering to volunteer to help those who were self-isolating or shielding. We have been delighted to welcome, during the year, 23 new volunteers – Brian, Antonia, Claire, Jenni, Clare, Sarah, Lesley, Tara, Fiona, Jane, Sam, Charlene, Steven, Paulette, Debbie, Rebecca, Cheryl, Louise, Zuzanna, Sue, Anne, Caprese and Theo.

A number of our volunteers have been unable to support as fully as they would like, having taken the sensible decision to self-isolate or reduce their capacity for some types of work, due to age, underlying health conditions or to safeguard others in their households. We are grateful for their continued support, and for the contribution all our volunteers have made to help others.

We said thank you and good luck to four volunteers during 2020 – to Sandie, who has moved away from Houghton Regis, and to Peter, Carol and Tony, who have stepped down for health reasons. This brings an end of year total of volunteers to 59.

The Honorary Officers and Committee thank all our volunteers for your care, commitment and goodwill, and dedication to helping others, especially during this challenging year

Job Summary and Clients 2020



The total number of recorded 'jobs' for 2020 was 3295, which is a 43% rise on 2019

Our volunteers supported an unprecedented number of individual residents this year – **469 in total** (not including children in families), compared to 158 in 2019. Due to Covid-19 we saw a big rise in first-time callers - 263 new clients were referred to, or contacted, Houghton Regis Helpers for support during the year.

The chart of jobs completed throughout the year (*above*) reflects the change in roles for our volunteers. A big increase in Befriending, mainly through regular phone calls and also socially-distanced outdoor visits, helped residents to manage their self-isolation and loneliness. The main support to residents has been in the collection and delivery of prescriptions and shopping. A wide-ranging age group has been supported, with prescriptions collected for children aged 3 years upwards to adults aged 100!

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 60 other professionals, other organisations and community groups. These include professionals in the field of health and social care, such as Social Workers, Learning Disability teams, staff from the L&D Hospital, as well as callers from the Community Mental Health team, Central Bedfordshire Housing, Tenancy Support Officers and Beacon House. Our volunteers have worked in close partnership during 2020 with the Community Hub and Community Engagement Team at Central Bedfordshire Council, with Houghton Regis Town Council, Tithe Farm Foodbank, Beds RCC, and Titan Primary Care Network

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. We have also supported the family and friends of our vulnerable residents.

The impact of Covid-19

It is hard to believe that just one year ago we were living 'normal' lives and looking forward to our usual activities - our monthly coffee mornings and occasional Afternoon Teas – and community events such as Quiz nights, Easter Egg Hunt, the Town Mayor's Civic Service and looking ahead the VE Day 75th Anniversary celebrations. Then the Coronavirus epidemic in China became a global pandemic, changing all our lives in so many ways. Social distancing; NHS Shielding; lockdown; stay at home messages and PPE became everyday vocabulary. In early March, our committee took the decision that volunteers would not be entering residents' homes during this time, including care homes and independent living flats. We agreed to postpone or cancel meetings and small gatherings to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.



We have been able to hold virtual coffee mornings on Facebook and remote committee meetings. Laying a wreath on behalf of Houghton Regis Helpers at the Armistice Day Remembrance Service at the Memorial Stone in November 2020 was one of a few socially distanced events we were able to participate in.



During the year volunteers have been kept informed of current Government restrictions and guidance with regular policy updates and risk assessments, and notices on the website, in our newsletters and on Facebook. As the number of requests for help rapidly increased we set up a second phone help line to manage the calls.

Some outdoor DIY work was possible during the summer months, however home visits have been limited to essential visits only due to the possible risks to residents and volunteers. Volunteer drivers continue to provide residents with lifts to hospital and GP appointments, including transport for Covid vaccinations, following the strict Covid-19 guidelines we have set down for this role. Face masks, disposable gloves and hand sanitiser have been provided for volunteers by the organisation.

Community groups in Houghton Regis have worked together to support local residents at this time of crisis and it has been mutually beneficial to work in partnership with other organisations and individuals. One partnership has been with a local pharmacy who approached Houghton Regis Helpers to ask if we are able to support with the collection and delivery of prescriptions for local patients. Another partnership has been with local foodbanks, which has led to volunteers being able to promptly arrange emergency food parcels for households in need.

FUNDING SUPPORT AND THANKS

In 2020 Covid-19 restrictions meant that our group was unable to participate in our usual fund-raising activities and events. With the unprecedented rise in requests for help costs rose substantially, particularly unexpected costs being incurred such as additional phone costs; purchase of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment); reimbursement of travel costs for volunteers; and DBS checks for new volunteers.



We are extremely grateful for the generous donations from clients who have been supported and for the award of grants from the following organisations and emergency funding providers:

Houghton Regis Town Council Grant of £500

Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation,
Bedfordshire Coronavirus Emergency Fund Grant of
£1500

Catalyst Coronavirus Emergency Fund - Awarded
£658

Central Bedfordshire Council, Ward Councillor Covid-
19 Grant of £400



With their support we have been able to sustain our funding in 2020. THANK YOU.

With the cancellation of our annual Christmas Afternoon Tea for vulnerable residents we are grateful for the support of **Morrisons** store who donated gifts for Christmas goodie bags which we delivered to residents instead!



During the year volunteers received THANKS for their support for the community from:

- HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, Helen Nellis
 - The High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, Susan Lousada DL
- Houghton Regis Town Mayor and Houghton Regis Town Council
 - Cheering Volunteering, Central Bedfordshire Council
 - Beds RCC

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



**Finance Report
on Back Page**

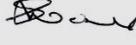
Annual Report edited by the Secretary February 2021

All photographs and images are printed with permission for use by © Houghton Regis Helpers

Please seek permission for any reproduction or photocopying of content

FINANCE REPORT

Presentation of independently examined end of year accounts 2020

HOUGHTON REGIS HELPERS INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2020						2019	
	2020					2019	
£	Unrestricted Fund	Restricted Fund ONE Covid-19 / HRTC	Restricted Fund Two Covid-19 / BCEF	Restricted Fund Three Covid-19 / Catalyst	Restricted Fund Four Covid-19 / CBC Ward Cllr Grant	£	
INCOME							
Donations - General	£565.00					£285.00	
Gardening	£100.00					£185.00	
Town Crier Deliveries	£434.85					£1,091.48	
Fundraising & Promotional	£0.00					£566.68	
Insurance claim	£0.00					£200.00	
Asda Grant (restricted)	£0.00						£250.00
Covid-19 HRTC (Restricted)		£500.00					
Covid-19 BCEF (Restricted)			£1,500.00				
Covid-19 Catalyst (Restricted)				£658.00			
Covid-19 Ward Cllr Grant (Restricted)					£400.00		
Sub-Totals	£1,099.85	£500.00	£1,500.00	£658.00	£400.00	£2,328.16	£250.00
TOTAL INCOME (All Funds)	£4,157.85					£2,578.16	
EXPENDITURE							
Mobile Phone	£129.14	£255.39	£6.47		£40.00	£160.00	
Broadband & Landline		£55.00	£61.23	£234.31		£17.47	
Website	£95.47					£627.47	
Stationery/Postage/Admin	£348.70	£65.37	£298.38	£116.73		£60.41	
Gardening	£39.88			£14.96		£259.94	
Equipment / Software	£255.02			£79.99		£215.40	
Uniforms			£768.00			£179.38	
Fundraising & Promotional	£155.41					£413.97	
Advertising	£0.00					£80.35	
Volunteer Events	£39.55	£11.25				£269.44	
Insurance premium renewal	£271.98					£203.00	
Insurance claim paid	£0.00					£31.20	
DBS	£10.40		£10.40	£83.20		£265.60	
Training	£0.00					32.77	£250.00
Christmas Event	£77.52					£40.00	
Other	£48.60						
Other - Covid-19 costs							
PPE		£110.00	£194.45		£119.88		
Reimbursement of travel costs for volunteers			£161.07	£45.89	£174.14		
Incidentals (for clients)		£2.99			£8.35		
Sub-Totals	£1,471.67	£500.00	£1,500.00	£575.08	£342.37	£2,856.40	£250.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (All Funds)	£4,389.12					£3,106.40	
Net income	-£371.82			£82.92	£57.63	-£528.24	
Balance b/f	£1,516.00					£2,044.24	
Plus income	£1,099.85	£500.00	£1,500.00	£658.00	£400.00	£2,328.16	£250.00
Less expenditure	-£1,471.67	-£500.00	-£1,500.00	-£575.08	-£342.37	-£2,856.40	-£250.00
Sub-Totals c/f	£1,144.18			£82.92	£57.63	£1,516.00	£0.00
TOTAL c/f to 2021 (All Funds)	£1,284.73						
Cash in Bank	£1,270.57	*as at 31.12.20				£1,035.41	
* Less uncashed cheque	-£46.75					£480.59	
Petty cash	£60.91						
	£1,284.73					£1,516.00	
I hereby confirm that I have examined the books and papers for the year ended 31st December 2020, and that these accounts fairly state the receipts and payments for that period		Independent Scrutineer		S. North		Date 22/1/21	
		Signature					

With thanks to Jenny Galluci, interim Treasurer, for keeping the accounts this year and to our Independent Scrutineer, Sheila North, for your thorough and diligent examination of the Houghton Regis Helpers accounts for year ending 31 December 2020