

HOUGHTON REGIS HELPERS
CELEBRATING 10 YEARS
2011 TO 2021



Celebrating 10 Years!

Houghton Regis Helpers

Annual Report 2021



Houghton Regis Helpers



Our volunteers are here to help local residents in need



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Houghton Regis Helpers

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Welcome from the Chair

AGM 10 February 2022



2021 has been another challenging and difficult year due to the continuing Coronavirus pandemic, with the Delta variant causing a lockdown in January to the Omicron variant bringing further restrictions at the end of the year. Covid-19 vaccinations have helped reduce the severity of illness and we have been fortunate that most volunteers have been able to continue to help our residents in need, including volunteers who have supported with the vaccination programmes.

Volunteers have been exceptional in their support, maintaining social distancing and following Covid guidance, wearing face coverings and ensuring everyone has been kept safe. As Chair of Houghton Regis Helpers, and on behalf of the Honorary Officers and Committee, I thank you all.

1st December 2021 marked the 10th Anniversary since the launch of Houghton Regis Helpers in 2011. Ten years on, volunteers have seen a lot of change and growth and you can read about this in the Annual Report. As yet, we have been unable to celebrate our ten years achievements but, hopefully, as we begin to enjoy a more 'normal' life in 2022 we will once again be able to meet socially all together and enjoy some Birthday cake!

I hope you enjoy reading about our work during 2021 in this Annual Report and I trust everyone stays safe and well.

Eric

Eric Gallucci (Chair)

**Thank
You!**

Who's Who in 2021

Honorary Officers 2021				Committee members 2021	
Chair	Eric Gallucci (2020 to 2022)	Vice-Chair	Terry Jones (2021 to 2023)	Rae Bird Yvonne Farrell Ange Kings	Christine Lyus Charlene McCoppin Betty Todd
Treasurer	Caprese Green (2021 to 2022)	Secretary	Jenny Gallucci (2021 to 2023)		

Volunteers 2021

– as a group, we started 2021 with 59 volunteers ‘on our books’. A few volunteers took the sensible decision to self-isolate or reduce their capacity for some roles, due to age, underlying conditions or to safeguard others in their households. Several volunteers who generously gave of their time during the Covid-19 lockdowns continue to support the group when ‘working from home’ and we have a great team of volunteers who make regular phone calls to befriend lonely and isolated residents. We have been so grateful for the support and contribution all our volunteers have made to help others.

During 2021 we welcomed Sandra, Lisa, Zunaira and Omer as volunteers, and we said goodbye to Cheryl, Claire, Ged, Jean, Jenni, John, Louise, Rebecca, Sam, Sue, and Theo.

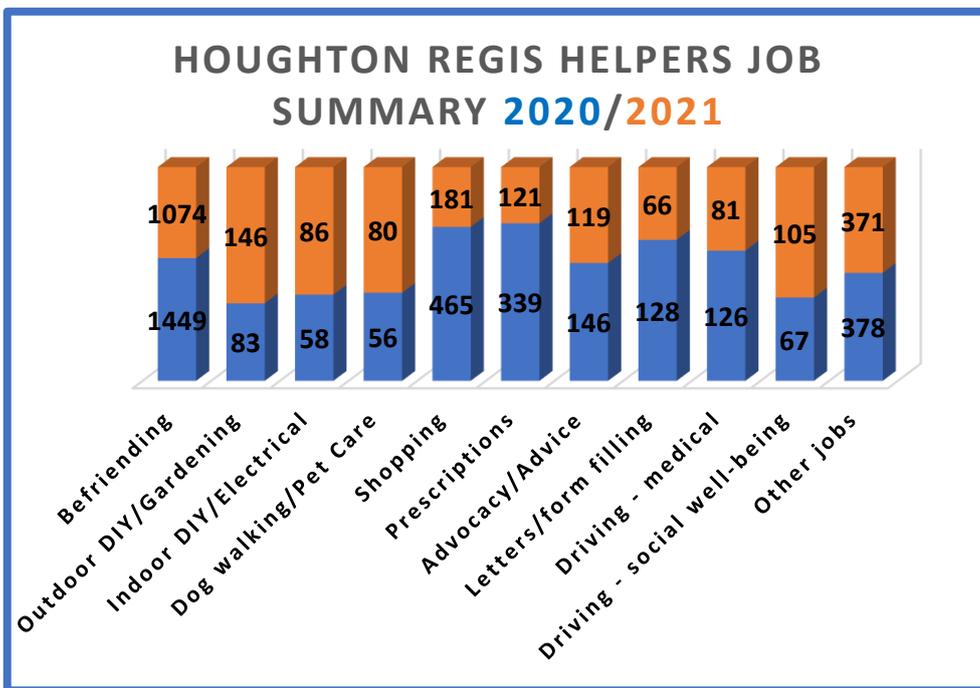
In Remembrance of Peter Todd

It was with great sadness that we report the passing of Peter Todd, one of Houghton Regis Helpers founder members, who died on 25 February 2021. Peter was a committee member from the launch of the group in 2011 until he stood down due to ill health in 2020. He was a spoken gentleman, happy to help with gardening, painting and at local events. He would certainly challenge when he disagreed with decisions but was kind-hearted and caring. Peter was a ‘village’ boy, born and raised in Houghton Regis and lived here all his life.

Peter is remembered with affection. Our condolences, love and prayers go to Betty, his wife and founder member of Houghton Regis Helpers also, and all the family.



Job Summary and Clients 2021



The graph shows the total number of recorded ‘jobs’ for each category, as reported to Beds RCC. In 2021 the overall total was 2430, our second highest achievement since 2020 when volunteers worked through lockdown to complete a record 3295 jobs.

Our volunteers supported 225 individual residents in 2021, not including children in families.

70 new clients were

referred to, or contacted, Houghton Regis Helpers for support during the year.

In addition to the help given to individual residents in Houghton Regis we responded to requests for assistance, advice and information from callers from out of the area and from more than 30 other professionals, other organisations and community groups. These include professionals in the field of health and social care, such as Adult Social Care, Independent Living Officers, Children’s Learning Disability team, the Community Mental Health team, Tenancy Support Officers and the Well-Being team at Titan Primary Care Network. During 2021 volunteers continued to work in partnership with the Community Partnership and Engagement Team at Central Bedfordshire Council, with Houghton Regis Town Council, the Trussle Trust Foodbank, Beds RCC and Time2Connect in Houghton Regis.

Celebrating 10 Years 2011 to 2021!

In the summer of 2011 around twelve residents attended a meeting with Houghton Regis Town Council and Beds Rural Communities Charity to discuss the setting up of a Good Neighbour Scheme in the town. Village Care Schemes were well established across Central Beds and Bedford Borough and now Houghton Regis was suggested as one of the first Town Schemes. As a result of this first meeting a Steering Group was set up, with Cllr Rob Shimmin as Chair. Interest from local residents and other community groups led to the recruitment of seventeen volunteers and the scheme was launched on 1st December 2011.



As the group became known requests for help started to come not only from residents themselves but from relatives, neighbours and other professionals. An early request for help came from a resident who was a hoarder and wanted to de-clutter - this work involved a team of volunteers over several weeks!

Over the ten years the volunteers' work has grown from 53 residents helped and 315 'jobs' completed in 2012, to over 500 residents helped in 2020/21. Roles are very varied – befriending still plays a big part of our volunteers' work, as well as shopping, collecting prescriptions, outdoor and indoor DIY, giving advice and acting as advocates, helping with letter-writing and I.T. and giving lifts to medical appointments and social activities.

Houghton Regis is a diverse community with residents from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and with areas of high deprivation. Older residents without family nearby, single parents with young children, vulnerable adults with complex mental and physical needs, disabled residents of all ages, all looking for support and neighbourly help. More than a third of our 'clients' are under 60 and during the Coronavirus pandemic requests for help have risen dramatically across all age groups - from 3 years of age to 100!

There are many memories of the last ten years. Since 2012, when we were asked to provide the teas at the town's celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, Houghton Regis Helpers have supported many community events – teas at the May Fayres; Community Engagement Days; Easter and Christmas events; refreshments at Craft Fairs; Carnivals and Houghton Rocks; working back-stage at the Grove Theatre for Celebration of Christmas – to name but a few! In 2015 we held our first Afternoon Tea for residents, becoming an annual event until Covid-19 closed venues, and monthly Coffee Mornings started up in 2017.



May Fayre 2018 Tea with Town Mayor and May Queen

Christmas Tea for residents 2016

Christmas Tea for residents 2016



As a voluntary organisation Houghton Regis Helpers relies on donations, fund-raising events and grants to sustain the service. We have been fortunate over the years to maintain our funding, partly through sponsorship - Town Mayor Cllr Peter Williams supported us during his mayoral year 2013/14, and his donation went towards our volunteers' uniforms, now commonly referred to as the 'blues'! In 2017 we were awarded an '*Inspiring Volunteering*' grant by Central Beds Council. This grant led to the 'Bridging the Generations' project, with events held to bring young and older residents together and to encourage younger volunteers.

Our volunteers are highly valued - their hard work, goodwill and caring, compassionate support for our residents, often unseen, is amazing. At start of the most challenging onset of the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020, we welcomed more than 20 new volunteers who came forward to give so generously of their time and talents. Despite the restrictions and PPE precautions necessary to keep everyone safe volunteers gave the most fantastic response to meeting residents' needs. Thank you.



Delivering food parcels during the pandemic

We look forward to the next ten years!

FUNDING SUPPORT AND THANKS



Since 2020, Covid-19 restrictions meant that we have been unable to participate in many of our usual fund-raising activities and events. With the unprecedented rise in requests for help continuing in 2021 this has led to increased running costs and we are extremely grateful for the award of a generous emergency funding grant and for kind donations.

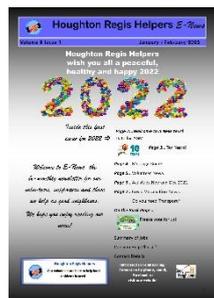
THANK YOU TO:

- ❖ Bedfordshire & Luton Community Foundation (Whitbread Plc Chairman's Fund) Grant of £1000 (for 2021/22) and £1000 (for 2022/23)
 - ❖ [Houghton Regis Town Council donation of £200](#)
- ❖ Asda Foundation donation of £300
 - ❖ [Wheatfield Road Pharmacy donation on £90.06 \(from patients\)](#)
- ❖ the volunteers who raised £1333.45 by delivering Neighbourhood Plan Leaflets and the Town Crier to households across town on behalf of Houghton Regis Town Council
 - ❖ [individual donations from grateful clients](#)
- ❖ Morrisons, Houghton Regis, for the donation of prizes for fund-raising at Houghton Rocks



Houghton Regis Helpers 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) Certificates.

Anyone interested in joining as a volunteer is most welcome – contact us or download our Volunteer Welcome Pack from the website. The pack includes an Expression of Interest Form; Guidelines for Good Practice; GDPR and Data Protection Privacy Notice; and Volunteer Driver declaration. Copies of our Policies and Risk Assessments, including Covid-19 precautions and guidance, can also be found on our website.



E-News is the bi-monthly electronic newsletter from Houghton Regis Helpers.

The newsletter includes news of volunteers' work, photos, events (recent and coming up), articles and any interesting facts or news from the local community. If you wish to subscribe to the mailing list and give GDPR consent to your email address being used in this way, contact the editor by phone or email.

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 2022

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