



# Houghton Regis Helpers Annual Report 2024



Presentation of the King's Award for Voluntary Service, 18 April 2024

**13<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting 19 February 2025**  
**7 p.m. Council Chamber**  
**Houghton Regis Town Council**

## *Introduction from Chair, Yvonne Farrell*

Welcome to the Annual Report 2024 of Houghton Regis Helpers, the local voluntary Good Neighbour Scheme set up in December 2011.

Our aim is to:

“Provide to the residents of Houghton Regis and Chalton, short term help such as transport, domestic support and household assistance, through local volunteers – and to encourage sustainability, self-help and friendship within the local community”

Since our launch 13 years ago the help and support given by our volunteers has become well established and wide-ranging.

The highlight of 2024 was receiving the King’s Award for Voluntary Service. The award was presented by HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire on the 18th of April at a grand event held at Houghton Regis Memorial Hall for dignitaries, HRH volunteers and members of the community. It was a day to celebrate, make memories and enjoy. Thank you to those who attended, organised and helped on the day it was an incredible achievement.

The crystal and certificate can be seen in the Council Chamber where they will remain for safe keeping. I think this deserves a round of applause.

Our Organising Committee thank you all for your support, commitment and care for the community during what has been another busy year.

## *Who We Are 2024*

**Honorary Officers** - elected on a two-year rotational basis

Chair: Yvonne Farrell (2024 to 2026) Vice-Chair: Eric Gallucci (2023 to 2025)

Treasurer: Brian Mew (2024 to 2026) Secretary: Jenny Gallucci (2023 to 2025)

**Committee** - elected annually

Edwards Costello, Christine Lyus, Jacqueline Taylor, Susan Thorne

## *Volunteers 2024*

We were delighted to welcome nine new volunteers during 2024 – Belinda, Dena, Gaye, Jacque, Michael, Nicola, Norman, Saikat and Terry. We thank all volunteers who have supported Houghton Regis Helpers during the year. At the close of 2024 we have forty-six volunteers ‘on the books.’

In January we held a Thank-you dinner for volunteers, and in August we introduced bi-monthly ‘Get-Togethers.’ These events give volunteers the opportunity to meet up informally and to share experiences.

Opportunities for training for volunteers in 2024 included Safeguarding Awareness and Dementia Friends.

Volunteers raised over £2500 in 2024 by delivering the Town Crier and Carnival Programmes to households across Houghton Regis on behalf of Houghton Regis Town Council – thank you!

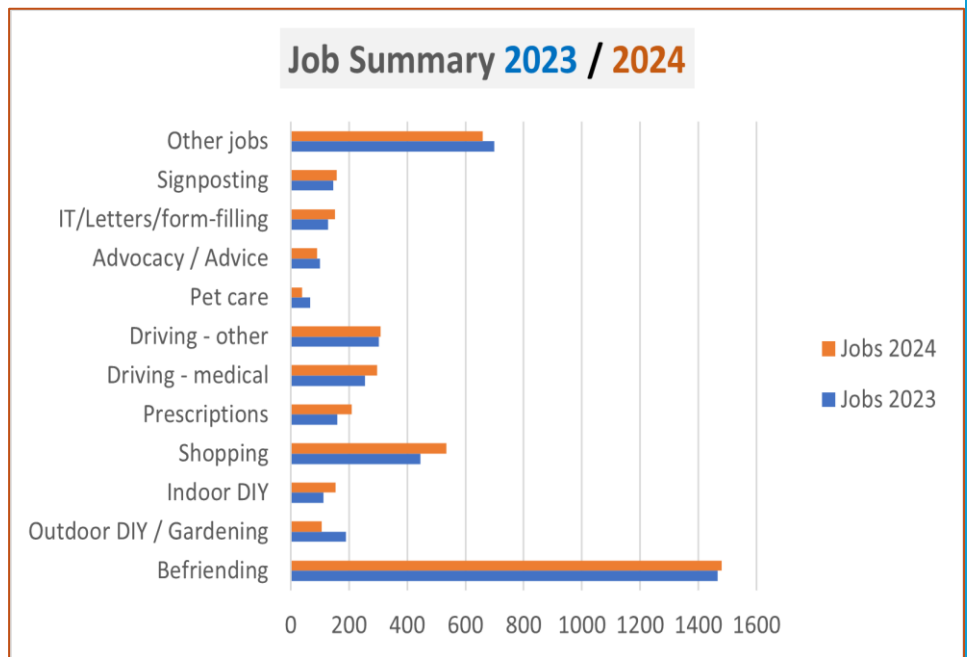
Every quarter Houghton Regis Helpers report the number of ‘jobs’ completed by volunteers to Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BedsRCC), the ‘umbrella’ organisation for Good Neighbour Schemes in Bedfordshire. The type of support and jobs volunteers conduct is wide-ranging and is summarised in the following graph.

*Job Summary* - the graph shows the total number of recorded 'jobs' for each category carried out in **2024** compared to **2023**. The overall total in **2024** was 4185 jobs (compared to 4072 in 2023) another new record!

*Befriending* is a regular activity, either through home visits or phone calls for a chat.

*Prescription* 'jobs' include taking repeat prescriptions to GPs, collecting and delivering prescriptions to patients, and picking up sickness certificates.

*Shopping* includes regular shopping trips with and for clients, trips to the Post Office, Tidy Tip and taking items to charity shops!



Houghton Regis Helpers thank all our volunteers and colleagues for their commitment and kind support during 2024

*Clients 2024* – volunteers help residents from across all wards in Houghton Regis, including residents in the growing areas of Bidwell West and Linnere, and in Chalton. Houghton Regis Helpers supported **391** residents and households in 2024. Of these, 128 were requesting help for the first time. We receive requests for help and advice from residents themselves, from their family, or through referrals by other professionals.

During 2024, Houghton Regis Helpers 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, including professionals in the field of health and social care, such as Adult Social Care, Early Help teams, Well-Being teams at Titan PCN and Chiltern Hills PCN, and CBC Independent Living Officers.

### Cost-of-Living Support

Working in partnership with local community groups, including Houghton Regis Town Council, Community Link (Baptist Church) and Jewels, during 2024 volunteers delivered more than 25 Packs of Support; 30+ store vouchers; essential food supplies and energy top-ups to residents struggling during the cost-of-living crisis.



Volunteers also collected food parcels on 84 occasions from the Dunstable Food Banks for households unable to get to the Food Bank themselves.



Sixty residents received a Warm in Winter Bag, donated by Small Acts of Kindness

## *Highlight of 2024!*

The King's Award for Voluntary Service, presented by Susan Lousada HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, at our special celebration event on 18 April 2024, is equivalent to an MBE for Voluntary Groups.

Welcomed by our Chair, Yvonne, the Lord-Lieutenant presented the Certificate and Crystal, speaking about the dedicated team of volunteers and the difference they have made to the community especially during and post-Covid. She spoke about the King's Award being awarded to voluntary groups that are truly outstanding and that Houghton Regis Helpers are truly outstanding. On presenting the Certificate to the Chair, Susan Lousada read out the inscription, signed personally by King Charles the Third, awarded to '*Houghton Regis Helpers for providing practical support and wellbeing whilst reducing loneliness and isolation in Houghton Regis*'



*Committee Report 2024* - the Committee met six times during 2024 and reviewed the following policies and procedures:

- Data Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Safeguarding and Protection of Adults at Risk
- Risk Assessment of activities

Policies and other documents can be read on our website [www.houghtonregishelpers.co.uk](http://www.houghtonregishelpers.co.uk)

The Committee agreed to the publication of new leaflets to incorporate the King's Award for Voluntary Service logo. Following the decision by Government to means-test winter fuel payments more than 800 Winter Fuel / Pensions Credits advice leaflets were produced and distributed, with support from the CAB (Citizen's Advice Bureau) and Houghton Regis Town Council.

We thank Time2Connect at Houghton Hall Park, Houghton Regis Town Council, The Memorial Hall and St Thomas' Meeting House for the use of premises for meetings, events and training during the year.

## End of Year Accounts 2024



**HOUGHTON REGIS HELPERS**                      **Year 13**  
**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2024**

	Unrestricted Fund	Restricted Fund Two HRTC LLSGroup	Restricted Fund Three HRTC Cost of Living Crisis	Year 12 2023
	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>				
Donations - General	1,223.19			719.00
Donations - Gardening	85.00			283.00
Linmere Estates	-			1,000.00
HRTC (Cost of Living)			690.00	600.00
HRTC (Deliveries)	2,540.66			2,539.64
HRTC (Mayor)	550.00			-
Fundraising	211.50			-
Other	-			330.00
<b>Sub-Totals</b>	<b>4,610.35</b>	-	690.00	<b>5,471.64</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME (All Funds)</b>	<b>5,300.35</b>			<b>5,471.64</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Mobile phone	-	150.00		- 150.00
Website / Broadband	-	412.12		- 230.07
Stationery/Admin	-	582.55		- 403.34
Postage	-	40.60		- 40.00
DBS checks	-	139.30		- 29.20
Equipment / Software	-	131.33		- 735.91
Clothing/Uniforms	-	894.00		- 312.00
Fundraising / Promotional	-	78.69		-
Advertising	-	392.99		- 140.49
Volunteer Events/AGM	-	932.07		- 84.80
Christmas Event	-	-		- 453.31
Insurance	-	377.33		- 332.46
Training	-	-		- 484.69
Other	-	160.00		- 391.98
Travel reimbursement (unrestricted fund)	-	218.90		- 310.48
Travel reimbursement (LLSG Restricted fund)		6.60		- 7.70
Cost of Living Crisis			461.12	- 443.06
<b>Sub-Totals</b>	<b>- 4,509.88</b>	<b>- 6.60</b>	<b>- 461.12</b>	<b>- 4,549.49</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE (All Funds)</b>	<b>- 4,977.60</b>			<b>- 4,549.49</b>
<b>SURPLUS/DEFICIT(-)</b>	<b>322.75</b>			<b>922.15</b>
Balance b/f 1 Jan 2024	3,935.80	182.40	156.94	
Plus Income	4,610.35	-	690.00	
Less Expenditure	- 4,509.88	- 6.60	- 461.12	
<b>Sub-Totals c/f</b>	<b>4,036.27</b>	<b>175.80</b>	<b>385.82</b>	
<b>TOTAL c/f to 2025 (All Funds)</b>	<b>4,597.89</b>			
Cash in Bank	4,468.52			
Petty Cash	129.37			
	<b>4,597.89</b>			

I hereby confirm that I have examined the books and papers for the year ended 31st December 2024, and that these accounts fairly state the receipts and payments for that period.

Independent Scrutineer

Signature

R H Turner

Date

21/01/2025

With thanks to Independent Scrutineer, Roger Turner, for your diligent examination of the accounts for year ending 31 December 2024

**HOUGHTON REGIS HELPERS  
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR YEAR 13  
YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2024**

**Summary 2024**

<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£5,300.35</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b><u>£4,977.60</u></b>
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>£322.75</b>
<b>Balance b/f 1 January 2024</b>	<b><u>£4,275.14</u></b>
<b>Balance c/f 31 December 2024</b>	<b><u>£4,597.89</u></b>

**Key Points**

**Income**

Total income is just under £200 less than in 2023, primarily as a result of the fact that 2023 included a one-off donation of £1,000 from Linnere Estates. However, this has been largely offset by a generous donation of £550 from the Mayor of Houghton Regis Town Council (HRTC) and a number of generous donations from individual clients. Funding from HRTC for deliveries is the largest single item of income, and from 1 April 2024, HRTC also increased ring-fenced Cost of Living Crisis funding from £50 to £60 per month.

**Expenditure**

Total expenditure is just over £400 more than in 2023, with the main increases being on clothing and uniforms, reflecting increased numbers of volunteers, and one-off expenditure associated with the King's Award for Voluntary Service.

The accounts have been examined and signed off by our independent scrutineer, Roger Turner.

Brian Mew  
Treasurer  
Houghton Regis Helpers  
22 January 2025

## Snapshot of a Range of Fund-Raising, Promotional and Community Events attended 2024!



- ❖ Interview on BBC Three Counties Radio Breakfast Show
- ❖ Houghton Regis Carnival
- ❖ Houghton Rocks



- ❖ Serving Refreshments at community events



- ❖ Represented at
- ❖ Royal Garden Party
- ❖ Mayor's Afternoon Tea / Coffee Morning
- ❖ Virtual meetings and information sharing



- ❖ Mayor's Civic Reception
- ❖ Mayor's Civic Service
- ❖ Mayor's Carol Service
- ❖ Cheering Volunteering



- ❖ Fund Raising at Morrisons



- ❖ Local Networking events

- ❖ Partnership Events

... and More!



## Interested in Volunteering? Sign up!

The Volunteer Welcome Pack and Good Practice Guidelines can be downloaded from the website or give us a call for more information!

Volunteers who engage in regulated activities working with adults must have an Enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Certificate. This is free for our volunteers.

### How to contact us...

By phone: **07587 004514**

Email: [houghtonregishelpers@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:houghtonregishelpers@hotmail.co.uk)

Website: [www.houghtonregishelpers.co.uk](http://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



#### Houghton Regis Helpers

Our volunteers are here to help local residents in need

Annual Report edited by the Secretary February 2025

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