



# Houghton Regis Helpers

*E-News*



Our volunteers are here to help residents in need in  
Houghton Regis and Chalton

Volume 11 Issue 2  
March / April 2025

Welcome to Spring 2025 issue of  
*E-News*

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**Legend on the Bench**  
**Someone is always listening...**

Registered Charity (England & Wales) Number: 1205392  
Registered Charity (Scotland) Number: SC053241

*Read about the Legend on the  
Bench on page 5...*



**Interested in volunteering?**

**Contact us by phone, email,  
Facebook or visit our website -  
see the Back Page for details!**

## Letter from the Chair...

As we progress into March there seems to be light at the end of the tunnel that winter is on its way out. Cheerful spring flowers are starting to bloom, blossoms are appearing and birds are tweeting. Hopefully the grey skies will revert to blue soon. This time of year does make us feel better even if it's just a little bit!

Houghton Regis Helpers held their 13th AGM on the 19th February where 20 people, made up of members and guests, were in attendance to witness the contents of the Agenda and have informal conversations and refreshments.

I take this opportunity to thank all the officers and volunteers for their continuous commitment and hard work. You are amazing.

A new record of jobs for 2024 totalled 4185 helping 391 residents and households. That is incredible!

Till next time,

Very best wishes

*Yvonne*

*Chair of Houghton Regis Helpers*

The **13th Annual General Meeting** of Houghton Regis Helpers was held on Wednesday 19th February in the Town Council Chamber.

Our Treasurer, Brian, presented the end of year accounts and financial report which were approved by members. Roger Turner was appointed independent scrutineer of the accounts for 2025 and thanked for his thorough and timely scrutiny of the accounts for 2024.

Roger commented that the accounts are well presented and reflected that if you compare the number of jobs volunteers completed in 2024 with the costs it is approximately equivalent to

**£1 per job**, all down to the incredible volunteers!

## Houghton Regis Helpers *E-News*

The Secretary, Jenny, presented the Annual Report for 2024 (*read an extract from the Report on page 3*).

Elections of Honorary Officers - Vice-Chair and Secretary - and of Committee members were held at the AGM, with the Chair and Treasurer remaining in post until the AGM 2026

### Who We Are 2025

#### Honorary Officers

**Chair:** Yvonne Farrell (2024—2026)



**Vice-Chair:** Terry Bodkin (2025—2027)

**Treasurer:** Brian Mew (2024—2026)



**Secretary:** Jenny Gallucci (2025—2027)

#### Committee Members 2025-2026



Christine Lyus



Sue Thorne



Eric Gallucci



Joan Hensbrey

Our Annual Report for 2024 was presented at the AGM on 19th February 2025. Here is an extract. You can read the full report on our website or contact us by email to receive a copy.

*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!

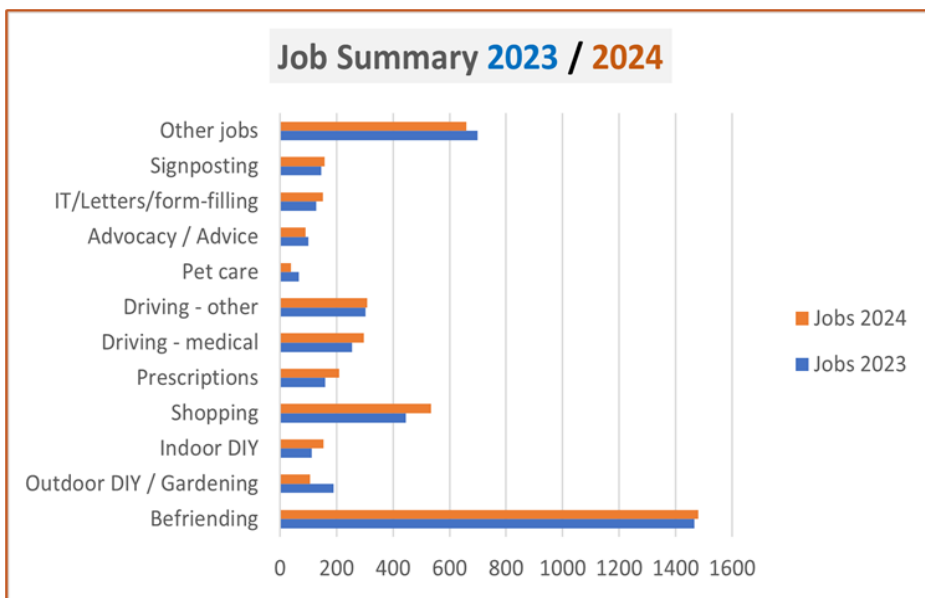
Every quarter Houghton Regis Helpers report the number of ‘jobs’ completed by volunteers to Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BedsRCC), the ‘umbrella’ organisation for Good Neighbour Schemes in Bedfordshire. The type of support and jobs volunteers conduct is wide-ranging and is summarised in the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

## Training, Chats and Speakers!

Fifteen volunteers attended volunteer training for Level 1 Safeguarding Awareness on 31st January 2025. We also enjoyed a visit from Steve Blake, CBC Community Safety Officer, who spoke about local issues and gave out personal alarms and guidance on how to keep safe.

The next Training session will be on Saturday 8th March 2025, from 11 am to 1 pm, at St Thomas' Meeting House. Steve will be attending this session and giving a talk on 'cuckooing'.

### Coffee and Chat!



### Volunteer Training

Level 1 Safeguarding Awareness and Presentation on Cuckooing

All Volunteers are required to attend Safeguarding Awareness training and this is an opportunity to meet up and receive up-to-date information.

You are invited to come along on for training and coffee and chat! It's FREE!

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2025**  
**11 am to 1 pm**

The session will include a presentation on Cuckooing by a Safer Communities Officer from Central Beds Council.

**Venue: St Thomas' Meeting House**  
**Lowry Drive, Houghton Regis LU5 5SJ**



**RSVP by 4 March 2025**  
via phone, text or email

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

## Houghton Regis Helpers E-News

Continuing our Volunteer Get-Togethers in April, we invite volunteers to come along on Friday 11th April for **Coffee and Chat** and hear about the **Talk Adult Social Care Forum** with guest speaker, Rachael Maskery, from Central Beds Council.

The forum is focused on engaging the voices of lived experience in the co-production of Adult Social Care services across Central Bedfordshire and Rachael will tell us more about the forum and how people can get involved. All welcome, its free and no need to book!

### Coffee and Chat!



### Volunteers!

Join us for a Get-Together, Coffee and Chat!

**Friday 11 April 2025**

**11 am to 12.30 pm**

**Where?**

**St Thomas's Meeting House,**  
**Lowry Drive,**  
**Houghton Regis**  
**LU5 5SJ**

**Guest Speaker!**

We will hear about the  
**Talk Adult Social Care Forum**



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



## What is a Dementia Friend?

A Dementia Friend is somebody that **learns about dementia** so they can help their community.

Too many people affected by dementia feel that society fails to understand the condition they live with. Dementia Friends help by raising awareness and understanding, so that people living with dementia can continue to live in the way they want.

A number of our volunteers have signed up as up as a Dementia Friend. It's really easy! Volunteer Ambassadors from the Alzheimer's Society run free virtual Information Sessions that you can book on to attend.

Here's the link - [dementiafriends.org.uk/WEBSession](https://dementiafriends.org.uk/WEBSession) Search for on-line sessions by clicking on 'Show online Sessions only'

## Volunteer News / Events

We currently have 48 volunteers signed up with Houghton Regis Helpers.



Welcome to Toni and Dermot who signed up in January 2025.

Thank you for joining the team!

### Town Criers

Thank you to the twenty volunteers who have offered to deliver more than 6000 Town Criers to households in the next couple of weeks, on behalf of Houghton Regis Town Council!

This 'job' greatly helps sustain our funding.

### January / February 2025

The first two months of 2025 have been as busy as ever! To date, 100 residents have received help and support with more than 700 jobs completed during January and February.

Befriending, shopping and prescription collections account for 50% of these jobs. Some great DIY jobs have been completed, including blinds put up, outdoor light installed, kitchen light fittings fixed, broadband router and phones installed and set up, gate locks fitted and leaky front door repaired!

Volunteer drivers have been busy accompanying clients to hospital, dental and physio appointments as well as for shopping and to social events.

### Cost-of-Living Crisis

The cost-of-living crisis funding from Houghton Regis Town Council continues to support households who are struggling. We have been able to provide store vouchers to eight families, and purchased emergency food supplies and toiletries for an individual and a family of six during January.

### Can you Help please?

Help needed for setting up and serving **Tea at All Saints View** on the afternoon of **Sunday 6th April please!**

The Town Mayor's Civic Service is being held at All Saints' Church at 3 pm and tea will be served afterwards to guests attending the service.

If you can help, please contact Jenny by email. Thank you!

## Houghton Regis Helpers E-News

### Unveiling of Legend on the Bench benches

The unveiling of two benches in Houghton Regis took place on Wednesday 26th February, a cold, wet and windy day but braved by all who attended! Following the unveilings the buffet lunch in the Pavilion on the Green was most welcome!



### Legend on the Bench

Someone is always listening...

Registered Charity (England & Wales) Number: 1205392  
Registered Charity (Scotland) Number: SC053241

### Houghton Regis - Bench Reveal

The next Legend on the Bench Charity branded bench reveals will be in Houghton Regis at Middy on Wednesday 26 February 2025. Two benches will be revealed on the day. Come and join us as the Legend on the Bench Charity reveals its latest bench at:

Tithe Farm Pavilion  
Tithe Farm Recreation Ground  
Tithe Farm Road.  
Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire  
LU5 5JE (nearest postcode)

Followed by 2<sup>nd</sup> bench at  
The Village Green Pavilion  
The Green  
Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire  
LU5 5DY



A message from our  
Charity Ambassador  
**MICKY  
HAZARD**

Legend on the Bench is a Charity with a simple aim - installing benches in public areas, that can be used by anyone in the community needing time to reflect. The benches contain phone numbers of organisations ready to listen when required.



Our vision is to help combat Mental Health issues and Suicides by providing resources to support those in need



For more details please visit:  
[www.legend-on-the-bench.co.uk](http://www.legend-on-the-bench.co.uk)

Our great team of volunteers, Teresa, Christine, Paulette, Joan, Sheila, Sandra and Yvonne, supported this Town Council event, by setting up and preparing the Pavilion and serving the buffet lunch and hot drinks.



Everyone was pleased with the food and meeting Brian Stein, Luton Town Legend!

"The pavilion looked welcoming on arrival and nicely set out. Well done to the HRH team once again. The team knowing exactly what's what, and just got on with it as usual"

# THE BACK PAGE

# Houghton Regis Helpers E-News

## NOTICE BOARD

## COMING UP!

### Volunteering opportunities in your area



We need you to help your neighbours feel confident and safe when it comes to the BT Digital Voice switchover

Are you...

- Available during the day?
- A good communicator
- Motivated to help?

What you can expect...

- BT training provided
- Full support offered
- Expenses reimbursed



If you would like to know more, please contact us

rosslyn.allen@ourwatch.org.uk  
Ros Allen, Digital Voice Coordinator (East of England)



### Tibbs Dementia Foundation

#### Support for Memory

If you have a recent diagnosis of dementia or support someone with memory problems or a diagnosis, then this free course could be useful for you.

Over three weeks we'll deepen our understanding of dementia together. We'll look at the changes in the brain leading to a range of possible symptoms and how to develop strategies and practical tips to manage these to continue to live as well as possible.

We'll spend time thinking about health and wellbeing and small steps to boost physical and mental health.

We'll also look at wider support networks, resources, financial and legal considerations.

On Monday 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

At 6.15pm - 8.00pm

On Zoom

For more details email [Carole.Briggs@tibbsdementia.co.uk](mailto:Carole.Briggs@tibbsdementia.co.uk) or phone 01234 210993



Tibbs Dementia Foundation, 5 Lansdown Road, Bedford, MK40 2BY  
Email: [contact@tibbsdementia.co.uk](mailto:contact@tibbsdementia.co.uk) | Website: [www.tibbsdementia.co.uk](http://www.tibbsdementia.co.uk)  
Phone: 01234 210993 | Registered Charity No. 116696

Houghton Hall Park  
Saturday 12th April  
**EASTER**  
**EGG HUNT**  
10am - 2pm  
Starting at Houghton Hall Park Visitors Centre  
FOOD - CRAFT STALLS - FUN  
AGE 16 & UNDER FOR THE EASTER EGG HUNT  
[www.houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk](http://www.houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk)

### INFO for those in need of help / advice

Citizens Advice Bureau,  
Dunstable & District

01582 670003

Dunstable Food Bank: 07874 200056

Age UK Beds: 01234 360510

Salvation Army: 01582 606031

Dial A Ride: 01582 235454

Carers in Bedfordshire: 0300 111 1919

Disability Resource Centre: 01582 470900

Samaritans: 116 123

ALL RETIRED RESIDENTS WELCOME  
**Time for Tea & a Treat**  
Enjoy a change of scenery, FREE tea & a treat along with conversation and laughter.  
**10:30am - 12pm**  
4th & 18th March  
1st April & 15th April  
continuing on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month  
All Saints View (entrance left of Costa Coffee)  
Sapphire Place,  
Houghton Regis, LU5 5LP  
*Make new friends!*  
For more information please contact:  
Zunaira Sabih - Houghton Regis Town Council  
01582 708 546  
\*If transport is a struggle we may be able to assist, please contact the above number for details

Houghton Regis Memorial Hall  
**Afternoon Tea for the over 65s**  
Saturday 31st May  
at 1.00pm  
Only £5.00 a ticket with entertainment & Bingo  
To book a seat contact  
Ken:  
[chairman@houghtonregismemorialhall.com](mailto:chairman@houghtonregismemorialhall.com)  
or 07799 720767

### Houghton Regis Helpers Contact Details

Phone: 07587 004514

Our phone help-line is 'manned' on weekdays between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Messages can be left at any time and we aim to return calls within 24 hours.

Email:

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

Join our Facebook group page!

Visit our website [www.houghtonregishelpers.co.uk](http://www.houghtonregishelpers.co.uk)

Or Write to us at: Houghton Regis Helpers  
c/o Houghton Regis Town Council  
Peel Street LU5 5EY

*E-News* is your bi-monthly newsletter

The next issue will be **May 2025**

**Please send your articles, photos, comments and ideas by email to the Editor**

We reserve the right to edit or decline to include articles which are contrary to the vision and aims of our group.