



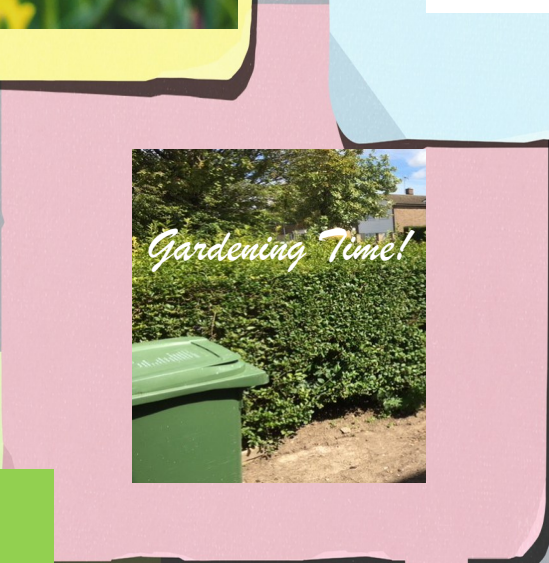
# Houghton Regis Helpers

## E-News



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

Volume 11 Issue 3  
May / June 2025



**Get Involved**

[volunteersweek.org](http://volunteersweek.org)

#VolunteersWeek

2nd - 8th June



**Interested in volunteering?**

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



## Greetings from the Chair...

In May, we can expect a mix of seasonal events, festivals, and celebrations, including May Day (May 1st), the May Bank Holiday (May 5th), VE Day (May 8th) when The Beacon will be lit at the memorial stone on The Green, Houghton Regis after the speeches at 9.30pm.

There's also a wide range of national awareness days and weeks, such as Deaf Awareness Week (May 6-12), Mental Health Awareness Week (May 12-18), and National Doughnut Week (May 18-26) Not forgetting National Walking Month, World Asthma Day (6th May), to World Turtle Day (23rd May) Europe Day. International Nurses Day (12th May), World Bee Day (20th May), International Day of Light (16th May), National Biscuit Day (29th May) and World Parrot Day (31st May).

Sporting events like the French Open and Women's FA Cup Final, alongside cultural celebrations.

A packed month with something for everyone.

Enjoy the warmer weather, longer daylight, the beautiful colours and smells of nature. The dandelions are especially prolific this year – good news or not so good for gardeners!

Most of all stay safe and well.



*Yvonne*

*Chair of Houghton Regis Helpers*

### FEEDBACK



Every quarter we report facts and figures to Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity, who in turn report on the network of good neighbour schemes to Central Beds Council.

#### Recent feedback re Houghton Regis Helpers included::

“The group are able to take on a very wide remit within the local community alongside traditional daily good neighbour activity responding to residents’ requests – handling referrals from professionals and contributing to local community projects. This commitment and dedication by a smaller number of key organisers within the group is greatly valued by professionals who may not be aware of the full amount of work and time involved, which is equivalent to that of some professional organisations’ own paid employees”

*See recent facts and figures on page 5...*

## Houghton Regis Helpers *E-News*

### *Gardening Time!*

Now that the Spring weather has arrived, so have the requests for grass-cutting, and for shrubs and hedges to be trimmed!

In 2024 our gardening team completed 76 gardening ‘jobs’ between March and October! Let’s see what 2025 brings!

As a guide for volunteers our gardening policy states that:

- ♦ Houghton Regis Helpers responds to requests for occasional help, to enable independence and self-sufficiency for residents by helping make overgrown or unkempt gardens more manageable.
- ♦ priority will be given to residents whose tenancies may be at risk or those who are unable to physically manage the work themselves.
- ♦ gardening requests are restricted to hedge cutting and shrub pruning, grass cutting and strimming.
- ♦ general weeding will not be carried out and the removal of brambles, nettles and other invasive plants will be assessed on an individual basis.

If a resident requests gardening we will assess each request individually, including assessing any risks in the use of equipment owned by the resident and any personal safety or health risks.

We aim to leave gardens as tidy as possible but volunteers do not remove garden waste. If the resident has paid their subscription to Central Beds Council the green waste bin will be used, otherwise the resident is asked to provide bags.

The gardening first visit is free, however a small donation is requested for a follow-up visit (subject to ability to pay).

For more information see the policy on the website or phone 07587 004514



## Volunteer News / Events

We currently have 51 volunteers signed up with Houghton Regis Helpers.



Welcome to Mark who signed up during April.

Thank you for joining the team!

### Safeguarding and Community Safety

Saturday 8 March 2025 was the second of our Level 1 Safeguarding training sessions so far this year. At the January event Steve Blake, CBC Community Safety Officer, attended and spoke about local issues, gave out personal alarms and guidance on how to keep safe. Steve also attended in March and gave a presentation on 'Cuckooing'.

Cuckooing is the term used to describe criminals, mainly drug dealers, who take advantage of a vulnerable person, often taking over their home and using it as a base for criminal activity. Steve spoke about the signs to look out for and how to report concerns.

### Helping at Mayor's Civic Service

On Sunday 6 April our Town Mayor, Councillor Elaine Cooper, welcomed dignitaries, residents and other guests to her Civic Service at All Saints' Church. Following the service afternoon tea was served in All Saints View. We thank the volunteers who supported the event, both in the Church giving out orders of service and at All Saints View, setting up, preparing and serving the teas. Councillor Cooper was delighted with the service and very grateful for the help of our volunteers, passing on her sincere thanks to everyone.

### Annual Towns Meeting

On Monday 14 April Houghton Regis Town Council hosted the Annual Towns Meeting at All Saints View. Not-for-profit groups operating in Houghton Regis were invited to give an update on their work in 2024. Our Secretary, Jenny, gave a report on the work of Houghton Regis Helpers, outlining the help we

## Houghton Regis Helpers E-News

provide to residents in need - in 2024 volunteers carried out 4185 jobs, supporting 391 residents and households. An average of 80 jobs per week!

Jenny commented on the highlight of the year - receiving the King's Award for Voluntary Service, presented by HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire. She also thanked Houghton Regis Town Council for the monthly cost-of-living crisis donations which allowed us to distribute more than 30 store vouchers, purchase emergency food supplies and toiletries, provide energy top-ups for residents struggling financially, and to deliver children's gift bags to more than 20 families at Christmas.

### Get-together, Coffee and Chat

Twelve volunteers came along to our 'Easter treats' get-together, coffee and chat on Friday 11 April. Mini Easter eggs, party cupcakes and lots of chat!



Continuing the theme of community safety, guest speaker, Elaine Mountfort, CBC Safer Communities Officer, attended and led an informal, lively discussion on local safety concerns, including fly-tipping, scams and cyber bullying. Anyone with concerns can contact Elaine at [Elaine.Mountfort@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Elaine.Mountfort@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Thank you to our recent guest speakers for your time and support and to all who are able to attend these events!



### Date for your Diaries

The next volunteers' Get-Together will be on Friday 6 June during Volunteers' Week - [see page 4 for more details!](#)

Volunteers' Week is an annual UK-wide campaign held from the first Monday in June to celebrate and recognise the contributions of volunteers.

**40 years of  
Volunteers'  
Week**



Launched in 1984, this initiative has been running for over 40 years, celebrating the contributions of organisations and communities across the country.

to thank current and past volunteers for their invaluable efforts.

[Volunteers' Week -](#)

## Coffee and Chat!



Join us for a  
**THANK YOU**

**Get-Together, Coffee and Chat  
to celebrate Volunteers' Week!**

**Friday 6 June 2025**

**11 am to 12.30 pm**

**Where?**

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

**Free and open to all!**



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

As Houghton Regis Helpers volunteers you give so much to our organisation, without you we wouldn't be able to do what we do. Thank you to each and every one of you, present and past.

Join us on Friday 6 June for a  
**You Get-Together**

**Thank**

**A look back at Volunteers'  
Week events!**



Cheering Volunteering 2016



Volunteers' Lunch 2018



Cheering Volunteering 2022

## *Facts and Figures!*

The first quarterly report for 2025 has been submitted to Beds RCC. From January to March volunteers completed a total of 1048 jobs for 135 residents and 15 other professionals - well done!

Befriending 344    DIY 58    Pet care 65

Transport: Medical 59    Social 85

Shopping / Post Office 144

Food Bank 23

Prescriptions etc 65    Advocacy 21

Admin, form-filling and IT 31

Signposting 33    Cost-of-living 14

Other jobs 106

## *Here's a snapshot of the range of jobs*

### *Deliveries!*

Thank you to the twenty-one volunteers who delivered, on behalf of the Town Council, the



Town Crier to 6400 households in Houghton Regis during March and April!

Thank you to the volunteers who collected and delivered food parcels from the

Dunstable Food Banks to 23 households during the last three months.

And thank you for the sixty-five trips to GP surgeries and pharmacies across Houghton Regis, Wheatfield Road and Dunstable to

deliver repeat prescriptions, sick notes, collect and deliver prescriptions, and even sample bottles!

## *DIY!*

The great DIY jobs continue! Outdoor light and nesting box installed, kitchen light fittings fixed, gate locks and leaky front door repaired!



Key safe installed, squirrel feeder moved and bed linen changed! Our volunteers help with small DIY jobs when possible, however larger decorating work and other projects are referred to other professionals.

## *Driving!*

Thank you to our team of volunteer drivers, With almost sixty lifts to/from hospitals, clinics, physio, GP's and dentists during the last three months you have helped patients attend their appointments, often accompanying them to give them support.

Your goodwill and kindness has enabled other residents to do their own shopping, or carried out shopping on their behalf, attend their clubs and other social activities, go to hairdresser appointments, visit a loved one in a care home and more!

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS



## NOTICE BOARD

## COMING UP!



**healthwatch**  
Central Bedfordshire

### Help Shape Support Services for Carers

**Do you provide care for someone who couldn't manage without your support?**

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire wants to hear from unpaid Carers – especially those who do not see themselves as Carers, or have not accessed support services.

#### Join a Focus Group

- What kind of support would help you most? (Peer support, advice, social activities)
- Why haven't you used Carer support services before?
- Would you prefer face-to-face support, online, or a mix of both?
- What doesn't work for you in current services?
- What needs to change to encourage more people to access support?

#### Interested in Taking Part?

Register your interest by contacting:

info@healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk

0300 303 8554



**Houghton Regis Carnival**  
Saturday 12th July 2025 on the theme of 'Icons of Sport'

**Tibbs Dementia Foundation**

Do you have age-related memory problems?  
Do you support someone with memory problems?  
Would you like to socialise with others in a similar situation?

If this sounds like you, then please join us for fun activities, friendship and support.

**Houghton Regis Activities and Games Group**

2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month - 10.30am-12pm  
Moore Crescent Pavilion, Moore Crescent, Houghton Regis. LU5 5GZ

For more information contact angela.drayson@tibbsdementia.co.uk / 01234 21099 or charlotte.capocci@tibbsdementia.co.uk / 01234 21099

Tibbs Dementia Foundation, 5 Lansdowne Road, Bedford, MK40 2BY  
Email: contact@tibbsdementia.co.uk | Website: www.tibbsdementia.co.uk  
Phone: 01234 21099 | Registered Charity No. 1166796

**80**

BEACON LIGHTING - 9.30PM THE MEMORIAL STONE, THE GREEN, HOUGHTON REGIS.

**VE DAY**

80TH ANNIVERSARY

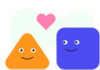
A SHARED MOMENT OF CELEBRATION

8 M A Y 2 0 2 5

Houghton Regis Town Council 01582 708540



**Do you look after someone who cannot manage without you?**



**We're here to offer free support to all unpaid Carers across Bedfordshire**

You've helped me so much, I wish I had called you sooner.

0300 111 1919  
www.carersinbeds.org.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

### Dementia Walking Football Enjoying Football at Your Pace

These weekly sessions are great for both men and women looking to boost their fitness, have fun and enjoy meeting new friends. Ideal for those with dementia and their family carers.

#### Benefits

- Play football at a walking pace
- Suitable for all ages and physical conditions
- Improves heart rate, blood pressure, mobility and agility
- Prevents social isolation, fosters new connections



#### Supportive Environment

- Non-competitive atmosphere
- Rules explained during sessions
- Focus on enjoyment and support
- No prior experience needed
- Carers welcome

#### Indoor Program with Dunstable Town FC

- Location: The Dunstable Centre, Court Drive, Dunstable
- Thursdays at 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM

Registration and Contact  
Email: walkingfootball.dunstabletownfc@gmail.com  
Phone: 07973 810936

### Houghton Regis Helpers Contact Details

Phone: **07587 004514**

Our phone help-line is available on weekdays between 10.00 and 15.00 hrs.  
Messages can be left at any time and we return calls as soon as possible.

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  
**July 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.