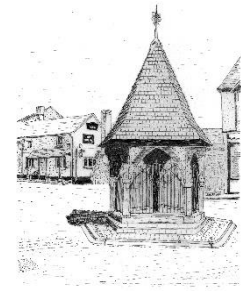


BOVINGDON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2019 – 2020



Dear Resident,

This is the first Annual Report of the present Parish Council since the local elections held on 2 May 2019. Of your ten councillors, eight were elected unopposed. In addition, Hugh Schneiders was elected onto the Council and Philip Walker was co-opted onto the Council to fill the remaining vacancy.

The team of councillors consist of myself, Alison Gunn, Julia Marshall, Ben Richardson, Hugh Schneiders, Julie Steer, David Stent, Philip walker, Adrian Watney and Pauline Wright. The Parish Council is fortunate to have been made up of some very committed individuals who give their time voluntarily to the benefit of the village and I would like to extend my thanks to all the councillors (several who have full time jobs / commitments) for their hard work over the last year.

We are also grateful for the support of the office team who are all part-time comprising Mike Kember, Parish Clerk, Lisa Edwards, Assistant to the Parish Clerk and to the Responsible Financial Officer, Dave Kirk.

I would also like to thank our two other Dacorum Borough Council Ward Councillors, Stewart Riddick and Gbola Adeleke and our Herts County Councillor Richard Roberts for actively supporting the work we do in addition to the teams at Dacorum Borough and Herts County Councils.

This year has been a consistent year for the Council, with regular issues of planning, environmental and parking being on-going concerns for residents and visitors.

The Council meets every other month and each meeting has time scheduled for parishioners to raise any concerns, which help guide the direction of the Council. A full schedule of all the Council and Committee meetings is available on our website.

As a Parish Council, we try to do what we think is best for our village to make Bovingdon a better place to live in and to protect it from the various challenges we will face during the coming years.

Finally, due to the unprecedented times we are currently experiencing as a result of the corona virus pandemic, the council has taken the decision to postpone the Annual Parish Meeting, which was to take place in May until 7 September 2020, when hopefully we will be able to hold public meetings. The Annual Meeting of Bovingdon Parish Council will not take place this year.

Graham Barrett

Councillor Graham Barrett, Chairman, Bovingdon Parish Council and Dacorum Borough Councillor

The Annual Parish Report contains a summary of the work the Parish Council has carried out over the past twelve months. The day- to- day work of the Council is carried out through its Committees.

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Councillor Julie Steer has continued to oversee the work of this Committee. We have successfully managed our budgets again, although it was considered necessary to increase the precept for the forthcoming financial year 2019 - 2020. This was mainly due to the continued reduction in the level of funding received from Dacorum Borough Council and increased costs to comply with Data Protection and accounting requirements and security of the building following a series of break-ins. The precept figure (net of Council Tax Support Grant and Resilience grant) is £63,071. Based on current information, the Parish Rate for a Band D property will rise from £29.13 to £29.77 per annum, an increase of 64p (2.2%). A 1% increase in the precept raises approximately £600 additional income for the council.

At the same time, we have been able to build up modest reserves in support of future projects and for other increasing demands on the council's finances.

In an attempt to maximise income from reserves, investments have been made as follows:-

- £55k (Parish Council) and £40k (Memorial Hall) into a Hampshire Trust Bank 90-day notice account current rate 1.5%
- £30k (Memorial Hall) and £20k (Parish) into a Skipton 1 year bond current rate 1.5%.

The Parish Council has recently purchased a bespoke Financial Software package designed specifically for local councils to improve and provide more detailed budget and other financial management reports.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a way of collecting contributions from developers towards

the provision of infrastructure required to support growth in Dacorum. CIL is a non-negotiable planning charge introduced by the government under the Planning Act 2008 to provide local authorities with a more flexible and transparent means of funding infrastructure projects across their local area. The levy is charged per square metre of new development (floorspace) and the charge may vary according to the size, location and type of development.

As the charging and collecting authority, Dacorum Borough Council are responsible for setting the CIL charge, collecting CIL money and allocating money for infrastructure projects.

The CIL charge was introduced by Dacorum Borough Council on 1 July 2015 and is applicable to developments that received planning permission on or after 1 July 2015.

The Parish Council in conjunction with Dacorum Borough Council are monitoring the schemes, which are eligible to pay the CIL. The Parish Council currently receives 15% of the receipts from developments in the parish. The CIL Regulations states that CIL receipts must be used to support the development of the local council's area, or any part of that area, by funding

- (a) the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or
- (b) anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area.

The council has received just over £19k to date, which is ring fenced. Discussions are currently taking place on what to spend the receipts on.

Memorial Hall Management Committee

Councillor Julie Steer continues to be chairman of this Committee. The Memorial Hall is owned and managed by the Parish Council with all councillors automatically becoming trustees on their election to the Council. The building continues to attract users both old and new and remains a facility for the community. The building is well maintained as there is in place a rolling programme for the redecoration and maintenance of the building and

for the replacement of major items. Apart from individuals who hire the Hall for parties and charity raising events our regular hirer's cover 'something for everyone' including an Art Group; Hatha and Yoga Fitness; Ladybirds – a women's social group; Evergreens – a club for the over 55's, Karate, dog training, a home for the Bovingdon Players and many more social and welfare groups.

As many of you aware, the Memorial Hall was built in 1921 to commemorate the lives of the thirty-seven villagers who died in World War 1. The Hall was built at a cost of £3,000 with the money raised by public subscription and a generous donation of £2,000 from Mr Whichello who lived at Bovingdon Grange. The Council is already beginning to think about how to acknowledge the 100th anniversary of the Hall and as it is also the 125th anniversary of the founding of The Royal British Legion a joint event may take place to commemorate both events.

Outdoors Committee

The Committee, under the Chairmanship of Councillor David Stent, continues to be responsible for all aspects of the outdoors of the village.

It is a year since the Parish Council signed a contract with the Sunnyside Rural Trust whose personnel carry out the warden duties and are also taking on further works to improve the environment around the village and to maintain the surrounds of the Memorial Hall. The Council is very pleased with how the contract has evolved and the relationships that have been built with the key workers of the Trust.

The Sunnyside Rural Trust was founded in 1990 as a small, horticultural project for young people and adults with learning disabilities. It is now a thriving charity and social enterprise, offering training and work experience for over 130 vulnerable people in the local community.

Hopefully many of you will have seen their teams of personnel collecting litter, planting and generally carrying out maintenance work in all areas of the village.

The Committee continues to organise and monitor the annual contract for the maintenance of the pond and surrounding area on Bovingdon Green and to care for the surrounds of 'the docks'. The Council is looking into the possibility to carry out major improvements to the pond in the autumn / winter 2020 following advice received from the Countryside Management Services.

Personnel Committee

Councillor Ben Richardson is chairman of this Committee, which meets once or twice a year to review personnel practices and procedures and to monitor the terms and conditions of the employees.

Planning Committee

The Planning Committee, chaired by Councillor Graham Barrett, continues to work diligently to preserve the village environment. The council has been faced with a number of contentious issues that threaten to fundamentally change the village. The village will doubtless continue to be under pressure from developers and the Parish Council is committed to maintaining the village environment and will endeavour to defend any proposals that threaten to harm the Green Belt. Generally, new planning applications and planning issues continue to occupy a considerable amount of time for the Council.

Dacorum Issues and Options Consultation

In November 2017, Dacorum Borough Council commenced a consultation on the first stage of its new Local Plan – known as 'Issues and Options'. The consultation looked at the issues the Borough faces over the next 20 or so years and the options for addressing them. Housing is, as always, the greatest challenge for Dacorum as a location – especially in the context of the central Government's commitment to significantly increasing housing delivery across the country. As part of considering what the Borough's future housing strategy should be, the Borough asked for feedback on sites on the edge of towns and villages, some of which are in the Green Belt, and have been put forward as potential development sites by landowners. There are four sites, which have been put forward in the village as follows:

Site Reference: Bov-h1 – Land at Grange farm, Green Lane (corner of Leyhill Road / Green Lane)

Site Reference: Bov-h2 – Land south of Homefield

Site Reference: Bov-h3 – Land rear of Green Lane / Louise Walk

Site Reference: Bov-h4 – Land at Duckhall Farm, Newhouse Road

Since this time, the Borough Council has invited landowners to put forward other sites in the borough for consideration for development and several other sites in the village have been identified but not consulted on.

We understand that the Borough Council will be consulting on their draft proposals later in 2020. Needless to say we will keep residents informed and up to date on this vitally important document.

It is clear from the 90+ planning applications considered by the Committee during the year that a number are becoming more complex and require several amendments to the schemes. Some of these developments are clearly having an impact on the street scene in the village and despite our concerns are granted planning permission by Dacorum Borough Council.

Here are some of the applications considered by the Committee, which will have an impact on the village:

Bobsleigh Hotel & land west of the Bobsleigh

The MacDonald's Hotel Group have been granted outline planning permission to demolish the Bobsleigh Hotel and for the construction of 58 dwellings made up of 36 apartments and 22 houses. The owners have submitted a further application for outline planning permission, which has not been decided for part demolition of the existing hotel and associated buildings, conversion of the 'stable lodge' into a dwelling, 36 apartments and 24 houses, and relocation of the two existing mobile homes.

Bovingdon Airfield - Land at Runways Farm, Upper Bourne End Lane - Noise from motor sport activities

In January 2015, the Planning Inspectorate allowed an appeal made by the owners of Runways Farm and quashed the enforcement notice issued by Dacorum Borough Council and granted planning permission with conditions to allow motorsport activity to continue for a trial period of two years.

Throughout this period the Borough Council have been working with the applicant to implement a suitable Management Plan to improve the monitoring and reduce the noise from the motor vehicles and to improve track safety. A revised Plan was submitted in the early part of 2018, which both the Parish and Borough Council's objected to and again planning permission was refused.

The applicant appealed this decision and following a Planning Inquiry held in September 2018, the Planning Inspector allowed the appeal and granted planning permission for the use of the site for motorcycle and motor vehicle activities and associated storage and parking, subject to a number of conditions. One of the most important conditions was to implement a Noise Management Plan to help alleviate and monitor the noise arising from the motor vehicle activity. In February 2020 the Borough Council refused planning permission for the information submitted by Runways Farm. At this time, we are not aware of the next steps to be taken by the applicant.

50-53 Chesham Road – The planning appeal to demolish the existing bungalow and for the construction of a terrace of 7 houses and 2 semi-detached houses on land at the rear of 50 - 53 Chesham Road has been allowed, despite the objection of both the Parish and Borough Council Planning Committees.

Rosecroft, 49 Chesham Road – Demolition of existing bungalow, construction of 8 new semi-detached houses (2 x 2 bedroom, 2 x 3 bedroom and 4 x 4 bedroom), access, turning and parking areas, landscape planting and ancillary development (Amended Plans) – this development borders the approved development at 50 – 53 Chesham Road. This scheme has now received Planning Permission.

Bovingdon Market

Following the concerns and major problems of traffic going to the Saturday Market on Bovingdon Airfield and inconvenience caused to the village on the Saturdays in the run-up to Christmas 2019, Herts County Council, Herts Constabulary, Dacorum Borough Council and the Parish Council worked together to put in place steps to prevent a further re-occurrence of the problems.

High Street

The Parish Council continues to work closely with stakeholders in the village and other agencies, including the Aspire Academies Trust, Bovingdon Primary Academy, the County and Borough Councils and the Scouts, in an attempt to look at long term solutions for improving the High Street. This includes options to create additional parking and to provide better quality and more appropriate community facilities. The County Council in partnership with the Parish Council and Dacorum Borough Council commissioned Lambert Smith Hampton, a leading UK commercial and residential real estate consultancy, to carry out a feasibility study to look into and advise on the feasibility of redeveloping Public Sector Assets in Bovingdon. We hope that the findings will help to influence the future development of the village and have a bearing on the provision of additional housing and infrastructure needs.

When car parking and traffic congestion in the High Street is of such a crucial concern to many residents and the Parish Council it was disappointing that Dacorum Borough Council were refused permission to convert part of the grassed area adjacent to New Hall Close, High Street, into six parking bays, especially when the Lord of the Manor had recognised the need in the village and had given his permission to proceed with the project.

The Parish Council has set up a small working group comprising councillors and business owners in the High Street to look at the High Street and how it might be improved both functionally and aesthetically. In addition, a meeting has been held

with Herts County Councillor Richard Roberts and representatives from Herts Highways who are in the process of preparing designs for improving the area outside the parade of shops comprising Jarman's and the Co-op. This will include a disabled parking bay.

Other issues:

Community Safety

Councillor Ben Richardson continues to report to the Parish Council on questions of Community Safety. This report covers the activities of the DriveSafe Campaign and the establishment of a citizen patrol programme.

Police Commissioner's DriveSafe Campaign

The Bovingdon DriveSafe volunteers started their regular speed awareness sessions at the beginning of 2016. This has continued on various roads in the village over the last four years.

The winter months of 2019/2020 were adversely effected by bad weather which prevented the sessions being conducted. For safety reasons sessions cannot take place in the rain. The pandemic restrictions have now meant that all activity in this areas has stopped for the time being.

As previously reported, the data collected from DriveSafe was used as the basis for a Road Safety Fund Feasibility Study. The Study suggested five options for road safety improvement in the village with options 1 and 2 receiving funding. The first option is to improve the village gateways on Hempstead Road, Chesham Road and Chipperfield Road and the second being the installation of temporary 20mph advisory signs in the High Street.

The works, originally scheduled to take place by the end of the 2019/2020 year, have been merged with proposed work to improve the parking area in front of the Co-op is to be undertaken by the engineers Arup. Unfortunately, owing to the current pandemic restrictions this has been delayed.

Emergency Services Volunteers

The original proposal to create a Citizen Patrol scheme for the village has evolved over the last year.

The improved scheme is supported by both Herts Fire and Rescue Service and Hertfordshire Constabulary and will be called the Emergency Services Volunteers. There are currently three police volunteers and three Fire Service volunteers undergoing training and security vetting prior to the start of a 12-month pilot in Dacorum. Initially there will be a twelve-month pilot and this will be focussed on Bovingdon, and expand further as it develops.

The role of volunteers will include welfare and safety visits to residents to give advice/help on fire safety and crime prevention. Volunteers will also be seen on the streets in the village wearing a distinctive grey uniform.

As with many other activities the launch of this initiative will be delayed until the relaxation of social distancing regulations.

Overall, the village is fortunate to experience low levels of crime and social disorder. There is regular contact with the local police, Safer Neighbourhood Team who regularly report to the Parish Council meetings.

BOVINGDON PARISH 10 and 3k Fun Run

The Parish Council held its third 10k run and 3k fun run on Sunday, 1st September 2019, which was once again a huge success, with more people taking part and a further £1k? being raised for the benefit of community groups in the village. To date several groups have benefitted namely:

Summer Scoot

Grant of £250 towards the costs of organising the summer scoot race

Friends of Bovingdon Green

Grant of £250 towards the cost of the insurance for the event.

Bovingdon Community Library

Grant of £300 towards the cost of filing cabinets and suspension files to house collection of photographs

A huge 'thank you' must go to Councillor Richard Taylor for being the main 'driver' of this event, and to Councillor Julie Steer for the support she has given Richard in organising this event and for continuing to help with organising the next event, which will be held on Sunday, 6th September 2020 (postponed to September 2021 due to the corona virus pandemic).

Christmas Street Fayre / switch-on of High Street Christmas lights – 1st December 2019

The Christmas Fayre was again a great success and this year we had again the added attraction of the Christmas Lights switch-on. A number of local businesses, traders and individuals, together with the Parish Council and ITV Productions contributed to the cost of the lights. ITV generously arranged for the star attraction, Trisha Goddard, to come and perform the switch-on, which almost all went according to plan! Trisha then spent some time chatting to local residents during the event, which proved very popular. I would like to thank Tracy Woods for organising the Fayre and Councillors Julia Marshall and Alison Gunn for their hard work in organising the Christmas lights.

We are looking forward to this year's event, which will take place on Sunday 29th November 2020 (subject to the prevailing government guidelines on the pandemic) and are hoping that once again ITV will be able to arrange for another celebrity to switch-on the lights.

Neighbourhood Planning

The Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group (NPSG) was established twenty months ago and meets each month on a Tuesday evening. As well as the main meetings, each group gets together regularly to advance the four main areas of the plan. Housing, Transport, Business and Community/Environment.

The NPSG has spent a great deal of time researching and canvassing residents' opinions and are now at

a stage where the groups are writing policies for the final plan.

The main purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to create policies on 'land use' and each group has been using the information gathered to formulate policies specific to their areas.

The Transport Group are looking at ways to improve public transport, parking provision in the High Street, road safety, encourage alternative modes of transport and reduce traffic flow through the village.

The Business Group are aiming to protect and improve the High Street as a commercial zone, by upgrading the layout, attractiveness and parking; support existing businesses and protect employment within the parish; and improve the communications infrastructure.

The Community & Environment Group are seeking to improve and extend community and sports facilities; to protect and conserve buildings, green spaces and other valued assets within the parish. They are also looking at establishing policies that codify community and environmental protections for all new developments.

The Housing Group probably has the most difficult task of all: looking at areas, which would be most suited to development within Bovingdon Parish. The group had hoped to work with Dacorum Borough Council, to identify sites within the village envelope and adjacent to it, as the DBC Local Plan has not been finalised. Unfortunately, DBC made it clear that they are unwilling to share any information on their preferred sites or to engage with the Steering Group on this issue. After 6 months and more of failed negotiation the Housing Group will be carrying out their own assessment of the sites known to them. They will also be formulating design criteria to ensure developments meet high standards of design and build.

It is our intention to hold another Open Day in the autumn to present our draft policies to the

residents. Please check the Bovingdon Parish Council website and Facebook pages for details.

Bovingdon Library

As part of the County Council's 'Inspiring Libraries' strategy, libraries serving smaller communities, including Bovingdon, were designated as 'Community Libraries', to be run as a partnership between Hertfordshire Library Service and local community groups.

The County Council wrote to the Parish Council in February 2018, seeking help to identify key individuals in the village who would be willing to form the nucleus of a volunteer group to work with the Library Service in securing the future of Bovingdon as a thriving Community Library.

The Library is now very much a Community Library and is largely staffed by volunteers from the village, with the steering group being led by Councillor Julie Steer.

Dates for your diary 2020

Subject to the COVID-19 situation

Annual Parish Meeting

Monday 7 September in The Memorial Hall starting at 7.30 p.m. – light refreshments from 7.15 p.m. Speaker Katie Price, new Governor, The Mount Prison

Christmas Street Fayre and Switch-on of

Christmas Lights

Sunday 29th November (Provisional)