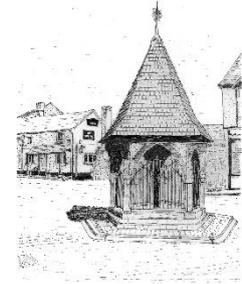


BOVINGDON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024 – 2025



Dear Resident,

The Parish Council remains committed to acting in the best interests of Bovingdon, striving to enhance quality of life for all residents and ensuring the village is well-prepared to meet the challenges of the years ahead.

Council meetings are ordinarily held on the first Monday of every other month. Each meeting includes time for parishioners to voice concerns or provide input, which assists in guiding the Council's decision-making and future direction. A comprehensive schedule of all Council and Committee meetings is available on the Parish Council website.

The team of councillors consists of myself, Karen Bregazzi-Jones, Mike Foulds, Nic Leon, Hugh Schneiders, Julie Steer, David Stent, Philip Walker and Pauline Wright.

Following the sad death of Councillor Adrian Watney in December 2024, Karen Bregazzi-Jones was co-opted on to the Parish Council to join our small and dedicated team.

Councillor Watney served Bovingdon Parish Council with commitment and integrity from 2018. During his tenure, he made valuable contributions through his involvement in several committees, including the Outdoors and Planning Committees. His dedication to the village and its community is warmly remembered and deeply appreciated.

There is currently a further vacancy on the Council for which we have received several enquiries.

The Parish Council continues to be fortunate in having this dedicated group of Councillors who generously give their time voluntarily for the benefit of the village. I would like to take this opportunity to formally thank all Councillors for their commitment and hard work over the past year.

We are also sincerely grateful for the invaluable support provided by our office team – Parish Clerk

Gemma Coventry and Assistant to the Parish Clerk Lisa Edwards. Both work part-time, with the Parish Office open to the public from 9.30am to 12noon on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks to the many members of the community who have shown their continued support for the Parish Council over the past year. In particular, we are grateful to Clare Norton for her leadership as Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and to Gary Cullum for his ongoing involvement and valued support.

Finally, our thanks go to our three Dacorum Borough Council Ward Councillors—Phil Walker, Stewart Riddick, and Gbola Adeleke—and to our Hertfordshire County Councillor, Richard Roberts, for their active engagement and support of the Parish Council's work. We also wish to acknowledge and thank the teams at both Dacorum Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council for their continued collaboration.

Graham Barrett

Councillor Graham Barrett, Chairman, Bovingdon Parish Council

The Annual Parish Report contains a summary of the work carried out by the Parish Council 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 despite all councils facing unprecedented increases in costs.

To help ensure we can continue providing essential services and supporting our village, Bovingdon Parish Council agreed a 10% increase in the precept for the 2025/26 financial year.

We understand that any increase affects residents, and this decision was made with much consideration. Even with this adjustment, Bovingdon's precept remains well below that of many, often smaller, neighbouring parishes. It is worth noting that more than 15% of the increase in council costs is from the recent rise in National Insurance contributions.

The Parish Council precept still makes up less than 2% of your overall Council Tax bill—but it plays a key role in funding local projects, maintaining public spaces, and supporting the everyday services that help keep Bovingdon a great place to live and work.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced by the government in 2008 to provide local authorities with a means of funding infrastructure projects across their local area. The charge is paid by developers, calculated per square metre of each new build, and may vary according to its size, location and type.

Dacorum Borough Council are responsible for setting the CIL charge, collecting the money and allocating it towards infrastructure projects.

The Parish Council, in conjunction with Dacorum Borough Council, monitor developments which are eligible to pay the CIL. The Parish Council used to get 15% of the receipts from developments within the parish. However, this has increased to 25% because we have an adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

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.

Our annual CIL report is posted on the Parish website every year.

Memorial Hall Management Committee

Councillor Julie Steer continues to be chair 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 Memorial Hall continues to be well used by local community groups together with a number of commercial bookings.

The hall was built in 1921 to commemorate the lives of the 37 villagers who died in the First World War, at a cost of £3,000. Money was raised by public subscription and a generous donation of £2,000 from Mr Whichello who lived at Bovingdon Grange. It is likely the usage and economic viability of the building and its ability to meet ever-rising costs of maintenance will have to be reviewed in the near future. Currently, however, the hall still covers its expenditure. As a registered charity, a report is submitted each year to the Charity Commission.

Outdoors Committee

The Outdoor Areas Committee, chaired by Councillor Pauline Wright, is responsible for overseeing the management, maintenance and enhancement of the village's outdoor spaces.

This year, residents and visitors once again enjoyed the magnificent display of daffodils planted by the Parish Council over the past two years, which continue to bring vibrant colour to the village each spring. As in previous years, a multitude of hanging baskets will once again be installed along the High Street, enhancing the area with vibrant colour and a welcoming atmosphere throughout the summer months. The Committee continues to manage the annual maintenance contract for the pond and surrounding area at Bovingdon Green, as well as the care and upkeep of the 'Docks' area on the High Street. In addition to regular maintenance, the Parish Council has been exploring opportunities for significant improvements to both the Bovingdon Green pond and the Docks area.

We are also pleased to acknowledge the generous donation of £3,000 from Carla Homes, which will contribute towards the proposed refurbishment of the Docks.

Personnel Committee

Councillor Mike Foulds is chair of this Committee, which meets as necessary, usually once or twice a year, to review personnel practices and procedures and to monitor the terms and conditions of the employees.

Neighbourhood Plan

We are extremely pleased to report that our Neighbourhood Plan went to referendum on 13th June and was supported by over 90% of those voting. It was subsequently supported by Dacorum Council and the Plan was formally adopted on 17th July. This is a tremendous achievement for the planning team and the village as it gives the Parish Council much greater influence on the future of the village. It will also bring a significant increase in funding for many years to come that will be directly spent within the parish. We are very grateful to the small, dedicated team of volunteers who have persevered with working on the plan for more than five years, in particular to Julia Marshall and Clare Norton who chaired the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Planning Committee

The Planning Committee, chaired by Councillor Graham Barrett, meets every three weeks. Significant progress is being made across several key development sites in the village. Construction is now well under way at the Molyneux Avenue site, marking a major step forward in local development. Meanwhile, the proposed redevelopment of the Bobsleigh Hotel site remains in the planning phase, with work yet to commence.

Planning permission has been granted for the transformation of the former Bovingdon brickworks site. The approved plans allow for the creation of over 8,000 square metres of new industrial units. A portion of this space is expected to be occupied by E.H. Smith, the current site owners.

In addition, early-stage consultation is taking place regarding a proposed solar farm covering more than 150 acres along Ley Hill Road. A full planning application is anticipated in the coming months.

Grange Farm

In August 2023, a planning application was submitted by Whitehaven/Taylor Wimpey for a significant development at Grange Farm. The application includes 57 new homes, 59 units of extra care accommodation, and an outline proposal for an additional 129 dwellings. Subsequently full planning permission has now been granted for 186 dwellings and the care home accommodation.

Bovingdon Parish Council chose to support the application, recognising the likelihood that this land would be designated for development in the Dacorum Borough Council Local Plan. When it became clear that a portion of the site was no longer needed by Hertfordshire County Council for a new school, the Parish Council saw an opportunity to work with the developers to secure a more comprehensive package of benefits for the village.

As a result, enhancements that will serve the wider community have been secured. It is anticipated that construction of the new community facilities will begin later this year or in early 2026. The full development is expected to be completed by the first half of 2027.

Dacorum Local Plan (2024-2040)

The Dacorum Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination on 11 March 2025.

The Inspectors will consider the comments made as part of the most recent Local Plan consultation and identify various matters, issues and questions to consider as part of the examination.

In Bovingdon, Dacorum are planning to deliver 230 additional new homes from 2024 to 2040, which include the housing that will be provided by Grange Farm, a 5% decrease from their proposal in 2020. It is considered that this strategy will deliver the following key benefits for Bovingdon:

Around 70 affordable homes, including:
18 First Homes for affordable home ownership; and
52 Genuinely Affordable / Social Homes to Rent.
Specialist housing provision including wheelchair accessible homes and provision for older people;
Contributions to help fund new GP capacity;
New community facilities, including the provision of a new scout hut; and new green spaces, including play spaces, public parks and allotments.

supporting various charities. The Community Events Team are also hoping to restart the annual Christmas Fayre and Christmas Light Switch On.

High Street

Measures have recently been introduced aimed at addressing ongoing challenges facing the High Street, particularly in relation to parking.

Following a public consultation by Dacorum Borough Council, the Parish Council secured the improvements. These include a two-hour parking restriction on both sides of the road outside the main shops, dedicated disabled parking bay and double yellow lines at the corners of Old Dean and the High Street to improve safety and traffic flow.

Community Events

Bovingdon's inaugural Scarecrow Festival kicks off on Saturday 31st May. Competing scarecrows will be displayed around the village with prizes awarded at the St Lawrence Church Summer Fete on Saturday, 14th June.

The Classic Vehicle show returns on 6th July from midday to 6pm, this time on Bovingdon Green. The event is being organised by the Bovingdon Community Events Team and it is expected that more than 250 classic vehicles will take part. There will be entertainment and activities for all ages, a range of refreshments and numerous stalls - many

Committees and Representatives

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Councillors Graham Barrett, Mike Foulds, Julie Steer (Chairman), David Stent, Philip Walker and Nic Leon

Memorial Hall Management Committee

Councillors Mike Foulds, Julie Steer (Chairman), David Stent, Karen Bregazzi-Jones and Pauline Wright

Outdoors Committee

Councillors Graham Barrett, Hugh Schneiders, Nic Leon, David Stent and Pauline Wright (Chairman)

Personnel Committee

Mike Foulds (Chairman), Julie Steer, Dave Stent and Karen Bregazzi-Jones

Planning Committee

Councillors Graham Barrett (Chairman), Nic Leon, Hugh Schneiders, David Stent, Philip Walker and Pauline Wright

Council representatives

Bovingdon Community Library – Councillor Julie Steer

Bovingdon Primary Academy - Councillor Nic Leon

Community Safety - Councillor David Stent

Friends of HMP The Mount – Councillor Nic Leon

Contact Details

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Vice-Chairman – Councillor David Stent

david.stent@councillor.bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk

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