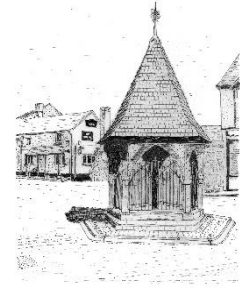


**BOVINGDON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2020 – 2021**



Dear Resident,

This is the second Annual Report of the present Parish Council, following the local elections held on 2 May 2019.

2020 - 21 has been without doubt a year of unprecedented times and the most extraordinary we have experienced since the end of World War II, due to the chaos and turmoil caused by COVID-19. The pandemic has affected us all, for some people it has been worse than for others. Three of the councillors have had the virus but thankfully have recovered without any long term issues. The prospect of returning to 'normality' is within sight.

The Council normally meets on the first Monday of 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.

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 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.

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.

Due to the pandemic, the Parish Office has been closed and the administrative team have been working from home. Despite the exceptional times, the Parish Council and Committee meetings have been held remotely via video conference facilities, which has worked very well. In all, a total of 33 meetings have been held.

### **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 2020 - 2021. This was mainly due to the continued reduction in the level of funding received from Dacorum Borough Council and increased costs to comply with statutory regulations. 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.

The Parish Council has 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. This could potentially increase to 25% if 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.

The council has received just over £35k 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. This has been a difficult year for the Hall due to the restrictions on usage caused by COVID-19. However, the Memorial Hall has remained open throughout the past year for the Bovingdon Pre-school to look after the children of key workers, the NHS Blood and Transplant Service and the Child Health Clinic. Apart from a short period in the Autumn of 2020 the building has remained closed to all our regular hirers and ad hoc users.

The council has taken advantage of applying for three grants totalling £20,808 made available via the National Lockdown Business Support Grant scheme to help make up for the loss of income from hirers during the pandemic.

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 looking into replacing the clock on the front of the building with an inscription 'Memorial Hall 1921 – 2021' to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Hall.

### **Outdoors Committee**

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

Despite COVID-19, the Sunnyside Rural Trust whose personnel carry out the warden duties have continued to work safely throughout the three lockdowns within the measures and guidelines laid down by the government. We are very grateful to them for their continued commitment to the village. The Trust have worked hard to continue to provide the basic requirements of the contract and have also taken on further works to improve the environment around the village and to maintain the surrounds of the Memorial Hall. The Council is 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. For the past two years it has been the chosen charity of The Mayor of Dacorum.

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 has been looking into the possibility to carry out major improvements to the pond but quotations for the work have exceeded the budgets the council has available for the project. In the meantime, the Sunnyside Rural Trust have carried out some environmental improvements at a more modest cost and will continue to maintain the environs of the pond for the forthcoming year.

### **Personnel Committee**

Councillor Ben Richardson is chairman 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.

### **Planning Committee**

The Planning Committee, chaired by Councillor Graham Barrett, continues to meet every three weeks. This year the number of planning applications has increased as people have had more time to consider improvements to their properties. 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.

It is clear from the 156 planning applications considered by the Committee during the year that a number are becoming more complex and require several amendments to the schemes. This represents a 25% increase in applications over the previous year. Some of the applications, for instance the redevelopment of older style detached properties in the Chesham Road with terraced and semi-detached houses is clearly having an impact on the street scene in the village.

### **Dacorum Local Plan (2020 – 2038): Emerging Strategy for Growth (for consultation)**

During the latter part of 2020 and the early part of 2021, Dacorum Borough Council carried out an extensive consultation on the Borough's emerging strategy for growth for the period 2020 – 2038.

The Borough Council is preparing a new Local Plan for the period 2020 to 2038. Once adopted, it will replace the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (adopted July 2017), the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted September 2013) and those "saved" parts of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (adopted May 2004). The Local Plan is being prepared in accordance with the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) (adopted July 2020).

The Bovingdon Delivery Strategy states that at least 240 homes will be provided over the period 2020-2038. The compact and built-up nature of Bovingdon limits opportunities for development on previously developed land in the settlement area. It also states that there is scope for some further redevelopment opportunities on the High Street and on the former Bobsleigh Hotel to the north east of the village. Included in the current allocation is land already allocated under the old plan for 40 homes on the site adjacent to Chesham Road/Molyneaux Ave. However, the majority of the growth is to be accommodated through 'a sustainable urban extension of 150 homes' on a greenfield site on the village edge i.e. Land at Grange Farm, Green Lane (corner of Leyhill Road / Green Lane). The Borough Council has decided at this time against additional development on Land south of Homefield, Land rear of Green Lane / Louise Walk and Land at Duckhall Farm, Newhouse Road and on other sites that had been promoted by various land owners in and around the Village.

The Parish Council responded in depth to the Dacorum Issues and Options Consultation in December 2017, which at the time listed four sites that had been put forward by landowners for consideration for development. Since 2017, the Borough Council has also invited people 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.

A number of meetings between your local Borough Councillors and Dacorum Council officers took place prior to the consultation in order to reinforce the view that Bovingdon would be unable to cope with large scale development. We are therefore, pleased to note that currently the proposals for Bovingdon are very much reduced.

If all the sites that had been put forward for development had been allowed, the Parish Council estimates that the village would have been facing an increase of 800 - 1,000 new homes.

The Parish Council has always been protective of the Green Belt and regrets any proposal that seek to remove land from the Green Belt for development. However, it would be unrealistic to expect the Village not to bear some of the governments requirements for new homes and in principal we support the Borough's proposals, which are in line with the suggestions for growth in the other large villages in the Borough, namely, Kings Langley and Markyate. The additional development will provide funding towards improvements to infrastructure within the Village.

We will have to wait until the summer / autumn of 2021 to learn of the results of the consultation.

### **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 Parish Council has set up a small working group comprising councillors and business owners 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.

With the convergence of the work done within the village by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and the announcement of the proposed Dacorum Local Plan there is a real opportunity for the Parish Council and the community of Bovingdon to pull together an extensive Village Improvement Programme. Both the Neighbourhood and Dacorum Local Plans identify the infrastructure challenges that already exist for the village, and the further impact on that infrastructure of the proposed new housing developments.

The Parish Council will keep the residents informed of its progress in this major task.

## **OTHER PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

### **Neighbourhood Planning**

This past year has been a challenging one for the Steering Group, in common with many groups, we have been unable to meet in person and this has meant all our meetings have been held online via Zoom. Our group has reduced further under these difficulties and we now have a small band of dedicated volunteers, who have worked hard to keep the project on course.

We have continued to work on the Neighbourhood Plan, writing policies and assessing potential housing sites, but progress has slowed down considerably. Unfortunately, restrictions have also meant that the consultation on our draft policies, which we had planned to hold in the Memorial Hall at the end of 2020, has had to be delayed and alternative means sought to consult with residents and canvass their opinions.

The Steering Group is currently finalising an online presentation, in which we will set out our draft policies and the evidence behind them. This will be available for residents and interested parties to view on the Bovingdon Parish Council website.

Views and feedback from residents will be invited, via a short online survey or by email to the parish office. [http://www.bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk/Neighbourhood\\_Plan](http://www.bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk/Neighbourhood_Plan)

### **Community Safety**

Councillor Ben Richardson continues to report to the Parish Council on questions of Community Safety.

### **Police Commissioner's DriveSafe Campaign**

Compliance with the COVID pandemic regulations have forced a reduction in the activities of the DriveSafe Campaign volunteers over the last twelve months.

Activity over this period was restricted to a short period between the first and second lockdowns and more recently (31<sup>st</sup> March) as restrictions eased, a normal schedule of speed checks has resumed. These sessions are being run at the normal location in Chipperfield Road while complying with social distancing rules.

In order to further support the programme and reinforce the message that, speeding is both dangerous and unacceptable, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has acquired purpose built speed monitoring vehicles to work in conjunction with the DriveSafe groups in the local area.

The funds secured from the PCC's Road Safety Fund for improvements to the village gateways and installing part-time advisory 20mph signs on the approaches to the school in the High Street are still in place. The events of the last year have meant that the Highways Authorities had a backlog of similar works. Conversations continue with the Head of the Hertfordshire Road Safety Partnership and the Office of the Police Commissioner.

### **Emergency Services Volunteers**

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

The concept has received approval and support from the Police and Crime Commissioner and Hertfordshire County Council. As a Joint Fire & Rescue Service and Police initiative, it will now be called the Emergency Services Volunteers.

The planned twelve-month pilot was delayed because of the pandemic but is now on course to start on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021. During this delay, volunteers have been able to take advantage of the time to take part in various training courses at locations such as, The Joint Emergency Services Academy in Stevenage and Constabulary Headquarters at Welwyn Garden City.

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.

### **Reported Crime**

Overall, the village is fortunate to experience low levels of crime and social disorder. There is regular contact with the local, Safer Neighbourhood Policing Team who regularly report to the Parish Council public meetings. During recent months there have been discussions with representatives of the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) to improve the level of detail on the monthly crime reports to the Parish Council. This should give a better understanding of the context of crime even though the numbers are in the low single figures.

### **BOVINGDON PARISH 10 and 3k Fun Run**

Due to COVID-19 the fourth 10k run and 3k fun run did not take place. It is hoped that this will take place on Sunday 5 September 2021.

Grants awarded from surpluses made at this event:

#### **Friends of St Lawrence Church**

Grant of £165 towards the costs of producing a Guide to St Lawrence Churchyard.

#### **Bovingdon Primary Academy**

Grant of £500 towards the cost of providing bicycle / scooter storage facilities and pavement signs.

### **Christmas Street Fayre / switch-on of High Street Christmas lights – 29 November 2020**

Once again, due to COVID-19 this event was unable to take place.

However, the lights were switched on as planned and we are grateful to those businesses and individuals who contributed so generously via Collection Pot adding a further £2,555 to the Christmas

Lights fund. Our thanks also go to Derek Procter of Marchants Farm for donating a lovely Christmas tree, which stood lit up on the forecourt of the Memorial Hall.

Subject to government restrictions, it is hoped to be able to hold a switch-on and mini-fayre in the Memorial Hall on Sunday 28 November 2021.

### **Bovingdon Library**

All Community Libraries have remained closed over the past year due to COVID-19.

### **Bovingdon News**

Steph Farrer of Farrspark who has edited the Bovingdon News for a number of years has agreed to take over responsibility for the future publication of the booklet and the Parish Council will continue to distribute it to every household in the village via a band of 40+ volunteers. We hope that the Bovingdon News will complement The Bovingdon Villager produced by Gary Cullum.



## **Committees and Representatives**

### **Finance & General Purposes Committee**

Councillors Graham Barrett, Julie Steer (Chairman), David Stent and Philip Walker

### **Memorial Hall Management Committee**

Councillors Alison Gunn, Julia Marshall, Julie Steer (Chairman) and Pauline Wright

### **Outdoors Committee**

Councillors Graham Barrett, Alison Gunn, Julia Marshall, Ben Richardson, Hugh Schneiders, Julie Steer, David Stent (Chairman), Philip Walker, Adrian Watney and Pauline Wright

### **Personnel Committee**

Councillors Ben Richardson (Chairman), Julie Steer, Dave Stent and Adrian Watney

### **Planning Committee**

Councillors Graham Barrett (Chairman), Alison Gunn, Julia Marshall, Ben Richardson, Hugh Schneiders, David Stent, Philip Walker, Adrian Watney and Pauline Wright

### **BP 10 Run Sub-Group (4)**

Richard Taylor (Organiser), Councillors Julie Steer (Co- organiser) and David Stent

**Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group** – Councillor Julia Marshall

**Council's Representative on Bovingdon Primary Academy** - Claire Norton, Chair of Governors

**Council's Representative on Friends of 'The Mount'** - Kathy Banks

**Council's representative on Community Safety** - Councillor Ben Richardson

**Council's Representatives on Bovingdon Community Library** – Councillors Julie Steer

### **Contact Details**

Chairman – Councillor Graham Barrett – [graham.barrett@councillor.bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:graham.barrett@councillor.bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk)

Vice-Chairman – Councillor Julia Marshall – [julia.marshall@councillor.bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:julia.marshall@councillor.bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk)

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