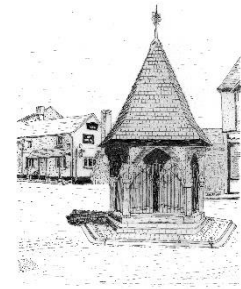


BOVINGDON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023 – 2024



Dear Resident,

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

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 may help to guide the direction of the Council. A full schedule of all the Council and Committee meetings is available on our website.

The team of councillors consists of myself, Mike Foulds, Alison Gunn, Nic Leon, Hugh Schneiders, Julie Steer, David Stent, Philip Walker, Adrian Watney and Pauline Wright. Ben Richardson decided to resign as a councillor in October 2023 after many years' service. We thank him for all his hard work and dedication during his time on the Council. Nic Leon was co-opted on to the Council to fill the vacancy created by Ben Richardson. The Parish Council has always been fortunate to be made up of very committed individuals who give their time voluntarily for the benefit of the village and I would like to extend my thanks to all the councillors for their hard work over the past year.

We are also grateful for the support of the office team. This year has seen some changes with the retirement of both our long-standing Parish Clerk, Mike Kember, and our Responsible Financial Officer, Dave Kirk, who have both diligently served the Council for many years. We are indebted to them both for all their hard work and wish them well in their retirement. I am pleased to report that Gemma Coventry has joined the Council as Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer and Lisa Edwards continues in her role assisting the Parish Clerk. Gemma and Lisa work part time and the office opening hours are 9.30 – 12.00 Monday to Friday.

In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the other members of our community who have shown tremendous support for the Parish Council during the year. In particular Clare Norton for chairing the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Brad Gunn for his contribution in respect of the Christmas Street lights and fayre, Gary Cullum for his ongoing involvement and support, and Ben Richardson for heading up the Parish Marshalls and leading the Bovingdon Community Safety Group.

Finally, I would also like to thank our three Dacorum Borough Council Ward Councillors, Phil Walker, 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

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. Despite the increased pressure on our budgets from the rise in inflation and the tremendous increases in electricity and gas prices, we have successfully managed our budgets although it was considered prudent to increase the precept for the forthcoming financial year 2024 – 2025.

Although total costs have increased by just over 10% the peculiarity of precept calculations across local government is that the precept is only part of the overall income, so the increase will inevitably be larger in percentage terms because grants and other income do not increase at the same rate.

The total precept receipt (net of Council Tax Support Grant and Resilience grant) is £83,743. Bovingdon's precept remains in the lower quartile of charges made by all parishes within the Hertfordshire County Council area.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

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 monitor developments which are eligible to pay the CIL. The Parish Council currently receives 15% of the receipts from developments within 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.

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 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. In the near future, important and difficult decisions may have to be taken to review the usage and economic viability of the building and its ability to meet the ever-rising costs of maintenance and sustainability. Currently even with rising costs it is still covering its expenditure. As a registered charity, a report is submitted each year to the Charity Commission.

Outdoors Committee

The Committee is chaired by Councillor Pauline Wright, and is responsible for all aspects of the outdoor areas of the village.

One important aspect of the work of the Committee is to monitor the outsourced village warden contract which is undertaken by The Sunnyside Rural Trust. The 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 more than 130 vulnerable people in the local community.

The Trust fulfil the contract with their hard work and they have also taken on further works to improve the environment around the village and to maintain the surrounds of the Memorial Hall.

Many of you will have seen the Trust's teams collecting litter, planting and carrying out maintenance work around the village. A lot of residents have expressed their thanks to the Trust and appreciate their hard work. The Parish Council are very grateful to them for their continued commitment to the village. This year we have also appointed a new part time Parish Warden, Paul Hartwell. Paul will carry out additional works around 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' on the High Street. The Council has been looking into the possibility of carrying out major improvements to the pond at Bovingdon Green. The Parish Council has this year renewed the lease on the pond for a further period of 25 years with Dacorum Borough Council.

The railings that surround the Docks were damaged during the year and we are currently obtaining quotations for their replacement.

In December the Parish Council planted a further 38,000 daffodil bulbs outside Newhall Close, along the Hempstead Road and at Hyde Meadows to complement the bulbs planted in 2023 which have produced a wonderful and lasting display of colour over several weeks.

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.

Planning Committee

The Planning Committee, chaired by Councillor Graham Barrett, meets every three weeks. Several major planning applications are in progress which will substantially affect the village:

Permission has been granted for 43 new homes to be built at Molyneaux Avenue, which will be constructed by Carla Homes. The scheme will provide 40% affordable housing together with a

much-needed pedestrian and cycle access from Hyde Lane through to Lancaster Drive.

EH Smith has submitted a planning application to redevelop the old brickworks with more than 8,000 square metres of new industrial units. This will increase the size of the site by 50% more than the old brickworks buildings, and potentially bring an increase in commercial traffic along the Hempstead Road and Chipperfield Road. Included within the application are proposals to divert the footpath that currently runs along the rear of the old brickworks and the land occupied by EH Smith. Whilst the Parish Council supports the principal of development on this site for employment purposes we have objected to the current proposals. The main objections are the overall increase in the built area and the diversion of the footpath, which would result in the loss of a popular circular walk.

Grange Farm

A planning application was submitted by Whitehaven/Taylor Wimpy during August 2023 for 57 dwellings, 59 units of extra care accommodation together with an outline application for a further 129 dwellings.

The application was supported by the Parish Council primarily in the certainty that the land at Grange Farm would eventually be adopted for development within the next Dacorum Borough Council Local Plan. On being made aware that additional land within the site was no longer required by Herts County Council for a new school, we saw an opportunity of working with the developers to negotiate an enhanced package of benefits for the village. The majority of the land that had originally been designated for a new school will now be made available for the direct benefit to the village. This will include the provision of a new Scout building, a new Bowls Club, allotments, a community orchard, and public open space. The development will provide a significant amount of much needed affordable housing together with additional financial contributions which will go directly to the village. We are certain that none of these benefits would have been available if the proposed Local Plan had been adopted prior to a planning application being made.

Dacorum Local Plan (2024-2040): Emerging Strategy for Growth (for consultation)

The Borough Council is still in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for the period 2024 to 2040. The work on this had been delayed by the

steps being taken to preserve the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation.

The published changes to the strategy in Bovington are plans to deliver 230 new homes from 2024 to 2040, a 5% decrease from the 2020 proposal. DBC believe that this strategy will deliver the following key benefits for Bovington: 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 areas, public parks and food growing areas.

Local Plan Proposed Allocations

Site Reference / Site Name	Proposed Status (Revised Strategy 2023)
Bv01: Grange Farm	Retained for 150 homes
Bv02: Chesham Road / Molyneux Avenue	Retained for 40 homes

High Street

Everyone will be aware of the challenges in the High Street, particularly in respect of parking. Councillors have for several years been looking for a viable solution, however it is abundantly clear that without releasing some land within the High Street there is no realistic prospect of any fundamental improvement. With the potential release of the land currently occupied by the Bowls Club, there will be an opportunity to both potentially redevelop or reconfigure the Memorial Hall which together with the Bowls Club land could transform the High Street, providing additional parking and the possibility of a green corridor through to King George V playing fields, the Church and beyond.

Christmas Street Fayre / Switch-on of High Street Christmas lights – Sunday, 3 December 2023

In December we had yet another highly successful Christmas Fayre and Christmas Light switch-on, although unfortunately the weather was less favourable than in previous years.

Comedian Lou Sanders alongside her professional partner Brendyn Hatfield turned on the lights. The

Parish Council is very grateful for ITV's ongoing sponsorship of our Christmas lights and the support of the Dancing on Ice team

The Parish Council would also like to thank SparkX our lighting contractor who are based in Wendover, for their help with the provision of our Christmas Street Lighting and for their support on the evening of the switch-on.

We are grateful to those businesses and individuals who contributed so generously to the Christmas Lights fund. Our thanks also go to Derek Procter of Marchant's Farm for donating a lovely Christmas tree, which stood lit up on the grass area in front of Archway Flats and which received a lot of positive comments from residents.

Neighbourhood Planning

The Steering Group under the direction of the Chair, Clare Norton and our consultant, Jacqueline Veater have made a lot of progress over the past year and are now able to hold our Neighbourhood plan Referendum.

Neighbourhood Planning Referendums are held once a Local Planning Authority has come to a formal view on whether a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) meets the basic conditions.

The referendum will ask the question:

“Do you want Dacorum Borough Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Bovington Parish to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area”

Electors are able to respond either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ on the ballot paper.

If more than 50% of those voting in the referendum have voted in favour of the plan, then we must bring the Plan into force. The referendum will take place on Thursday 13th June.

Community Safety

Ben Richardson reports to the Outdoors Committee on matters of Community Safety in the village. The role covers matters relating to road safety, close liaison with local police officers, reporting on crime and antisocial behaviour as well as managing the Parish Marshal patrols.

The village is a relatively safe place for motorists and pedestrians although problems persist with High Street congestion, inconsiderate driving and parking as well as speeding on some local roads.

Parish Marshals

The Parish Marshals aim to create a public face of the Parish Council, to improve community safety and to reduce the fear of crime. In the past year, volunteers (including some councillors) have continued to patrol regularly in Bovingdon achieving more than 225 hours of volunteer patrol in 12 months.

The Marshals always walk in pairs and are there to deal with a wide range of local issues including traffic problems, fly tipping and to engage with local residents.

Ben has subsequently decided to step down from his role in organising the Parish Marshals. The establishment of the Parish Marshals was his initiative, and we thank him for all that he has achieved.

D-Day 80 – 6 June 2024

On the 6 June 2024 there will be the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings. There will be a national event with beacons being lit across the country at 9:15pm. Communities in France and the UK will be asked to stop what they are doing to

undertake the international tribute. All villagers are invited to attend an event on the Green, there will be a cricket match taking place between 6pm and 8.45pm. The Cricket Club bar will be opened to serve refreshments and a local fish and chip van will be parked on the Green, as 6th June is also National Fish and Chip Day. The official poem will be read at 9.10pm and Councillor Richard Roberts will light the Beacon at 9.15pm. This will be a time of reflection, honouring all those who took part in the D-Day landings.

Committees and Representatives

Finance & General Purposes Committee

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

Memorial Hall Management Committee

Councillors Alison Gunn, Mike Foulds, Julie Steer (Chairman), David Stent and Pauline Wright

Outdoors Committee

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

Personnel Committee

Mike Foulds (Chairman), Julie Steer, Dave Stent and Adrian Watney

Planning Committee

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

Council representatives

Bovingdon Community Library – Councillor Julie Steer

Bovingdon Primary Academy - Vacant

Community Safety - Vacant

Friends of HMP The Mount – Councillor Nic Leon

Herts Councillor representative on the Chilterns Conservation Board – Councillor Adrian Watney

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – Clare Norton (Chairman)

Contact Details

Chairman – Councillor Graham Barrett

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Vice-Chairman – Councillor David Stent

david.stent@councillor.bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk

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Parish Clerk – Gemma Coventry

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