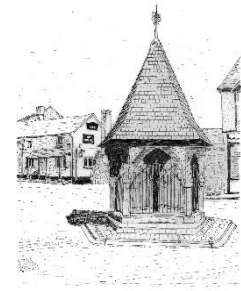


BOVINGDON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025 – 2026



Dear Resident,

The Parish Council remains committed to serving the best interests of Bovingdon, working to enhance the quality of life for all residents and to ensure the village is well-positioned to meet future challenges.

Council meetings are typically held on the first Monday of every other month. Each meeting includes an opportunity for parishioners to raise concerns or share views, which play an important role in informing the Council's decisions and shaping its future priorities. A full schedule of Council and Committee meetings is available on the Parish Council website.

The Council comprises the following members: Caroline Barnett, Karen Bregazzi-Jones, Ian Field, Mike Foulds, Nic Leon, Hugh Schneiders, Julie Steer, Philip Walker, Pauline Wright and myself.

David Stent resigned from the Council during this year and we extend our sincere thanks to David for his hard work and dedicated service during his term on the Council, which began in 2016. Following the death of Councillor Adrian Watney last year, and the resignation of Councillor David Stent, we subsequently welcomed two new councillors, Caroline Barnett and Ian Field.

The Parish Council continues to benefit from a dedicated group of councillors who generously give their time on a voluntary basis 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 also extend our sincere thanks to the office team for their invaluable support— Parish Clerk Gemma Coventry and Assistant

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

The Parish Council would also like to extend its sincere thanks to the many members of the community who have continued to support its work over the past year. In particular, we are grateful to Gary Cullum, Editor of The Bovingdon Villager, for his ongoing involvement and valued support.

We also wish to recognise the contribution of the three Dacorum Borough Council Ward Councillors, Philip Walker, Stewart Riddick, and Gbola Adeleke, and Hertfordshire County Councillor Richard Roberts for their active engagement and support of the Parish Council's work.

Finally, the Council would like to acknowledge and thank the officers and teams at both Dacorum Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council for their continued collaboration and assistance.

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 the Committee during the year. Despite the significant financial challenges facing local councils, the Committee has successfully managed its budgets. When we approved the budget for 2026/27, this included an increase of the precept from £43.09 to £61.95 per year. This represents an additional £1.57 per month for a Band D property.

This decision was made in response to growing financial pressures, most notably Dacorum Borough Council's decision to phase out all direct funding to Town and Parish Councils. This funding has historically supported essential village services, including the Parish Warden, litter picking, maintenance of public toilets, bus stops, and other communal areas.

With the withdrawal of this grant, alongside rising costs and additional demands associated with the growth of the village, the Parish Council had needed to adjust its budget to ensure the continuation of these vital services for the community.

The Council is also concerned about the potential impact of proposed local government reorganisation, which may lead to a reduction in services for local communities if Dacorum Borough Council is merged with other Hertfordshire authorities.

While any increase is unwelcome, the Council has made every effort to keep the rise to a minimum while maintaining the level of service that residents rely on.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

CIL was introduced by the Government in 2008 as a mechanism for local authorities to fund infrastructure projects within their areas. The levy is charged to developers and is calculated on a per square metre basis for new developments, with rates varying according to the size, type and location of the development.

Dacorum Borough Council is responsible for setting the CIL rates, collecting the levy, and

allocating funds towards infrastructure projects.

The Parish Council works in partnership with Dacorum Borough Council to monitor developments within the parish that are liable for CIL. Historically, the Parish Council received 15% of CIL receipts from developments in the area; however, this has increased to 25% following the adoption of the Bovingdon Neighbourhood Plan. CIL regulations require that receipts are used to 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, providing transparency on how these funds are received and spent.

Memorial Hall Management Committee

Councillor Julie Steer continues to serve as Chair of the Committee. The Memorial Hall is owned and managed by the Parish Council, with all councillors automatically appointed as trustees upon their election.

The Hall remains a well-used and valued community asset, hosting a wide range of local groups alongside a number of commercial bookings. Over the past year, usage has been particularly high as the Parish Council has supported St Lawrence Church during its redevelopment, accommodating many of its regular activities and groups.

Constructed in 1921 to commemorate the 37 villagers who lost their lives in the First World War, the Hall was built at a cost of £3,000. Funding was raised through public subscription, supplemented by a generous donation of £2,000 from Mr Whichello of Bovingdon Grange.

Given the age and inefficiency of the structure, the Council aspires to replace the hall in the future.

Looking ahead, it is recognised the number of Hall bookings, and so its financial sustainability and capacity to meet increasing maintenance costs is likely to be impacted by other venues. At present, however, the Hall continues to operate within its means and covers its expenditure. As a registered charity, an annual report is submitted to the Charity Commission.

Outdoors Committee

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

Over the past year, residents and visitors have once again enjoyed the impressive display of daffodils planted by the Parish Council in recent years, which continue to bring vibrant colour to the village each spring.

The Committee remains committed to ensuring that the village is clean and well maintained. It works closely with the Village Warden. This year a dedicated warden has been appointed with a specific focus on litter picking, further supporting efforts to keep the village tidy and welcoming.

Personnel Committee

Councillor Mike Foulds serves as Chair of this Committee, which meets as required, typically once or twice a year. The Committee is responsible for reviewing personnel policies and procedures, and for monitoring the terms and conditions of the Council's employees.

Planning Committee

The Committee, chaired by Councillor Graham Barrett, meets approximately every three weeks. It continues to work diligently to preserve the village environment. During the year the council has been faced with a number of major applications that threaten to fundamentally change the nature and character of the village.

The application for a solar farm on land along Ley Hill Road was approved by the Dacorum Borough Council Planning Committee, despite the Parish Council's objection and 135 objections submitted by members of the

public. In December, an outline planning application was submitted by Gleeson Land Ltd for the development of 145 homes on land off Hempstead Road, together with a full application for 12.42 hectares of Suitable Accessible Natural Green Space (SANG). The site lies within the Green Belt and is not allocated for housing in the draft Dacorum Local Plan. The Parish Council has objected to the application, expressing concern that it does not demonstrate adequate provision of education, healthcare, and wider infrastructure to support the proposed development. It is hoped that the Borough Council will adhere to its own draft Local Plan and refuse the application.

Grange Farm Housing Development

Concerns remain regarding flooding at the end of Green Lane. The developer has submitted a revised application relating to site drainage conditions. The Parish Council continues to actively engage with both Dacorum Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council to ensure these issues are properly addressed.

Construction has commenced over the last month of the new community facilities including a new bowls club, a new scout hut, a community orchard, allotments, and a multi-use games area (MUGA). The community facilities are expected to be completed and handed over during the first half of 2027.

Local Government Reorganisation

Under the Government's proposals, the existing 11 councils in Hertfordshire would be replaced by a smaller number of unitary authorities, each responsible for delivering all services currently provided by the County Council and the district and borough councils.

In November 2025, Hertfordshire's councils, together with the Police and Crime Commissioner, submitted proposals to Government outlining options for two, three and four unitary council models.

A seven-week statutory consultation was launched by the Government in early February 2026, inviting views on the proposed changes. The consultation closed on 26 March 2026.

A decision from the Government is expected in summer 2026.

Dacorum Local Plan (2024-2040)

The Plan (covering the period to 2040/41) sets out the long-term vision for growth and development across the borough, including the delivery of new homes, employment opportunities and supporting infrastructure.

The Plan identifies a need for significant housing growth, with more than 15,000 new homes planned across the borough alongside investment in transport, schools, healthcare and community facilities. During the past year, the Local Plan has progressed through its formal examination stage by the Planning Inspectorate.

Public hearings were held throughout 2025 and into early 2026 to assess the soundness of the Plan, including its housing targets, site allocations and infrastructure proposals. The examination process is now nearing completion, with final sessions held in spring 2026.

The Planning Inspectors are expected to publish their report later in the year, which will determine whether the Plan can proceed to adoption, potentially with modifications.

It is anticipated that Dacorum Borough Council will move to formally adopt the new Local Plan during 2026. Once adopted, it will replace the existing planning framework and guide future development across the borough up to 2040/41.

The Parish Council continues to monitor progress closely and will engage with the process where appropriate, particularly in relation to the potential impact of proposed

development sites and infrastructure on the local community.

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 Scarecrow Festival kicks off on Saturday 30th May and runs until the 14th June. Competing scarecrows will be displayed around the village with prizes awarded at the Bovingdon Primary Academy Summer Fayre on Saturday, 20th June.

The Classic Car show returns on 5th July from midday to 6pm, 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 supporting various charities.

Committees and Representatives

Finance and General Purposes Committee

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

Memorial Hall Management Committee

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

Outdoors Committee

Councillors Caroline Barnett, Graham Barrett, Karen Bregazzi-Jones, Nic Leon, Hugh Schneiders and Pauline Wright (Chairman)

Personnel Committee

Councillors Karen Bregazzi-Jones , Mike Foulds (Chairman), Julie Steer and Philip Walker

Planning Committee

Councillors Graham Barrett (Chairman), Karen Bregazzi-Jones, Ian Field, Nic Leon, Hugh Schneiders, Philip Walker and Pauline Wright

Council representatives

Community Library – Councillor Julie Steer

Bovingdon Primary Academy – Councillor Nic Leon

Community Safety – Councillor Caroline Barnett

Friends of HMP The Mount – Councillor Nic Leon

Contact Details

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Vice-Chairman – Councillor Philip Walker

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