

Dacorum Life Winter 2022

Welcome

Welcome to the winter edition of Dacorum Life magazine. In this issue, you can catch up on exciting projects in and around Dacorum, including Hemel Garden Communities and our major partnership programme for Hemel Hempstead town centre.

We have completed a number of refurbishment projects, including the transformation of Northridge Way basketball court, Canal Fields playground in Berkhamsted, and Tring Skate Park. We have also marked the completion of 10 new council homes in Kings Langley, in partnership with Bugler Developments. We are continuing to build new council homes throughout the borough to support those in housing need and have plans in motion to deliver 350 new homes between 2020 and 2025.

We have been successful in our bid to secure £1.7 million over the next three years, from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, to support local business, people and skills. We have been working with a range of partners including local businesses and voluntary organisations to develop an investment plan for the best use of the money, based on local need and activities.

Through the Hemel Garden Communities programme, the whole town will be transformed, to become more sustainable and innovative. Safe and healthy lifestyles will be a priority, as well as responding to the challenges of climate change.

Our approach to the climate and ecological emergency continues to gather pace. We have recently launched our new climate and ecological emergency (CEE) strategy, which provides information on our carbon emissions, both as an organisation and a borough, and outlines our key objectives and how we will work to achieve these. We have also published our Electric Vehicle Strategy, which outlines our role in supporting the uptake of electric vehicles and the implementation of appropriate charging infrastructure throughout Dacorum, ensuring the right facilities are put in the right place. We are participating in a number of home-energy efficiency schemes, ranging from a solar bulk buy scheme to free home improvements. We have secured Government funding through the 'Sustainable Warmth' scheme, which can help you get up to £10,000 worth of free improvements to your homes if you meet certain criteria.

The cost of living crisis is one of the biggest challenges facing residents, businesses and local authorities in 2022 and affects us all. We understand that many people across Dacorum are struggling to make ends meet and we are here to support you. You can find more information on where to get cost of living help with food, energy and other costs on our website, which will be regularly updated www.dacorum.gov.uk/cost-of-living

Councillor Andrew Williams. Leader of the Council

Christmas opening hours

The Forum and our Customer Service phone lines will be closed over the Christmas and New Year period and the bank holidays: Monday 26 and Tuesday 27 December and Monday 2 January 2023. During these times you can still use all our online services, please visit www.dacorum.gov.uk You can contact the emergency council housing repairs service on 0800 018 6050 and make payments using our 24-hour automated service on 0345 370 6070.

Cemeteries

Woodwells and Heath Lane in Hemel Hempstead, Kingshill in Berkhamsted and Tring Cemetery are open throughout Christmas and the New Year. Winter opening hours: Monday to Saturday 8am to 4.30pm, Sundays and Bank Holidays 9am to 4.30pm. The cemetery offices at Woodwells will be closed on the bank holidays, and Monday 26 and Tuesday 27 December and Monday 2 January 2023.

News

Memorial Garden opens

In July, we opened our Memorial Garden in Gadebridge Park to remember those who lost their lives during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We put in benches, a new path and wildflower planting around a copper leaf beech tree, which was planted in October 2021.

Hemel Hempstead resident Margaret Sharp worked with The Rt Hon Sir Mike Penning MP to raise funds in the community and from local businesses to pay for the tree, which was provided at cost by Majestic Trees in Flamstead. Sir Mike Penning MP, Gagan Mohindra MP, Mayor of Dacorum Cllr John Birnie, Leader of the Council Andrew Williams, councillors and representatives from community organisations attended the event.

Rev Canon John Williams from St Mary's Church in Hemel Hempstead carried out the tree blessing ceremony.

Protecting Ashridge Estate and Tring Woodlands

Over the last few months we have continued to work with partners on the development of a mitigation strategy to help protect Ashridge Estate and Tring Woodlands, which are under increasing visitor pressure from the borough and surrounding areas.

For the latest information please see: www.dacorum.gov.uk/SAC

Hemel Hempstead War Memorial restored

We have completed restoration works to the Grade II listed war memorial in Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead. It is a much-loved local landmark around which crowds gather at the annual Remembrance Day parade.

Cllr Alan Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Place, visited the memorial to see the work initiated under his predecessor Cllr Graeme Elliot. They invited the Rt Hon Sir Mike Penning MP, the Mayor of Dacorum and Sue Rose, Chairman of the Hemel Hempstead branch of the Royal British Legion, who lead on the annual Remembrance Day parade, along to see the completed works.

Dacorum remembers Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Dacorum came together as a community to mourn the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Floral tributes were laid around the borough and books of condolence signed. We held a ceremony of remembrance where councillors and community groups were able to give thanks and lay flowers in memory of our late monarch.

We also welcomed the new King Charles III with a Proclamation Ceremony on Sunday 11 September. Our ceremony was led by the Mayor of Dacorum, Councillor John Birnie, the Proclamation was read

by Deputy Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, Jo Connell OBE, and prayers said on behalf of all faiths for the new sovereign by Reverend Canon John Williams.

Dacorum was honoured to welcome the Queen on occasions such as her visit to Berkhamsted in 2016 and in 1952 when Her Majesty visited families who had moved into new council homes.

Ensuring economic growth and prosperity

Spotlight on Dacorum's businesses

I am pleased to confirm that we have secured significant funds to support local businesses as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The fund was launched by the government earlier this year to support its 'Levelling Up' agenda. All local councils have been allocated a share of the fund to invest in their areas by March 2025. The Shared Prosperity Fund is intended to replace EU funding.

We have been allocated £1,763,392 over the next three years, to support local activity and have been working with a range of partners including local businesses and voluntary organisations to develop an investment plan. Further details about some of the initiatives that the funding will support will be provided in my next update.

In July, eight budding entrepreneurs were awarded up to £2,500 for their businesses as part of our Dacorum's Den business grant scheme. The businesses pitched their ideas to a panel of judges, led by Rt Hon Sir Mike Penning MP, and a total of £10,000 was divided between their business ideas, which ranged from dog grooming to cake making.

In addition to financial help to kick-start their ideas, the winners also received one year's free membership to the Hemel Hempstead Business Ambassadors and six months' free business support coaching provided by ActionCOACH.

Over the last few months we have continued to progress plans for the growth and regeneration of Hemel Hempstead. You can read more about Hemel Garden Communities and our exciting plans for Hemel Hempstead town centre below.

Thanks to its diverse locations and historic charm, our borough has continued to attract film crews over the summer. During the peak of July's heatwave, Hemel Hempstead Old Town was transformed into a snowy Christmas scene for an upcoming Sky production.

Other filming projects completed or in the pipeline include the final series of Endeavour, a new drama for Amazon Prime and the second series of BBC comedy The Cleaner, which is being filmed in and around Berkhamsted.

I look forward to seeing Dacorum's many wonderful sights on my tv over the coming months.

Cllr Alan Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Place

Transformation of Hemel Hempstead

Growing a Garden Town that's fit for the future

Hemel Garden Communities: In 1947, renowned landscape architect, Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe, set out his vision for the New Town of Hemel Hempstead, of a 'city in a park', with gardens and green spaces

throughout. 75 years later, the town is being given the chance to grow through the Hemel Garden Communities programme, in a way that's just as visionary as Jellicoe's original plans.

By 2050, the programme aims to create up to 11,000 homes and 10,000 jobs, to the north and east of Hemel Hempstead, establishing new communities, integrated into the wider town, with neighbourhood centres and plenty of green space. A town-wide walking, cycling, and bus network will connect people to shops and local facilities. Community engagement and wider consultation will play a key part in shaping the proposals, alongside the local plan processes for Dacorum Borough Council and St Albans City and District Council.

Through the Hemel Garden Communities programme, the whole town will be transformed, to become more sustainable and innovative. Safe and healthy lifestyles will be a priority, as well as responding to the challenges of climate change, with a focus on four main themes:

- **A Green Network** to help us move around and live in a healthy and sustainable way.
- **Integrated Neighbourhoods** to make our communities safe, walkable, well designed and connected.
- **A Self-Sustaining Economy** to create a vibrant and diverse local jobs market supported by innovative and sustainable industries, with thriving high streets and local centres.
- **Engaged Communities** to ensure local people, their heritage and culture, shape the town's future.

Hemel Hempstead: Where Life is Greener

Alongside the Hemel Garden Communities transformation, we're also launching a major partnership programme for Hemel Hempstead, to plan for an ambitious future and develop new opportunities for business. If you've visited over recent months, you may have noticed the eye-catching banners celebrating Hemel Hempstead as a 'place'.

The town has always been a prime business location. The Maylands Business Park is home to over 650 companies, employing over 20,000 people and there are plans to expand further as part of the Herts Innovation Quarter (Herts IQ) Enterprise Zone. Hemel Hempstead's close proximity to major road links and accessibility to the countryside and London, have put it in an enviable position. It now has the chance to reinvent itself and become a role model for place again, as it was when Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe first devised it.

We'd love to hear your thoughts on the exciting proposals for the transformation of Hemel Hempstead, go to www.hemelgardencommunities.co.uk to fill in the survey and enter the free prize draw to win an electric bike! (Terms and conditions apply).

You can also find out more about plans for the town centre at www.thinkhemel.com

Building strong and vibrant communities

Finding strength in our community

I feel honoured that we were able to commemorate our late Queen's Platinum Jubilee with a series of events around Dacorum including our Party in the Park. I hope we can all reflect on how special a time it was for so many with communities joining together to reflect on a historic reign. We will always remember those times we had.

We were also proud to celebrate Armed Forces Day and welcome the Commonwealth Games Baton Relay to Hemel Hempstead in July. In difficult times it's important to have memories such as this to reflect and remember.

Another event was the official opening of Northbridge Way Basketball Court which was a real collaborative community event and is now a fantastic facility for our residents.

As we go into winter, our communities need support more than ever before. Support is available at www.dacorum.gov.uk or www.helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk

Recent announcements about rising energy prices and inflation will impact many people across Dacorum in the coming months ahead. The resulting consequences may lead to many residents' wellbeing being affected, as their physical and mental health may become less of a priority.

We are working in partnership with Community Action Dacorum and key voluntary and community sector organisations to coordinate a Borough-wide approach to supporting vulnerable residents over the next few years as the cost-of-living crisis continues to bite.

Working in collaboration we will help identify needs and agree solutions in a way that ensures we maximise our joint resources and avoid unnecessary duplication.

We want to ensure that we are all aware of the support available to residents to allow us to signpost more effectively.

I also would like to remind you of our Healthy Hub which is on hand to support with wellbeing, financial support and health advice. Find more information here: www.healthyhubs.org.uk/dacorum

Cllr Julie Banks, Portfolio Holder for Communities

Northridge Way Basketball Court refurbished

Our Northbridge Way Basketball Court is proving popular with players after a major refurbishment.

The court has been transformed with a new all-weather sports surface, new hoops, fencing and a small seating area.

Deputy Mayor Alan Johnson declared the court open in May with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and families were invited to take part in a basketball shoot out with players from Hemel Storm.

We led the project and secured sponsorship from Hemel Hempstead firm Whitton Electrical, based at Maylands.

Cllr Julie Banks, Portfolio Holder for Communities, said: "We are committed to providing access to first-class sporting facilities for our residents and the new refurbished court is proving to be a fantastic space for residents, basketball players and our local clubs. We're really proud to provide a facility of such high standard to our residents and it's a real indication of what can be achieved when the community works together. Thank you to Whitton Electrical for the sponsorship."

Celebrating our community groups

We have once again recognised the borough's most inspirational community projects with our Community Grant awards.

The awards were open to all organisations which received a community grant in 2020-21. Most of the projects focused on helping the community during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions.

Community grants are for all not-for-profit organisations based in Dacorum or working with Dacorum residents and are designed to support community activities and improve the health and wellbeing of residents in Dacorum.

The winners and highly commended organisations this year showed how they were able to deliver both online and in-person projects to positively impact people in Dacorum and to help them maintain good health and wellbeing despite the restrictions of lockdown.

Winners included AgeUK Dacorum, for its project to keep older adults connected during lockdown and when restrictions eased, they worked in partnership to deliver gardening activities. Sunnyside Rural Trust won the Equality and Diversity Award.

Find a full list of the winners on our website and more details of how you can apply for a grant:

www.dacorum.gov.uk/grants

A clean, safe and enjoyable environment

Keeping Dacorum green

Residents took part in our new Refill and Go trails checking in to the businesses on the LoyalFree app and refilling their water bottle to win prizes.

There are over 130 Refill Stations at businesses in Dacorum which offer free drinking water refills, hot drinks (some places offer discounts when using your own cup) and zero-waste shops, along with greengrocers, bakeries and even takeaway food offered in reusable lunch containers.

We also launched a new Zero Waste Map to help residents reduce waste, recycle more and, in many cases, save money.

The map shows where different items can be recycled across the borough including the recycling centres (household waste sites) and neighbourhood recycling sites as well as showing a wealth of second hand shops, charity shops, vintage and antique shops and shops selling upcycled products.

Shopping second-hand supports the circular economy, offers unique items, is often cheaper and is much better for the environment than buying new.

The Zero Waste Map is a great way for residents to find sustainable shopping options, reduce waste and recycle more.

Dacorum residents already recycle over 54 per cent of what's thrown away in our homes and we want to increase that further still. Shopping second-hand and repairing items can save people money and reduces the need to buy new, meaning resources are saved and less is thrown away.

We hope that residents will find this a useful resource.

To support this initiative, we held successful clothes swap events in September and October where residents could bring along their unwanted clothes to swap for something new. The next clothes swap event will be in March so keep an eye on our website for more information.

At the September clothes swap, experts from Open Door's Make and Mend workshops gave free sewing demonstrations to show how simple fixes extend the life of clothes.

I'm delighted that we have continued to fly the Green Flag for our parks and open including the beautiful Water Gardens.

I hope you all have a special Christmas. Please see our website for advice on recycling over the festive time: www.dacorum.gov.uk/recycling

Cllr Graham Barrett Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services

Berkhamsted play area revamped

Canal Fields play area, in Berkhamsted, was reopened in August after a complete refurbishment to improve the play experience for young children.

The transformation has removed the old metal play equipment and replaced it with modern wooden play structures including a castle, train and climbing frames.

It includes a new sand pit and inclusive play equipment, new slides, swings and benches.

The project was funded by contributions from developments in the local area.

Keeping the Green Flag flying

We have retained the Green Flag Award for five of our green spaces. The parks, which have once again been accredited with the international quality mark for parks and green spaces, are:

- Bunkers Park, Hemel Hempstead
- Canal Fields, Berkhamsted
- Chipperfield Common
- Tring Memorial Garden
- Water Gardens, Hemel Hempstead

Cllr Graham Barrett, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, said: "Our parks and green spaces play a vital role for people as a place to relax, exercise and meet friends and family. The news that our parks have retained the Green Flag Award is testament to the hard work and dedication of the team that make the green space a great space that everyone can enjoy.

"The awards wouldn't be possible without collaboration between the council, town and parish councils and the amazing volunteers and community groups, who between them maintain the exceptional high standards in these council-run parks.

To find out more about these award-winning parks, visit our website:

www.dacorum.gov.uk/greenflag

Herts sustainable periods

We are supporting a new scheme tackling period waste, whilst also addressing other issues around women's health and period poverty.

The Herts Sustainable Periods Scheme, developed by Hertfordshire WasteAware and Sustainable Hertfordshire, offers 15 per cent off reusable period products.

The scheme is part of a wider project increasing education around reusable period products across Hertfordshire schools in conjunction with the Women's Environmental Network (WEN) and the Sustainability team at Hertfordshire County Council.

Find more information here www.dacorum.gov.uk/periods

A Royal summer we'll never forget

We are honoured we were able to commemorate the historic occasion of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's 70 years on the throne with our Platinum Party in the Park.

Hundreds of residents enjoyed the free day of music and entertainment culminating in the lighting of the Jubilee beacon and fireworks. Similar events were held around the borough in recognition of the dedicated service of our late monarch Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

As part of our Jubilee events, we planted a tulip tree for the Queen's Green Canopy project. The tree was planted in Reith Fields, behind Queen's Square, Adeyfield as this was where a young Queen Elizabeth visited in 1952.

The plaque-unveiling ceremony on Thursday 2 June was attended by the Mayor of Dacorum, Josephine Connell (OBE) Deputy-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, Reverend Richard Graham from St Barnabas Church, our councillors and members of the community.

In June, we held our first in-person Armed Forces Day event since the COVID-19 outbreak. The free event in Gadebridge Park was an opportunity to show gratitude and appreciation for past, present and future military forces from air, land and sea units.

There were displays from the Misselchalke Gundogs, a falconry show and singing from 1940s duo The Polka Dots.

Find more about our support for the Armed Forces here: www.dacorum.gov.uk/armed-forces

In July, we welcomed the Queen's Baton Relay to Hemel Hempstead as it continued on its journey to the Commonwealth Games host city of Birmingham.

We held a Wellness festival in Gadebridge Park where visitors were able to enjoy free workouts, entertainment and children's activities.

Cllr Julie Banks, Portfolio Holder for Communities, said: "The summer was a special time for so many especially in light of the recent years where events such as these were not possible.

"The Queen's Jubilee celebrations are especially poignant since our monarch's passing. We will always remember the long weekend where we marked the special Platinum Jubilee and be grateful for those times."

Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery

Transforming the way we work

Our transformation programme continues to move at pace, including work on our Customer Strategy. We have engaged customers through a number of focus groups and one-to-one sessions to understand their experiences of using the Council's services. Their feedback will enable us to improve how we work, how we use technology and, crucially, how we engage with our customers. We have also reviewed our complaints process and identified a number of improvements that will benefit our customers, and staff responding to complaints.

I would encourage you to sign up to MyDacorum, and join the 10,000 residents already using this service. MyDacorum is the secure, flexible and personalised way to access your council services. The residents' portal is a user-friendly site that lets you do anything from setting up bin collection reminders to checking or paying your Council Tax to Rent Statements and balances for Housing Tenants (and much more).

To sign up go to www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/mydacorum

We have worked in partnership with Tring Town Council to award grants to Wendover Canal Trust for a canal restoration project.

We have given £135,000 from Dacorum and Tring Town Council has provided £20,000 from its Community Infrastructure Levy neighbourhood fund, towards a project to remove waste from Wendover Canal, which will later enable it to be relined and rewatered.

At the end of each financial year, we are required to produce an annual statement of accounts.

This technical publication includes all the financial statements and disclosures required by law. I am pleased to announce that our draft-audited accounts have been published and draft annual Audit Findings Report issued.

This provides confidence and assurance to all stakeholders that we are a financially well managed organisation. We will shortly publish our annual report for 2021/22 on our website, which provides a summary of our achievements and performance over the year.

Cllr Graeme Elliot, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services

Canal restoration project

We have awarded a grant of £135,000, alongside a grant of £20,000 from Tring Town Council, to Wendover Canal Trust for a canal restoration project. The grants have been matched with a legacy fund from a former resident of Little Tring.

The restoration project includes the removal of 5,500 cubic metres of household waste. This was tipped for 10 years from 1918 to 1928 into the closed canal at Little Tring by the then Tring Urban District Council.

The tip waste consists mainly of ash and stretches for 270 metres. It's one of the final barriers to rewatering the Wendover Canal, and its removal will be a significant milestone. It will also allow the re-opening of the towpath through the area currently containing the waste, avoiding the need for walkers, runners and cyclists to divert down the busy Little Tring Road. For the first time in 100 years, there will be a continuous towpath from the Grand Union Canal to Wendover.

We are pleased to be able to support this excellent canal restoration project, which when completed will bring a range of biodiversity, health and wellbeing and economic benefits to the area.

You can follow the restoration at www.wendovercanal.org.uk

Tring Skate Park refurbished

The skate park in Pound Meadow, Tring was nearing the end of its useable lifespan.

We consulted residents for their ideas and feedback on the proposed skateboarding facilities in Tring, and how it could be made more suitable for users for the years to come. In partnership with Tring Town Council, we officially re-opened Tring Skate Park in September this year, with the Mayor of Dacorum, John Birnie and Cllr Andrew Williams, Leader of the Council unveiling the new facility. Further work is taking place to install lights this year, which will enable the facility to be used in the darker months.

Dacorum Borough Council Committee Meetings

Full Council

All 51 Council Members attend full Council meetings, held around eight times a year. They debate and agree decisions on behalf of local residents.

Cabinet Meetings

The Council's Cabinet has six senior Councillors who make key decisions. The Cabinet's decisions can be 'called in' to be looked at in more detail by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, or may need to be approved by Full Council.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees

These meet regularly to discuss service performance and improvements and to check the decisions made by the Cabinet. They are made up of Council Members from across the political parties and encourage views from local people, community groups and our partner organisations.

- **Strategic Planning and Environment**
- **Housing and Community**
- **Finance and Resources**

Other committee meetings:

Health in Dacorum

Development Management Committee

This committee makes decisions on planning applications.

Licensing (Health and Safety and Enforcement)

Dacorum Community Safety Partnership

Standards Committee

Audit Committee

Meeting agendas are published a week before the meeting date. You can find the most up to date details, agendas, minutes and meeting dates on our website at

www.dacorum.gov.uk/councilmeetings

Climate and ecological emergency

How we're reducing our transport and housing emissions

Cars account for over a third of emissions in Dacorum. Electric vehicles have zero tailpipe emissions, making them better not only for drastically helping to reduce emissions in comparison to regular cars, but for improving our air quality too. From 2030 the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles will be banned. To ensure we are prepared for the switch to electric vehicles, we have published our Electric Vehicle Strategy, visit www.dacorum.gov.uk/electricvehicles

It outlines the role we will play in supporting the uptake of electric vehicles and the implementation of appropriate charging infrastructure throughout Dacorum, ensuring the right facilities are put in the right place. The strategy takes into account funding, evolving technology and industry guidance and best practice, along with other external factors.

Moving forwards, we will be rolling out chargepoints in our Council-owned car parks, supported by commercial investment and Government funding. In addition to this we will be supporting others with home, on-street and workplace charging, as well as the development of rapid charge hubs (similar to petrol stations).

As an organisation we are also planning to transition our own fleet of approximately 100 vehicles to electric. We will begin with our light vehicles (small vans) and explore this in the next few years. Our

heavy and specialist vehicles (such as waste trucks and mowers) make up 40 per cent of our fleet. Due to evolving technologies and markets, the transition for this will be more complicated and so we will be exploring this after 2025.

Another third of the borough's emissions comes from our homes. Installing solar panels and producing renewable electricity will not only reduce your carbon footprint but reduce your energy bills too. In August, we launched Solar Together Hertfordshire along with Hemel Garden Communities.

It is a group-buying scheme, which brings local households together to get high-quality solar panels at a competitive price.

Over 2,000 Dacorum residents applied for quotes through the scheme and I hope many will benefit from producing their own solar energy next year.

For more information on what we are doing to meet our climate and sustainability goals visit www.dacorum.gov.uk/climatechange

Cllr Andrew Williams, Portfolio Holder for Commercial Strategy and Delivery

Green community grants

We awarded over £10,000 last year to projects that support our climate and sustainability goals. Here's a look at a few of the projects:

Wildflowers in Northchurch

Northchurch Parish Council was awarded £1,800 towards establishing wildflower verges. It worked with Sunnyside Rural Trust on the project and also a group of local volunteers, who also helped plant 100 trees along the canal bank near the wildflower verge.

Vegetables growing in Wigginton

The Wigginton 56 Club was awarded £400 with the aim of supporting 10 per cent of families in the village to grow their own fruit and vegetables. It exceeded their target and had 62 families take part. By giving out seeds for easy to grow vegetables, organising seed and plant swaps, and produce sharing stands at the local community shop it helped the village residents to live more sustainably by reducing their food miles, food waste and the amount of packaging used.

Growing wilder in Chaulden

Chaulden Allotment Group was awarded over £1,000 to encourage plot-holders to help improve the local environment for wildlife. Gardeners pledged to grow with wildlife in mind and were encouraged to use less chemicals, add wildlife habitats, plant pollinators and collect rainwater. It also held regular plant sales, BBQs and meet-ups to increase the sense of community and reduce social isolation. The scheme was supported by the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.

Download HEAT to increase your energy savings

Download the Hertfordshire Energy Advice Tool (HEAT) app on your smartphone to get some quick hints and tips on how to save money on your energy bills.

On average householders can make over £75 worth of savings through the app. These savings are most likely to be made from simple, low-cost actions such as washing your clothes at 30 degrees, installing water-saving shower heads and upgrading to A-rated appliances when the time comes.

You can download the app for free from the App Store or Google Play to see how much you could save. Visit www.dacorum.gov.uk/homeenergy to find out more.

Get up to £10,000 worth of free home improvements

With energy prices continuing to rise, you may want to make improvements to your home that will reduce the amount of energy you use and help save money on your bills. Making our homes energy efficient is also a vital step in reducing your household's carbon footprint to help tackle the climate emergency.

We've secured Government funding through the 'Sustainable Warmth' scheme, which can help you get up to £10,000 worth of free improvements to your homes if you meet certain criteria. The grant can be used to pay for insulation, doors and windows, solar panels, air source heat pumps and more.

Find out more on our website www.dacorum.gov.uk/homeenergy

Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need

Dacorum housing matters

Our ambitious new-build programme will deliver much-needed social homes for residents most in need of housing.

Housing is in short supply across Dacorum and creating new council homes is central to addressing the growing pressure on our housing register.

Besides the development of our high-quality new homes that people are proud to live in, we are the first council in Hertfordshire to use purpose-built modular homes at Hampton Close in Hemel Hempstead, which will provide much-needed safe and secure move-on accommodation.

As we work towards meeting the housing needs of Dacorum, it is vital that we also consider the environmental impact of our construction projects. Our modern, energy-efficient homes use the latest low-carbon technology, that reduces both the environmental impact and the amount of money residents need to spend on energy bills.

With many residents being priced out of living in their local areas, it is important that we provide affordable housing options to enable these local communities to continue to thrive.

These two themes of sustainability and affordability for residents will continue throughout our housing development programme.

Our private sector housing team are also working with landlords to maintain high standards for tenants in the private-rented sector, and providing support to property owners to bring empty homes back into use.

The cost of living crisis is one of the biggest challenges facing local authorities in 2022 and affects all of us as the prices of everyday essentials are rising.

We understand that many across Dacorum are struggling to make ends meet and we are here to support you.

Early financial assistance can be an important intervention to prevent households getting to a crisis point where they become homeless, so please don't hesitate to get in touch with us. You may be able to get help with your council tax or your rent and we can also signpost you to other support.

Cllr Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing Services

Modular homes arrive in Hemel Hempstead

We marked the completion of specially designed modular homes to provide secure move-on accommodation for people who have previously experienced homelessness in the local area.

We are the first council in Hertfordshire to make use of the purpose-built SoloHaus provided by The Hill Group.

Management of the homes at Hampton Close in Hemel Hempstead will be through a partnership arrangement with DENS to support our residents to realise their aspirations for housing, skills development, employment and education.

The homes are specially designed, fully furnished and equipped for a single person to move straight into. Each modular home provides a sleek independent space and a safe, comfortable environment. The homes, which are built to last for at least 60 years, are highly energy efficient to keep costs low and are designed to Future Homes Standards, which exceeds building regulations for energy efficiency and sound insulation.

One of the turnkey homes has been gifted by The Hill Group, with the other seven funded by ourselves and a Government grant. We also received support from BPM Project Management Ltd and Arcus Consulting on the project.

SoloHaus was developed as the housing solution to Hill's Foundation 200, a £15million pledge to design, manufacture and donate 200 modular homes to local authorities and charities. At the time of going to print, 150 SoloHaus homes have been handed over to local authorities in the fight against homelessness.

For further information or support with concerns about housing, please visit www.dacorum.gov.uk/housing-advice

First residents move into Coniston Road

We celebrated the opening of 10 new council homes in Coniston Road, Kings Langley with residents and Bugler Developments in September.

The homes are a mix of two and three-bedroom energy efficient houses, featuring solar panels and increased insulation above current building regulation requirements. In addition, each home has an electric vehicle charging point and private parking space.

These are the first new council homes to be built in Kings Langley since the early 1980s.

News for tenants and leaseholders

Housing team here to help

We understand that money is more of a worry this winter. Many of our tenants are facing financial difficulties for the first time.

If you're worried about paying your rent, please speak to our Income Team who are here to support residents and can ensure you're getting all the financial help you're entitled to.

There is a range of support being offered by organisations in Dacorum.

Find more information on our website www.dacorum.gov.uk/cost-of-living

Direct Debit

Paying your rent by Direct Debit is the most efficient way for you to pay your rent. You can now choose from three different payment dates throughout the month (1st, 10th and 21st). We take four weeks rent by Direct Debit each month (this takes account of the rent-free weeks each year). To set up a Direct Debit you will need to be a named account holder of the account you want to use or the only person needed to authorise a Direct Debit on that account.

Rent-free weeks

If you pay your rent weekly the rent-free weeks over the Christmas period are the week beginning Monday 19 December and Monday 26 December.

For more information visit www.dacorum.gov.uk/rent. Or you can speak to your Housing Income Team by calling 01442 228000 and asking for an Officer by name (if you know it) or by asking for 'Housing Rent'.

Fire safety in your home

As a landlord we are responsible for providing you with working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.

As a tenant you are responsible for regularly testing the alarms to ensure they are working properly.

If an alarm within your property is not working, been removed or out of battery please contact the council immediately on: 0800 018 6050 or compliance@dacorum.gov.uk

Setting out our housing vision

We believe that everyone living in Dacorum should have access to a safe, affordable home that meets their needs and where they feel supported and empowered to speak up and have their voice heard.

Dacorum's next Housing Strategy will set out a clear vision for our own stock and provision of affordable housing in the borough, including long-term objectives and targets to be achieved.

We will continue to build our own homes at social rent for households most in need, as well as working closely with our housing partners to deliver truly affordable homes for local people.

A full definition of affordable housing is on the Government website, search for 'affordable housing'.

How can you help?

We want local residents to help us develop our next Housing Strategy:

- What should 'affordable housing' mean for Dacorum?
- How could affordable housing enhance our existing estates?
- How could local people get more involved in shaping their neighbourhoods?

To take part and tell us what you think, please complete our survey before 16 December 2022.

Find out more at www.dacorum.gov.uk/housing-strategyconsultation

Investing in our housing for older people

We have recently carried out planned improvement works at our supported schemes.

Climate Change is the greatest battle we face. We are looking to reduce our emissions wherever possible and moving away from our reliance on gas is a key part of this journey. It is crucial that we are willing to embrace new technologies and we are already installing renewable heating systems

where feasible and have recently upgraded heating systems at two supported housing schemes in Tring, Emma Rothchild Court and Pond Close.

The communal gas boilers that provided heat and hot water to the schemes needed replacing, but instead of replicating the existing system 'like for like', we decided to introduce renewable heating technologies.

We now have communal air source heat pumps and Solar PV panels providing energy for the schemes, which will significantly reduce our carbon footprint and contribute towards our long-term carbon zero ambitions. The renewable heating system should also decrease the amount of energy required that will in turn lower the running costs.

The safety of our tenants and leaseholders is a top priority and we are committed to improving fire safety across our stock.

Betty Patterson House was recently refurbished with all flat entrance doors, communal doors and emergency lighting being upgraded to current industry standard. This significantly improved the fire integrity of the building and allows tenants to stay safe in their homes in the event of a fire.

In addition the communal areas were painted and the carpets were replaced meaning the scheme is looking brighter, as well as safer.

Tenants were treated to a fish and chip supper to say thank you for being so considerate whilst we carried out essential fire safety works.

The next schemes that will be upgraded are Elizabeth House and Christopher Court and works have already started.

STAR survey

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete our STAR satisfaction survey earlier this year.

We received 1,363 responses, and we will use the feedback from the survey to improve our services. We will also be contacting the winners of the prize draw - good luck to everyone that took part.

Find out more about how to get involved www.dacorum.gov.uk/get-involved

Successful funding bid helps support rough sleepers

Following on from a successful bid to the Government's Rough Sleeper Initiative Fund we have been awarded funding to continue our Street Outreach presence for the next three years.

This project will be mobilised from September onwards and the service will be run by DENS. The length of this funding will enhance the rough sleeper pathway and further support Dacorum's aim to end rough sleeping in the area. The service has two dedicated Street Outreach workers who provide support to rough sleepers in the area and bring them in off the street and into accommodation.

If you spot someone sleeping rough or know of someone who is, please email the outreach team on Outreach@dens.org.uk or complete a referral via Streetlink website www.streetlink.org.uk

If you or someone you care about is homeless or at risk of homelessness and needs advice or support, help can be accessed here: www.dacorum.gov.uk/homeless-or-at-risk (01442) 228000 during working hours (8.45am-5.15pm Monday to Thursday and 8.45am-4.45pm Friday) or 0800 018 6050 out of office hours.

Cost of living support

Local

Dacorum Borough Council

You can find more information on where to get cost of living support on our website, which will be regularly updated.

www.dacorum.gov.uk/cost-of-living

Age UK Dacorum

Working across Dacorum to improve the quality of life for older people.

01442 259049

office@dacorumfoodbank.org.uk

www.ageuk.org.uk/dacorum

Citizens Advice Dacorum

Offers information and support online and in person.

0800 144 8848

www.dacorumcab.org.uk

Dacorum Community Trust

An independent charity that provide a range of practical support, including beds, cookers, fridges, children's equipment, bedding and kitchen starter packs and emergency energy vouchers.

01442 253216

www.dctrust.org.uk

Dacorum First Credit Union

Provide people who live or work in Dacorum with a simple and affordable way to save and borrow money.

office@dacorumfirst.co.uk

www.dacorumfirst.co.uk

0300 123 4044

Dacorum Foodbank

The Dacorum Food Bank, run by DENS, is part of a nationwide network of food banks, supported by The Trussell Trust, working to combat poverty and hunger across the UK.

01442 250969

www.dacorum.foodbank.org.uk

Dacorum Healthy Hub

Free information, advice and support to help you stay healthy and well.

www.healthyhubs.org.uk

Hemel Hempstead Community Fridge

On Wednesdays and Saturdays at Highfield Community Centre you can get good surplus food for free or donate food you know you won't eat.

www.foodbevg.com/GB/Hemel-Hempstead/105769418101045/Hemel-Hempstead-Community-Fridge

Highfield Community Centre,

Fletcher Way, Hemel Hempstead

HP2 5SB

Opening hours:

Wednesday 11am - 12pm

Saturday 11am - 12pm

Countywide

Hertfordshire County Council

Find sources of advice and practical help to manage finances and make savings while also helping the environment.

0300 123 4040

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/aboutthe-council/news/news-archive/help-to-manage-the-cost-of-living

HertsHelp

Trained friendly advisors are on hand to offer confidential assistance and can put you in touch with helpful services and support locally.

info@hertshelp.net

www.hertshelp.net

0300 123 4044

Families First

Local advice and practical help to manage finances and make savings.

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/families-first/newsand-campaigns/cost-of-living.aspx

Hertfordshire Growth Hub

Hertfordshire Growth Hub is Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's flagship business support service integrating national and local business support. Hertfordshire Growth Hub's website provides your business with immediate access to advice, resources and events at a time and place of your choosing.

enquiries@hertsgrowthhub.com

www.hertsgrowthhub.com

01707 398168

National

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

0345 6060 265

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-forwork-pensions

Help for Households

The Government's Help for Households website gives you access to more than 40 different Government schemes available to help with the cost of living, including new one-off payments as well as existing benefits and schemes.

<https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/>

Mind

For information and support about mental health services.

0300 123 3393

info@mind.org.uk

www.mind.org.uk

Your bin collections for 2022/2023

To check when your bins are collected go to www.dacorum.gov.uk/mybins and enter your postcode. From here you can check your upcoming collections, download your own personalised calendar as a PDF to keep on your digital device or print off a copy.

If you require a physical copy please email recycle@dacorum.gov.uk or call 01442 228000 and ask for 'waste services' and your personalised calendar can be sent to you in the post.

The garden waste collection is suspended over winter and will begin again between 27 February and 10 March 2023.

See website for information www.dacorum.gov.uk/mybins.

Our Christmas Tree recycling day will be on Sunday 8 January 2023.