

Dacorum Life residents' magazine – Winter 2023

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Hello

Welcome to Dacorum Life magazine, with news and updates from Dacorum Borough Council.

For regular news updates, sign up to our Dacorum Life email. It's quick and easy to sign up here www.dacorum.gov.uk/dacorum-life.

You can follow us on social media. Find more details on our website: www.dacorum.gov.uk/social-media.

Dacorum Life editorial: communications@dacorum.gov.uk.

General enquiries (Customer Services): 01442 228000.

Council offices: The Forum, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead HP1 1DN.

You can apply, pay, report and contact us on our website for a range of services:
www.dacorum.gov.uk.

Alternative formats are available: audio and large print.

Dacorum Life is going digital

Our biannual residents' magazine has moved online. Previously delivered to every household, printed copies are now available to pick up from Council customer access points and community locations throughout the borough.

This will substantially reduce our carbon footprint by decreasing printing and distribution, supporting our climate and ecological aims and objectives.

To ensure you don't miss out on Council news and services, and vital information such as your bin collection days, please sign up to receive our weekly e-newsletter, Dacorum Life (digital).

Sign-up now by registering your email address at www.dacorum.gov.uk/dacorum-life.

Welcome

We've been listening to our residents and giving opportunities for you to have your say whether it's on parking charges or the Local Plan.

Welcome to the winter edition of Dacorum Life.

It's been more than six months since I became Leader of the Council and as a new administration we have been consulting with our residents and creating new opportunities for Dacorum.

I'm pleased to announce the Council, in partnership with West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and the NHS Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB), is exploring the future viability of an Integrated Health Campus at Market Square in Hemel Hempstead.

The decision follows initial exploration work, which has highlighted the advantages to the healthcare offer for local people and the wider regeneration of the town centre.

This is very early days and a full study will be commissioned to develop detailed proposals for this potential campus.

The evidence gathered so far suggests that the Market Square site has several advantages. It is in an accessible location, in the heart of the town centre and the Council owns the land. Additionally, it provides a focal point as part of our wider ambitions for the transformation of the town centre. We believe that this would be an exciting and highly beneficial development for the town and wider borough.

We recently held a consultation into our borough parking charges and would like to thank those residents who took part and had their say. We will now be reviewing the results of the consultation and taking into consideration your views with more details to follow next year.

I'm also pleased that our Electric Vehicle Charging rollout across 18 car parks has gathered pace. Once all of the new EVCPs are in place as part of the installation programme, Dacorum will become the borough or district with the highest number of these in Hertfordshire, and will also move into the top 20 per cent nationally.

We strive to improve the environment of the borough for our residents. We're delighted to be working in partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association to invest in and refurbish two public park tennis courts in Hemel Hempstead.

We hope all our residents keep well this winter. Wishing everyone a safe, peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Cllr Ron Tindall, Leader of the Council

Our priorities 2020-2025

- Ensuring economic growth and prosperity
- Building strong and vibrant communities
- A clean, safe and enjoyable environment
- Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery
- Climate and ecological emergency
- Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need

News

Christmas Tree recycling

Once the festivities are over, bring along your real Christmas trees to one of our Christmas tree chipping points on Sunday 7 January 2024 so it can be turned into plant bedding:

- Berkhamsted: Canal Fields car park (over the canal behind Waitrose), HP4 2AL, 8am – 3pm
- Hemel Hempstead: Dacorum Borough Council, Cupid Green Depot, HP2 7BA 8am – 3pm
- Tring: Tring Garden Centre, HP23 5HF (drop-off only) 10.30am – 4.30pm

We will be offering bags of tree chippings that you can use in the garden. Any unclaimed chippings will be made into compost.

Trees can also be taken to your local recycling centre. Trees improperly disposed of will be treated as fly-tipping and you could be prosecuted.

For more information on recycling centres, including locations, opening times and accepted materials, visit: www.dacorum.gov.uk/recyclingcentres

Garden recycling

Our garden waste collection is an opt-in paid subscription service. If you wish to receive fortnightly green-lidded bin collections you will need to subscribe and pay an annual fee.

Subscriptions for the 2024 season (starting in March and ending in November) will open in March.

On-demand bus service for rural areas

HertsLynx, Hertfordshire's on-demand bus service, is launching a new service in Dacorum from December which will operate a flexible, bookable transport provision for residents in rural areas.

The HertsLynx service does not follow fixed routes or timetables, instead passengers will be able to use the service to travel anywhere within the operating zone paying a single fare of £2 or free travel for concessions.

Journeys can be booked through the HertsLynx app, online at <https://bookings.hertsllynx.co.uk/login> or over the phone on 01992 555513, up to 30 days in advance or for the same day, depending on availability.

Improving walking and cycling routes in Dacorum

We are working to improve cycling and walking networks across the borough and will be holding a consultation so you can help shape the plans.

With Hertfordshire County Council, we are forming a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), with the aim of enabling a long-term approach to improving networks in the district for cyclists and pedestrians.

The plan forms a vital part of national and local government strategy to increase the number of trips made on foot or by bike. It will set out preferred routes for development and a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for investment.

The first public consultation will take place in early 2024 and it's important we hear from you so the plan represents what you need.

Sheron Wilkie, Portfolio Holder for Place, said: "We have a beautiful district to explore by bike or on foot, and by having a joined up plan in place, we can attract the investment needed to fund vital investment. We would welcome input from our residents to ensure that this plan meets their needs."

To find out more please visit www.dacorum.gov.uk/walkingandcycling or email dacorum.LCWIP@hertfordshire.gov.uk

New Hemel Hempstead Crematorium

Hemel Hempstead has a new Crematorium, located next to Bunkers Park, at Bedmond Road. The chapel, which overlooks a tranquil reflection pond, can seat up to 140 people and sits within extensive grounds next to our Poppy Fields cemetery.

The new site will allow for enhanced quality of service by offering longer service times, ensuring that residents can say goodbye to their loved ones in a more personalised way. It will also provide a complementary service to the Garston site, increasing the choice available to residents and reducing waiting times in peak periods.

For more information, please visit the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee website: www.westhertscrem.org

Shaping Dacorum's future

We've been asking you to have your say on the future of the borough – and to decide the plan and direction for Dacorum for the next 16 years.

Thank you to all our residents and businesses who have been taking part in the consultation. The Local Plan will lay out the strategy for delivering new homes, jobs and investment across the borough; it will plan for important infrastructure such as schools, transport and health facilities; and will also set our approach to protecting and providing parks and green spaces, and the way in which we respond to the challenges of climate change. It will also provide the policies to be considered when decisions are made on planning applications.

We will be considering all of your feedback and preparing a summary Consultation Report for spring 2024. A pre-submission version of the Local Plan will be published in October 2024, in time for formal submission by mid 2025.

Find out more: www.dacorum.gov.uk/new-single-local-plan

Ensuring economic growth and prosperity

Shaping the future of Dacorum

We've been carrying out the consultation into our revised draft Local Plan. From the responses we can see how important it is for you to have your say on the future of the borough for the next 16 years.

The borough is already a great place to live and raise a family, and a proven perfect location for national and international business. The Local Plan consultation has been about you and about making sure that Dacorum continues to become an even better place to live and grow up, as well as thriving as a hub for business and industry.

The Local Plan will lay out the strategy for delivering new homes, jobs and investment across the borough; it will plan for important infrastructure such as schools, transport and health facilities; and will also set our approach to protecting and providing parks and green spaces, and the way in which we respond to the challenges of climate change. It will also provide the policies to be considered when decisions are made on planning applications.

Your previous feedback has already led to changes in our Revised Strategy for Growth. You said the proposed level of homes across the borough was disproportionate for our smaller towns and villages, so we have reduced the number of homes proposed at Berkhamsted, Tring, and our villages. We've focused on transforming Dacorum's largest and most sustainable town, Hemel Hempstead, by delivering new growth and infrastructure via the Hemel Garden Communities programme.

We will be considering all of your feedback and preparing a summary Consultation Report for spring 2024. A pre-submission version of the Local Plan will be published in October 2024, for formal submission by mid 2025.

I'm delighted that we've secured £190k to support the Hemel Garden Communities Programme, a joint initiative between us, St Albans City and District Council and Herts County Council which will transform Hemel Hempstead and bring new homes, jobs and community facilities to the area.

Part of the funding will be used to develop our programme of active and sustainable travel ensuring we are maximising all opportunities in the borough for the benefits of our residents.

Next year, you can have your say on a new Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The first public consultation will take place in early 2024 so please get involved to make sure these plans represent your needs.

Making it safer and easier to cycle and walk in the borough is a priority. We've recently refurbished the Grand Union canal towpath between Nash Mills, Hemel Hempstead and Kings Langley. It's now easier to walk or cycle on, particularly in the winter months.

Cllr Sheron Wilkie, Portfolio Holder for Place.

Celebrating the newly refurbished towpath along the Grand Union canal

Hemel Garden Communities recently welcomed our councillors, plus other funding partners to see the new refurbished Grand Union canal towpath between Nash Mills, Hemel Hempstead and Kings Langley.

The works involved resurfacing an 800-metre area of the towpath between Nash Mills and Apsley and the River Gade lakes, north of Kings Langley. Bushes and trees which were encroaching onto the path were also cutback, which makes it easier for people to pass each

other. The new surface is much more suitable for walking and cycling in all weather, meaning the path can be used all year round.

Hemel Garden Communities contributed to the project after receiving funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, as part of the Garden Communities Programme.

We've delivered the improvements in partnership with Three Rivers District Council and Nash Mills and Kings Langley Parish Councils, who have all contributed financially, with the support of Hertfordshire County Council and the Canal and River Trust. It was also part funded by contributions from developments in the local area.

The new towpath also got the seal of approval from Roy Unwin, a canal boat owner who regularly travels through Hemel Hempstead. "The towpath used to get really muddy along this stretch, the resurfacing work has transformed it. I've seen a lot more people using the path for walking and cycling now – it's a job well done!" he said.

For more information about Hemel Garden Communities, please visit www.hemelgardencommunities.co.uk.

Dacorum's Den winning businesses

Ten budding entrepreneurs were awarded up to £2,000 to support their business growth after they pitched their ideas to a team of Dacorum's Den judges.

The panel of judges, led by Sir Mike Penning MP, awarded a total of £13,500 to grant fund a range of business ideas that included coaching, an independent beer and cider shop, florist, corporate team building and a cryotherapy service.

As well as the financial support, the winners will also receive six months free business support coaching provided by a local supplier, ActionCoach.

Now in its tenth anniversary year Dacorum's Den has awarded over £100,000 to 80 local businesses supporting business growth and creating additional jobs in the borough.

The event sponsors formed the panel of judges including Robert Wilson, Head of Property & Facilities at Sopra Steria, David Spratt, Head of Sales Business Systems at Epson (UK) Ltd, Sarah Rutt Director at Beeches Group, and Martin Fieldman, Managing Director at Abodebed.

To find out more about the 2023 Dacorum's Den winners visit: www.dacorum.gov.uk/dacorumsden

If you run a Dacorum business and would like to get involved with sponsorship, please email our Economic Development Team at business@dacorum.gov.uk

Sign up to our Business Update Newsletter to keep updated on the 2024 scheme. www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/business/business-services

Building strong and vibrant communities

Communities support our free family events

As we approach the busy festive period, it seems a great time to pause and reflect on all the work and initiatives taking place in my Portfolio since my last update.

Over the last few months we have hosted several events, all of which have been fantastically supported by our local community. Over the summer, we supported a number of free and low cost activities to help keep families entertained during the school holidays.

One of my personal highlights was the pop-up velodrome (pictured right). This was a free event, for all the family, in Market Square, Hemel Hempstead and was very popular with keen cyclists.

In the autumn we held our hugely popular Old Town Halloween Party. It was lovely to see so many residents getting involved and making such an effort with their amazing costumes. We had a fancy dress competition for all ages, craft and community stalls and children's activities. Thank you to all those who came along and made it such a success.

In November, we held our Remembrance Sunday Parade. Despite the rain, you came out in great numbers to support the event and to honour our armed forces. Events like this really bring our community together and we are grateful for all your support.

Our diverse range of urban and rural locations has continued to attract prestigious film and TV productions to Dacorum. Filming provides a valuable boost to our local economy – and helps to create a great buzz about our borough.

If you'd like to be part of the Dacorum filming experience why not sign up to our locations database. Your house or business location could be featured in the next big production!

We are looking forward to 2024 and putting on more events for our community. Do follow us on social media to find out all the latest on the exciting events planned for the coming year.

Cllr Carole Weston, Portfolio Holder for People and Transformation

Old Town Halloween Party

On Sunday 29 October, we hosted our Old Town Halloween Party. It was great to see so many of our community supporting the event.

There were some fantastic Halloween costumes - making selecting the winners of the fancy dress competition a very difficult task for our judges, the Mayor and Mayoress of Dacorum and Cllr Victoria Santamaria.

The diverse range of craft and food stalls, together with activities including face painting and fairground rides, helped to keep everyone entertained.

We would like to thank our partners, Community Action Dacorum, Hemel Old Town Market, Hemel Old Town Traders Association and The Old Town Hall for helping to make the event a success.

View the event images on our website: www.dacorum.gov.uk/halloween-party

Remembrance Sunday Parade

It was wonderful to see so many of the community coming together to support our annual Remembrance Sunday Parade, held in Hemel Hempstead town centre, followed by an outdoor service at Boxmoor War Memorial. The service on Sunday 12 November paid tribute to the service and sacrifice of our armed forces.

Filming in Dacorum

Over the last few months we've worked alongside Disney+, ITV, BBC, and 'Marmalade Productions'. The third popular children's Paddington Bear film called 'Paddington in Peru', is set for release November 2024, so do look out for some familiar locations!

We've also welcomed filming back to the Old Town High Street in Hemel recently for another series of BBC Comedy 'Mandy', and upcoming Disney+ series 'Beaumont', which follows the lives of a number of characters growing up in Belfast in the 1970s, 80s and 90s.

Keep an eye on our social media pages, as once the productions are released we will be sharing some more 'behind the scenes'.

A clean, safe and enjoyable environment

Community making us greener

We have a fantastic community in Dacorum, working to support us in making the borough beautiful.

I'd like to thank our teams of volunteers who make our community brighter. The Friends of the Jellicoe Water Gardens are a brilliant example, who organise weekly work in their dedicated area of the Water Gardens. They also help our staff in the main gardens too!

The volunteers grow vegetables, which they give to The Liberty Tea Rooms in Bank Court, who turn the fruit and veg into delicious dishes. Find out more about this wonderful team: www.dacorum.gov.uk/watergardens

We now also have over 1,300 Street Champion volunteers registered across the borough, collecting hundreds of bags of litter each month from our streets and parks. Thank you for all your efforts.

Thanks to our volunteers and dedicated staff, we have once again retained Green Flag awards for five of our parks and open spaces. These awards are a tribute to all who work tirelessly so that residents and visitors can relax and enjoy these places.

Our Parks and Open Spaces team have machine-planted 64,000 daffodil bulbs in Coronation Fields. What a beautiful display that will be in the spring!

I'm also delighted that the next generation of Dacorum is getting involved in protecting our local environment.

We run competitions throughout the year to involve children in positive behaviours. In June, we ran a 'Worm Spectacular' Competition open to all schools, where children designed artwork highlighting the importance of composting. The winner was

Sophie, nine, from Hobbs Hill Primary who won a wormery and a copy of 'Darwin's Super Pooping Worm Spectacular' book for her school, written by local author Polly Owen. Composting is a way of working in harmony with a natural ecosystem and it's wonderful that Dacorum children have been learning about this.

In October, we hosted the 'Big Recycling Hunt' with Hemel Hempstead BID in the Marlowes shopping centre to mark the start of Recycle Week. Schools and youth groups made sculptures and artwork out of rubbish and recycling to highlight the need to reuse our rubbish.

In September, we held our first ever baby clothes swaps for parents to exchange their child's outgrown baby clothes for bigger sizes with no cost to them. We hosted this event to save parents money and reduce the impacts of the children's fast fashion industry – babies can outgrow seven clothing sizes in two years! There were 41 attendees, 683 items of baby clothes were brought and 234 were taken away.

Cllr Robin Bromham, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Operations.

Big Recycling Hunt

Schools and youth groups took part in our Big Recycle Hunt exhibition, designing artwork of local endangered species out of recycling and rubbish. The exhibition was held at the Marlowes in partnership with Hemel Hempstead BID in October to mark Recycle Week.

We were joined by several local organisations who ran activities and crafts, including Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, Anna's Funky Art, Frogmore Papermill, Nysa Projects and Imajica Theatre. We would like to say a big 'thank you' to these organisations who kindly contributed their time and resources to make the event such a success.

The winning sculptures created by South Hill Primary School, Second Chaulden Guides and Westbrook Hay Prep School were chosen by a panel of judges according to their use of materials, locality of the species and the resemblance to the animal.

A 'Community Choice' award was given to Potten End Primary whose sculpture received the most engagement on our Facebook channel. Each of the winning schools and youth groups have been presented with a recycling or biodiversity-themed experience day for their children to learn more about the topics.

Planting seeds for the future

In October, the Parks and Open Spaces team, in partnership with the Natural History Museum, organised a day of preparing and planting wildflower seeds, wildflower turf and bug hunting for Goldfield Infant and Nursery School students. Planting took place in Miswell Lane Park and was undertaken by 20 students and teachers with a helping hand from our parks team.

Wildflowers provide essential homes and food sources for pollinators such as bees, butterflies and other insects, which in turn are crucial for supporting larger wildlife populations that depend on them, such as birds and mammals.

To learn more about what we are doing to support biodiversity in the borough, visit: www.dacorum.gov.uk/biodiversity

Christmas food waste

'Tis the season to be jolly, but it's also the season when our food waste caddies are overflowing. Each festive season, UK households throw away on average 710,000 tonnes of potatoes and 100,000 tonnes of turkey or chicken meat, with the majority of this still being perfectly edible.

Research shows that if a household reduces its edible food waste it can save up to £720 per year. In fact, a staggering 24 per cent of the waste in Dacorum household rubbish bins is edible food - that's four trolleys worth of food each year!

Follow the four steps to save; PLAN your meals, SHOP responsibly by sticking to a shopping list, STORE in the best way and freeze any leftovers, EAT what you have by using a portion planner and cooking up tasty meals using leftovers.

For more festive food waste tips and an opportunity to win a meal out on us, visit www.wasteaware.org.uk/worthsaving.

Summary of 2022-2023 financial year

Ensuring economic growth and prosperity

- Developed a Mitigation Strategy with our partners, to help protect Ashridge Commons and Woods, and manage future growth.
- Eight budding entrepreneurs were awarded up to £2,500 for their businesses as part of our Dacorum's Den business grant scheme.
- Continued to develop our new Local Plan to deliver new homes and jobs in the borough.

- Upgraded the Nickey Line in Hemel Hempstead, to provide a better surface and improved safety for active travel users.

We invested £37.08m on the following assets:

- £34.57 million on Housing
- £960,000 on Culture
- £880,000 on Environmental Services
- £550,000 on Central and Democratic Services
- £60,000 on Parking
- £60,000 on Planning and Development

We spent:

- £64.82 million on council housing funded by rents and service charges.
- £37.34m on Housing Benefits
- £14.52m on Environmental Services
- £8.91m on Cultural Services
- £8.14m on Planning and Development
- £6.99m on Central and Democratic Services
- £1.83m on payments to the Local Enterprise Partnership
- £1.74m on Investment Properties
- £1.65m on Parking and Transport
- £1.01m on Precepts to Parish Councils
- £800,000 on Financing
- £350,000 on contributions to Capital

Every £1 of your Council Tax is shared in the following way:

- Hertfordshire County Council – 78p
- Dacorum Borough Council – 11p
- The Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire – 11p

Climate and ecological emergency - working to deliver net zero carbon

- Agreed a Climate Emergency Strategy to reach net zero emissions as an organisation by 2030.
- Secured over £400,000 of Government funding to support installation of 104 EV charge points across 18 public car parks.
- Held our second Climate Action Network (CAN) conference to look at how we can collectively take actions to tackle the Climate Emergency.
- Delivered Solar Bulk Buy Scheme, to help residents and businesses reduce their carbon footprint.

Building strong and vibrant communities

- Created a Covid-19 Memorial Garden in Gadebridge Park to remember those who lost their lives during the pandemic.
- Hosted a series of community events, including the Commonwealth Games Baton Relay and Queen's Platinum Jubilee weekend.
- Boosted the local economy through filming in the borough, including Sky film This is Christmas and BBC comedy The Cleaner.
- Awarded Gold in RSPCA Annual PawPrints Awards, in recognition of our good practice in relation to animal welfare.

- Our Old Town Hall hosted 153 performances and sold 7,572 seats.

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

- Delivered 10 new council homes in Coniston Row, Kings Langley for social rent.
- Completed eight new modular homes in Hemel Hempstead, as follow-on accommodation for people who have previously experienced homelessness in the local area.
- Successfully bid for Rough Sleeper Initiative funding, enabling us to deliver initiatives to help eradicate rough sleeping and homelessness in the borough.
- Awarded £850,000 from the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, to help fund works to improve the energy efficiency of 75 older council homes.

A clean, safe and enjoyable environment

- Refurbished the play area at Canal Fields, Berkhamsted with new equipment.
- Five parks retained their Green Flag status.
- Completed restoration works to Hemel Hempstead War Memorial.
- Carried out a spring clean of the A41, collecting five tonnes of litter and a further 69 tonnes of rubbish/debris from the road.
- Continued to increase our recycling rates, working towards a target of 65% by 2035
- Celebrated reaching over 1,000 Street Champions volunteers, who help to improve their area through litter picking and reporting issues.

Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery

The Council is committed to providing first class front-line services and we are constantly reviewing how we can continue to provide you with the best service.

We recently held a consultation into our borough parking charges and are pleased that some residents took part and had their say.

While we continue to work hard to become even more efficient and reduce running costs where possible, we also need to take decisions on increases to charges and fees, to ensure we can continue to balance our budgets and provide essential and discretionary services to our residents.

The set of proposals regarding parking fees and charges has been carefully considered to ensure they are fair and proportionate. They will allow us to continue to offer competitive pricing locally for parking and visits to our town and neighbourhood centres. The Council's proposed parking charges are thus significantly lower than public sector averages, and local private sector parking charges.

The Council has spent a lot of time reviewing all our fees and charges and planning how we will deliver a balanced budget for the next financial year 2024-25.

We are currently holding a consultation to ask you to give us your feedback on priorities for spend in the coming year. The consultation is open from 11 December to 17 January. You can find all the details on our website at: www.dacorum.gov.uk/consultation-feedback/current-consultation

Having your say is crucial to local democracy

The Police and Crime Commissioner election will be held on 2 May 2024. If you are not registered to vote you can apply on the Government website: www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

You now need photo ID to vote in a polling station. If you don't have photo ID, you can apply for a free voter authority certificate at: www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate

Changes have been made to postal and proxy voting. You can apply for a postal vote by completing an online application form on the Government website or paper forms can be requested from our Electoral Services team. Under the new rules for proxy voting you can only act as a proxy for a maximum of two people. Anyone acting as a proxy voter for people living overseas may vote for a maximum of four people.

Find all the latest information on the changes on our website: www.dacorum.gov.uk/postal-proxy-voting

Cllr Ron Tindall, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Commercial Services.

Tennis courts set for revamp

We're working in partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association to invest in and refurbish two public park tennis courts in Hemel Hempstead.

Alongside the investment, we'll also work with the LTA to deliver a range of activity across the park sites. This will include weekly organised free park tennis sessions for all ages, playing levels and experience where equipment is provided, meaning that people will not need someone to play with or their own racket. Local Tennis Leagues will also provide friendly, sociable, opportunities to get active through local competition.

The park venues being renovated are Reith Fields in Adeyfield and Coronation Fields in Bennetts End, whilst tennis courts at Cupid Green Playing Fields will also have new gate-access technology, making it far easier to find and book a court or activity.

Refurbishment works started on site in early November at Reith Fields, work at Coronation Fields will begin in January 2024. Both sites will be completed and ready for spring 2024.

Festive opening hours

The Forum and our Customer Service phone lines will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. 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

Our cemeteries in Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring are open throughout Christmas and the New Year (our office will be closed on 25, 26 December and 1 January). Winter opening hours (until February) are: Monday to Friday: 8am to 4.30pm. Sundays and Bank Holidays: 9am to 4.30pm. For further details email cemeteries@dacorum.gov.uk.

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

Choosing a greener future

We will soon be entering a new year and 2024 is a year we can all commit to making small changes to make a difference.

Every small change you make is multiplied by your neighbours, across this borough, over the UK and throughout the World. It has an impact in China (mass manufacturing), Nepal (glaciers), Bangladesh and Norfolk (lowland flood plains), the Sahara, the Amazon, the Arctic and Antarctic – raising the sea level.

By re-inventing our borough for self-preservation, we can choose "Climate Generation" instead of Climate Emergency.

So far the new Council has identified £1.5 million of savings, driven by the mantra to "reduce, repair, re-use, recycle".

We are trying to establish the habit of thinking through what needs to be done and when best to do it, optimising work to use less energy, finding ways to invest in reducing wasted energy and ways to add capacity to renewables generation in our towns, villages and sensibly in green spaces.

We're installing Electric Vehicle Charging Points across the borough with the first of a new batch going live in Tring. This happened earlier than expected and I'm delighted that we are installing modern infrastructure across Dacorum, helping residents, shoppers and other visitors to be confident in leaving behind vehicles which require outdated fossil fuels.

We're working towards making our borough net-zero by 2050.

We can do this much, much better, if you play a big part in this way of thinking.

What you can do:

1. Sign up to Dacorum CAN: www.dacorum.gov.uk/dacorumcan
2. Become a Street Champion: www.dacorum.gov.uk/street-champions
3. There are many ways you can check your Carbon Footprint – <https://climatehero.typeform.com/dacorum-borough>
4. Share your Climate Generation progress story; send your story and your ideas to climate.action@dacorum.gov.uk – Every step counts!
5. Reduce energy use in your home – The National Energy Foundation provide free advice on 0800 107 0044.

The aim of “Climate Generation” is to bring a can-do attitude and a better alternative to Climate Emergency. It brings new energy to Dacorum: renewable power generation, but also a dawning realisation that we must generate a better future.

New Electric Vehicle Charging Points

Dacorum forges ahead as new Electric Vehicle Charging Points go live across the borough.

The first of a new batch of Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) for Dacorum were installed in the Forge Car Park, Tring in October.

A range of different EVCPs - from fast to ultra-rapid are on the way at many other sites in Dacorum.

We were awarded over £400,000 of government funding to install these charge points, making it easier for those with electric vehicles to charge and to encourage those who don't to make the switch. We are working towards making Dacorum net-zero by 2050.

Understanding the air we breathe

As part of our plan to improve air quality in the borough, the Environmental and Community Protection team have installed a number of air quality monitors to help us understand where we need to reduce pollution from road traffic.

We have also been working with Hertfordshire County Council to install an additional three new air quality monitors across Dacorum to monitor pollution levels, adding to our current network of diffusion tubes and expanding our monitoring capability.

These are in locations including a school, an ongoing air quality management area and a location raised as a potential traffic pinch point. The data will be fed into our Pollution Team's regular monitoring and form part of the yearly reports sent to DEFRA, aiding in decision-making around safer walking and cycling routes, traffic management, and raising local awareness.

This will also feed into Hertfordshire's air quality alert system, which is a free service that all residents can subscribe to. Just search 'Hertfordshire Air Pollution Alert' to register.

Air quality is slowly improving in the borough, likely due to the increase in home/remote working since COVID-19 and improvements in the emissions of vehicles, however there is still a lot of room for improvement which officers are addressing in combination with colleagues in the County Council's Public Health, Highways and Strategic Planning teams.

Dacorum CAN

Dacorum CAN held its third annual conference and networking event in November.

The free event focussed on community climate action. There were a range of speakers and stallholders from local community organisations and the Council. We highlighted the actions taking place locally to tackle the Climate and Ecological Emergency and how you can help.

You can view the conference on our [YouTube channel](#).

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

Delivering new council homes and improvements

The Council continues to deliver on its commitment to build hundreds of new council homes to meet local residents' needs.

I was delighted to attend the official completion ceremony for six houses in Wilstone, near Tring, one of which is fully wheelchair accessible. It was lovely to meet Linda, one of our new tenants, who told me how happy she is that her family's new home has a garden, so her son can run around outside, which is already making a big difference to their lives.

My portfolio's other recent projects include a transformation of flats in Northend, Hemel Hempstead, delivering more attractive homes for our residents as well as reduced energy bills. Improvements include external wall insulation, new roofs, new windows and entrance doors.

I attended the launch of a new gardening project in partnership with Sunnyside Rural Trust.

We have started work on a pilot project off Redbourn Road, Hemel Hempstead to create a new biodiverse garden for residents to enjoy. This is part of a planned programme across the borough.

We want to offer more ways for you to get involved in your Housing service. We held our first Annual Housing Open Day in November with a variety of information stalls aimed at helping existing tenants, leaseholders and housing applicants. Stalls included advice on the cost of living, housing options and shared ownership information.

This autumn, we held events at our high rise blocks to ask residents what matters to them and to tell us about any safety concerns. Our housing teams went out to Pelham Court, Fennycroft Road, Kylna Court and Gade Tower. We're pleased the events were well attended, and that the overwhelming feeling is that these blocks have a great sense of community. We're developing action plans to tackle issues as effectively as possible and will keep residents informed.

To hear all the latest news from your Housing and Property Services, sign up to our new monthly Housing Matters email specifically for tenants and leaseholders. This will give you all the latest important news from the Housing service, including information on events, new homes and how you can get involved. If you haven't signed up already just go to:

www.dacorum.gov.uk/housing-matters

Cllr Simy Dhyani, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property Services.

New homes in Tring village

We've marked the completion of six new council homes in Tring.

The homes are a mixture of two and three-bedroom houses, providing much needed housing for social rent in the sought after village of Wilstone. One house is fully accessible.

The homes are on under-used Council land and are designed to complement the surrounding properties. They are energy-efficient and feature photovoltaic panels, electric air source heat pump heating/hot water and increased insulation. Each home has an electric charger point and a private parking bay.

Councillors, members of the housing team, representatives from Life Build Solutions, Project Managers BPM Ltd and Architects Kyle Smart Associates attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony on Wednesday 18 October. New tenants attended the opening including Linda James who cut the ribbon.

Linda James said: "Our home is beautiful and built to a very high standard. Already, the extra space is making a huge difference to our everyday family life. It's so lovely to have a garden now for my son. We look forward to spending many happy years here."

£10.9 million funding for affordable housing schemes

We've been awarded £10.9million funding from Homes England for two of our affordable housing schemes. The Council successfully bid for funding for Marchmont Fields and Paradise Depot – both in Hemel Hempstead.

The Paradise Depot scheme is an exciting plan to redevelop the site and includes a new building which will house a food bank, depot and offices run by local homeless charity DENS. The Homes England funding will be used to build 56 apartments with a mix of one and two-bed homes. The new centre built for DENS will have a food bank and community café located on the ground floor and office space for staff.

Both buildings will be heated by an energy-efficient air source heat pump system and will have a number of electric vehicle charging points in the communal parking areas.

Planning permission was granted in March 2023 with construction works due to begin next spring.

The Marchmont Fields site is to the south of the existing Grovehill Estate. The scheme will have 32 new homes, including 14 houses and 18 apartments for social rent and is due to be completed in spring 2025. All new homes will be heated by Air Source Heat pumps and the development includes electric vehicle charging points.

News for tenants and leaseholders

Growing our green spaces

We're working with Sunnyside Rural Trust on a project to create biodiverse gardens at our Housing developments across the borough.

We have started work on a pilot project off Redbourn Road, Hemel Hempstead and are creating a new garden for tenants to enjoy.

The design will be circular with paths, wildflower planting and seasonal perennial beds. It will be planet and space themed to link into the road names in the area which include Saturn Way, Jupiter Drive and Martian Avenue.

Cllr Simy Dhyani, our Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property Services, went to the site on Monday 30 October along with Council and Sunnyside Rural Trust representatives.

Cllr Dhyani said: "Our aim is to create a wonderful amenity space for local residents to enjoy and to promote biodiversity in our open spaces. It was lovely to visit the area and start the work off with the first dig and I am looking forward to seeing it completed."

We will be working with our residents to deliver themed gardens across Dacorum.

Breaking the cycle of domestic abuse

The Chrysalis Centre is a ground-breaking programme of interventions to break the cycle of domestic abuse making victims, families and communities safer. They have received funding to provide a referral, triage and service delivery hub. It is their ambition that the Chrysalis Centre will become a centre for excellence in the field of behavioural change interventions.

They can accept referrals where consent has been gained by the subject of the referral. Find out more here: <https://chrysaliscentre.net>

Engaging with our residents

We've begun our programme of engagement events at our high rise blocks.

Teams from across housing met and heard about the key issues affecting you. We're pleased the events were well attended, and that the overwhelming feeling is that these blocks have a great sense of community.

We'll be updating the Resident Engagement Strategy for each of these blocks in line with resident feedback, and will be launching dedicated engagement platforms shortly.

Reduced energy bills for tenants

We've transformed our blocks of flats at Northend, helping reduce energy bills for our residents.

The pilot project was aimed at understanding how we can modernise/improve some of our poorer performing properties. The average SAP energy rating across the 24 flats is now an A.

Improvements include external wall insulation, new roofs, new windows and entrance doors. We also installed glazed panels to the internal drying areas, which dramatically improve both the appearance and the thermal efficiency of each block.

Secondary works included landscaping the surrounding areas, removal of wooden fencing around the unused external drying areas, and construction of convenient new bin stores sited well away from the blocks to minimise smells and fire risk.

We co-funded the project with government funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

Sign up to Housing Matters

Get all the latest news from your Housing Service with our regular monthly email newsletter.

Housing Matters is sent to our tenants and leaseholders with all the important news from the Housing service, including information on events, new homes and how you can get involved.

If you haven't signed up already just go to: www.dacorum.gov.uk/housing-matters

Reduce energy use with free helpline

Better Housing Better Health is an organisation to help keep residents warm and well at home and improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

In a preventative approach to health and wellbeing, the service provides residents with a single point of contact to get impartial expert advice to help improve the energy efficiency of their home, save money and improve comfort.

Go to www.bhbh.org.uk or call 0800 107 0044 for more information.

Helping to tackle damp and mould workshops

Making sure that all Dacorum's residents live in warm, dry, and safe homes is a top priority for the Council. We will take robust action to tackle damp and mould wherever it occurs in rented housing, whether our own stock, homes in housing association ownership, or the private rented sector.

In October, we invited all our tenants and leaseholders along to workshops to help us develop and review policies and procedures for treating and preventing mould, damp and condensation within our social housing.

We are now evaluating the data from the workshops, held in partnership with Bedford College and University College London.

If you rent in the private sector and you require more information on damp and mould or need to report damp and mould in your home - please call the Private Sector Housing Team on 01442 228574 or email pshousing@dacorum.gov.uk. If you are a council tenant please report issues here: www.dacorum.gov.uk/damp-mould-condensation.

Theatre trip for tenants

Around 50 supported housing tenants enjoyed a Mystery Movie tour and afternoon tea to The Old Town Hall.

The special event was organised by our Supported Housing team and supported by Osborne.

Residents enjoyed sandwiches and cakes and a showing of the film Hairspray.

Are you aged 60 or over and interested in supported housing accommodation? We have 29 schemes across Dacorum with a range of self-contained flats and bungalows. You can find out more here: www.dacorum.gov.uk/supported-housing-options.

Your bin collections for 2023/2024

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.

Christmas and New Year collections 2023/24

Normal collection day	Your bins will be collected on...	Bins to be collected
Monday 25 December 2023	Saturday 23 December 2023	Blue and food waste
Tuesday 26 December 2023	Wednesday 27 December 2023	Blue and food waste
Wednesday 27 December 2023	Thursday 28 December 2023	Blue and food waste
Thursday 28 December 2023	Friday 29 December 2023	Blue and food waste
Friday 29 December 2023	Saturday 30 December 2023	Blue and food waste
Monday 1 January 2024	Tuesday 2 January 2024	Grey and food waste

Normal collection day	Your bins will be collected on...	Bins to be collected
Tuesday 2 January 2024	Wednesday 3 January 2024	Grey and food waste
Wednesday 3 January 2024	Thursday 4 January 2024	Grey and food waste
Thursday 4 January 2024	Friday 5 January 2024	Grey and food waste
Friday 5 January 2024	Saturday 6 January 2024	Grey and food waste

Week beginning	Bins to be collected
Monday 8 January 2024	Blue and food waste
Monday 15 January 2024	Grey and food waste
Monday 22 January 2024	Blue and food waste
Monday 29 January 2024	Grey and food waste
Monday 5 February 2024	Blue and food waste
Monday 12 February 2024	Grey and food waste
Monday 19 February 2024	Blue and food waste
Monday 26 February 2024	Grey and food waste
Monday 4 March 2024	Blue and food waste
Monday 11 March 2024	Grey and food waste
Monday 18 March 2024	Blue and food waste
Monday 25 March 2024	Grey and food waste
Monday 1 April 2024	Blue and food waste
Monday 8 April 2024	Grey and food waste
Monday 15 April 2024	Blue and food waste
Monday 22 April 2024	Grey and food waste
Monday 29 April 2024	Blue and food waste
Monday 6 May 2024	Grey and food waste
Monday 13 May 2024	Blue and food waste
Monday 20 May 2024	Grey and food waste
Monday 27 May 2024	Blue and food waste
Monday 3 June 2024	Grey and food waste
Monday 10 June 2024	Blue and food waste
Monday 17 June 2024	Grey and food waste
Monday 24 June 2024	Blue and food waste
Monday 1 July 2024	Grey and food waste
Monday 8 July 2024	Blue and food waste
Monday 15 July 2024	Grey and food waste
Monday 22 July 2024	Blue and food waste
Monday 29 July 2024	Grey and food waste
Monday 5 August 2024	Blue and food waste
Monday 12 August 2024	Grey and food waste
Monday 19 August 2024	Blue and food waste
Monday 26 August 2024	Grey and food waste

The garden waste collection is suspended over winter and will begin again between 4 March and 15 March 2024.

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

Our Christmas Tree recycling day will be on Sunday 7 January 2024.