



dacorum
digest
news from your council

Summer 2020



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Delivering
our services to you



Welcome

We have been living through extraordinary times as collectively we have learned to cope with coronavirus (COVID-19) in our communities.

As your borough council we have been committed to keeping our frontline services running during these unprecedented times as safely and efficiently as possible.

In this edition of Digest you can read about the contribution our services have made in the effort to keep our community running.

Just some of the services our employees have provided are: maintaining waste collections and keeping open spaces clean and tidy; working with vulnerable tenants; getting vital grants to our local businesses within a 24-to-48-hour turnaround and working shoulder-to-shoulder with charities, volunteers and community groups to deliver vital grassroots support.

While some of our much anticipated events were cancelled, communities managed to mark key events such as VE Day and Armed Forces Day to pay tribute to those who served and continue to serve our country.

There have been challenges for many during this time but as we strive to move forward into more normal times, we say thank you to our residents for the continued support and messages of thanks.

Cllr Andrew Williams, Leader of the Council

Sally steps down

After seven years at the helm, Sally Marshall, the council's Chief Executive, has announced she's stepping down from her role to enjoy more time pursuing other interests. Sally originally joined Dacorum Borough Council in 2008 to take up the role of Corporate Director (Finance & Governance) and was appointed the authority's first female Chief Executive in 2013.

Sally said: "It has been a great privilege working with my colleagues here at Dacorum Borough Council, and an honour to serve the community. I will miss colleagues but am very much looking forward to a new chapter."

Cllr Andrew Williams, Leader of the Council, said: "I have worked closely with Sally since 2008. Sally has a vast amount of knowledge and experience and has been a tremendous asset to the council and its communities throughout her tenure.

"I wish Sally well in her retirement. On behalf of the council, all councillors, staff and the people of the borough I would like to place on record our gratitude to Sally for what has been a remarkable 12 years in Dacorum."



Be first with the news

Join the thousands of others who are already getting council news and information straight to their inboxes by signing up to Digital Digest - our monthly email newsletter.

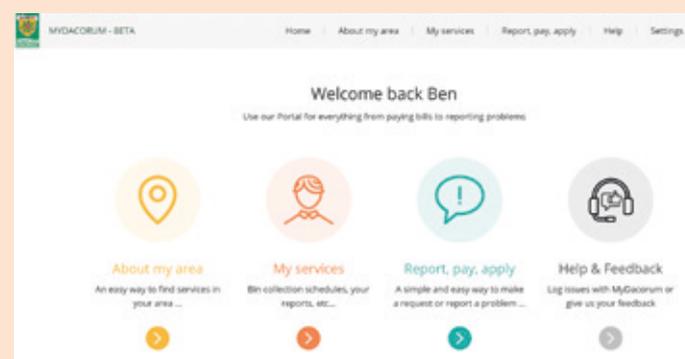
You'll get the latest Dacorum Borough Council news, information about upcoming events, essential service updates - such as changes to bin collections - job alerts and details of current consultations.

Subscribing is quick and easy to do, just visit www.dacorum.gov.uk/digitaldigest.

Sign up to MyDacorum

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 seeing the planning applications in your neighbourhood (and much more). We are currently working on a new feature for tenants to report housing repairs on the portal, which will be available later this year.

To sign up go to: www.resident.dacorum.gov.uk



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Delivering our services to you

As the country moves through the different phases of recovery, it is vitally important that everyone continues to follow Government guidance and observe the rules on social distancing.

We have accomplished a great deal since the lockdown began on 23 March. By working together, we can continue to achieve our plans to:

1. Protect the health and wellbeing of Dacorum residents, working in partnership with our partners at Hertfordshire County Council and the NHS.
2. Maintain essential council services and/or deliver them in a different way.
3. Support our communities, vulnerable people and those with complex needs.
4. Support our business community through business rate re-billing and administration of loan schemes to support the local economy.
5. Work with council tenants affected by coronavirus.

For updates on affected services, help and guidance, please visit our dedicated webpage www.dacorum.gov.uk/coronavirus

Further information

Answers to frequently asked questions about coronavirus can be found on our website via www.dacorum.gov.uk/coronavirus

If you have any other concerns, then please send an email to customer.services@dacorum.gov.uk or ring us on **01442 228000**.

Additional information for people with care and support needs, as well as other Hertfordshire County Council service updates, can be accessed at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk Alternatively you can contact them on **0300 123 4042**.

Help and advice guide

Help and advice

HertsHelp: If you're self-isolating and you need emotional support or practical help call **0300 123 4044** or visit www.hertshelp.net or email info@hertshelp.net

Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Helpline: **08 088 088 088** (If you are in immediate danger always dial **999**)

Advice on avoiding and reporting scams

Citizens Advice consumer helpline: **0808 223 1133** or contact Action Fraud: **0300 123 2040** / www.actionfraud.police.uk/

Financial advice

Money Advice Unit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/benefits

Hertfordshire Citizens Advice Line: **03444 111 444**

Help with claiming Universal Credit: **0800 144 8 444**

Information

Latest Government information on coronavirus
www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Government Coronavirus Information Service on WhatsApp. Add **07860 064422** to your phone contacts and then message 'hi' in a WhatsApp message to get started.

Medical and health advice and information www.nhs.uk/coronavirus

For the latest Council information and advice, visit www.dacorum.gov.uk/coronavirus

Housing services

Supported Housing: provides accommodation for those aged 60 and over, and continues to support its tenants during this difficult time. If

you are a Supported Housing tenant, or a friend or relative and have concerns, please contact the team on **01442 228347** or Hertfordshire Adult Social Services on **0300 123 4042**.

Homelessness: If you become homeless, you should contact homelessnessprevention@dacorum.gov.uk or call **01442 228000**. If this is out of hours, please call **0800 018 60 50** for our 24-hour service.

Private Sector Housing: If a private sector resident is at risk of landlord harassment, concerns about a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), illegal eviction, serious disrepair or safety issues (non DBC housing) they should contact us at pshousing@dacorum.gov.uk or call **01442 228000**.

Financial support for individuals

Universal Credit: Advice on how to claim for the first time and details regarding the Local Housing Allowance can be found at www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/coronavirus or call the Universal Credit helpline on **0800 328 5644** for support and advice.

Council Tax: For advice on Council Tax Support, please visit www.dacorum.gov.uk/counciltaxsupport

Support for local businesses

There are a number of schemes and grants that have been put in place by the Government to try to reduce the economic impact of the pandemic. For more details about any of these, please visit www.dacorum.gov.uk/business-rates-relief

If you have any other business concerns, then please contact us directly via www.dacorum.gov.uk/business or phone our Economic Development team on **01442 531003**.

Our community coming together

Our local voluntary and community sector organisations have helped thousands during lockdown finding new ways to support Dacorum residents.

Our Community Partnerships team have been working with key groups supporting them with the community grants scheme and signposting to other, external funding opportunities.

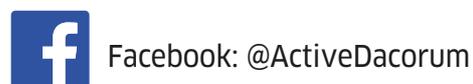
If you're a local charity or community group and need help with funding, contact grants@dacorum.gov.uk

Find out more: www.dacorum.gov.uk/grants

Active Dacorum

Active Dacorum, run by the Community Partnerships Team, focuses on physical activity, wellbeing and arts and culture through events, sessions and activities.

While some events and activities have been postponed due to COVID-19, it's hoped these can be held later in the year. To keep up to date and find ideas to keep your family active or busy with challenges and creative ideas, follow:



Facebook: @ActiveDacorum



Twitter: @Active_Dacorum

Dance Reignite Festival

On Sunday 8 March more than 350 people from Hertfordshire, including many Dacorum residents, took part in a countywide festival celebrating dance for adults aged 55 and over.



The event, organised by BEEE Creative, included jive, swing and popping workshops with a dance finale led by Louise White of Dacorum Community Dance and Laura Horn from Watford Borough Council. The festival marked the end of a two year partnership between us and BEEE Creative to connect older adults and provide dance opportunities. The project has reached more than 4,000 people across Hertfordshire.

Hertfordshire 2020 Year of Culture

Events may have been cancelled over the past few months but creativity hasn't.

That's the message from Herts Year of Culture which is promoting the many organisations that moved their services online during the crisis.

Some of these are:

- Electric Umbrella inclusive music group, which created EUTV with "online helpings of fun, music and madness" including weekday singalongs and chats with famous musicians.
- Dacorum artist Anna Schofield from Anna's Funky Art is offering art and wellbeing workshops on Zoom through the summer as well as free YouTube sessions.
- Herts Inclusive Theatre is running drama and musical sessions.
- Open Door Community Hub in Berkhamsted is hosting online exhibitions and creative workshops.

Links to local online activities can be found at: www.dacorum.gov.uk/HYOC2020 where you can also stay up to date with HYOC2020 activities, news and events. If you are a local creative or cultural organisation or artist and have an online activity that you would like to be part of HYOC2020, let us know at: active@dacorum.gov.uk

Swift scheme spreads wings

We've been working with Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and Osborne Property Services to successfully create habitats for wildlife and to help the declining swift population. Swift nesting boxes were fitted to council properties earlier this year in St Albans Hill, Hemel Hempstead in conjunction with planned improvements to enhance the thermal values of the properties and reduce the carbon footprint – and swifts have now been spotted nesting.



Cllr Julie Banks, Portfolio Holder for Community and Regulatory Services, said: "It has been so wonderful to see the voluntary sector coming into its own in such a time of crisis and uncertainty.

The support that residents have given to each other and voluntary organisations in Dacorum has been heart-warming and spirit lifting. Community Action Dacorum has led the way in galvanising and co-ordinating a huge and efficient response to support the effort to protect the NHS and continue to support those who are shielding. We will get through this together and our communities will be stronger."

If you need support contact **Herts Help** www.hertshelp.net, email info@hertshelp.net or phone HertsHelp on **0300 123 4044**

New ways of working

Our Housing team has been supporting residents through the pandemic and continues to do so delivering services digitally where possible and in line with social-distancing guidance.

The service has ensured that those living in Sheltered Housing still receive regular contact and has provided support to any tenant worried about paying their rent - making referrals on their behalf to organisations including Age UK, The Food Bank and HertsHelp.

If you are a Dacorum Borough Council tenant and are experiencing financial difficulties, please contact: **01442 228000** and ask for Housing Income.

Homelessness and rough sleeping: Our Strategic Housing Team has continued to provide advice and assistance to those in housing difficulty throughout the crisis, providing help and support including access to accommodation to over 620 households. Don't suffer in silence. If you or someone you care about is homeless or at risk of homelessness and needs advice or support, help can be found here:

www.dacorum.gov.uk/homeless

We have two dedicated Street Outreach Support workers who provide support to rough sleepers in the area. For help contact:

DB.Outreach@hightownha.org.uk or complete a referral via Streetlink.

Private sector housing: Work with both landlords and tenants to resolve issues of property conditions or disrepair has continued - with videos or photos being used to help identify and resolve issues. If a visit is needed for further inspection, officers have been making necessary arrangements, in line with Government guidance. If you have an issue, email: pshousing@dacorum.gov.uk

Continuing essential services: Urgent and essential repairs have continued throughout the lockdown and planned works and work on our new build programmes have begun again with all trades required to observe social distancing and follow the guidance from the Construction Leadership Council.

Additional cleaning has taken place in sheltered schemes and on touch points in general needs blocks to reduce infection risks with additional patrols of landings to address any build up of items or fly tipping which had increased during lockdown.

Housing needs: Our housing register is active and we are dealing with enquiries, for more info visit: www.movingwithdacorum.org.uk

Resident engagement: Tenants and leaseholders have been able to continue to have their say with all meetings and focus groups taking place online.



If you are a tenant or leaseholder and would like to take part or would like more information contact: sieteam@dacorum.gov.uk

Anti-social behaviour: We have taken steps to deal with the increase of anti-social behaviour during lockdown. Residents can now submit reports to us online and can use a new noise app to record incidents on their phone. Find more info here: www.dacorum.gov.uk/asb

“ Cllr Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing, said:
I am proud of our dedicated Housing team who have continued to provide essential services during exceptionally difficult circumstances finding new and innovative ways of working to support tenants, leaseholders and those in need. ”





Supporting business

During COVID-19, the Economic Development Team has been supporting businesses in Dacorum by allocating grants and giving essential guidance and advice.

Through the Government's Small Business Grant Fund and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund more than **£2.48 million** has been awarded to local businesses and **1,000 businesses** were awarded a business rates holiday (100% for 2020/21)

The Discretionary Business Fund was also made available and the team has worked to allocate funds quickly and efficiently.

Harbour Lights Scuba Diving Club said how vital funds had been in keeping afloat: "We were wondering how we were going to pay May's bills. I think you may have saved our business as we were down to our last £166.90 in our bank account."

More information here: www.dacorum.gov.uk/business-support-grants

DACORUM BUSINESS HEROES

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Do you know a Hero?

Our borough's businesses have shown extraordinary resilience during these difficult times - so it's more important than ever to recognise our Business Heroes. Nominate a company you feel has gone above and beyond, that has really made a difference and had a positive impact on the lives of others. This year we have added a new category to recognise businesses that adapted to cope with the crisis.

Find out more about all the categories and how to nominate at www.dacorum.gov.uk/businessheroes
Applications close on 17 September 2020.

Dacorum's Den

If you are a budding local entrepreneur, why not enter Dacorum's Den 2020 for your chance to win £1,000 to help establish or grow your business.

Sponsored and judged by businesses, applications close on 12 October 2020. Find out more: www.dacorum.gov.uk/dacorumsden

Talking to business

The Economic Development team has carried out over 700 telephone surveys to understand the real effects of the crisis. This information will feed into the economic recovery strategy for Dacorum, helping businesses back on their feet and ready for the 'new normal'.

Many local businesses have stories of adapting and diversifying to ensure they continued to support local employment. A local grocery store in Tring has reported business taking off by providing bespoke grocery boxes to the local community.

Several businesses have successfully introduced online ordering and new ways of delivering their products and services direct to the consumer. A café on Marlowes has expanded its delivery service, is re-focusing on highlighting local producers and has prepared its reduced restaurant area ready for socially distanced dining.

Businesses in Dacorum are helping with the fight against coronavirus (COVID-19) - one business is trialling vaccines in Italy and Spain. We have also seen many acts of generosity and community spirit in these difficult times, with local businesses and schools producing masks for NHS and front line workers, and hotels and campsites offering accommodation to nurses.

We offer free business advice to any local self-employed, home workers, new start-ups and companies; however big or small.

Contact  business@dacorum.gov.uk  01442 531002

For the latest business advice, including support available, sign up to our mailing list at www.dacorum.gov.uk/economic-development-mailing-list





Annual Report

2019/20

www.dacorum.gov.uk

Delivering for Dacorum – 2019/20

During the last financial year, Dacorum has continued to thrive as a borough where people want to live, work and enjoy their leisure time.

The past year has been unprecedented in many ways. We held three elections, including the first December General Election since 1923. During the latter stage of the year, the coronavirus outbreak emerged, which has, and will continue to have a significant impact upon the way we live.

Over the last year, we have continued to invest in supporting our businesses to promote growth and employment opportunities.

We awarded six budding entrepreneurs with grants totalling £10,000 to help their business ideas grow, following a successful pitch to our Dacorum's Den Scheme. We also celebrated some of the businesses that make a real difference to the lives of others at our annual Business Heroes Awards.

We completed structural work on our new multi-storey car park in Berkhamsted, which will help to support local businesses and encourage visitors to this historic town.

We have continued to work with St Albans City and District Council, Hertfordshire County Council, The Crown Estate and Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership on proposals for a new residential and commercial development for Hemel Hempstead, known as Hemel Garden Communities. The development could provide around 11,000 new homes and 10,000 new jobs for the area.

Leisure time is hugely important in maintaining physical and mental wellbeing. Over the past year, we have jointly funded (with Everyone Active) a £600,000 refurbishment at Berkhamsted Leisure Centre and invested £112,000 on new stands to increase capacity for Hemel Storm basketball fans at Hemel Hempstead Leisure Centre. We also re-opened

Tring swimming pool to the public, following an extensive £1.8m refurbishment project.

Last June, many of our residents joined in celebrating Armed Forces Day on a gloriously sunny day in Gadebridge Park. This annual event provides everyone with the opportunity to show their appreciation for our armed forces, both past and present, and their families. We also hosted a spectacular Freedom Parade and flypast to honour the borough's links with RAF Halton.

During the summer, we introduced two Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO) to help address certain anti-social behaviours within Dacorum. Our Hemel Hempstead Town Centre PSPO has helped to tackle issues such as nuisance cycling in pedestrianised areas of the town centre. Our borough-wide Dog PSPO has focused on encouraging responsible dog ownership.

We have delivered 222 new, high-quality council homes to date and are well on track to provide 328 council homes by the end of 2020. We intend to deliver a similar number of new council homes over the next five years. We have also provided grant funding to several local housing association schemes to help further increase the supply of homes for people in housing need.

Over the last year, we have been very successful in attracting grant funding to help some of the most vulnerable people in the borough. We received £69,000 to help us drive improvements in the private rented housing sector and secured funding, in partnership with St Albans City and District Council, to launch a 12-month pilot scheme to help our rough sleepers.

Over the next financial year, we will continue to strive to make efficiencies and improvements to our services and to deliver the priorities set out in our new Corporate Plan (2020-2025).

In 2019/20 Dacorum Borough Council services cost you around **55p per day**

(based on a band D property)

Our Vision

We are committed to working in partnership to create a borough which enables the communities of Dacorum to thrive and prosper. This requires us to play a leadership role in bringing together a range of organisations and individuals to support and sustain good conditions for local growth.

Our Priorities



A clean, safe and enjoyable environment



Building strong and vibrant communities



Ensuring economic growth and prosperity



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



Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery



Councillor Andrew Williams, Leader of the Council



Sally Marshall, Chief Executive



A clean, safe and enjoyable environment

We responded to **1,237** fly-tipping reports within **07 DAYS**



We collected **46,387** tonnes of waste and recycling from homes

Our recycling rate has increased to **53%**

5 of our parks retained Green Flag status



Building strong and vibrant communities

We responded to **96%** of anti-social incidents within one working day

Entertained **12,000** people with live performances, events and exhibitions at the Old Town Hall theatre

Had over **27,600** attendances at our adventure playgrounds

Supported community groups with over **£78k** worth of funding

21 of our **23** car parks received the Park Mark accreditation for safety

We inspected **598** food premises - **417** achieved the top food hygiene rating



Ensuring economic growth and prosperity

We attracted around **£230m** in private sector investment to the borough

We held over **334** business meetings and visited **145** businesses for the first time

A programme of **42** workshops were run for **308** attendees helping businesses to upskill

100% occupancy at the Maylands Business Centre

280 new jobs were created through businesses we supported, relocations of businesses to the area and business growth



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

99% of tenants were satisfied with repairs to their home (combined figure for SunRealm and Osborne)

Carried out **25,461** repairs to council properties

Provided housing advice to **1,806** households

We invested more than **£37.7m** in our council housing

We took an average of **37** days to re-let a general needs council property

We took an average of **50** days to re-let a sheltered council property

We consulted **2,129** tenants and leaseholders

Built **12** new council homes and started construction on **121** since April 2019



Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery

Over **4,000** people have signed up to our residents' portal

We processed over **3,000** new benefit claims

On average we took **15.1 days** to award new housing benefits



Welcomed around **50,706** customers to our Customer Service Centre and took **83,902** calls and responded to **17,176** emails and **9,799** social media enquiries through our contact centre

We invested **£56.68m** on the following assets:

- £42.42m on Housing
- £1.37m on Culture
- £4.10m on Essential Services
- £5.04m on Parking
- £0.72m on Planning & Development
- £3.03m on Environmental



Where your Council Tax goes:



£1,359.94

Herts County Council



£188.00

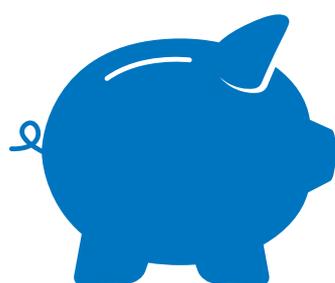
Herts Police



£201.36

Dacorum Borough Council*

* amounts based on a non-parish band D property



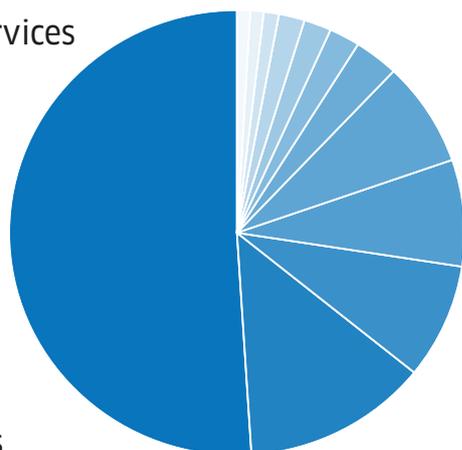
We spent

£69.1m

on council housing funded by rents and service charges

We spent:

- £44.464m on Housing Services
- £11.484m on Environmental Services
- £7.294m on Cultural Services
- £6.746m on Essential Services
- £6.642m on Planning & Development
- Contribution to Reserves £2.741m & to Capital £1.908m
- £1.692m on Parking & Transport
- £1.599m on Investment Properties
- £0.939m Payment to Local Enterprise Partnership
- £0.825m on Financing
- £0.816m on Precepts to Parish Councils



In the financial year 2020/2021 we will:

- Continue to support our businesses during the coronavirus pandemic as we move into recovery
- Increase our effectiveness in preventing homelessness for those with complex needs (mental health, drugs & alcohol, domestic abuse & modern slavery) by working with Herts County Council to undertake a full review of complex needs pathways and services
- Work towards our commitment to eradicate rough sleeping within the borough, by supporting those individuals to find a suitable and settled home. In line with the Dame Louise Casey 'Everyone In' initiative, we will seek to ensure that no one is at risk of returning to the streets, by developing a proactive approach to prevention services
- Continue to work towards delivering our pledge to ensure that the Council is carbon neutral in its impact through its services and assets by 2030
- Carry out a public consultation on our new Local Plan - a key planning document which sets out our vision and framework for the future development of Dacorum
- Deliver an additional 109 new council homes through our new build programme, taking our total number of new homes to over 300 by the autumn
- End the use of flexible tenancies to create more long-term security for our council tenants
- Open our new multi-storey car park in Berkhamsted to support local businesses and encourage visitors to the town
- Continue to work with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to bring forward the Herts Innovation Quarter
- Implement a new pre-application advice service for planning
- Promote Dacorum's arts, culture and heritage through continued delivery of the Herts Year of Culture 2020





Help shape Hemel's future

This summer we have set up a new online platform, the Hemel Channel, to host conversations and activities all about Hemel Hempstead. Residents, businesses and visitors are welcome to join the conversation to explore the past, present and future of Hemel. This virtual space enables everyone interested in Hemel to connect and help shape its future whilst social distancing continues.

The ambitious re-imagining of Hemel Hempstead is being led by the Hemel Garden Communities team. They are guided by Dacorum Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council and Hertfordshire County Council, and by their partnership with Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and The Crown Estate. Hemel Garden Communities is a development programme that is expected to transform the whole town and create attractive and sustainable new neighbourhoods to its north and east. This includes more than 11,000 high-quality new homes and

10,000 new jobs by 2050 as well as new amenities, green spaces and play areas, and sustainable transport links.

The Hemel Garden Communities Team see this as an unparalleled opportunity to bring benefits to communities in and around Hemel Hempstead. As we come out of COVID-19, it is more important than ever to plan for an inclusive, sustainable recovery that meets the needs of all our communities.

For the latest updates and to join the conversation, follow @HemelChannel www.instagram.com/hemelchannel or visit: www.dacorum.gov.uk/hemelgardencommunities

If you have any questions, please email hemelgardencommunities@dacorum.gov.uk and if you would like to join in offline, write to us at Hemel Garden Communities Team, Dacorum Borough Council, The Forum, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 1DN.

New council homes

We are continuing to deliver new council homes for social rent in the borough.

In September last year, tenants moved into their new homes at Swing Gate Lane, Berkhamsted. The attractive, town centre development consists of nine one- and two-bedroom flats and three two- and three-bedroom houses.

Earlier this year, we were presented with the Berkhamsted Citizens' Association Annual Environment Award 2019 for the development.

We have several other council housing schemes due to complete over the next few months, and are on track to deliver our 300th council home by the autumn.

Find out more about our council housing new build programme: www.dacorum.gov.uk/newbuild



Thank you to key workers

Our frontline workers and key staff have received thanks and praise from grateful residents during the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.

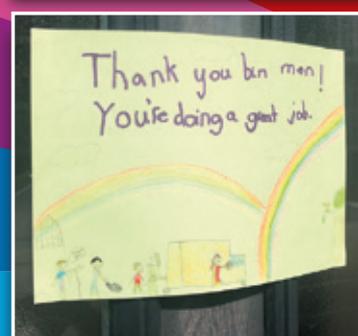
Despite major challenges, dedicated Waste Service and Clean, Safe and Green staff continued to provide a normal service during the pandemic.

Normal collection services were continued despite a 50 per cent reduction in the Waste Services workforce due to illness or members of the team self-isolating or shielding.

While supporting Waste Services and working with a reduced staff level, our Clean, Safe and Green crews prioritised and adjusted their every day work, such as grass cutting, to ensure that parks and open spaces were kept in good condition so residents were able to do their daily exercise outside safely whilst maintaining social distancing too.

Cllr Alan Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, said: "The work behind the scenes to keep service disruptions to a minimum was immensely challenging. The Council provides a number of essential frontline services to residents. Waste collection, street cleansing and grounds maintenance are some of the key services which affect every single household in the borough on a continual basis and as a result are often in the spotlight. These are also supported by lower profile services, such as the office staff and vehicle workshop whose skilled technicians help to keep our vehicles on the road and equipment in tip top condition. We are incredibly proud of the achievement of our teams and cannot thank our staff enough for their hard work in pulling together to make this happen. Our staff were very appreciative of all of the hundreds, if not thousands, of messages of thanks and gratitude that they received from residents. These messages came in a range of different ways including thanks on social media and emails, phone calls, signs left on bins, paintings left outside houses or displayed in windows, chalk messages drawn on the pavements, kind gifts and even rounds of applause. At a time when the world was becoming a dark place, it is these messages of support that really helped to lift our key workers' spirits and keep them going.

"We would like to thank our residents for being so understanding and supportive of our staff at what has been a difficult time for everyone."



Don't be a litterbug

At the beginning of lockdown, the levels of general litter around the borough were lower than usual due to a decrease in people eating and drinking outside. This is increasing again now that more people are socialising in parks and green spaces. Littering is illegal and ruins our borough for everyone – there is never an excuse. Remember that you must always take your rubbish home with you or use a nearby bin.

As well as general rubbish, littered PPE such as masks and gloves are now also a problem. This is a health and safety risk not only to other members of the public and our Clean, Safe and Green crews who then pick these up, but to wildlife too.

You can either make or buy your own reusable face masks which eliminates the need for disposable ones. Gloves will not help prevent against coronavirus (COVID-19) and can still spread the virus in the same way as hands do – instead you should be cleaning your hands regularly with soap or hand sanitiser.

If you choose to use disposable PPE, please remember to always put this in your nearest bin or take it home with you.

Once it is safe to do so, we will be supporting community litter picks by loaning litter-picking equipment out again: www.dacorum.gov.uk/litterpick

Time to get composting

Have you had more time to enjoy gardening these past few months? If so, you may have been creating more garden waste than normal.

Starting your own compost heap can be the perfect solution for getting rid of kitchen scraps and food waste and it doesn't need to cost you a penny. You can either start a heap in the corner of your garden or build a compost bin from wood or old pallets. Composters are also easy to find if you choose to buy one to help you get started – find more information at: www.getcomposting.com where you can buy water butts too.

Reasons to compost:

It's good for your garden

Over time soil quality declines - to improve its quality it requires nutrients. Compost adds structure and fertility to your soil. Adding homemade compost is one of the best things you can do to enhance and protect the health of your soil.

A good alternative to peat-based composts

Much of the compost available from retail and online stores is peat based. Nearly 70 per cent of all peat used is by home gardeners. Peat is a valuable carbon store and digging it up harms the environment and contributes to the climate crisis. By making your own compost you can help reduce this environmental problem.

Reduces the carbon footprint of your waste

A compost heap is a useful back up if your kerbside recycling bin is full. Waste from your green bin and food waste caddy are both transported to different facilities before they are turned back into a resource through composting or anaerobic digestion. You can eliminate the carbon footprint of this waste by composting at home instead and turning it back into a resource in your own back garden.

There are plenty of guides and advice on composting online to help you get started. Check out: www.dacorum.gov.uk/compost



Learning from Lockdown

Many people have adapted to a different way of life due to lockdown and adopted new habits - with many positive effects on the environment. These types of changes are exactly what we need more of as our battle to resolve the Climate Emergency and help prevent ecological breakdown getting worse.

We are running an online survey to find out what sustainable changes residents have made, or would like to make, in their daily lives since lockdown began. For example, how many of these green habits do you do more of now?

Reducing Travel Emissions

- Working from home more
- Walking and cycling more and driving less
- Using virtual meetings to work or socialise

Valuing Food

- Writing a meal plan and doing a weekly shop
- Reducing food waste by using up what's in the cupboard or fridge
- Cooking and baking more, instead of takeaways or eating 'on the go'

Valuing Resources

- Organising your home and rediscovering old items or clothes to use again
- Sharing items second hand instead of throwing them away
- Making, mending or repurposing something instead of buying new

Valuing Nature

- More time gardening - increasing biodiversity and growing food locally
- Interacting with nature more, such as feeding birds and other wildlife
- Discovering and connecting with more natural green spaces to help manage physical and mental health

Valuing Community Spirit

- Connecting with neighbours and local community groups
- Sharing shopping, food, tools and skills
- Taking part in local volunteering and projects

Every journey not taken, every extra seed that has been sown and every piece of packaging not used or item not needlessly bought, have all helped to give our environment a much needed break. Should we really go back to the way things were? Or do we want to create a 'new normal' - that incorporates the lessons we've learned from lockdown to create a greener, happier and healthier future for us all?

The survey will help us to learn how we could potentially do more to support these sustainable changes so that they become an integral part of our 'new normal' lifestyles.

To take part in the survey, visit: www.dacorum.gov.uk/sustainability





If you live in Dacorum, the Council is part of your every day life, so it's important you have a say in the decisions that affect you. This section in Dacorum Digest is to let you know about opportunities coming up for you to get involved in local decision making.

Dacorum Borough Council

Committee Meetings

Due to COVID-19, committee meetings have been taking place online at 6.30pm. If you would like to participate, please email: member.support@dacorum.gov.uk and the link will be sent to you. All decisions are added to our website: www.dacorum.gov.uk five days after the meetings. We will update the public when council meetings re-sit at the Forum.

Full Council

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

Wednesday 16 September
Wednesday 8 November

Cabinet Meetings

The Council's Cabinet has six senior Councillors who meet every month to 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.

Tuesday 22 September
Tuesday 20 October
Tuesday 24 November

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

Tuesday 23 September
Tuesday 27 October
Tuesday 10 November

Housing and Community

Wednesday 9 September
Wednesday 7 October
Wednesday 4 November

Finance and Resources

Tuesday 8 September
Tuesday 13 October
Tuesday 3 November

Health in Dacorum

Wednesday 2 September

Development Management Committee

This committee makes decisions on planning applications.

Thursday 13 August
Thursday 3 September
Thursday 24 September
Thursday 15 October
Thursday 5 November
Thursday 26 November

Other committee meetings

Standards Committee

Thursday 10 September

Audit Committee

Wednesday 30 September
Wednesday 11 November

Meeting times and agendas are correct at the time of printing but can change. 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



Have your say

Online consultation group

Want to give us your views on a range of council issues?

Join our online consultation group and let us have your views via the internet. The email group is designed to be flexible and convenient to you. Once you join, you will be invited to take part in online consultations. You won't have to participate in every consultation - only the ones that you feel relevant to you or would like to give us your opinion about.

To join you must be aged 16 or over, live in Dacorum and be able to complete our surveys online.

Register at www.dacorum.gov.uk/consultation where you'll also find more information, or email haveyoursay@dacorum.gov.uk with any questions.



Have your say on parks and open spaces

We want to make sure Dacorum's parks and open spaces remain clean and safe for everyone to enjoy and therefore have taken the decision to adopt the Government's Model Byelaws for the better management of our grounds.

As part of this regulatory process, we would like to consult with people who are likely to be affected by the proposed byelaws and we would like to hear from you.

For details of the proposed park and open spaces byelaws and instructions on how you can respond to the consultation visit www.dacorum.gov.uk/consultation

If you don't have access to a computer please call: 01442 228623.

Feedback on design guide

We are currently consulting on our draft Strategic Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and would welcome feedback from our residents. The purpose of the SPD is to provide robust guidance to applicants on the approach we expect them to take with regard to design. This will assist developers in ensuring that any proposals conform to our planning policies. We will review the findings of the consultation and make any changes necessary prior to the formal adoption of the SPD.



The consultation runs until 16 August 2020. Please visit www.dacorum.gov.uk/consultation for further details and to take part in the consultation.

Communities come together to mark VE Day anniversary

Dacorum showed its spirit marking the anniversary of VE Day with a difference during lockdown.

Communities pulled together on Friday 8 May which marked 75 years since Victory in Europe Day when the Second World War came to an end in Europe.

Despite events being cancelled due to COVID-19, the day was a tribute to the armed forces who gave their lives with social distanced picnics in front gardens, houses decorated in bunting and "We'll meet again" sing-alongs sounding out across the borough.

We installed commemorative signs at Gadebridge Park, Boxmoor war memorial and Tring Memorial and organised a plane to fly over the borough pulling a VE Day banner.



Showing support for our Armed Forces

Last year we hosted an Armed Forces Day event at Gadebridge Park, which attracted more than 3,000 people. However, due to the coronavirus outbreak in the UK we were unable to hold the event in the park this year but we still marked the important occasion. The flag was raised at the Forum and our war memorials were cleaned and gardens manicured to look their best for the day on Saturday 27 June.

The Hemel Hempstead Yarn Bombers marked the occasion with special creations, which decorated the tops of the town's post boxes.

Cllr Julie Banks, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Regulatory Services, said: "Armed Forces Day was a great opportunity for us to demonstrate respect, appreciation and gratitude to our brave service men and women, both past and present. I would also like to thank the people of Dacorum for showing their support and in recognising the very important work our armed forces deliver on a daily basis."



PIC-COLLAGE

Recognising our local heroes

During Armed Forces week we raised awareness of our local heroes by sharing their stories on our social media channels. One inspirational story told the recovery of veteran plane crash survivor, Jamie Hull, formerly from Berkhamsted.

Jamie, a former British Army Reservist was 32 when his plane engine caught fire during a training flight. Against the odds he survived the crash, having 60 operations and rebuilding his life to take on fundraising challenges for Help the Heroes.

We also paid tribute to Sue Rose, who has been the Poppy Appeal organiser for the Hemel Hempstead branch of The Royal British Legion for 23 years and won a Mayor's Award for her volunteering, and Chris Richards, a Standard Bearer for the Royal British Legion for Berkhamsted and Tring who has distributed poppies for 50 years and collected £3,000 in donations.



Chris Richards



Jamie Hull. Photo credit: Adam Hollier



Sue Rose

EU CITIZENS APPLY TO THE EU SETTLEMENT SCHEME



HM Government

If you are an EU citizen¹, you and your family members can apply to the EU Settlement Scheme to continue to live, work and study in the UK.



To apply, you need to be an EU citizen or a non-EU family member of an EU citizen. This includes those with a UK permanent residence document.



You do not need to apply if you have indefinite leave to remain or enter, or you are an Irish citizen, but you can if you want to.



The online application checks three basic principles: **identity**, **UK residence** and **criminality**. Support is available if needed.



The scheme is open now and closes on 30 June 2021.



For more information, visit gov.uk/eu-settled-status

¹EU citizens used throughout refers to EEA and Swiss nationals, who are all eligible to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

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