

# Flaunden Annual Parish Meeting 29 May 2026

## Annual Report

By David Imroth, Chair of Flaunden Parish Council

Welcome everyone, it is pleasing and encouraging to see so many local people as well as representatives from Dacorum Borough and Herts County Councils.

Your Parish Council has again been busy on your behalf, and the team remains the same with no personnel changes to report. As you will hear, the council's finances remain in good shape with adequate reserves. We have some money coming in from our share of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which is paid by construction firms to Dacorum and a proportion is then distributed to relevant Parish Councils. We can only spend this money on infrastructure projects and have time constraints, so thoughts ideas are always welcome. Last year, amongst other things, we contributed to maintaining village facilities including £4,000 towards the Church Room roof and £4,125 towards the Village Hall drain and path improvements.

There has been lots happening in the village in the last 12 months, much of which is reported in the Flaunden Flyer. Highlights include:

The ditches and grips along Black Ditch Lane were repaired and got a thorough testing with some heavy rain in May but happily survived. FPC (via Ann) have reported various road surface failures and potholes throughout the year. Some of our roads are in quite a poor state of repair and some repairs to the worst areas were completed recently. Still more work to do, and top-dressing would tidy it all up, if County Council budgets permit.

This year has seen many planning applications (again!). Several were homeowner plans to extend or improved existing buildings, most of which we are happy to support. We have had completion of several new builds including four houses in Flaunden Park, six houses at The Rise and one in Birch Lane. FPC do our best to try and manage development so as to retain the appearance and nature of the village, but it often feels like a battle! The Parish Council are engaging with planning consultants, where deemed necessary. We have attended Development Planning Committee meetings and managed to get some reassurance regarding the appropriate use of some of the proposed developments.

The development in Bovingdon continues apace and will undoubtedly result in busier roads in our vicinity. We have been seeking a traffic survey so that the impact (if any) on traffic through the village can be measured. Bovingdon high street seems busier already

and whilst the boost for local businesses will be welcome, the potential increases in traffic are a less attractive outcome.

The proposal for a solar farm near Pudds Cross has been approved despite several of the Dacorum councillors voting against because, amongst other reasons, it removes green-belt land from farming use and has no local benefits. We understand that the land will be redesignated as “grey belt” and may therefore also be targeted for residential development in the future.

Taryn managed to get the collections from our many litter bins around the village sorted out and they now are scheduled to get emptied twice a week, hopefully resolving the issue of them overflowing and presenting health hazards. She has also been working hard to tidy up the areas around the benches in the village, including arranging for refurbished and replacement benches that are now in place and being used! The Hogpits Bottom area around the post-box has lovely new paving and kerb edging as well as a new noticeboard. The bench area at the top of the village by the telephone box has had a new base and is looking very smart.

Several of the six Gateways into the village – the big wooden structures on each of the entry roads – are earmarked for renewal similarly to the one by the village hall which was replaced in summer of 2021. A budget has been set aside, and Taryn is arranging for the first (worst) one at Flaunden Lane near Venus Hill to be replaced. Work is underway to build the gate, and installation should follow very soon.

Whist there wasn't a full spring litter blitz this year (not needed as our village warden John, who is on his own now that Terry has retired, does such a good job) there was a mini blitz just as a last pre-spring tidy-up.

In mid-July, several of your councillors attended Springview Quarry to meet the owner and Herts County Councillors and to see the progress that has been made to restoring the quarry to its approved state. The work, which involves grading the waste materials into fine, coarse and hardcore materials, is very slow as it could really use a much bigger grading machine, but work is ongoing and Elena and other councillors along with Herts County Councillors are now visiting regularly to keep an eye on progress.

There were central government proposals to change the way local government is structured by removing the District Council and County Council layers and replace them with one or more Unitary Authority(s). This means that the role of the District Council will be combined with the role of the County Council but, realistically, Hertfordshire is too big

and too diverse an area for there to be just one council. Dacorum have submitted their preferred structure (four Unitary Authorities) to Hertfordshire County Council following the result of their indicative vote at their cabinet in November last year. A decision is still awaited.

Simon has been liaising with our local police following a series of burglaries in the area this year. Several arrests were made recently relating to burglaries across Hertfordshire. Whilst it is good news, it is not guaranteed that those arrested were the ones committing crime here and so everyone is urged to remain vigilant and report any suspicious behaviour as soon they are able. Advice from our local officers about securing houses has been circulated on the parish email as well as via the neighbourhood watch notifications from Hertfordshire Constabulary.

The annual Pancake Race event took place on Sunday 22 February at the Village Hall and was a great success despite the weather and a lower turnout than usual, probably as much to do with the clash with half-term as the decidedly soggy ground conditions. Thanks to the team of volunteers led by Jane for their hard work organising and running the event.

Finally, as always, some huge thanks are due from me on behalf of us all.

To all our parish councillors, Taryn, Elena, Simon, Geoff and now Ann, for their work in maintaining our village as such a great place to live.

To our Dacorum and Hertfordshire County Council representatives, Stewart Riddick, Gbola Adeleke, Phillip Walker and Richard Roberts for their invaluable support in all matters (including financial as well as expertise and advice) that they can assist with.

To our village warden – John – who, unpaid (assisted by Ann), does such a fabulous job of keeping our village clean and tidy.

To all those involved in the production of the fantastic Flaunden Flyer; Jane Duncan, Leo Holden (despite having moved away), Jack Debnam, Mandy Hemmings, and Vanessa Robinson

To the members of the village hall committee, who provide the space that we regularly use for meetings an events and who work so hard to maintain and improve the facility that is available for us all

To all the volunteers who willingly give up their time to organise and run our events and to all our villagers who attend and support the events come sun, rain and mud, raising money to maintain our communal buildings – the village hall, the church and the church room.

And again, to the two people who are the most important to the successful smooth running of the parish council. Mandy Taylor, who looks after the unenviable task of producing the agendas and minutes of the parish council meetings, and Jack Debnam, who performs the role of Clerk to the parish council and is also our Financial Officer. Both roles carry huge responsibility and are very time consuming – he is the person who must ensure that all the council's actions are lawful and that our finances meet with all legal requirements.

Thank you for attending this evening's Annual Parish Meeting and I hope to see you all at future Parish council meetings.

David Imroth

Parish Council Chair