

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

Date: Monday 7 September 2026

Time: 7.30 pm

Venue: St Leonard's Church, Flamstead

Members of the press and public were invited to attend.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Behr, Cllr Crowie, and Cllr Williams.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 6th July 2026 were a correct record.

Proposed by: Cllr Humphreys

Seconded by: Cllr Crawley

4. Public and Press Participation

Friendless Lane

Cllr Pither provided an update on the position at Friendless Lane.

The Police were not invited to the meeting, having previously responded to the Council's questions. The Head of Planning was invited but declined because enforcement action remained active, and attendance could prejudice the Council's legal position. Victoria Collins MP was unable to attend due to parliamentary commitments, and her secretary submitted apologies on her behalf. Correspondence from Victoria Collins MP concerning the current position was reported to the meeting.

It was noted that Dacorum Borough Council had acted promptly by obtaining a stop notice and an injunction over the Easter weekend. Further action was pursued when these measures were breached. Cllr Pither and Cllr Humphreys attended the High Court as representatives of Flamstead.

The occupants were given one month to leave the site and have complied. The injunction remains in force for two years and may subsequently be renewed. It prohibits the individuals concerned from living, working or remaining on the land.

The initial injunction did not include a power of arrest, partly because the occupants were identified as "persons unknown". During the proceedings, witness statements were submitted that established their identities and enabled further enforcement action.

The meeting recorded its appreciation for Dacorum Borough Council, the Parish Council representatives and residents who had contributed to the outcome. It was noted that the case had attracted wider attention and could assist other communities facing similar circumstances.

The planning process remains separate from the enforcement proceedings and must be handled in accordance with planning law. An initial application relating to 14 pitches remains on record. A revised application for nine pitches was discussed, but this has not yet been submitted. Concern was expressed that the planning process could remain unresolved for a considerable period.

Victoria Collins MP's correspondence noted that the final order prohibited use of the land without lawful planning permission but did not expressly require the land to be cleared.

Dacorum Borough Council continued to assess the position, including the implications of any appeal and the appropriate process for restoring the land.

The meeting acknowledged that the matter was complex, and that Dacorum Borough Council could not provide a detailed public update while enforcement action remained active.

Questions from the Public

Possible contamination

A resident asked whether hardcore deposited on the site might be contaminated and whether it presented a risk.

It was confirmed that no evidence of contamination was currently available. The suggestion was believed to be unsubstantiated, although the position would need to be determined through the appropriate process. The intention remained that the land should be restored to its previous condition.

Comparison with the Old Watling Street site

A question was raised about the difference between Friendless Lane and the traveller site on Old Watling Street.

It was explained that the sites had different planning histories and classifications. Old Watling Street was considered to fall within grey belt, whereas Friendless Lane was subject to different planning considerations. The Parish Council had objected to the Old Watling Street proposal, but planning permission had been granted by Dacorum Borough Council.

Cllr Jane Timmis noted that an earlier permission at Old Cherry Tree Lodge had made the subsequent application easier to approve. Concern was also expressed that local provision was not meeting the needs of the travelling community.

Cllr Alison Ford confirmed that the Parish Council remained in regular contact with Dacorum Borough Council's Planning Team and would continue to pursue the matter.

Additional pitches at Cherry Tree Lodge

Concern was expressed that conditions attached to the first permission had reportedly not been met, despite a further application for additional pitches being considered.

Friendless Lane planning application

A resident asked why Dacorum Borough Council could not refuse the application immediately.

It was explained that every planning application must be considered fairly and in accordance with the statutory planning process. The Parish Council would ask Dacorum Borough Council whether a time limit could be applied to prevent the application from remaining unresolved indefinitely.

Action: Parish Council to pursue the application timetable with Dacorum Borough Council.

Compulsory purchase

The possibility of compulsory purchase was raised. It was reported that the land had been purchased in December and might subsequently have been divided into individual plots. The ownership position was unclear because these changes were not yet evident from Land Registry records. It was also suggested that some plots might have been gifted.

Clearance and restoration

Residents asked when the site would be cleared and whether Dacorum Borough Council could undertake the work.

The meeting understood that the High Court judge might have required both vacation and restoration of the land, but this was not expressly recorded in the final order. The full judgment is awaited and expected to clarify the position. It should become publicly available following the relevant three-month period.

It was suggested that, where legally possible, the appropriate authority could arrange clearance and seek to recover the cost from the landowners. The meeting was advised that patience would be required while the legal and enforcement processes continued.

Dacorum Borough Council was reported to have spent more than £50,000 on court proceedings and injunctions. Enforcement could be complicated if the land has been divided into smaller plots under different ownership.

The Parish Council believe that Dacorum Borough Council have a way forward but was unable to disclose details while action remained ongoing.

Lessons learned

Residents stressed the importance of recognising the efforts of local people who had acted quickly when the site was first occupied. It was suggested that the Parish Council should establish a clear procedure for responding to any comparable incident in the future.

The Council agreed that lessons should be learned and that a well-publicised response procedure should be developed.

Action: Parish Council to consider a response policy and communication procedure for comparable incidents.

Planning application 26/01756/FUL

Liz Philpott presented the principal points concerning the proposal for seven affordable homes on land west of Trowley Bottom.

The scheme is being proposed specifically as a rural exception site to meet an identified affordable housing need in Flamstead. The need is evidenced by the Flamstead Housing Needs Survey 2023, the survey identified a net requirement for 12 affordable homes within the parish. The mix of one- and two-bedroom properties directly responds to the shortage of smaller properties identified within the survey. These would not be unrestricted open-market homes, the intention is that the properties would be prioritised for people with a strong connection.

The application is supported by technical assessments covering highways, drainage, flood risk, ecology, biodiversity, trees, heritage and sustainability. Overall, the proposal represents a modest and locally focused development, delivering 7 affordable homes.

Members of the public raised the following concerns:

- The homes might not remain genuinely affordable, given local property values.
- A one-bedroom home in the area could cost approximately £300,000.
- Trowley Bottom experiences regular flooding and requires the use of sandbags.
- There is no pavement connecting the site with village services and public transport.
- The site is more than half a mile from shops and bus services.
- Residents would probably need cars, adding pressure to limited parking.
- The road is used by agricultural vehicles and as an alternative route during disruption on the M1.
- The area might not be capable of accommodating additional traffic and residents.

It was noted that three sites at the upper end of the village had previously been identified, but those sites were unavailable.

The Parish Council confirmed that it was a statutory consultee, and that Dacorum Borough Council would make the final decision.

Following discussion, the Parish Council resolved to object to application 26/01756/FUL.

The Chair closed the public participation section of the meeting.

5. Friendless Lane Update

The detailed Friendless Lane update and associated public questions were recorded under minute 4.

6. Report from Cllr Jane Timmis

No separate report was recorded.

7. Report from Cllr Caroline Smith-Wright

Cllr Smith-Wright reflected on the action taken by the village and partner authorities. The first priority had been to secure the occupants' removal from the site, with the planning process forming the next stage.

She noted that the prompt action of residents, councillors and Dacorum Borough Council had enabled an injunction to be obtained quickly. Victoria Collins MP had received enquiries from other MPs about the approach taken in Flamstead.

Although further work remained and the continuing position caused understandable anxiety, the outcome to date represented a significant achievement.

8. New Planning Applications

Application	Location and proposal	Parish Council response
26/01756/FUL	Land west of Trowley Bottom, Flamstead - construction of seven affordable dwellings comprising three one-bedroom and four two-bedroom units	Objection raised following consideration under minute 4
26/01685/PIP	Land west of Chequers Hill, Flamstead - demolition of existing buildings and erection of between one and three dwellings	Objection raised
26/01669/FUL	River Hall Cottage, Old Watling Street, Flamstead - replacement dwelling, detached double garage and new access	No objection
26/01287/RET	Land east of Watling Girth, Old Watling Street, Flamstead - extension and reconfiguration of the existing Gypsy and Traveller site, including seven additional pitches, a community day room, drainage and highway works	Objection raised

The objection to application 26/01685/PIP was based on:

- Proximity to adjoining properties.
- Inadequate access.
- Increased traffic.
- Overdevelopment.
- Pressure on existing community facilities.
- Traffic and highway concerns.
- Harm to the Green Belt.
- Impact on the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation.

The objection to application 26/01287/RET was based on:

- Proximity to adjoining properties.
- Inadequate access.
- Increased traffic.
- Increased pollution.
- Impact on residential amenity.
- Pressure on existing community facilities.
- Traffic and highway concerns.

9. Planning Decisions by Dacorum Borough Council

The following decisions taken during July and August 2026 were noted:

Application	Location and proposal	Decision
26/01214/FHA	18 College Close, Flamstead - conversion of a garden outbuilding into a workspace	Granted
26/01429/FHA	29 Parsons Close, Flamstead - single-storey rear extension	Granted
26/01073/FUL	Land west of River Hill, Flamstead - new dwelling	Refused

Application	Location and proposal	Decision
26/01637/LDP	Watling Cottage, London Road, Flamstead - construction of a carport and storage area	Granted
26/01487/LDP	15 Old Watling Street, Flamstead - single-storey side extension	Granted
26/01385/FHA	Hillside View, Old Watling Street, Flamstead - first-floor side extension	Refused
26/01003/LBC	Verlam Cottage, River Hill, Flamstead - replacement and repair of damaged walls	Granted
25/02344/FUL	Land adjacent to Rose Cottage, River Hill, Flamstead - demolition of the existing garage and viewing deck and construction of a one-bedroom dwelling	Granted

10. Defibrillator

Discussion concerning the use of the defibrillator and the cost of a replacement was deferred until October 2026.

The Clerk has contacted the British Heart Foundation and completed the required form to obtain information about the frequency of defibrillator use. The matter remained ongoing.

Action: Clerk to continue enquiries and report to the October meeting.

11. Electric Vehicle Charging Points

Consideration of electric vehicle charging points in Flamstead was deferred until October 2026.

Priory Orchard had been considered but might be unsuitable because of the number of vehicles already parked there. Alternative locations suggested by the Clerk included Vicarage Gardens, the Pavilion and the Friendless Lane car park. A response was awaited.

Action: Clerk to continue enquiries and report to the October meeting.

12. Clerk's Salary and Pension

Consideration of the percentage salary increase, and pension arrangements was deferred until October 2026.

13. Pavilion Security

Discussion was deferred until October 2026.

14. Policies

Consideration of the IT Policy, CCTV Policy and Data Protection Policy was deferred until October 2026.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their time and attendance and expressed appreciation for the efforts of all those involved in the Friendless Lane matter.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting.

Signed: _____

Chairman

Date: _____