**REPORT TO A MEETING OF THE ENGAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE OF DUSTON PARISH COUNCIL 8TH MARCH 2018**

**AGENDA ITEM 9 – PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER**

**1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 To consult with the Engagement and Environment Committee on reviewed arrangements for the production and distribution of the Duston Parish Council Newsletter.

**2. Background**

2.1 Duston has a significant number of older residents who may be inclined to use parish council services and facilities, but do not generally access information through the internet. The newsletter is produced and distributed quarterly by the parish council with those residents in mind.

2.2 At present, each issue of the newsletter is designed, printed and hand delivered by external contractors.

2.3 Currently, the newsletter is funded by Duston Parish Council, with individual organisations being asked to contribute sponsorship of £250 per issue on an ad hoc basis.

**3. Objectives and Content**

3.1 The key aims of the newsletter are:

* To give information specifically relating to the activities of Duston Parish Council
* In the interests of transparency and accountability, to update local council tax payers on work that has been undertaken by Duston Parish Council
* To market and advertise events and services provided by, and through, Duston Parish Council with the aim of increasing community engagement and income from parish council facilities.
* To provide key information and public notices which may be useful to local residents.

3.2 The content of each issue should reflect these objectives and meet the community engagement and marketing objectives of Duston Parish Council.

**4. Budget and Funding**

4.1 At present the newsletter is funded by the parish council, with sponsorship of £250 being found for each issue on an ad hoc basis. The newsletter currently costs the parish council between £1,000 and £1,300 per issue.

4.2 Larger local business are to be contacted with the view of securing adequate sponsorship funding to make the newsletter cost neutral to the parish council.

4.3 Having speculatively approached a number of printers and distributers, officers believe that savings can be made by retendering, and will seek to do this.

4.4 In January 2018 Council set the total newsletter budget for 2018/2019 at £5,000. This was a contingency to ensure that the newsletter could continue to be produced if, for some reason, adequate sponsorship was not forthcoming.

**5. Printing and Distribution**

5.1 As of the beginning of 2018 there were 7,433 residential properties in Duston.

5.2 Newsletters will also be distribute to prominent local businesses and will be available at Duston Community Centre and St Luke’s centre.

5.3 Previous print runs have been in the order of 10,000 copies per issue, which would be reduced to 8,000 per issue based on the number of properties in Duston and distribution to local businesses.

5.4 Many distribution companies, including Royal Mail, offer demographic profiling to increase the efficiency of targeted deliveries. Officers will explore this option as a way to better target distribution with the aim of reducing unnecessary printing and delivery costs going forward.

5.5 The newsletter design should take into account the older demographic it is intended for, and as such the current full colour A4 format would be retained with a revised design.

**6. Schedule and Production**

6.1 The newsletter schedule will continue as at present, with issues being produced and distributed in January, April, July and October of each year.

6.2 The design and content of each issue will be coordinated and produced by officers of the council, having first requested contributions from members of the council and following consultation with the Engagement and Environment Committee.

6.3 Councillors will be notified of specific production lead times and deadlines after revised printing and distribution arrangements have been finalised.

**7. E-newsletter**

7.1 Officers will also work to create an electronic version of the newsletter to extend it’s reach, and to naturally reduce the production and distribution of the paper version over a period of time.

7.2 The e-newsletter will be distributed directly by email to local residents who have indicated that they wish to receive it.

7.3 The electronic version will also be posted on the parish council’s website and publicised through social media.

7.4 Any distribution databases created for this purpose will comply with the requirements of GDPR.

**8. RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee resolves to:

1. Note the revised arrangements for the Duston Parish Council Newsletter
2. Receive further progress updates