



Annual Report of Duston Parish Council

It has been a 1 year since the election of May 2021.

We are all shocked with the sudden and unexpected passing of our Chair Shaun Pape. He was well regarded by many for his professional and easy going manner. His passing was a difficult moment for the Parish Council but ultimately we have picked ourselves up and marched forwards just as Shaun would have wanted us to do. We are looking to plant a tree in Shaun's memory in the future.

Like other organisations we have been adjusting to post pandemic life. After the best part of two years the Parish Council is starting to return to some kind of normality. During the pandemic the opportunity was taken to renovate Duston Community Centre. A big change has been that the facilities team are now based in the front office as people come into the community centre.

In 2012 the Parish Council took on the former school site St Luke's and turned it into a Community Centre. It is an old building which requires much maintenance and upkeep. This is why part of the building is let out to commercial tenants to ensure that it helps pay for itself. In these past few months we have been carrying out much needed renovation and repair work and the building is looking a lot better. We had much positive feedback from the various groups

based there. However, the more we repair the more we find that needs doing. We are still finding stuff!

Duston Parish Council is an ambitious council and we are now pleased that Errington Park, Mendip Park, Grafton Way Park and Melbourne Park is in our ownership. In the near future we expect the public open space at the new build development at Telstar Way to transfer to Duston Parish Council. Other asset transfers are proving to be frustrating slow. We have asked West Northamptonshire Council for the remaining parks in Duston and the two allotment sites but this seems to have stalled for the time being. The Heritage Features (Timken Gates & Rosevilla Hut and access way) and the Alfred Knight footpath with streetlights are still underway.

With the pandemic over we have started once again to put on our usual calendar of events. Last November we saw the return of the Christmas Market at St Luke's Centre. The Easter trial proved to be popular with local people and was well received. The Easter trial encourages residents to explore the whole of Duston. Other events included monthly health talks and festive windows trial. After a two year hiatus Duston Fun Day is returning again in June. This year we will have a jubilee theme. We have planted a tree on St Luke's Field as part of the Queen Greens Canopy. We also placed 14 hanging baskets across Duston at various shops.

The local community organised a "Santa in van" drive around the village which is something we supported by funding some of the printing and giving them St Luke's Car Park to prepare. The Parish Council supported Christmas carols at St Francis Church.

We have installed 5 new benches. Three of them are commemorative benches which have been well received by the community. They are on Bants Lane, Newton Road Open Space and the south entrance to Sandy Lane walk. We have also installed a new bench next to Templemore and one in Duston Cemetery. Two bins have also been installed at the Eastfield Road / Main Road junction and at a bus stop on Wrenbury Road.

We purchased a new parish council noticeboard on Weggs Farm Road and installed new entrance barriers to Mendip Park. The new "Welcome to Duston" signs have enhanced the entrances to the parish.

We try to engage positively with West Northamptonshire Council but they are still very much finding their feet after the reorganisation. We are still actively trying to find out how much Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (these are developer contributions to the community) is owed to the civil parish of Duston.

Previously Duston Parish Council used to receive police reports about crime and anti-social behaviour in the area. The Police have stopped doing these reports this past year as they said

the reports were not informative and they needed to focus on their front line jobs. Hopefully at some point in the future Duston Parish Council will once again have some dialogue with the local Neighbourhood Policing Team.

After many years of talks and objections we are now finally starting to see developers move onto green fields to our East (in the parishes of Harpole, Harlestone and Harlestone Manor) and this prompted many concerns from our residents. We have repeated our long standing view that our road network needs to be improved (such as completion of Sandy Lane Relief Road and North West Relief Road) and our amenities such as doctor surgeries, schools and library need to be enhanced.

We continue to communicate with parishioners through noticeboards, website, social media channels and local publications known as community connect and In and Around Duston. The website has been upgraded so it is more user friendly to people with disabilities.

We are currently looking at our Youth provision and will hopefully have something to announce very soon.

At the election of May 2021 we saw Mike Pepper and David Huffadine-Smith stand down and we once again thank them for their many years of service to Duston. Since the election we have had Cllr Anna King leave us but we have had Cllrs Miles Barnes, Sandra Roper, Joanne Mumford and Iain Liddon join us as new members.