



Annual Report of Duston Parish Council 2023

We have now emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic and the Council has been getting on with its usual activities.

Once again this year both Duston Community Centre and St Luke's Centre have been important hubs for the local community. It is great to see them well used by members of the public.

We said goodbye Pete Wisbey who left the Council after more than 6 years service. George Nemteanu has taken on the role of Facilities & Operations Manager. We welcomed Sean Millar, Jenny Evans, Ryan Ikvanieks and Daniel Bell to the Council.

Jenny continues to work on The Grow Together Allotment which is still proving to be a fabulous community resource. Council have now agreed aims and objectives for this project which will further guide its activities.

This past civic year saw us celebrate the platinum jubilee but also mourn the passing of the Queen just a few months later. We had a successful jubilee themed Duston Fun Day, a Royal Family display on the bank of St Lukes and installed a commemorative jubilee bench on the grass verge outside the vicarage. Duston Parish Council sent its condolences to the King on the passing of the late Queen.

We have campaigned on a few important local issues this past year such as

- Supporting Harlestone Manor Parish Council to make the rest of the Halestone Road a 30 mph speed limit.
- For safety improvements at the Main Road / Tollgate Way / Bants Lane / Duston Road junction.
- Resurface Limehurst Square.

- Spoke out against the repeated roadworks and disruption on Berrywood Road, Sandy Lane and New Sandy Lane. These roadworks have caused much anguish for local residents particularly those living in St Giles Park.
- Anti-dog fouling. Duston Parish Council purchased signs for lampposts which tries to promote responsible dog ownership.

We planted a tree each for John Caswell and Shaun Pape at Duston Sports Centre. Both their families attended and joined for coffee/tea afterwards.

As part of the Queen Green Canopy we planted a tree on St Luke's Field in the summer as well as a tree to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Duston based 11th Northampton Boys Brigade. In addition, we planted 45 saplings on St Luke's Field.

The Facilities & Operations Team have started to do a community litter pick once a month. They continue to help local people without internet access to report problems.

We replaced the old green bench in the village centre with a nice new one.

We have installed four additional bins, which are now well used. The locations are

- Quarry Road near the shops / bus stop
- Westbury Close Open Space (between Westbury Close and Bants Lane)
- In between Errington Park and Park Avenue
- Path adjoining Brockwood Close & Velocette Way

At our parks (Errington, Mendip, Grafton Way Meadow, St Luke's) we installed DPC signage to show our ownership. An item of play equipment had to be removed from Errington Park due to safety reasons but this was promptly replaced by the Parish Council with a cockerel two way springie.

This year the Council provided a "Warm Room" for local residents during the cold winter months. This was based at Eastfield Close Community Hub. Thank you to Northampton Partnership Homes for letting us use this space.

We have done an 8 month trial youth club in partnership with Northampton Leisure Trust and we are soon to evaluate how this is gone.

This year we have helped maintain two pieces of land that are unregistered with the land registry. The first is the path between Kerrfield estate and Sir John Pascoe Way. The second is the hedge adjacent to Duston Village Hall. This proved popular with local people.

In terms of events we continue to with our free monthly Health and Wellbeing Talks which are run in partnership with St Luke's PPG, Genesis Healthcare and Three Shires. We have our indoor car boot sales. We held our annual Christmas Market at St Luke's Centre. We held our Community Info & Wellness Fair at Duston Community Centre.

After years of persistence Duston Parish Council was finally given approximately £209K in what it was owed in back dated Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). However, we don't believe

this is the final figure. There is also still much Section 106 that is outstanding. We have made progress but there is still some way to go before this issue is resolved.

The CIL received has already been put to use and we have resurfaced the pathway entrance into Grafton Way Meadow. It is now much more welcoming. Also on Grafton Way Meadow we have created a “rewilding” area to help with biodiversity.

The most significant test of the year for the Council has been rapidly rising energy costs and double digit inflation. High running costs for Duston Community Centre and St Luke’s Centre has been the biggest challenge faced by the Council. Ultimately, after careful consideration the Council put together a budget that safeguarded its services and ambitions for the future whilst also having to deal with escalating energy costs and inflation.

Just as the civic year ends the Council were pleased to award Duston Scouts a grant of £1000 for their activities.

Much is planned for the next civic municipal year 2023/24.