

Duston Parish Council has met on thirteen separate occasions, over the last twelve months and I am grateful for the attendance levels of all Councillors. Although by video is not the same as sitting here in Duston Community Centre.

Following the recent elections we have lost several Councillors. I would like to thank Cllr. Mike Pepper, Cllr. Suresh Patel, Cllr. David Huffadine-Smith, Cllr. Alison Nish and Cllr. Ken Clarke for their commitment and efforts on behalf of the Parish.

I would like to thank the local Borough Councillors, Cllr. Tim Hadland and Cllr Suresh Patel for the work they have done for the residents of Duston and our County Councillor Matt Golby.

I would like to offer our congratulations to our recently elected West Northamptonshire Councillors Matt Golby, Anna King and Jake Roberts for Duston West and St. Crispins, and Nigel Hinch, Paul Dyball and Greg Lunn for Duston East. All candidates, whether successful or not, that stood for these new seats should be thanked for their commitment and willingness to represent and support all areas of Duston.

It is good to see the new Council in place and to welcome back some 'old faces' who have returned to the Council. I would particularly like to welcome Cllr. Jan Ennis-Clarke, Cllr. Nigel Hinch and Cllr. Anna King as new members of the Council.

It has been a difficult year for everyone and the situation has meant that very few, if any, Parish events have taken place. However, it is a tribute to the Council considering what projects have been implemented.

These have included:

Working with the RBL, Church and the Duston Covid-19 Facebook group to provide support for the residents of Duston during the pandemic. The excellent work carried out by this partnership will be carried on as it metamorphoses into the Duston Good Neighbour Scheme;

Working with the residents of the Timken development regarding management companies;

Liaising with NBC regarding CIL and S106 money;

Working with residents regarding HMO's;

Looking at providing a lasting memorial, in the form of commemorative benches, to the sacrifices of Duston residents during the recent pandemic.

The Parish Council have made several grants to organisations working in the Parish. These include The Royal British Legion, Boys Brigade, Wellbeing café, Favell Day Services, Girl Guides, Duston Village Hall and Affinity Day Care.

Duston Parish Council also supported the essential and vital work of our local police, by providing funds for the purchase of a new bike.

The Council also recognises the work carried out by the staff during the pandemic. This has seen a complete and very successful refurbishment of the Community Centre, our thanks to Pete Wisbey and his team for this. The move by staff into the new reception centre is an excellent development to the appearance of the centre. The continued work with the Speed signs and attempts to reduce traffic speed across the Parish.

We also thank the events staff for the creative way in which they have put on virtual events for the residents of Duston. These have included an Easter egg hunt, craft fair, festive pets competition and also provided the tree of hope and the tallest sunflower competition.

We are particularly pleased to accept transfer of several public areas from NBC and the developers. These include Errington, Grafton, Melbourne and Mendip Parks, Rose Villa Garden, Timken Gates and the strip of land behind Pendle Road. This ensures that these vital areas of Duston are preserved and protected by the Parish for the future generations of Duston Residents.

The Parish Council continues to work with the developers and the various Management Companies to hopefully improve both the services that they deliver to you and the local environment.

The Parish Council responded swiftly to support vulnerable residents during the current Covid-19 pandemic. This involved working with the RBL and local residents to set up a Covid support group. I am particularly thankful to Cllrs. Enright-King, Stonehouse and Maitland for this work.

Council have also embedded into its structure Wellbeing and now this forms part of the new Engagement and Wellbeing Committee.

Duston Parish Council will continue to work with all agencies and especially WNC, to ensure that residents have the necessary facilities and resources to make a happy and peaceful place to live.

I would also like to thank all the groups and individuals involved across the parish this includes the Councillors around this table and the Parish Clerk, Deputy Clerk and all staff for their continued work for the residents of Duston.

Shaun Pape
Chairman