



DUSTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Duston Parish Council
Duston Community Centre
Pendle Road
Duston
Northampton
NN5 6DT

Resources and General Purposes Committee

Cllrs Enright-King, Ingram, Barnes, Ennis-Clark, Maitland

30th November 2023

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Resources and General Purposes Committee to be held at Duston Community Centre on Wednesday 6th December 2023 commencing at 7.00pm for the purpose of transacting the following business.

Issued by:

Gary Youens
Parish Clerk, Duston Parish Council

AGENDA

RGPC37/23. To receive apologies for absence

RGPC38/23. To receive and approve the minutes for signature of the meeting held on 12th October 2023 (APPENDIX A)

RGPC39/23. To receive declarations of interest under the Council's Code of Conduct related to business on the agenda (*Members should disclose any interests in the business to be discussed*)

and are reminded that the disclosure of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest will require that the member withdraws from the meeting room during the transaction of that item of business).

RGPC40/23. Public Participation Session (*Persons wishing to address the committee on an agenda item may register their intention to do so by telephone or email by 12 noon on the day of the meeting and may speak for a maximum of 3 minutes).*

RGPC41/23. Four Year Plan Review

- To review the Four Year Plan and identify projects to prioritise for budgetary consideration (APPENDIX B).

RGPC42/23. NCALC AI Task Group

- To receive a verbal update from the Assistant Clerk upon the NCALC AI Task Group session.

RGPC43/22. Councillor IT Equipment

- To discuss the current arrangement and if there needs to be changes.

RGPC44/23. Asset Transfers to Duston Parish Council

- To receive a verbal update on the following:
 - a) Transfer of Parks, Public Open Space & Allotments from West Northamptonshire Council
 - b) Transfer of Telstar Way POS (known as “Duston Gardens”)
 - c) Transfer of Alfred Knight Footpath, 3 streetlights and Rosevilla Road Access Way.

RGPC45/23. St. Luke’s Centre and Field Transfer

- a) To review and discuss West Northamptonshire Council’s community asset transfer policy (APPENDIX C)
- b) To consider applying for a community asset transfer for St. Luke’s Centre and St. Lukes Playfield.

RGPC46/23. Staff Training

- To use funds from General Reserves, if necessary, to pay for one off staff training from NCALC on the structure and processes of parish councils and also customer care and complaint training (APPENDIX D)

RGPC47/23. Draft Budget 2024/25

- To review and discuss the Draft Budget for 2024/25 (APPENDIX E)

RGPC48/23. Meetings Papers Policy

- To review the updated version Meetings Papers Policy (APPENDIX F)

RGPC49/23. Recruitment of Facilities & Estates Officer

- To discuss the current recruitment of the Facilities & Estates Officer

RGPC50/23. Appointment of Staffing Sub-Committee

- To appoint members of the staffing sub-committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2023/24 as set out in the disciplinary and grievance procedure.

RGPC51/23. Exclusion of Press and Public

In view of the confidential nature of the following item, which relates to the business matters of other individuals and organisation, the public shall be excluded while the following item is discussed. This is in accordance with the Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960 as amended by the Local Government Act 1972.

RGPC52/23. HR Matters

- To discuss current HR issue(s) and agree how to proceed (APPENDIX G)



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Duston Community Centre
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Duston
Northampton
NN5 6DT

Resources and General Purposes Committee **Minutes 12th October 2023**

Chair: Cllr J Ennis-Clark

Councillors Present: Enright-King, Ingram

IN ATTENDANCE:

Gary Youens – Clerk

Ryan Ikavnieks – Assistant Clerk

George Nemteanu – Facilities and Operations Manager

RGPC20/23. To receive apologies for absence

- Apologies were received from Cllr Barnes

RGPC21/23. To receive and approve the minutes for signature of the meeting held on 2nd August 2023

- **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd of August 2023 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair (APPENDIX A).

RGPC22/23. To receive declarations of interest under the Council's Code of Conduct related to business on the agenda

- Members were reminded of the need to declare any interests in the items on this agenda, whether pecuniary or otherwise. There were no interest declared.

RGPC23/23. Public Participation Session

- There were no members of the public present.

RGPC24/23. Budget Monitoring

- **RESOLVED:** That the budget monitoring report titled '3 months to June 2023 v. budget 2023/24' was received, discussed and noted (APPENDIX B)

RGPC25/23. St Luke's Churchyard

- **RESOLVED:**
 - a) That the quote for maintaining St Luke's churchyard (£3000+VAT per annum for 5 cuts a year) was received.
 - b) That it should be cut 4 times a year in the growing seasons. This to be included in the draft budget for 2023/24.

RGPC26/22. Bowling Green Steps

- **RESOLVED:**
 - a) That the request to create steps between the bowling green and the coffee box at Duston Sports Centre from the Trilogy Active and the Bowls Club was received, discussed and noted (APPENDIX D).
 - b) That the Clerk responds to the request by informing the Bowls Club and Trilogy Active to apply for a grant to support the construction.

RGPC27/23. Asset Transfers to Duston Parish Council

- The Clerk gave a brief verbal update regarding where the ongoing asset transfers. There has been a last minute hold up with Telstar Way POS which should soon be resolved. Rose villa Road should be resurfaced soon by David Wilson homes as per previously agreed. Rose Villa Road is a public right of way that everybody in Duston can use. The "Private Road" signs are open to misinterpretation and this will need to be rectified once transfer is complete.
- **RESOLVED:**
 - a) That the verbal update regarding the transfer of Parks, Public Open Space & Allotments from West Northamptonshire Council was received and noted.
 - b) That the verbal update regarding the transfer of Telstar Way POS (known as "Duston Gardens") was received and noted.

- c) That the verbal Update regarding the transfer of Alfred Knight Footpath, 3 streetlights and Rosevilla Road Access Way was received and noted.

RGPC28/23. Environmental Strategy Insourcing and Outsourcing

- **RESOLVED:**
 - a) That the Environmental Strategy for Insourcing and Outsourcing was discussed and noted the report (APPENDIX E).
 - b) The Committee agreed the Environment Strategy in the report and that it should be implemented.

RGPC29/23. Annual Facilities Review

- The Facilities and Operations Manager gave a presentation on the running of both Duston Community Centre and St Luke's Centre and answered questions from the Committee.
- **RESOLVED:** The Annual Facilities Review (APPENDIX F) was discussed and noted.

RGPC30/23. Room Hire Prices at Duston Community Centre & St Luke's Centre

- The Clerk and Facilities & Operations Manager put forward proposal to increase some room hire prices due to increasing utility and staffing costs.
- **RESOLVED:** The Committee agreed to increase the room hire prices as set out in APPENDIX F.

RGPC31/23. Artificial Intelligence in Local Councils

- The Assistant Clerk sits on the NCALC working party on how AI will impact on the future workings of Clerks and Parish Councils. The Assistant Clerk gave his thoughts on how AI could be used in future.
- **RESOLVED:** That report from the Assistant Clerk was discussed and noted (APPENDIX G).

RGPC32/23. Duston Parish Council Staff Structure

- **RESOLVED:** That the current staffing structure was noted and agreed (APPENDIX H).

RGPC33/23. Budget Priorities for 2024-25

- Various budget proposals were discussed such as grass cutting at St Luke's Churchyard, a path around Errington Park and a bin at Telstar Way. The Four Year Plan should be on the next Council agenda to consider other ideas.
- **RESOLVED:** That the Four Year Plan be reviewed at the next ordinary meeting of Council for review and discussion.

RGPC34/23. Energy Usage at café in Duston Community Centre

- The Facilities and Operations Manager informed the Committee how much energy is being consumed according to the recently installed smart metre and the unit price.
- **RESOLVED:** That the update upon energy usage at Duston Community Centre was received, discussed and noted.

RGPC35/21. Exclusion of Press and Public

In view of the confidential nature of the following item, which relates to the business matters of other individuals and organisation, the public shall be excluded while the following item is discussed. This is in accordance with the Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960 as amended by the Local Government Act 1972.

RGPC36/23. Rent Review

- **RESOLVED:** To proceed with a rent review for the tenant after taking external advice.

The meeting ended at 9:00PM

DELIVERING FOR DUSTON

FOUR YEAR ACTION PLAN

1st April 2022 – 31st March 2026

Introduction

This year marked the 30 year anniversary of Duston Parish Council (DPC). Over this time the Parish Council has gradually taken on more of a role in making Duston a better place to live and work. There are notable things that happened in that first decade or so that are still here benefitting residents today. In 2001 the Parish Council installed Triumph Gardens play area and the path linking it to Aquitaine Close. In 1998 DPC installed the commemorative bench on Bants Lane to mark the passing of Princess Diana funeral cortege. The work continued in the next decade as well such as putting in a path around the perimeter of the Quarry Park and then installing the MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) at Errington Park.

The Parish Council has also played a role in more difficult times. Following the closure of the British Timken site the Parish Council, despite being a relatively small organisation at the time, worked hard with the developers to try and get the best deal for residents. It secured the future of the Sports Club and Field and ensured this much valued asset stayed in local control and could be safeguarded for future generations.

In the first half of 2000s Northamptonshire County Council took the decision to restructure schools in Northampton and bring it in line with the rest of the county and most of the country. Northampton went from Lower, Middle and Upper Schools to Primary and Secondary. This meant a surplus of school sites and many, such as the Ryeland Middle School, were sold for housing. A strong campaign helped secure the future of St Lukes Lower School and Field as a community facility which DPC now proudly maintains for local residents.

Duston Parish Council has now for some time put on an annual community festival. Not always in the same location or with the same name. Presently it is held at St Luke's Field with the name "Duston Fun Day". This annual community event has become a key event in the local calendar. In recent years there has been a change in the nature of local government across the country.

Both Northampton Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council began to focus more on their core statutory services. This has meant DPC has taken on yet more of a role in the community to fill a void. Most notably it has taken on the freehold and running of the Community Centre at Pendle Road and installed more play and gym equipment. These are the kind of things that principal authorities once did.

Duston has always had a strong sense of community and identity. After the demise of the previous Duston Parish Council in 1965 when the village was incorporated into the Borough of Northampton the community picked up the pieces. The previous Duston Parish Council (1895 – 1965) had an Old Peoples Welfare Committee and after 1965 this became Duston Old Peoples Welfare Association (DOPWA). DOPWA have carried forward the work in helping the older residents. Duston Community Association (DCA) coordinated a huge range of volunteer activities over many years such as running Duston Community Centre and teaching young children to swim at the local swimming pool.

Where we are

Duston Parish Council now finds itself amongst change. The village has gone from being one out of ten parishes in Northampton to one out of 165 parishes in West Northamptonshire. West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is one of the larger local authorities in England. Many principle authorities will be focusing on issues like social services, infrastructure projects, schools places and strategic housing growth. Duston Parish Council now has a simple choice. It can either be a talking shop and just administer itself or it can choose to take on a bigger enhanced role and actually deliver for residents. Duston Parish Council can fill some of the space left by the now defunct Northampton Borough Council. We will look favourably with West Northamptonshire Council about devolving services locally to Duston Parish Council.

Our surroundings are continuing to change as well. Until very recently Duston was on the edge of Northampton surrounded by countryside to the east. Large scale housing development is now taking place in Dallington Grange, Upton Lodge and in Harlestone/Harpole. Despite this change the Parish Council is determined to keep Duston's character and identity.

The Purpose

The core purpose of Duston Parish Council will be to make the Parish a great place to live and work and the guiding overarching principles will be -

1. To protect and enhance both the history and identity of Duston. This will help preserve and enhance the sense of community pride in Duston.
2. To improve the environment and public open spaces in the Parish.
3. To provide cost effective services that meet local needs and aspirations.
4. To keep our local amenities such as shops and restaurants that help to bring the community together and provide for local employment.
5. Provide Community Leadership. The Parish Council alone can't make our locality a great place to live and work. So Duston Parish Council will work in partnership with West Northamptonshire and other stakeholders. We will work alongside all sections of community including young people.

Our Aims

To be implemented by both Councillors and Staff.

Engagement & Wellbeing	
Annual Magazine. DPC "Annual Report" Highlighting local business, community groups and events.	Dec-22
Set Up from Friends of Park Groups.	Dec-23
Quartley Councillor Surgeries	Ongoing
Suck up grass cuttings left by Veolia / Idverde	Dec-24
Engage with Limehurst Square Shops	Ongoing
Christmas Carols at Limeshurst	Ongoing
A resident survey to all domestic properties in Duston	Dec-22
A feasibility study & consultation into a band stand in Errington Park	Feb-23
Be proactive at opportunities in adopting Public Open Space so it doesn't go to management companies	Ongoing
Now Duston is no longer part of the Borough of Northampton the Parish Council will need to become the leader of local civic events.	Ongoing
Re-surface Limhurst Square but keep trees and bins. An improved design.	Dec-25
Continue to run our usual calendar of events.	Ongoing
Develop links with PPG & Mind. Both mental and physical wellbeing is vital to our residents.	Ongoing
Build up a volunteer base that is willing to help and support Parish Council initiatives.	Ongoing
Divide Parish into 12 areas for each councillor to monitor	Ongoing

<u>Environment</u>	
Replace the small noticeboards with double noticeboards in approx same location	By December 2022
Use non-toxic spray to help wildlife	Once Veolia contract expires
To obtain to Public Open Space from West Northants & put it in Parish Council ownership	Ongoing
To obtain ownership of both Bants Lane Allotments & Berrywood Road Allotments	Ongoing
To see how we can enhance both Duston Cemetery & St Luke's Churchyard	Ongoing
Employ an additional "Community Ranger" so DPC has two out in the Parish	By December 2022
A litter bin near Quarry Road shops	Sep-22
Install "Welcome to Duston" signs at Weggs Farm Road, Chiltern Avenue & Cotsworld Avenue	Jun-22
To install finger directional signs around parish	Feb-24
Install "a trim trail" somewhere in Duston in an appropriate location like Mendip Park or Sports Field	Dec-24
Adopt a biodiversity policy. We will look to have some rewilding to support wildlife.	Dec-22
Install more new play equipment at Melbourne Lane, the Quarry and Haydown Green aimed for the younger children.	Jun-22
Do a public consultation on putting in a gateway between Timken Estate & Mendip Park	Dec-25
Keep all four of our defibrillators for the next four years.	Ongoing
Identify Areas for Rewilding to help wildlife	Ongoing
Look to install planters & hanging baskets in each shopping area	Dec-23
Village green status for each park we own and maybe also St Luke's Field	Dec-23
Tree Planting	Ongoing

Consider funding a PCSO for Duston	Ongoing
Install a bench by Bus Stop opposite Timken Way North	Aug-22
Paving outside Duston Library	October 2022
Clerk to bring to Council a tree Policy	Feb-22
To ensure we provide an effective youth provision	Ongoing
Get an additional Vehicle Speed Sign	Dec-23
Commerative bench on verge opposite Timken Gates	Apr-23
Look to improve the entrances to DPC owned parks	Ongoing
Refurbish equipment MUGA at Errington Park, Mendip Park & Grafton Way	Ongoing

Planning	
To revise and update the Neighbourhood Plan	Complete within 2 years
To look at all unregistered land in the Parish	Ongoing
Install 2 – 3 public information boards explaining the history of the parish and its various buildings.	Complete within 2 years
Establish a working party to see how we can enhance Rosevilla Hut & Timken Gates	Dec-26
Get installed electric charging points in appropriate location	Dec-26
Establish a working party to make recommendations to council on CIL / S106 can be spent	Ongoing

Duston Together & Wellbeing

Duston is made up of various estates. Residents do not always know the groups out there that can help. Therefore Duston Parish Council will help bring this all together as we are about “connecting the community”. It should be easy to sign post what organisations are out there

that can meet particular needs of our residents. Knowing what local organisations are out there will improve community wellbeing and satisfaction.

Our Amenities

Shops, restaurants, café and pubs play both a vital economic and community function. Keeping these facilities are vital in making Duston a great place to live. Having our basic amenities nearby, in a reasonable walking distance, helps to reduce car travel and thus pollution. We will look to support each of our shopping areas in the ways that we can.

Concluding Remarks

It is a key role of Duston Parish Council to provide community leadership and take things forward. To make Duston a great place to live and work we need vibrant communities. Duston Parish Council is ambitious for the future. Our aim is for the Parish Council to be responsive and delivering for residents. *To be the best parish to live in West Northamptonshire.*



Adoption of Assets Policy
Approved by Cabinet on an interim basis, 11 October 2022

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- 2.5 'Management company' – a company or other entity (apart from WNC or a parish council) which owns and manages, or is proposed to own and manage, an asset.
- 2.6 'Net zero' – delivering net zero (or less) emissions of carbon dioxide and other gases implicated in global warming, measured as carbon dioxide equivalent warming impact.
- 2.7 'Promoter' – the person or organisation seeking to have an asset adopted. This will normally be the person or organisation who owns the asset.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 There are several considerations which arise when an asset is considered for adoption. These include:

- 3.1.1 How provision is to be made for upkeep.
- 3.1.2 The most appropriate body to adopt the asset in question.
- 3.1.3 How the interests of the public as users, taxpayers, and (in some cases) charge payers are protected.
- 3.1.4 The terms on which the asset is offered for adoption.

- 3.2 These considerations are addressed below.

4. Providing for upkeep

- 4.1 If an asset has a net positive value – that is, income generated from it is likely to exceed costs incurred in looking after it – provision for upkeep is not normally a concern. However, even in such cases it might be necessary to consider management of risk, especially if the adopting body has limited resources to cope with changes in income or costs arising from the asset (for example, if it is a smaller parish council or a management company).
- 4.2 In other cases, there is a generally a net annual cost of looking after an asset. It is this net cost which is the concern, along with consideration of risk. As with net income-generating assets risk is a particular issue if the income stream is significant, costs may vary significantly, or the adopting body has limited resources to cope with changes in income or costs arising from the asset.
- 4.3 Considering provision for funding net cost, Appendix 1 sets out the relevant content of two background documents, ODPM Circular 5/05 and the Chris Britton Consultancy (CBC) paper 'Committed Sums for Future Maintenance in relation to Adoption and Transfer of Infrastructure Assets'. Circular 5/05 was withdrawn when the National Planning Policy Framework was introduced, but without any suggestion that its contents were considered invalid or inappropriate.

- 4.4 Circular 5/05 suggests that where facilities are:
- 4.4.1 Purely for the users of a development it may be appropriate for the developer to make arrangements to fund their upkeep in perpetuity.
 - 4.4.2 For “wider public use” the costs should be taken on by the new owner, but funding (“pump priming”) for the gap before the public sector funding streams arise may reasonably be sought from the developer.
- 4.5 These principles commend themselves in logic and accordingly are considered relevant even though Circular 5/05 has been withdrawn given that there is nothing similar replacing them in the National Policy Framework or currently inconsistent with them. They can reasonably be argued to logically apply whether or not development is the cause of a desire to pass the asset to a new owner.
- 4.6 In the case of assets solely for a specific local public use, these principles can be applied straightforwardly. It is clearly right that the public at large should not be required to fund maintenance and management of an asset that is of benefit to only a small number of people or, in the extreme, to only one person, such as a developer.
- 4.7 However, further consideration is needed for assets in wider public use; specifically, what is an appropriate “pump priming” period? The Circular suggested this should be until “inclusion in public sector funding streams”. However, the structure of local government funding is such that it cannot be assumed to meet the costs of new assets. Council Tax income does not assist, because the grant arrangements deduct assumed income from these sources. Allocations of Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) are time limited. Accordingly, it would be possible to conclude that pump priming should be for an indefinite period, that is, in perpetuity. However, this conflicts with the express wording of the paragraph. Use of a period of ten years may represent an acceptable compromise between those two positions.
- 4.8 Typically, provision for in-perpetuity net costs is made by way of commuted sums. Such sums are designed to produce an income each year which matches the expected annual net costs relating to the asset.
- 4.9 The CBC paper identifies a long-term real interest rate of 2.2%. Analysis set out in Appendix 2 suggests that for WNC the long-term real interest rate is around 2.1%. Using the 2.1% figure would mean that for WNC to receive annual income (actually, reduce its debt costs) by £Z per year would require a commuted sum of £X, calculated as follows:

$$£X = \frac{£Z}{0.021}$$

- 4.10 If a parish council or management company was to receive a commuted sum rather than WNC the money may be placed in an interest-bearing account (rather than being used to

reduce debt) and thus earn a lower real interest rate. This would mean a higher commuted sum. However, it would be unreasonable for the promoter to face a higher cost merely by a change in adopting body. Given this, and given how close the CBC report figure is, it seems reasonable to apply 2.1% in all cases.

5. Adopting bodies

- 5.1 WNC is a large unitary council serving a diverse area. It recognises the important role parish councils play in managing local facilities for their communities. This is reflected in transfers of, for example, local open spaces and community centres to parish councils by WNC (and by its predecessor councils in preparation for the new local government arrangements from 1st April 2021).
- 5.2 More generally, there is value in facilities used purely or mainly by a specific group of people being looked after by that group of people. They can decide how much they wish to invest in upkeep, and can make changes to reflect local needs and wishes.
- 5.3 It therefore seems reasonable that where a facility is purely or mainly for local public use, the preferred adopting body would be either a management company controlled by those who would pay for upkeep, or a parish council. Conversely, where an asset is of benefit to people from an appreciable portion of West Northamptonshire, being more than one parish, it would be most appropriate for WNC to adopt it.
- 5.4 However, as noted in 4.1 and 4.2, it is important that smaller adopting bodies have means to manage the risks involved in owning assets, especially those where there is material risk of significant change to either income or costs. This may in some cases justify WNC itself adopting the assets.

6. Protecting public interests

- 6.1 Where assets are adopted by public bodies such as local authorities, the combination of democratic accountability to local people and the statutory regime acts to protect the public interest. However, where adoption is by a management company there is a risk that the public interest is not prioritised, or that the entity is not responsive to local concerns. Management companies come in many forms, both legally and practically, including those tied by ownership, control, or contract to service providers.
- 6.2 It is therefore important that the constitutional and contractual arrangements for management companies, where they are used, are designed to secure genuine local control, efficient and effective management, and a focus on the public interest.
- 6.3 These requirements are also important to WNC financially, because if they are not met the Council may in the future be asked to adopt the asset in question to remedy poor management or local concern about charges levied by the management company.

7. Terms of adoption

- 7.1 It is important that any asset adopted is free from unnecessary controls and can be effectively managed over the long term. This will normally mean the adopting body receives freehold ownership free of all restrictions except those requiring the asset to be used for the purpose intended. These should provide sufficient flexibility to allow for changes in circumstances over time.
- 7.2 The adopting body will also need sufficient rights of access and any other rights necessary in each case to effectively operate and maintain the asset.

8. WNC approach

- 8.1 In considering adoption of assets, the Council will make reasoned decisions based on the facts of each case, guided by the following.
- 8.2 In considering any potential adoption the Council will assess if there is a need for adoption at all (for example, if the promoter of the adoption is able to continue caring for the asset and will or can be compelled to do so), and there is no other reason to favour adoption. Where the Council chooses to adopt an asset which could reasonably be retained by the promoter the commuted sum will be calculated on a perpetuity basis.
- 8.3 The preference for adoption of other assets is set out in the table below, together with the implications in terms of the commuted sum required.

Area of benefit	Default adopting body	Modifying factors	Revised adopting body	Commuted sum
Discrete small estate or community with only very limited use from wider parish	Management company meeting requirements given in 8.9	None	N/A	Pump priming
		Parish council wishes to adopt	Parish council	Pump priming
		Risk is too great for management company to manage	Parish council if willing; otherwise WNC	Perpetuity
		Significant strategic interest for WNC to adopt	WNC	Pump priming
	Parish council	None	N/A	Pump priming

Area of benefit	Default adopting body	Modifying factors	Revised adopting body	Committed sum
Wholly or mainly one parish in scale		Risk is too great for parish council to manage	WNC	Perpetuity
		Parish council declines to adopt	WNC	Perpetuity
		Significant strategic interest for WNC to adopt	WNC	Pump priming
More than one parish in scale*	WNC	None	N/A	Pump priming

Note: * An asset which happens to be on or close to a parish boundary does not fall into this category simply by that fact, if where it further from the boundary it would be recognised as benefiting a single parish.

8.4 Commuted sums shall be assessed by assessing the expected net annual maintenance and management costs (£Z) and calculating:

8.4.1 Perpetuity: £Z divided by 0.021.

8.4.2 Pump priming: £Z multiplied by 10.

8.5 In addition, any costs that are reasonably estimated would be incurred in the process of adoption and bringing the asset into an acceptable state shall be added. This includes any necessary environmental works, including costs of managing the asset to achieve net zero.

8.6 The full Adoption Sum must be paid as part of the adoption unless the promoter and any other person who might financially benefit from the adoption is incapable of making payment and the adopting body (and WNC, if not the adopting body) judges that it would nonetheless be in the public interest for the asset to be adopted. In such cases the promoter (or other financially benefiting person) shall pay as much of the Adoption Sum as it can afford.

8.7 WNC may treat any sum paid to it as either capital or revenue depending on the proper accounting treatment of its expenditure.

8.8 No part of any Adoption Sum will be repayable in the event that the net costs are lower than the estimate on which the commuted sum was based. This is because the adopting body has taken a downside risk in accepting a particular commuted sum will be adequate and is accordingly entitled to benefit from any upside risk.

8.9 Any management company considered for adoption of an asset should meet the following requirements:

- 8.9.1 Be incorporated as a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), or as a community interest company or community benefit society, in either case with an asset lock and prohibition on distribution of profits.
 - 8.9.2 Have suitable objects, such that the asset would be used for its intended purpose and available for all those it is expected to serve.
 - 8.9.3 Be empowered to meet any funding needs by means of a rentcharge or other appropriate mechanism on properties benefiting from the asset in question.
 - 8.9.4 Have as the only members and able to appoint directors (or other persons in control of the management company's business) the persons liable to pay rentcharges or other payments as may be appropriate to the management company ('members'). Only if the members fail to appoint sufficient directors for the management company to function shall any other person have the power to appoint directors. That person shall be the parish council and failing action by the parish council, WNC.
 - 8.9.5 Have no material debt or obligation to take on debt.
 - 8.9.6 Not have any contractual commitments to third parties on onerous terms, and in any event no contractual commitment at point of transfer of the asset which extends beyond 12 months.
- 8.10 Adoption of an asset should be by means of transfer of freehold title at nil value. In exceptional cases, such as where the promoter does not hold the freehold, the adopting body may consider a lesser form of ownership e.g., long leasehold on a peppercorn rent. The transfer to the adopting body must include all necessary rights (e.g., of access) to enable the asset to be used as intended, maintained, and managed.
- 8.11 The terms of transfers of assets to the adopting body should include such restrictions as are necessary to ensure that the asset is used for the function(s) which it is intended to perform. There should be no other restrictions or matters which impact on this. The restrictions which are imposed should be designed to allow sufficient flexibility such that the asset can still be of value when circumstances change, such as changes in recreational habits.

Appendix 1: Background documents

Two documents are of particular value when considering the Council's approach to adoption of assets. These are given below.

Former ODPM Circular 5/05: Planning Obligations

Circular 5/05 represented Government policy in connection with the use of planning obligations in connection with development control. It was withdrawn with key points included in the National Planning Policy Framework, but without any suggestion that its approach was flawed. It contains provisions relating to the assets that are capable of wider use.

Paragraphs B18 to B20 discussed maintenance payments:

- B18 states that in the case of “...facilities which are predominantly for the benefit of the users of the associated development, it may be appropriate for the developer to make provision for subsequent maintenance (i.e. physical upkeep). Such provision may be required in perpetuity.”
- B19, however, provides that “where an asset is intended for wider public use, the costs of subsequent maintenance and other recurrent expenditure ... should normally be borne by the body or authority in which the asset is to be vested. Where contributions to the initial support (“pump priming”) of new facilities are necessary, these should reflect the time lag between the provision of the new facility and its inclusion in public sector funding streams, or its ability to recover its own costs... Pump priming maintenance payments should be time-limited and not be required in perpetuity...”

Commuted Sums for Future Maintenance in relation to Adoption and Transfer of Infrastructure Assets

This document was produced by the Chris Britton Consultancy for Department for Transport and others and exists in a draft version dated June 2008. Publication was expected under the banner of the UK Roads Liaison Group (UKRLG). Although it is understood this did not occur, the substance of the document remains valid.

Appendix 5 (p26) of the report states that an appropriate real long term interest rate when considering adoption of assets is 2.2%. This represents the difference between nominal interest rates and inflation rates in the UK, averaged over a long period of time.

Appendix 2: WNC interest costs

Given the date of the Chris Britton Consultancy document, it is appropriate to consider if real interest rates have materially changed since its publication. It is also useful to ensure the rate applied relates to the circumstances of WNC.

In practice, if WNC is paid a commuted sum, it is likely to use it to offset borrowing it already has or would otherwise incur. Like most principal councils, the Council has significant debts built up from the provision of capital assets and this position is unlikely to change. This means that the interest rate to be used for these purposes should reflect WNC's borrowing costs rather than the sums earned if it invested the money concerned. This means a slightly higher interest rate is applied (which corresponds to slightly lower commuted sums).

To form a reasoned view of real interest rates over a substantial period of time, CPI inflation was compared against the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) interest rate for new maturity loans each year. To reflect the spread of maturity periods the Council is likely to use, the average interest rate for all available loan lengths was used. As PWLB interest rates vary over time, the yearly rate was taken as a weighted average of interest rates applicable over the different periods of the year. Thus, the yearly average interest rate is calculated as follows:

$$r = \frac{\sum ip}{P}$$

Where:

r = Yearly average interest rate.

i = Average interest rate in any period.

p = Period during which interest rate i applied.

P = Sum of p during the year (it should be noted that because interest rates do not change exactly at year ends, P varies slightly from year to year).

The results were as follows:

Year	P, days	%		
		Yearly average interest rate (r)	CPI inflation	Real interest rate
1998	364.0000	5.6	1.6	4.0
1999	364.0000	4.9	1.3	3.6
2000	365.0000	5.2	0.8	4.4
2001	364.0000	5.0	1.2	3.8
2002	370.0000	5.0	1.3	3.7
2003	360.0000	4.7	1.4	3.3
2004	368.0000	4.9	1.3	3.6

Year	P, days	%		
		Yearly average interest rate (r)	CPI inflation	Real interest rate
2005	364.0000	4.5	2.1	2.4
2006	364.0000	4.4	2.3	2.1
2007	365.0000	5.7	2.3	3.4
2008	366.0000	4.6	3.6	1.0
2009	367.0000	4.1	2.2	1.9
2010	365.3861	4.2	3.3	0.9
2011	364.0187	4.5	4.5	0.0
2012	364.9811	3.7	2.8	0.9
2013	365.0001	4.0	2.6	1.4
2014	365.0050	3.9	1.5	2.4
2015	366.9946	3.2	0.0	3.2
2016	365.0001	2.7	0.7	2.0
2017	364.0008	2.6	2.7	-0.1
2018	364.9938	2.7	2.5	0.2
2019	364.9993	2.5	1.8	0.7
2020	367.9976	2.5	0.9	1.6
2021	365.0024	2.0	2.6	-0.6
Average				2.1

Whilst the yearly averages vary significantly, the average over 24 years (the longest period for which data was available) should give a sensible view of likely typical real interest rate. It is of note that the 2.1% calculated is very close to the 2.2% given in the Chris Britton Consultancy document.

Training

[For Councillors](#)
[For Clerks and Officers](#)
[For Councillors and Clerks](#)
[All Training](#)
[Whole Council Development](#)

Whether you've had an influx of new councillors following elections, you'd like training on a specific subject or you'd like a team building session we can bring training to your council.

The price for a two hour bespoke training course is based on how many councillors and staff your council has. Prices for 2023-2024 start from*

Cost (from)

10 or less councillors/staff - £270+ VAT

11-13 councillors/staff - £319+ VAT

14-19 councillors/staff - £347+ VAT

20+ councillors/staff - £517+ VAT

*The above costs are based on using in house trainers. Where an external trainer is required the cost of the training may increase. A standard whole council training session is 2 hours in length, we can accommodate extra time, however additional charges will apply.

If you would like to request a whole council training session, please complete this short form

[Whole Council Development Request](#)



What you can expect from us:

- A comprehensive training programme to meet the needs of the sector
- High-quality training delivered by top quality trainers
- Venues offering excellent learning environments
- Joining instructions sent the week before a course
- Invoices raised after the course
- Provide Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities

What we expect from you:

- Follow your council's procedures to identify training needs and book courses
- Arrive on time to events
- Have a learning mind-set when attending events
- Respect for both the trainer and other participants
- Sign the attendance list to ensure you receive your certificate

DUSTON PARISH COUNCIL
BUDGET 2024/2025

ADMINISTRATION

Employees
PC Salaries
EERS NI
EERS Pension

2023/24 2024/25

Income

Income from room and office hire
To be met from earmarked reserves

270,000 290,000
27,500 28,000
39,500 40,000

220,500 236,000

Staff Welfare/Clothing
Travel & Subsistence Cllrs
Travel & Subsistence EES
Training

1,150 1,450
200 200
500 500
3,500 4,000

100,000

Total Income

320,500 236,000

TOTAL 342,350 364,150

Councillors Services
Chairmans Allowances
Councillors Allowances

500 500
5,400 5,400
TOTAL 5,900 5,900

917,951 871,313
320,500 236,000

Precept Requirement

597,451 635,313

Office Expenses
IT Licences and Website
Photocopier
Postage
Stationery
Telephone/Broadband
Office Equipment
IT Support

5,150 7,250
2,300 2,300
300 300
2,500 2,000
5,600 6,250
2,000 2,000
3,000 2,500
TOTAL 20,850 22,600

Precept increase over previous year

12.51% 6.34%

Parish Van
Van Running Costs
Insurance

2,100 2,200
700 900

TOTAL 2,800 3,100

Audit & Legal
Finance/Legal
Insurance
Audit
Membership Fees
Licensing Fees
Elections

26,500 31,500
15,500 17,000
2,750 2,800
6,200 6,250
1,750 2,000

TOTAL 52,700 59,550

Allowed for in election earmarked reserves

	2023/24	2024/25
Parish Office		
Electricity	30,000	30,000
Water	5,000	4,500
Rates	1,500	1,750
TOTAL	36,500	36,250

Communications		
Marketing, communications, printing	7,500	7,500

	2023/24	2024/25
Miscellaneous Costs		
Loan Repayments St Luke's Centre	30,260	30,005
Loan Repayments Duston Sports Centre	23,947	23,947
Loan Repayments Duston Community Centre	65,127	65,127
Events, Engagement and Wellbeing (inc bins and seats)	20,000	20,000
Bank Charges/Credit Card Charges	1,200	1,250
St Lukes Utilities (gas and electric)	40,000	37,000
St Lukes water	5,000	4,500
St Lukes Rates	1,500	3,500
Cleaning/Laundry/Consumables	8,200	7,000
Waste Removal	9,000	10,400
Litter bin - waste removals	2,950	1,600
Security/CCTV	34,000	3,100
Environment - contracts	6,000	43,000
Environment - repairs/maintenance	17,000	14,000
Building Repairs/Maintenance/contracts		18,000

Reception Lease	1,750	2,000
2028 Grounds Maintenance	19,917	32,334
Renovation of Buildings	8,000	-
Equipment purchases	2,000	2,000
Environment and community (4 year plan)	5,000	-
TOTAL	300,851	318,763

Community		
Grants	10,500	10,500
Youth Services	10,000	15,000
Play equipment	10,000	10,000
TOTAL	30,500	35,500

Planning Committee		
Planning	200	200
TOTAL	200	200

CLIS		
Capital projects (CLIS fund)	100,000	-
TOTAL	100,000	-

Contingency		
	18,000	18,000
TOTAL	18,000	18,000

TOTAL EXPENDITURE

917,951 871,313



Duston Parish Council Meeting Papers Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that Staff, Councillors and our residents receive an appropriate level of information and detail, in an easy-to-follow format, to enable an effective understanding decision-making.

1. Each agenda item for large project (A project that costs over £2000 and/or has an ongoing expenditure cost over £200) requires a meeting paper for discussion which should be submitted in the format laid out at Appendix A.
2. As per Standing Order 9b, 'No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 10 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.'
3. All papers should be comprehensive, focused, and as concise as possible, setting out only the facts that the Council or committee members need to know.
4. Papers are to be completed in plain English; therefore, no use of jargon unless this is unavoidable, and all terms are to be explained when they first occur in the text.
5. Parish Councils can only do what legislation requires or permits them to do. As of 2023, Duston Parish Council no longer has the General Powers of Competence, due to not fulfilling the stipulation of 2/3rd Councillors needing to be elected. Therefore, the Council must rely upon the statutory powers it is afforded.
6. The public sector equality duty (PSED), outlined in the Equality Act 2010, requires all local authorities to take steps to consider, and have due regard on, how all of its policies and decisions impact on people with protected characteristics.
7. Under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 a local council has a duty to consider crime and disorder implications of its decisions and policies.
8. If your proposals have financial implications, you should detail what these are, including both the long- and short-term effects. You must also indicate whether your proposals are covered previously in agreed budgets; if this is not the case, you should outline how you intend your proposals to be funded. Please be aware that budgets are set for the year and that there is only a limited amount of contingency funding available.
9. Relevant officers will provide comments and observations. In performing their role, officers will act professionally, impartially and with neutrality. Whilst officers will respect a councillor's view on an issue, the officer should not be influenced or pressured to make comments, or recommendations which are contrary to their professional judgement or views. If there are several options from which to choose, outline them all, then make your recommendation. The Councillors or Committee members will always want to know what your recommendation is.



Agenda Item: Submitted By:
1. APPROVAL: Recommendation for Approval / To Note / To Discuss
2. Purpose of the Report:
3. Background Information:
4. Legislation:
5. Accessibility Implications / Impact on people with protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010)
6. Crime and Disorder Implications (Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Section 17):
7. Financial Implications:
8. Relevant Officers Comments:
9. Recommendation:
10. Reason for recommendation(s):

**Agenda Item: Inclusive Play Equipment Proposal and Plan
Submitted By: Cllr Smith**

1. For Approval

2. Purpose of the Report:

This report aims to set out a proposal and plan for new inclusive play equipment

3. Background Information:

Duston Parish Council has previously installed multiple accessible roundabouts in various parks throughout Duston. The Environment committee has identified the need to increase the amount of accessible play equipment in Duston.

The Committee has identified St Lukes Play Field as the most suitable location as the location is close to parking spaces, is flat and does not flood in the winter.

4. Legislation:

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2976, s.19

5. Accessibility Implications / Impact on people with protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010):

The increase in accessible play equipment will have a positive impact on those accessibility implications. By developing accessible play equipment, residents with varying accessibility and learning difficulties will be included in play.

6. Crime and Disorder Implications (Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Section 17):

The proposed location of the equipment has been strategically chosen away from residential boundary to ensure that the equipment is not used to gain unauthorised access.

7. Financial Implications:

Three quotes have been sought and received:

Quote 1 - £xxxxxx (supporting document a)

Quote 2 - £xxxxxx (supporting document b)

Quote 3 - £xxxxxx (supporting document c)

It is the recommendation of the Committee that the project be funded with Community Infrastructure Levy monies.

The ongoing costs:

- Weekly inspections (staff time)
- Annual inspection of all equipment + £xxx to the play equipment budget

8. Relevant Officers Comments: Operations officer to fill

9. Recommendation:

To approve the purchase of new inclusive play equipment (quote 2) for St. Lukes Play Field with the capital expenditure cost of £xxxx, to be funded via CIL monies and the Parks and Open Space budget to be increase by £x to reflect the ongoing inspection and maintenance costs.

10. Reason for recommendation(s):

It is the Environment Committees assessment that Quote 2 provides the best overall value for money in relation to the lifespan of materials, installation costs and the site of origin is 30 miles away from Duston as opposed to 80 miles and 120 miles.



<p>Agenda Item: Second stage proposal for Paper newsletter</p> <p>Submitted by: Cllr T. Hill and Cllr J. Wozniczka on behalf of the Communications Working Group</p>
<p>1. Approval:</p> <p>Noting and approval</p>
<p>2. Purpose of the Report:</p> <p>To gain Full Council approval to go ahead with one newsletter in the current financial year, in early 2024. To gain in-principle approval to continue with 3 newsletters per year subject to annual review and the budget process. To establish which of the printing and distribution options provided would be preferred.</p>
<p>3. Background Information:</p> <p>September's Full Council agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) the (Communications) Working Group further explores costs and potential suppliers with a view to going ahead with a paper newsletter three times a year.b) final costs and recommendations be submitted back to Full Council for consideration and budget virement <p>Tracey Hill and Julie Wozniczka were delegated by the Comms working group and have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Produced a brief paper about timeline for production, content and monitoring (see attached) which has been approved by the Comms group.2. Researched suppliers (see attached). <p>The former has been approved by the Comms group, who have also been consulted about suppliers. Further information has been gained from suppliers since the Comms group last met.</p>
<p>4. Legislation: N/A</p>
<p>5. Accessibility Implications:</p> <p>A paper newsletter, if designed sensitively, has the potential to make the Council more accessible to more people, especially those who struggle with online communications. A paper newsletter could also be used to raise awareness of the Council's website and social media pages.</p>
<p>6. Climate Emergency Implications:</p> <p>Delivery of a paper newsletter inevitably involves using paper and requires</p>



transport, almost definitely by car. The question is whether the benefits in terms of communication with the council tax payers justifies this.

We have researched the sustainability credentials of various suppliers, which are summarized in the attached.

For printers we have considered use of recycled and 'unfinished' paper, vegetable inks, printing processes which minimize energy use, as well as practical considerations like turnaround time and response times to emails and how local the printer is, as well as costs.

We have also contacted several distribution services.

The impact of a paper newsletter needs to be balanced against the positive outcomes of the Council being able to communicate more effectively with its residents. This might include better publicity for public transport and the car club, reuse and recycling options across the town, appeals for more flood wardens, etc.

7. Corporate Plan Implications:

MC1: Improve communications and accessibility to the council.

8. Financial Implications:

Costs need to be weighed against the other considerations. From our research, printing would be around £1000 per issue and distribution £1000 - £2000 per issue.

We would propose a New Year issue and three issues for 2023-4. (A first issue before Christmas this year would put councilors and staff under pressure at a busy time).

Total cost: £2-£3k in 2023/4, £6-9k to be budgeted in 2024/5.

The effectiveness of the paper newsletter would be subject to review after a year.

9. Recommendation:

1. That BTC moves ahead with production of a paper newsletter as outlined above, to be led by the Comms Group.
2. That the preferred printing and distribution options be used as far as practicable
3. That the BTC team be asked to make a template for the newsletter in Canva, in liaison with the Comms Group, and assist with the newsletter in line with their existing commitments to the e-newsletter.



10. Reasons for recommendation(s):

In order to work effectively with residents and be accountable to them, the Council needs to be proactive to ensure that residents know what the Council is doing in their name and have every opportunity to get involved.

The Council switched from a paper to an online newsletter recently. However, the take-up of the email newsletter has remained low, which limits the extent of resident communication and involvement with the Council. As well as improving communication in itself, the paper newsletter should encourage more residents to use the Council's website and social media feeds.

