



DUSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Corporate Plan and Service Review

VERSION 1

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document outlines Duston Parish Council’s journey—where it has come from, where it is headed, and what it aims to achieve in the foreseeable future. As a progressive and forward-thinking council, Duston Parish Council works on behalf of its residents with a commitment to its corporate objectives, all aimed at making Duston a better place to live and work.

For the first time, this Plan lists all services undertaken by Duston Parish Council. These services often overlap and are interconnected, reflecting the hyper-local nature of the work carried out for the people of Duston. The way services are delivered varies to meet the unique needs of the community, but all are driven by a dedication to improving the quality of life in Duston.

This Corporate Plan addresses the fundamental question: What is Duston Parish Council, and what does it do? It sets out the Council’s responsibilities, strategies, and ambitions. By doing so, the Council articulates its desire to become the best parish council in Northamptonshire, recognising that it is one key player among many in the local landscape but always striving to provide strong community leadership.

The Parish Council also acknowledges that, in managing public funds, difficult decisions may arise, but these are made with a commitment to fiscal responsibility and the long-term well-being of the community.

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2. ABOUT DUSTON

Historical Background

Duston, with its roots extending back to Roman times, has long been a distinct village, originally centred around agriculture before the 19th century. The village expanded very slowly during Anglo-Saxon times, gradually becoming a more established settlement. The majority of housing development has taken place since the 1920s after the Duston Manor Estate was sold in 1919.

Although once clearly isolated by open countryside, Duston is now an integral part of Greater Northampton, surrounded by development on all sides. Despite this, the area retains a strong local identity and an independent spirit. Duston doesn't view itself as being another "district of Northampton".

Economic Transition

In the past, Duston was home to several large employers, such as British Timken and Quarry Mining. Today, however, it is primarily a residential area. While some businesses remain, most large-scale employment opportunities have shifted to adjoining areas like Lodge Farm Industrial Estate and Sixfields, which host a variety of manufacturing, storage, retail, leisure, and service industries.

Development and Traffic Issues

Over the past 30 years, significant development on Duston's boundaries has led to increased traffic on local roads, a long standing concern for residents. Duston has become a "rat run" for drivers seeking quicker routes to the M1, Sixfields, and the town centre. Additionally, traffic is drawn into Duston for its local amenities, including the library, schools, and leisure centre.

Education

Duston is served by five schools:

- **The Duston School:** An all-through school offering both primary and secondary education. It also has a sixth form.
- **Millway Primary School**
- **Duston Eldean Primary School**
- **Chiltern Primary School**
- **Hopping Hill Primary School**

Local Amenities and Shopping Areas

Duston has several distinct shopping areas:

- **The Old Village Centre:** The most extensive area, featuring various shops, pubs, and restaurants.
- **Main Road:** Home to a grocery store, newsagents, and other small shops.
- **Malvern Grove:** Contains a newsagent, post office, pharmacy, and restaurant.

- **Quarry Road/Harlestone Road:** Features a pub, newsagents, post office, and other shops.
- **Limehurst Square:** Offers a grocery store, takeaways, barbers, a post office, and more.
- **Bordeaux Close:** Includes a Tesco, takeaway, a nursery, and other amenities.
- **Tollgate Way:** Hosts a garden centre and a commercial storage facility.

The area also has a variety of pubs, restaurants, takeaways, and churches. Duston Village Hall and Eastfield Close Community Hub provide space for community groups to meet, complementing the Parish Council's facilities. Duston Library, established in 1984, remains a key community resource.

Healthcare and Public Services

Healthcare in Duston is centred around St. Luke's Surgery, a large doctor's practice within the Timken Estate. However, like many areas, Duston struggles with access to NHS dentistry. Most roads, footpaths and streetlights are managed by West Northamptonshire Council, although Alfred Knight Close and Somerset Close remain unadopted for now.

A Police Box on Pendle Road, near the Community Centre and Library, provides some neighbourhood policing services, though its usage and future are uncertain. Duston benefits from a relatively good bus service, though it has been somewhat reduced recently. There are no fire or ambulance stations in Duston.

The Parish is served by three post offices located at Malvern Grove, Harlestone Road, and Limehurst. There are also three pharmacies at St. Luke's Medical Centre, Limehurst Square, and Malvern Grove, along with two private dental practices in the old Village Centre.

Duston Sports Centre is a leisure centre on Cotswold Avenue which includes a sports hall, café, gym and a large sports field.

Local Governance

The principal local authority for Duston is West Northamptonshire Council (WNC), which is a unitary authority. Duston is one of 165 Parishes in the area of West Northamptonshire. There is council housing in Duston and it is managed by Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) which is an arm's length management organisation of West Northamptonshire Council. In May 2025, there will be an electoral ward of Duston on WNC which will have three Councillors and the ward will exactly match those of the civil parish of Duston for the first time.

The Parish Council has three wards – 6 councillors for Old Duston, 2 for New Duston East and 4 for New Duston West. So there are 12 parish councillors in total.

Duston is within the Parliamentary constituency for Northampton South.

Public Open Space and Recreation

Despite its size, Duston has limited public open space, though it is aided by nearby areas like Dallington Park and St. Crispin Field. The largest public open space is Errington Park which approximately 8 acres. Estate management companies maintain the public open spaces on the Timken estate and Prestbury Court (formerly Ryeland Road Middle School site).

The parish is home to two care homes, located on the Timken Estate and Bants Lane, and features two allotment sites on Berrywood Road and Bants Lane. Duston also has two cemeteries, one on Berrywood Road and the other at St. Luke's Churchyard, which is now a closed churchyard.

Community Involvement

Duston has a vibrant community, supported by numerous voluntary groups that cater to a wide range of interests and needs. These groups span from youth organisations, such as Scouts and Brownies, to those focused on the elderly. The Boys Brigade, in particular, has been a significant part of local life for over 100 years.

Many of these voluntary and community groups meet at various locations throughout Duston, fostering a strong sense of community involvement. For decades, the "Duston Old Peoples Welfare Association" played a pivotal role in parish life, though it recently closed.

Local Insight Data Highlights

West Northamptonshire Council has provided key insights into Duston's strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths:

- **Children's Health:** Duston has a lower percentage of children living in income-deprived families (9.86%) compared to regional and national averages.
- **Digital Inclusion:** The area exhibits a variety of internet user classifications, indicating diverse digital engagement.
- **Access and Transport:** Duston ranks well in proximity to supermarkets and overall accessibility, reflecting strong infrastructure for daily needs.
- **Community Engagement:** The Community Needs Index shows high levels of active participation in community activities.

Weaknesses:

- **Carbon Footprint:** Duston's carbon footprint per person (9043kg of CO2 equivalent) is higher than regional and national averages.
- **Older Population's Health:** Significant health challenges exist among Duston's older population, with many over 65 reporting poor health and long-term illnesses.
- **Access to Services:** While transport infrastructure is good for daily needs, there may be geographical barriers to accessing essential services like GP surgeries and post offices.

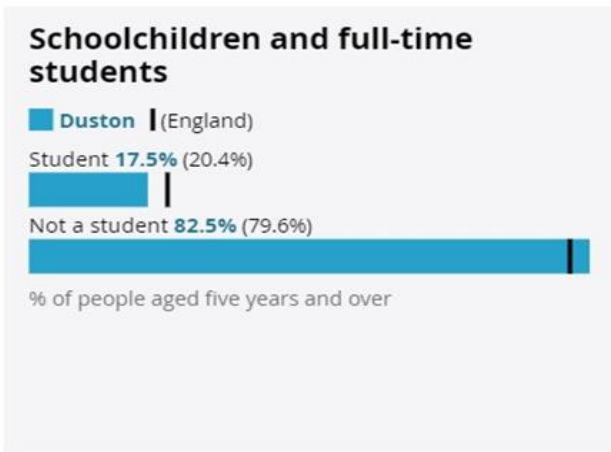
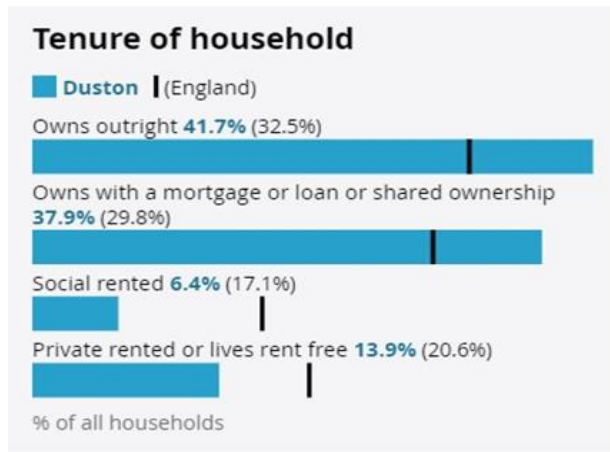
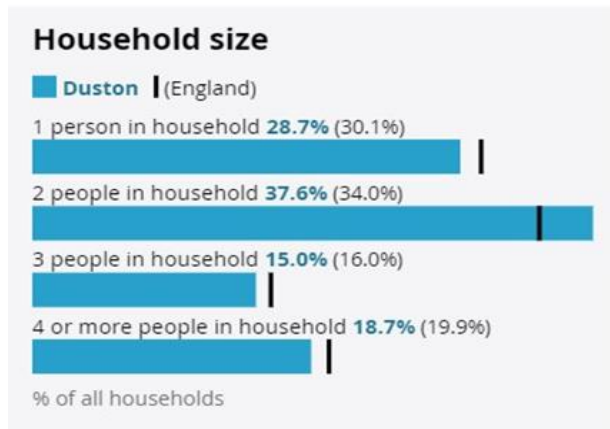
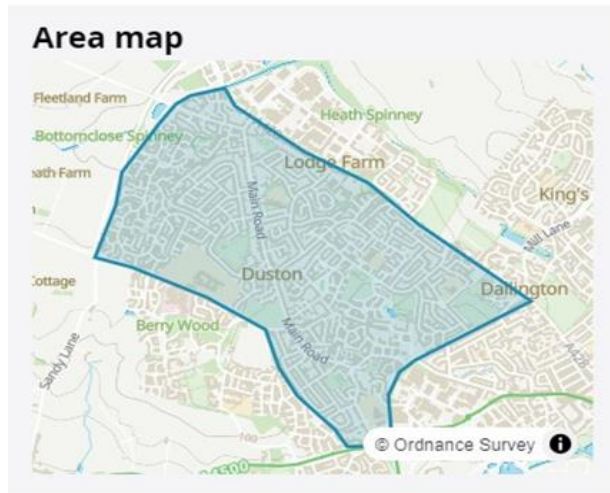
- **Economic Deprivation:** While children are less deprived, there are pockets of economic hardship within the community.

Vision for 2030

By 2030, Duston aims to be an even better place to live, with a stronger sense of village identity and community spirit. The area will have adapted to the extensive development to the west of Northampton in Harpole & Harlestone, with a focus on respecting and enhancing the character of its neighbourhoods. Open spaces will be protected and enhanced, with attention to play, landscape value, and nature conservation.

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Duston



Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021

3. A VERY SHORT HISTORY OF DUSTON PARISH COUNCIL

“They are starting from scratch” – Bill Hames (Clerk 1935 to 1965 of the previous Duston Parish Council) on the creation of a brand new Parish Council in 1991.

Since its establishment in April 1991, Duston Parish Council has seen significant growth, reflecting proactive leadership and the evolving needs of the community. The Council’s journey is marked by steady progress and periods of rapid expansion, always centred on serving the local community effectively.

Laying the Foundations (1991-2008)

In the 1990s, Duston Parish Council was in its infancy, focused on establishing its presence while Northampton Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council directly provided the majority of local services. There had been a 26 year gap since the last Duston Parish Council and much had changed since then.

During the first two decades, the Council's primary role was to make small but noticeable improvements and serve as an effective voice for local residents. Some key accomplishments during this period include:

- **Princess Diana Commemorative Bench:** Installed on Bants Lane, marking the passing of the cortege.
- **Triumph Gardens Play Equipment:** New play equipment for local children and a proper path through the hedgerow into Aquitaine Close.
- **Duston Wildes:** Additional path at the Quarry which improved accessibility for residents.
- **Benches:** Placement of benches in various locations such as two on Hardlands Road Open Space, one in the cemetery, one on Bants Lane, one on Main Road and another in the Quarry.
- **Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA):** Constructed in Errington Park following public consultation in 2008.

From the outset, the Parish Council actively participated in the planning process, representing the community's broader interests. The Council opposed development at St Crispins Hospital due to environmental and traffic concerns, expressing these objections to the then Borough Council through numerous letters, meetings, and discussions. In November 1999, some Duston residents exercised a legal right to call for a Parish Poll on three key planning issues. With a 24.3% voter turnout, the majority opposed the Dallington Heath and St Crispin developments and the idea of a supermarket on Harlestone Road. While the Poll highlighted strong local opposition in Duston, its results were not legally binding on Borough Council Planning Officers. The Parish Council bore the cost of the Poll, amounting to £5,148.

The Parish Council took on responsibility for local landmarks like the War Memorial and Rose Garden, both of which had been neglected by Northampton previously. The Council

also prioritised in those early years the establishment of a Parish Office, initially operating from several temporary locations before securing office space at Duston Community Centre in the early 2000s. Duston Community Centre was then managed by the voluntary organisation “Duston Community Association” (DCA).

Expansion and Development (2009-2018)

The period from 2009 marked a significant phase of growth and development for Duston Parish Council. Notable achievements during this time include:

- **Resurfacing of Errington Park Car Park:** A long-standing aspiration fulfilled in 2010.
- **Acquisition and Refurbishment of Key Community Buildings:**
 - **Old Timken Sports Club:** Transformed into Duston Sports Centre, with Trilogy taking on the lease, ensuring its success.
 - **Former St. Luke’s Lower School and Playing Field:** Secured through a 99-year lease in 2012 after a strong community campaign.
 - **Duston Community Centre:** Acquired from Northampton Borough Council and refurbished to become a modern community hub.

The acquisition of these three buildings within a short period represented a significant step forward for the Parish Council, enhancing its capacity to serve the local community. The Council’s strategic use of loans from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) facilitated these developments, contributing to the overall improvement of community facilities.

As Duston Community Centre underwent refurbishment, the Parish Council embarked on another bold initiative by developing one of the first Neighbourhood Plans in the area. This comprehensive planning document, created with extensive public consultation and the assistance of a planning consultant, was approved in a local referendum in December 2015. The Duston Neighbourhood Plan, which spans from 2015 to 2029, provides specific policies that guide planning applications within the parish.

Since the 2000s, Duston Parish Council has consistently prioritised hosting an annual summer festival for local residents. This event has evolved over the years, reflecting the Council's commitment to fostering community spirit. Initially, the festival was known as "A Day in the Park" and was held in Errington Park. As the event grew in popularity, it moved to the Sports Field and was rebranded as "Let's Celebrate Duston." In recent years, the festival has been called "Duston Fun Day" and takes place on St Luke’s Field. Each incarnation of the event has maintained its core objective of bringing the community together for a day of enjoyment and celebration.

In 2016/17, the Parish Council led a public art project that resulted in the creation of the Timken Artwork, now a prominent feature at Tollgate Way and Main Road. The Parish Council took ownership of this sculpture in 2018, further cementing its commitment to enhancing the cultural landscape of Duston.

In 2017 the Parish Council pulled sources of funding together and got the car park and pavement outside the library and community centre resurfaced and with parking bays.

With the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day the Parish Council placed a new commemorative bench at the Main Road / Berrywood Road turning.

Taking on three buildings and St Luke's Field meant Duston Parish Council expanding its staffing. In a few years the Council went from just having a part-time Clerk to having a small team. The Council for the first time began to employ a Deputy Clerk, Events staff and Facilities Officers some of whom were employed full-time.

A Period of Growth and Responsibility for Duston Parish Council (2019-2025)

Duston Parish Council has undergone a significant transformation between 2019 and 2025, taking on greater responsibilities and initiating numerous projects that have enhanced the community's infrastructure, wellbeing, and local environment. This period marked a new era of growth, development, and proactive community engagement.

In early 2019, Duston Parish Council introduced two new Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) that could be moved around the parish to improve road safety.

At the same time the Council purchased new play equipment for Triumph Gardens, Mendip Park, and Grafton Way Park. Additionally, older play structures in these play areas were refreshed with new paint, ensuring that these spaces remained safe and inviting for children and families.

Using S106 funding from the former Ryeland Middle School site, the Parish Council was able to acquire new play and gym equipment for Errington Park. Shortly thereafter, additional gym equipment was installed at St Luke's Field, further expanding the recreational options available to residents.

In 2020, the Parish Council adopted three decommissioned telephone boxes on Harlestone Road, Weggs Farm Road, and Chiltern Avenue. They were converted into community defibrillator stations, providing an important resource for the public.

The same year, the Council installed two new flag poles, one at Duston Community Centre and the other at St Luke's Centre, adding a touch of civic pride to these key community locations. A new Parish Council logo was also adopted, which remains in use today.

The local government restructuring in Northamptonshire, which began during this period, led to the creation of two new unitary authorities. Duston Parish Council became one of 165 parish councils within the newly formed West Northamptonshire Council area. Previously it was one of 10 within the Borough. With the creation of a large unitary authority and Borough Council now gone the Parish Council began to fill a void.

As Northampton Borough Council wound down, a number of assets were transferred to Duston Parish Council. In 2021, the Council gained ownership of Errington Park, Mendip Park, Grafton Way, and Melbourne Lane. The Council also acquired a small plot of land behind Duston Community Centre on Pendle Road. Later that year, the Parish Council took ownership of the historic Timken Gates and Rosevilla Hut and Wall from developers — important landmarks tied to the former British Timken Factory.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a challenging time for Duston residents, with community centres closed for extended periods. In a gesture of remembrance, the Parish Council placed a commemorative bench in the cemetery to honor all Duston residents who lost their lives during the pandemic.

Duston Parish Council also received backdated Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, which was quickly put to use for local improvements. These projects included:

- **Tarmacking the Entrance to Grafton Way Meadow:** The entrance to Grafton Way Meadow has been tarmacked, providing easier access for visitors and improving the overall appearance of the area.
- **Installing a Flag Pole at Duston Sports Centre:** A new flag pole has been installed at Duston Sports Centre, adding a symbol of civic pride to this popular community facility owned by Duston Parish Council.
- **Adding New Play Equipment at The Quarry and Haydown Green:** The Council has installed new play equipment at both The Quarry and Haydown Green, offering updated recreational spaces for children and families.
- **Placing a Defibrillator in Errington Park:** A new defibrillator has been placed near the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) in Errington Park, enhancing emergency response capabilities in the park.
- **Installing Planters Along Main Road:** To beautify the area and support biodiversity, new planters have been placed along Main Road near the shops, adding colour and greenery to the community.
- **Constructing a Soakaway at Mendip Park:** In response to long-term concerns from residents about flooding, the Council has constructed a soakaway at the entrance to Mendip Park to manage excess water and prevent flooding.
- **Installing a New Gate at Mendip Park:** A new gate has been installed at Mendip Park with Sam Harrison Way, which has been positively received by residents, particularly those from the Timken Estate and surrounding areas.

In 2023, after persistent lobbying by the Parish Council, West Northamptonshire Council resurfaced Limehurst Square, addressing longstanding complaints about the condition of the area. In response, the Parish Council purchased two benches and two planters, further enhancing the space for residents, shops and visitors.

The Council continued its tradition of hosting popular community events, including the annual Duston Fun Day and the Christmas Market. These events have remained key highlights of the local calendar, bringing together residents for celebration, entertainment, and community building.

In addition to these established events, the Council introduced new initiatives to promote health and wellbeing. Monthly Health & Wellbeing Talks provided residents with valuable information on various topics, while the Community Info and Wellness Fair became an event for those seeking advice and resources on physical and mental health and social wellbeing.

The Parish Council also made significant progress with its Grow Together Allotment initiative. This community allotment has become a cherished resource, offering

individuals and local groups a space to cultivate fresh produce, learn gardening skills, and foster a deeper connection with nature. The allotment has also served as a hub for community interaction and education. It is a valuable resource for local groups and individual volunteers.

With significant development taking place just beyond its borders, the Parish Council has consistently highlighted the growing problem of increased traffic on local roads. The Council has long been concerned about the impact of traffic congestion, noise, and air pollution, especially with the development of Dallington Grange and more recently the new builds at Harpole and Harlestone.

In response to the creation of a large unitary authority, which is primarily focused on social services, housing, and transport infrastructure, Duston Parish Council strategically decided to expand its role by becoming a provider of multiple local services. Recognizing the importance of local governance in managing community assets, the Parish Council undertook significant steps in 2024 to assume control of additional public land, ensuring these spaces would be managed with a focus on local needs.

- **May 2024:** The Parish Council took ownership of the Public Open Space on the new build development at Telstar Way, a site commonly referred to as “Duston Gardens.” This transfer marked a significant move, as it involved the Parish Council taking on land directly from a developer, reflecting its commitment to managing and preserving local green spaces.
- **July 2024:** Building on this momentum, the Parish Council further expanded its portfolio by taking ownership of several other public open spaces, including Newton Road Open Space, The Quarry, Cheddar Close Open Space, Westbury Close Open Space, Brockwood Close Open Space, and Clipston Way Open Space.

These actions underscore Duston Parish Council's dedication to enhancing and maintaining public spaces, ensuring they remain accessible and well-maintained for the community's benefit. By taking control of these areas, the Council is able to provide tailored local services and safeguard the quality of life for Duston residents.

From 2019 to 2025, Duston Parish Council has significantly expanded its role within the community, taking on greater responsibilities and leading numerous projects to improve local infrastructure, promote wellbeing, and enhance public spaces. As Duston continues to grow and evolve, the Parish Council remains committed to ensuring that the community's needs are met and that Duston remains a great place to live.

4. Governance

Duston Parish Council consists of 12 Councillors and 10 staff members. The main decision-making body is the Full Council, responsible for setting the budget, precept, policies, and procedures. The Full Council meets 11 times a year, with its Annual Meeting in May. Elections are held every four years alongside West Northamptonshire Council elections. All Council meetings take place at Duston Community Centre and are open to the public and press.

The Council and its Committees are responsible for strategic direction and leadership, while the staff manage the day-to-day operations and provide professional advice. In legal terms, the Council can only delegate decisions to a Committee, Sub-Committee, or Officer but not to individual councillors, including the Chair.

Duston Parish Council aims to be proactive and progressive, improving the area by using its broad powers. There are four standing committees, each with a maximum of 6 councillors and a quorum of 3, while the quorum for Full Council is 4. The four standing committees are:

1. **Planning Committee:** This committee responds to all planning applications on behalf of the Council and participates in strategic planning consultations, such as those from West Northamptonshire Council. It also addresses consultations related to public highways, including traffic orders. Additionally, it can provide comments on licensing applications.
2. **Environment Committee:** This committee oversees parks, open spaces, and other environmental issues like street furniture and litter. It deals with matters such as crime and anti-social behaviour and is responsible for DPC-owned monuments like Timken Artwork, War Memorial, and Timken Gates.
3. **Community Services Committee:** This committee discusses events, community engagement, and direct local services to the public, including allotments and defibrillators. It plays a role in enhancing local health and wellbeing and scrutinizes grant applications before the Council makes a decision. It collaborates with the local voluntary sector and oversees DPC external communications, such as the website.
4. **Resources & General Purposes Committee:** This committee focuses on budgets, resources, corporate governance, and buildings, such as Duston Community Centre and St Lukes Centre. It can recommend an annual budget and precept to the Council and is responsible for budget monitoring. It provides advice to the Council on HR policies.

There is also an ad hoc HR Committee that line manages the Clerk/RFO and conducts their annual appraisal.

Duston Parish Council has the following policies in place.

Corporate Policies
Standing Orders & Scheme of Delegation
Financial Regulations
Data Protection & Data Breach Policy
Internal Councillor Control Procedures
Records Retention Policy
Communications and Engagement Policy
Complaints Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Councillor Officer Protocol
Duston Parish Council Publication Scheme
Equality and Diversity Statement
Volunteer Policy
Armed Forces Covenant
Duston Parish Council Armed Forces Covenant
Park Users Policy
DPC Events on Open Spaces Application
CCTV Policy
Tree Management Policy
Trees FAQs
Grant Application
Grant Awarding Policy
Councillor Code of Conduct

Staff HR Policies
Disciplinary Policy
Grievance Policy
Annual Leave Policy
Lone Working Policy
Flexible Working Policy
Dignity at Work / Bullying and Harassment Policy
Sickness Absence Policy
Whistleblowing Policy

Land Owned by Duston Parish Council as of 1st October 2024

Land Asset Name	Nature of tenure	Comments
Duston Community Centre	Freehold	Obtained in 2012
St Lukes Centre	Leasehold	Leased started in March 2012 for 99 years
Errington Park	Freehold	Includes car park and path to Main Road
Mendip Park	Freehold	Obtained in 2021
Grafton Way Park	Freehold	Obtained in 2021
Melbourne Lane Park	Freehold	Obtained in 2021
Telstar Way Open Space	Freehold	Obtained in 2024
St Lukes Field	Leasehold	Leased started in March 2012 for 99 years
Duston Sports Centre	Freehold	Leased to Northampton Leisure Trust until 2042
Community Centre Reception	Leasehold	Leased started in June 2020 for 10 years
British Timken Gates, Main Road	Freehold	Obtained in 2021
Rose villa Hut and Wall	Freehold	Obtained in 2021
Land at Pendle Road, adj to DCC	Freehold	Obtained in 2021
Duston Wildes Quarry	Freehold	Obtained in 2024
Clipton Way Open Space	Freehold	Obtained in 2024
Westbury Close POS	Freehold	Obtained in 2024
Newton Road POS	Freehold	Obtained in 2024
Brockwood Close Open Space	Freehold	Obtained in 2024
Cheddar Close Open Space	Freehold	Obtained in 2024

5. DUSTON PARISH COUNCIL CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

I. Having Excellent Community Centres

Duston Parish Council is committed to providing community centres that serve as vibrant hubs for social interaction, catering to the diverse needs of all residents, from the young to the elderly. These centres are designed to be welcoming spaces where community members can come together for a wide variety of activities, fostering a sense of belonging and community cohesion.

Overview of Community Centres

The Council operates three key community centres, each playing a crucial role in the life of Duston:

1. **Duston Sports Centre (DSC):** Managed by Trilogy Active on behalf of the Council, Duston Sports Centre features a large field suitable for various sports, including football and cricket. This modern facility is a cornerstone of physical activity and sports in the community, encouraging healthy lifestyles among residents.
2. **St Lukes Centre (SLC):** Directly managed by the Parish Council, St Lukes Centre offers high-quality room hire at competitive rates. Located within the old village planning conservation area, it is an older facility that serves as a consistent and reliable venue for community activities, despite having fewer but steady bookings throughout the week.
3. **Duston Community Centre (DCC):** Also directly managed by the Council, Duston Community Centre is a more modern facility that accommodates a broader range of room bookings compared to St Lukes Centre. It offers flexible spaces that cater to a variety of community needs, making it a versatile and essential part of the local infrastructure. It has a stage in the Main Hall and café facilities.

Commitment to Excellence

The Council's objective is to maintain and enhance the standard of these facilities, ensuring they are managed efficiently, effectively, and responsively, all while keeping costs affordable for users. Key aspects of this commitment include:

- **Providing High-Quality Facilities:** Ensuring that all three centres are well-maintained, clean, and equipped to meet the needs of both community groups and commercial customers.
- **Supporting Community Groups at SLC & DCC:** Offering room hire at reduced rates for community groups to encourage local engagement and participation in social activities, thereby supporting the social fabric of Duston.
- **Fostering Welcoming Spaces:** Ensuring that the centres remain warm, inviting, and accessible to all, fostering an environment where residents feel comfortable and valued.

Adapting to Changing Needs

The Council recognizes that leisure patterns and community needs evolve over time. As such, all three centres must continue to adapt to these changes to remain relevant and well-utilized. This includes:

- **Catering to a Wide Variety of Interests:** Offering spaces that can accommodate a diverse range of activities, from sports and fitness to cultural events, educational workshops, and social gatherings.
- **Responsive Management:** Continuously seeking feedback from the community to understand their evolving needs and preferences, ensuring that the centres remain responsive and well-loved by the community.
- **Balancing Modernity and Tradition:** While Duston Community Centre and Duston Sports Centre are more modern facilities, the Council is committed to maintaining the character and heritage of St Lukes Centre, especially given its location in a conservation area.

Duston Parish Council is dedicated to ensuring that its community centres remain essential resources for the local population. By providing high-quality, adaptable, and welcoming spaces at affordable rates, the Council aims to support the social, recreational, and cultural needs of all Duston residents. These centres are not just buildings; they are the heart of the community, bringing people together and enriching everyday life in Duston.

II. High Quality Green Spaces

Duston Parish Council is committed to delivering and maintaining high-quality green spaces that serve as vital resources for the community. Recognising the profound impact that parks and green spaces have on physical health, mental well-being, and environmental sustainability, the Council has taken proactive steps to enhance these areas within Duston such as more regular tree maintenance, adding new play equipment and stopping unauthorised vehicle access.

Significance of Green Spaces

Green spaces and parks are more than just recreational areas; they are essential for promoting a healthy and connected community. These spaces provide opportunities for:

- **Play and Physical Exercise:** Parks are essential venues for sports, walking, jogging, and other forms of physical activity that contribute to a healthier lifestyle.
- **Social Interaction:** Green spaces offer a peaceful environment where individuals can engage in social activities with family and friends.
- **Mental Well-being:** Regular access to well-maintained green spaces is linked to improved mental health, offering a natural escape from the stresses of daily life and fostering a sense of peace and relaxation. Having close nearby opportunities to connect with nature improves mental wellbeing.

Commitment to High-Quality Green Spaces

Duston Parish Council understands that the quality and accessibility of parks and green spaces are crucial to community well-being. The Council's objectives include:

- **Ensuring Well-Maintained Spaces:** By taking ownership of several parks and green spaces, the Council is committed to ensuring these areas are well-kept, safe, and inviting for all residents.
- **Promoting Environmental Sustainability:** Green spaces play a critical role in supporting biodiversity and mitigating environmental challenges. The Council aims to preserve and enhance the natural beauty of these areas while promoting sustainable practices.
- **Fostering Community Well-being:** High-quality parks and green spaces contribute to the overall well-being of the community by encouraging outdoor activities, social engagement, and a deeper connection with nature.

Addressing Historical Neglect

Traditionally, parks in Duston have not received the attention they deserve, with other areas in Northampton like Abington Park & Racecourse often prioritised. Recognizing this imbalance, Duston Parish Council has taken decisive action to address the historical neglect of local parks and green spaces. By assuming ownership and responsibility for these areas, the Council aims to ensure that Duston's parks receive the care and investment necessary to meet the needs of the community.

Main Parks in Duston

- **Errington Park:** As the main park in Duston, Errington Park serves as a central hub for outdoor activities, offering ample space for recreation, relaxation, and community events. The Park opened in 1939 for the benefit of Duston residents.
- **Mendip Park:** This park provides additional green space for residents, offering a natural environment for leisure activities and outdoor enjoyment. Mendip Park has a play area and a small Multi Use Games Area. It also benefits being connected to the Timken Open Space.
- **Grafton Way Meadow:** A vital green space that contributes to the local ecosystem, Grafton Way Meadow is an important area for residents to connect with nature. Like Mendip it has a play area and a small Multi Use Games Area. It provides an important recreational space for the adjoining neighbourhood of Grafton Way, Meadow Close and Woodland Close.
- **The Quarry:** Another essential green space, The Quarry, offers a unique natural environment for exploration, exercise, and relaxation. The Quarry is a peaceful area where local people enjoy the unique landscape.

Duston Parish Council is dedicated to delivering high-quality green spaces that enhance the quality of life for all residents. By maintaining and improving these areas, the Council ensures that Duston's parks and green spaces are safe, welcoming, and accessible, providing invaluable benefits to the community's physical health, mental well-being, and sustainability.

III. A Safer, Sustainable, and Pleasant Environment

Duston Parish Council is committed to fostering a community where residents can enjoy a high quality of life in a safe, sustainable, and aesthetically pleasing environment. Recognising that residents value a clean, secure, and pleasant area, the Parish Council has continuously prioritised improvements to the public realm, striving to make Duston a great place to live, socialise, and raise a family.

Key Initiatives and Achievements

- **Public Realm Enhancements:** The Parish Council has a longstanding tradition of enhancing the local environment such as installing benches, planters and noticeboards. From the very beginning, it has maintained the War Memorial, ensuring that this important community landmark remains a place of respect and reflection. Additionally, the Council played a crucial role in the successful implementation of the Timken Artwork project, which adds cultural and historical value to the area.
- **Partnerships for Safety:** Understanding the importance of safety in creating a pleasant living environment, the Parish Council actively works with other local agencies, like the Neighbourhood Policing Team. By addressing crime and anti-social behaviour, these partnerships can significantly improve community well-being. The Council's commitment to working in genuine partnership with the Police and West Northamptonshire Council reflects its dedication to making Duston a safer place to live. The Parish Council highlighted the safety problems of e-scooters on the public highway to West Northamptonshire Council.
- **Anti-Speeding Measures:** The Parish Council has invested in vehicle speed-activated signage to improve road safety. These efforts are part of a broader strategy to reduce traffic-related incidents, making the streets of Duston safer for both residents and visitors. The Parish Council has put up signage to remind drivers of the local speed limits which is usually 30 mph.
- **Litter Management and Biodiversity:** The Parish Council recognises the importance of a clean and tidy environment. To combat littering, it has installed numerous litter bins throughout the parish. Additionally, the Council has introduced planters that not only brighten up public spaces but also support biodiversity, contributing to the overall environmental health of the area.

Environmental Sustainability

The Parish Council acknowledges the pressing issue of climate change and the need to act responsibly to protect the environment. As part of its sustainability agenda, the Council focuses on:

- **Biodiversity:** Enhancing local biodiversity is a priority, with initiatives such as the installation of planters and the promotion of green spaces that support a variety of

plant and animal life. These efforts contribute to better air quality, soil drainage, and the overall health of local ecosystems.

- **Flood Risk Reduction:** By improving soil drainage, the Parish Council helps reduce flood risks, protecting both residential and natural areas from the adverse effects of excessive rainfall.
- **Pollination Support:** Through its biodiversity initiatives, the Council supports the pollination of local flora, which is crucial for sustaining plant life and, by extension, the food chain.
- **Mental Health and Well-being:** The Parish Council recognises that a well-maintained, natural environment contributes positively to the mental health and psychological well-being of residents, offering green spaces for relaxation and recreation.

Local Services

Access to local services, such as the library, dentistry, public transport, and pharmacies, play a crucial role in making Duston an attractive place to live. The Parish Council is committed to ensuring that residents have easy access to these essential services, which enhance the quality of life and strengthen our community.

The Duston Parish Council remains committed in its purpose to create and maintain a safer, sustainable, and pleasant environment for all residents. Through ongoing initiatives and a commitment to working in partnership with local agencies, the Council continues to enhance community life in Duston, ensuring that it remains a desirable place to live, work, and visit.

IV. Produces An Events Programme Whether on Its Own Or In Partnership With Others

Duston Parish Council is dedicated to producing a varied and engaging events programme that fosters community spirit, supports local businesses, and enhances the quality of life for residents. Whether independently or in partnership with local organisations, the Council strives to create events that bring people together, celebrate the unique character of Duston, and strengthen our community bonds.

Key Events

- **Duston Fun Day:** As the flagship event of the Parish Council, Duston Fun Day is held every summer and stands as the largest community gathering of the year. This highly anticipated event draws residents and visitors alike, offering a day filled with entertainment, activities, and opportunities to connect with others. The Fun Day is a significant driver of local economic activity, attracting visitors who help contribute to the success of nearby businesses.

- **Christmas Market:** The Parish Council also organises an annual Christmas Market, bringing festive cheer to the community. This event provides a platform for local vendors to showcase their products, supports the local economy, and offers residents a joyful space to celebrate the holiday season.
- **Indoor Car Boot Sales:** Held quarterly at the Duston Community Centre, these sales provide a space for residents to buy and sell second-hand goods, promoting sustainability and offering a cost-effective way for the community to access various items. These events also encourage social interaction and community engagement.
- **Health & Wellbeing Event:** Recognising the importance of resident well-being, the Council recently initiated a Health & Wellbeing event. This gathering provides valuable information about local services and opportunities that support physical and mental health within the parish. The event reflects the Council's commitment to improving the quality of life for Duston residents.

Partnerships and Collaboration

While the Parish Council often organises events independently, it also values collaboration with other local organisations to enhance the scope and impact of its events. Partnerships with entities like Trilogy Active and Duston Library have been instrumental in expanding the variety of events available to the community. These collaborations allow for a more diverse range of activities and ensure that events cater to different interests and age groups within the community.

Community Impact

The Duston Parish Council believes that public events are essential for building and strengthening the community. The impact of these events includes:

1. **Social Connection and Mental Health:** Community events provide vital opportunities for residents to socialise, connect, and build relationships with one another. By reducing feelings of loneliness and fostering a sense of belonging, these events contribute positively to mental health and overall well-being.
2. **Economic Boost:** Large-scale events like Duston Fun Day play a significant role in boosting the local economy. By attracting visitors and generating revenue for local shops, restaurants, and vendors, these events contribute to the economic vitality of the parish.
3. **Promoting Community Cohesion:** Events organised by the Parish Council help to promote community cohesion by bringing residents together in a shared space. These gatherings strengthen the sense of community and create lasting memories that contribute to the unique character of Duston.

Future Commitment

The Duston Parish Council remains committed to continuing and expanding its events programme. By regularly organising a variety of events, the Council ensures that there are opportunities for all residents to participate, engage, and benefit from community

activities. Whether it's through the beloved annual Duston Fun Day or new initiatives that address emerging community needs, the Council will persist in its efforts to make Duston a vibrant and connected community.

Duston Parish Council recognises the power of events in fostering community spirit, supporting local businesses, and enhancing the well-being of its residents. The Council will continue to prioritize a diverse and inclusive events programme as a key element of its service to the community.

V. Advancing Health and Wellbeing

Duston Parish Council is committed to improving community wellbeing in the broadest sense by addressing social isolation, supporting young people, and fostering a healthy, prosperous, and caring community. Collaborating with residents, West Northamptonshire Council, businesses, service providers, and community organizations, the council aims to tackle the social determinants of health and enhance the overall wellbeing of Duston residents.

What is Wellbeing?

Wellbeing is defined as a positive state of mind and body, feeling safe, connected, and able to cope with life. Duston Parish Council's goal is to help residents lead fulfilling lives from cradle to grave through initiatives such as:

- **Community Info and Wellness Fair:** Held at Duston Community Centre to share resources and promote health awareness.
- **Monthly Health & Wellbeing Talks:** Specialist-led discussions on specific health and wellbeing topics.
- **Grow Together Allotment:** A community allotment on Berrywood Road where volunteers can engage with nature, develop new skills, and connect with others.
- **Partnership working with Duston Wellbeing Café:** A weekly afternoon event at St Francis Church providing social interaction and support.
- **Youth Club:** A weekly program at Duston Community Centre to engage young people in positive activities.

The council believes in the long-term benefits of youth work and preventive measures, emphasising that small investments now can yield greater returns in the future. Through partnerships with local healthcare providers like St Lukes Medical Centre, and by working with the library and Trilogly Active, Duston Parish Council offers a wide range of services to enhance health and wellbeing.

Duston Parish Council also provides outdoor exercise equipment in parks, free for public use, and multi-use games areas (MUGAs) to encourage physical activity among young people, which is increasingly important in the digital age. By offering information, services, and accessible spaces like Duston Community Centre and St Lukes Centre, the council supports the community's health and wellbeing.

As the first tier of local government and the closest point of contact for residents, Duston Parish Council plays a key role in addressing the wider social, economic, and environmental factors that influence physical and mental health, striving to make Duston a thriving, healthy place to live and work.

Duston Parish Council will remain dedicated to providing residents with information about local health and wellbeing services. Acting as a central hub, the Parish will guide individuals to the services and groups that best meet their needs. The Council will continue to collaborate with other organisations to further enhance health and wellbeing within the community.

VI. Advocating for Duston

The role of Duston Parish Council extends beyond the services it directly provides. Its mission is to promote all businesses, establishments, services, and amenities within the Parish, highlighting Duston's many offerings. The Council supports local initiatives and organisations that improve residents' quality of life in a fair and balanced manner.

An example of this is the Parish Council's use of social media to promote Duston Market and Duston Institute (Village Hall) room hire. The Council advocates for Duston's interests to external bodies, including the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner and West Northamptonshire Council.

Recognising the importance of local facilities—shops, pubs, restaurants, post offices, takeaways, hairdressers, and more—the Parish Council promotes these shopping areas while ensuring fair treatment of all commercial businesses. Additionally, it champions the local community and voluntary sectors, believing Duston has much to offer.

Efforts to beautify and boost the local economy include the use of planters, hanging baskets, and support for initiatives like local craft fairs. The Council also celebrates the achievements of the community and promotes Duston's rich history, which dates back to its mention in the Domesday Book and even beyond.

Duston Parish Council advocates for the community, its amenities, nonprofit organisations, and the local economy through various channels, such as leaflets, newsletters, the Council's website, and social media platforms. Through these efforts, the Council ensures that Duston remains a vibrant, thriving place for residents and visitors alike.

The website is not just information about Duston Parish Council but also about Duston more generally.

VII. Being a Professional and Competent Council

Duston Parish Council is committed to being a prudent, responsible steward of public funds, ensuring a strong financial foundation to meet future and unforeseen challenges. By maintaining healthy financial reserves, the Council minimises the need for borrowing.

It is transparent and open, publishing most information on its website, www.duston-pc.gov.uk, and consistently aims to provide effective services to residents while striving for continuous improvement.

The Council upholds good governance and meets all statutory requirements, delivering quality customer service. It prioritises spending money sensibly and makes decisions based on sound reasoning. In recent years, Duston Parish Council has successfully been paying off its historic debt from the Public Loans Work Board (PWLB), which was used to renovate three community centres, with the largest loan allocated for the near-complete renovation of Duston Community Centre.

Duston Parish Council focuses on achieving best value in its projects and remains open and transparent in its processes. Policies and procedures, such as Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and the Code of Conduct, are reviewed annually, usually at the Annual Council Meeting. The Council is dedicated to good governance and robust decision-making, even when difficult choices are necessary for the long-term public interest.

Understanding that it cannot please everyone, the Council ensures that money is spent wisely and prudently. It continues to strive for healthy general reserves and earmarked reserves to secure Duston's financial future.

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6. OUR SERVICES A-Z

The services provided by Duston Parish Council are diverse and delivered in various ways. Some services are managed directly by Parish Council staff, while others involve volunteers working alongside staff. In some cases, services are delivered by contractors or other organisations working on behalf of the Parish Council. While these services may overlap in certain areas, they collectively support the Council's seven corporate objectives. Each service has been identified as distinct, but they are interconnected and complement one another, working together to achieve the Parish Council's broader goals.

Duston Parish Council provides the following services to residents and the local community generally.

Allotments

Duston Parish Council has expressed an interest in owning and operating both the Berrywood Road and Bants Lane Allotments. West Northamptonshire Council have agreed to transfer them but no date yet has been given.

Attenuation Pond

Duston Parish Council owns one Attenuation Pond, located on Telstar Way Open Space. Attenuation ponds are crucial for managing and controlling excess rainwater, helping to prevent flooding by acting as temporary reservoirs to collect and capture rainwater runoff. The Attenuation Pond requires regular maintenance checks to ensure it functions properly, and warnings should be issued to alert the public to the potential danger of flash flooding in the area.

Bargain Shop

The Bargain Shop, located on the ground floor of Duston Community Centre, provides residents with an affordable and convenient way to sell unwanted household items. For just £1, residents can display up to 10 items for a period of three weeks. While Duston Parish Council retains the £1 fee, the sellers keep any money made from the sale of their items, though they are responsible for collecting any unsold goods.

Run by dedicated volunteers, the Bargain Shop not only offers a valuable service to the community but also provides social interaction and engagement for those helping to run it. Volunteers have the opportunity to spend time in a lively community setting, meeting new people and contributing to a popular local initiative. Additionally, the Bargain Shop helps increase footfall into Duston Community Centre and provides a modest income stream for the Parish Council.

Benches

Duston Parish Council acknowledges the social value of benches and their role in enhancing the public realm. Public seating offers several benefits to local residents, including:

- Providing an opportunity to rest.
- Allowing people to spend more time outdoors in the fresh air.
- Encouraging social interaction, reducing social isolation by offering a space for conversations in a non-digital environment.
- Serving as a free service for people to enjoy the outdoors and be among others.
- Supporting healthy routines by enabling people to spend more time outside without cost.

The Parish Council is committed to maintaining these amenities. All Parish Council benches are inspected annually, with minor repairs carried out as needed.

Benches in Duston can be categorised into two groups: those on Parish Council land and those not on Parish Council land. The latter include:

1. A bench outside Templemore on Bants Lane (on WNC Highways).
2. An NHS Commemorative Bench on Bants Lane by the allotments (on WNC Highways).
3. The Princess Diana Bench on Bants Lane near Poppyfields, installed in 1998 (on WNC Highways).
4. A Queen's Platinum Jubilee bench on Main Road outside the vicarage (on WNC Highways).
5. A green bench in the old village centre near the bakery (on WNC Highways).
6. A WW1 Commemorative Bench next to the Main Road/Berrywood Road roundabout (on WNC Highways).
7. A bench on the grass verge next to the allotments near the village sign (on WNC Highways).
8. Two benches on Hardlands Road Open Space (unknown).
9. A bench at the Main Road/Eastfield Road junction (on WNC Highways).
10. Two benches in Duston Cemetery, one dedicated to the COVID-19 pandemic (on WNC Assets).
11. Two silver-coloured benches in Limehurst Square (on WNC Highways).
12. A small green bench at the Harlestone Road bus stop (on WNC Highways).
13. A small green bench at Weggs Farm Road next to Tesco, at the bus stop (Private Property).
14. An NHS Commemorative Bench on Berrywood Road/Sandy Lane Walk (on WNC Highways).
15. A commemorative bench outside Duston Community Centre (on WNC Assets).

Additionally, the Parish Council owns several other benches placed on its land. These benches not only provide practical benefits but also contribute to brightening up the parish and enhancing the local environment.

Bleed Kits

Bleed kits are specifically designed to manage life-threatening bleeding, which can cause critical blood loss within minutes after a traumatic injury. These specialized trauma kits

provide first responders or bystanders with the necessary tools to control severe bleeding and potentially save lives.

Duston currently has two bleed kits located at:

1. The exterior wall of **Duston Community Centre**.
2. Inside the **defibrillator** on the exterior wall of **St Luke's Centre**.

These kits are essential resources in emergency situations, ensuring quick access to life-saving equipment.

Cafés

Cafés are important social hubs where people can meet, relax, and enjoy time with friends and family. They offer a space to talk, read, work, and network, making them versatile spots for both casual meetings and professional connections. Duston Parish Council hosts two cafés, both operated by third parties, offering a welcoming environment for locals to gather.

One café is located at Duston Community Centre and the other at Duston Sports Centre. Both provide a range of beverages, snacks, and light refreshments. With the addition of Wi-Fi, these cafés have become ideal spaces for people to not only socialise but also work or study, making them convenient and comfortable community meeting points.

Car Parks

Duston Parish Council provides and manages several car parks to support the local community and its facilities:

- **Errington Park Car Park:** This car park is free of charge and open to the public, offering convenient access to the park.
- **Duston Sports Centre Car Park:** While owned by Duston Parish Council, this car park is managed by Trilogly.
- **Duston Community Centre Car Park:** The rear car park is designated for staff and tenants.
- **St Luke's Centre Car Park:** Reserved for tenants and customers of the centre.

A well-maintained and safe car park can encourage higher footfall into Duston's community centres, providing convenience for the public, tenants, and customers alike. Proper maintenance of car parks also ensures that they are safe and practical for all users.

Commercial Spaces

Duston Parish Council offers commercial spaces for letting in all its buildings, recognising the importance of well-suited office environments in fostering productivity and staff wellbeing. The Council is keen to support small businesses by renting out these spaces, benefiting both the businesses and the local economy. There are 6 commercial lets available at St Luke's Centre and 2 at Duston Community Centre, while Duston Sports Centre is currently let to Trilogly.

As a landlord, Duston Parish Council aims to be both responsible and approachable, ensuring it addresses any concerns raised by tenants. When spaces become available, they are advertised to attract new businesses interested in renting. The Council values its role in promoting local business growth and maintaining a strong community presence through its commercial lettings.

Community Spaces

Duston Parish Council offers affordable community spaces for hire, supporting local groups, voluntary organisations, and even commercial entities at very competitive hourly rates. The Parish Council manages two key venues for this purpose: Duston Community Centre and St Luke's Centre.

Community spaces serve as a crucial gathering place, especially for older residents or those feeling isolated, offering opportunities for engagement through various activities and clubs. Community spaces can host a range of physical, creative, and educational classes. These clubs, classes and activities give opportunities to local people to become involved in stuff. They can also be hired by local people for social and family events.

Defibrillators

Defibrillators are crucial in saving lives, especially in emergencies where every second counts. In Duston, the Parish Council has made five defibrillators available across the community to ensure quick access in critical situations. These devices deliver a life-saving jolt of energy to the heart, helping to restore its normal rhythm and potentially saving a life. Importantly, defibrillators are user-friendly and do not require special training, making them accessible to everyone in an emergency.

Here's where you can find the defibrillators in Duston:

1. **Harlestone Road** (near Firsvie Drive) - Located in a repurposed BT telephone box, easy to spot.
2. **Weggs Farm Road** (by the shops) - Another community box location, easily identifiable.
3. **Chiltern Avenue** (by the shops) - Also housed in a former BT telephone box, clearly visible.
4. **St Lukes Centre** - Mounted on an exterior wall for easy access.
5. **Errington Park** (by the MUGA) - Positioned for quick access in the park.

These defibrillators are regularly checked by the Duston Parish Council to ensure they are in good working order, reinforcing the importance of being able to swiftly find and use them when needed.

Engagement & Partnership Working

Duston Parish Council recognises its vital role in providing community leadership. While the Council is just one entity among many in Duston, it often assumes a leadership role to unite various organisations for the greater good.

The Council actively seeks to collaborate with key local stakeholders, including West Northamptonshire Council, ward councillors, schools, local businesses, the voluntary sector, the Police, Northampton Partnership Homes, the food bank, and St Lukes Surgery. By working collaboratively together, these groups can achieve more significant positive outcomes than they could individually.

Community engagement involves involving and collaborating with stakeholders to address issues, solve problems, and make decisions that positively impact Duston. Effective partnership working and engagement are crucial for the Parish Council to enhance the delivery of services and outcomes for the Duston community.

Duston Parish Council is committed to fostering strong working relationships with all local stakeholders. Partnership working and community engagement is an important service.

Environmental Maintenance on non DPC owned land

Duston Parish Council undertakes various environmental maintenance tasks on land it does not own, all aimed at enhancing the local area. These efforts include:

1. **Timken Artwork Area:** Maintaining the area around the artwork at the Main Road entrance.
2. **War Memorial Area:** Sweeping and weeding around the war memorial.
3. **Village Centre Alley:** Trimming bushes and hedges in the alley between the Travel Agents and One Stop Shop in the old village centre.
4. **Bushes Near Pub and Bakery:** Maintaining bushes and hedges near these local businesses on Main Road.
5. **Saxon Rise/Main Road:** Managing hedges adjacent to Duston House at the bottom of Saxon Rise.
6. **Main Road/Eastfield Road:** Caring for a hedge on the grass verge, planted by the Parish Council.
7. **Ashwood Road:** Trimming the hedge at Duston Village Hall to keep the footpath clear.
8. **St Luke's Churchyard:** Cutting the churchyard grass four times a year during the growing season.
9. **Tree of Hope:** Small scale landscaping and planting around the Tree of Hope on Berrywood Road.
10. **Kerrfield / Timken Alleyway:** Cut back over hanging branches that overhanging this alley from Kerrfield Estate towards Sir John Pascoe Way and Timken Estate.

These efforts help improve the overall appearance and maintenance of Duston's environment.

Events

Duston Parish Council hosts a range of free events that provide opportunities for the public to come together and enjoy community activities. Some of the key events include the **Duston Fun Day** in June, the **Christmas Market** held in late November or early December, the **Health & Wellness Fair** in March, **monthly Health & Wellbeing talks** with specialists, and **quarterly Indoor Car Boot Sales** at Duston Community Centres. These events, organised by the Council, are designed to bring the local community together and foster a sense of belonging.

In addition to running its own events, Duston Parish Council offers support and advice to other local groups and individuals who wish to put on their own events. Events like these strengthen bonds between residents, encourage civic pride, and create a vibrant, connected community.

Flags

Flags are powerful symbols that promote unity, belonging, and identity, fostering civic pride within the local community. Duston Parish Council owns three flagpoles, located at Duston Community Centre (on land owned by West Northamptonshire Council), St. Luke's Centre, and Duston Sports Centre. The display of flags is managed in line with the Duston Parish Council Communications & Engagement Policy, ensuring they are flown appropriately and with respect to their symbolic importance.

Gym Equipment

Outdoor gyms are a fantastic way to encourage the Duston community to stay active, offering a free and accessible alternative to traditional gyms. These spaces are designed with a variety of equipment aimed at increasing strength and improving cardiovascular health, making them suitable for all fitness levels. Although children under 1.4 meters in height cannot use the equipment, seeing others exercise in outdoor gyms can inspire them to be more active and build confidence in working out in public.

In Duston, the Parish Council provides two outdoor gyms for the community:

1. **St Lukes Field** - A well-maintained gym that offers a variety of equipment for strength and cardio exercises.
2. **Errington Park** - Slightly larger than the St Lukes gym, this facility provides more space and equipment options for users.

Both gyms are popular with residents and are regularly maintained by the Duston Parish Council to ensure they remain in good condition for public use. These outdoor gyms provide a welcoming and accessible space for everyone to enjoy the physical and mental benefits of exercise in a natural setting.

Grants

Duston Parish Council offers a grant process for local, constituted not-for-profit groups. These groups can apply for grants of up to £1,000, with each year's budget allocated to support such initiatives. The grants are designed to benefit local charities and third-sector

organisations in Duston, helping them with project completion, equipment purchases, or carrying out activities that support the community.

To apply for a grant, groups must follow the guidelines set out in the Grant Awarding Policy. The application process involves submitting a Grant Application Form, which can be found on the Duston Parish Council website. Grants are awarded with the aim of benefiting both the applying group and the wider Duston community.

Green Spaces

Duston Parish Council offers green spaces free of charge to the local community, recognising their vital role in individual and collective wellbeing. In an increasingly urbanized Duston, these green spaces are crucial for both physical and mental health, providing areas for relaxation, play, and socialization among families and friends. The Parish Council ensures that these spaces are well-maintained and welcoming.

Errington Park is the largest green space in Duston, offering a wide area for residents to enjoy. Other significant parks include the Quarry, Mendip Park, Grafton Way Meadow, and St Luke's Field. These spaces not only serve as recreational areas but also play a key environmental role, supporting biodiversity and contributing to a healthy, vibrant community. Green spaces are essential for fostering wellbeing and have numerous positive environmental impacts, making them invaluable assets for the community.

Information

Duston residents like reliable information about what's happening in their community, and Duston Parish Council plays a key role in keeping them informed. Residents want to know what's going on in their area. So the Council shares updates not only about its own activities but also about broader local events. When promoting information about commercial businesses, the Council ensures it is done fairly and impartially. Additionally, the Council shares details about public services, such as those offered by the Neighbourhood Policing Team and St Luke's Surgery.

Residents are eager to stay updated, and the Council works diligently to meet this need. As the Council is funded by residents through the precept, it has a responsibility to keep them informed about how their money is being used. To do so, Duston Parish Council communicates through various channels, including social media, radio interviews, newsletters, third-party publications, leaflets, and the website (www.duston-pc.gov.uk).

Furthermore, the Council has strategically placed noticeboards across the parish to ensure easy access to information. The four larger noticeboards are located at Duston Community Centre, St Luke's Centre, Errington Park, and the shops at Weggs Farm Road. Four smaller boards are situated at Duston United Reform Church, Main Road Shops, Quarry Road/Port Road, and Malvern Grove Shops. Since the Council's establishment in 1991, the methods of communication have evolved significantly to meet changing information needs.

Leisure Centre

Duston Sports Centre, located in the heart of the community, is a key asset owned by Duston Parish Council. With a large field accommodating a variety of sports, the Centre

plays a crucial role in promoting wellness and physical activity. The facility includes a gym and provides spaces for fitness, social interactions, and overall wellbeing.

By driving physical activity and addressing health inequalities, Duston Sports Centre fosters community cohesion and enhances the physical health of local residents. It offers a positive environment for people to engage in fitness and socialise, helping to strengthen the community's wellbeing. The Leisure Centre is crucial for the general health of the community.

Litter Bins

Litter bins serve as the first line of defence in keeping our streets clean and are essential fixtures in public spaces that help maintain a tidy and hygienic environment. This, in turn, significantly improves the overall cleanliness of Duston. However, the presence of litter bins alone does not guarantee that waste will not be discarded on the streets.

Duston Parish Council owns numerous litter bins, though the exact number is currently unknown, it is estimated to be in the dozens. These bins also double as dog waste bins and are primarily located in parks owned by the Parish Council. While all bins within these parks are owned by the Parish Council, they are emptied by West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) as part of the Veolia contract, which, as of 2025, is a service provided at no cost to Duston Parish Council. Most of the main parks have at least one litter bin, with most parks having multiple bins.

In addition to the bins covered under the WNC Veolia contract, Duston Parish Council has also installed several litter bins in various other locations around the parish. These locations include:

- Outside Duston Library
- Main Road / Eastfield Road
- Main Road / Ryeland Road
- Quarry Road Bus Stop
- Path between Park Lane & Velocotte Way
- Wrenbury Road Bus Stop
- Telstar Way
- Harlestone Road / Firsview Drive
- Westbury Close
- Haydown Green Play Area

The bin outside the library is emptied directly by Duston Parish Council. For the other bins listed above, Duston Parish Council pays a fee to WNC for their emptying. These bins feature a plaque indicating they were installed by Duston Parish Council and also bear a "Report It" sticker for easy reporting of issues.

Currently, there is a distinction in how bins are managed—some are emptied by WNC at no charge to the Parish Council, while others incur a fee. Looking ahead, Duston Parish Council will need to decide on the management and emptying of all bins, ideally by the time it takes over full operation of the parks in 2028. This decision will ensure consistency in service and potentially streamline the management of public waste disposal across the parish.

Monuments

Duston Parish Council owns and maintains five monuments in Duston, each serving as a tangible link to the past and preserving the history and heritage of the parish for future generations. These monuments not only reflect the local community's history but also play a vital role in maintaining the area's identity and collective memory.

The Monuments are as follows:

1. Timken Artwork

- **Ownership:** Owned by Duston Parish Council (DPC) but sits on WNC Highways Land.
- **Location:** Main Road / Tollgate Way.

2. Timken Gates

- **Ownership:** Owned by Duston Parish Council, which also owns the land.
- **Location:** Main Road adjacent to the Timken Estate.

3. Rosevilla Hut & Wall

- **Ownership:** Owned by Duston Parish Council, which also owns the land.
- **Location:** Rosevilla, adjacent to Norman Snow Way.

4. War Memorial

- **Custodianship:** Under law, Duston Parish Council acts as the Guardian/Custodian of the War Memorial, which sits on unregistered land and belonged to the previous Duston Parish Council.
- **Location:** Main Road near St Lukes Church

5. Village Sign

- **Ownership:** Owned by Duston Parish Council but sits on WNC Highways Land.
- **Location:** Berrywood Road / Main Junction grass verge.

6. Tree of Hope

- **Ownership:** Owned by West Northamptonshire Council but maintained by Duston Parish Council.

- **Location:** Berrywood Road / Sandy Lane.

These monuments serve as enduring symbols of Duston's rich history, particularly those associated with the British Timken factory, a significant part of the local community from 1942 to 2002. The Timken Artwork, Timken Gates, and Rosevilla Hut stand as a lasting legacy of the factory's impact on the area.

The Tree of Hope stands as a powerful symbol of the community's resilience and unity, particularly highlighted during the challenging times of the Covid-19 pandemic. This tree embodies the collective strength and perseverance of Duston's residents as they navigated through adversity.

By owning the land on which the Timken Gates and Rosevilla Hut sit, the Parish Council ensures that these monuments, along with the War Memorial and Village Sign, are preserved and maintained as prominent local features. Their upkeep is a testament to Duston's commitment to honouring its history and the contributions of its residents over the years.

Pavements

Pavements are a service provided by Duston Parish Council, playing a vital role in encouraging walking as an alternative to motor transport. They create safe zones for pedestrians, away from traffic, which not only promotes walking but also contributes to reducing vehicle use, improving air quality, and lowering emissions. Additionally, pavements support physical health by offering opportunities for exercise and outdoor activity.

Paths are crucial for ensuring accessibility, particularly for wheelchair users and those with mobility scooters. Duston Parish Council maintains several important paths, including those at Errington Park, Telstar Way Open Space, Clipston Way Open Space, and The Quarry. For instance, the Council owns and maintains the path leading from Main Road into Errington Park, ensuring it is well-kept and accessible for all users. The path at Clipston Way was closed off from Hopping Hill numerous years ago following police advice to address persistent anti-social behaviour. At Telstar Way, paths run through the public open space, connecting the Timken Estate to Tollgate Way, providing essential routes for local residents.

There are also paths at St Luke's Centre and Duston Sports Centre, although the paths at Duston Sports Centre are managed by Trilogy. Pavements provide convenience and accessibility for all residents, though their benefits face challenges due to the illegal use of e-scooters, which pose safety risks to pedestrians. Duston Parish Council is dedicated to maintaining and protecting these vital community pavements to ensure they remain safe and accessible for everyone.

Planning

Duston Parish Council is notified of all planning applications within the parish and makes it a priority to respond to as many as possible. The Council ensures that these applications align with the broader community's interests and are not detrimental to the local area.

Recently, the Council has raised objections to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) due to concerns over increased parking issues and domestic waste left on the streets.

The Parish Council aims for all planning applications to respect the character of the area and contribute to a more visually pleasing and functional neighbourhood. The Council's Planning Committee reviews these applications and submits its views to West Northamptonshire Council, which makes the final decisions.

The Planning Committee meetings are open to both the public and the press, ensuring transparency and community involvement in the process.

Planters

Planters play a significant role in contributing to sustainable living and biodiversity by encouraging the growth of native plants and providing habitats for pollinators and other wildlife in Duston's urban environment. These planters not only improve the visual appeal of urban spaces but also foster a healthier ecosystem at the heart of the parish. By enhancing the appearance of areas near shops, planters make them more inviting, increasing foot traffic and boosting local business.

Beyond aesthetics, planters instill a sense of pride and responsibility in residents, fostering a stronger sense of community and connection. Duston Parish Council currently maintains a variety of planters throughout the parish, including:

- 12 hanging baskets
- Planters on Main Road and Berrywood Road under the "Welcome to Duston" sign
- A smaller planter near the Duston Village Sign at the Main Road/Berrywood Road junction
- 3 round planters near the shops on Main Road (near the Coop) and one octagonal planter outside the newsagents
- Two 3-tier planters at the entrance of Duston Community Centre
- 2 round planters at the shops on Weggs Farm Road, near Tesco
- 2 large planters at Limehurst Square
- Various planters around St Lukes Centre

Duston Parish Council is also exploring the possibility of trialling lamppost planters to further enhance the area.

Play Areas

Playground equipment provides children with numerous learning opportunities that support their social, emotional, imaginative, and physical development. It helps strengthen their bodies, improve balance, enhance motor skills, and boost confidence. Neighbourhood parks and playgrounds also foster interactions between parents and children, allowing parents to play with, teach, and bond with their children, while kids engage in activities with their peers and develop new skills.

Duston Parish Council maintains many children's play areas of various sizes, ensuring accessible recreational spaces for the community. These include:

1. **Errington Park Play Area** – Also features a full MUGA (Multi-Use Games Area).
2. **Mendip Park Play Area** – Includes a half MUGA.
3. **Grafton Way Meadow Play Area** – Also has a half MUGA.
4. **Triumph Gardens Play Area**
5. **The Quarry Play Area**
6. **Westbury Close Play Area**
7. **Haydown Green Play Area**
8. **St Luke's Field Play Area**

These play areas provide valuable opportunities for children to play, learn, and interact with others, enriching both individual and community life.

Speed Activated Signs

Speed Activated Signs are roadside LED displays designed to alert drivers if they are exceeding the speed limit, which is typically 30mph in Duston. These signs play a crucial role in improving road safety by providing a visual reminder to drivers to reduce speed if necessary. Duston Parish Council recognises the concern of speeding within the parish and uses these signs to reinforce speed limits and promote safer driving habits. The Parish Council currently has four Speed Activated Signs that are mobile and can be rotated across various locations in the parish. This flexibility ensures that all areas benefit from their use over time, as they are mounted on Highways lampposts.

The Grow Together Allotment (TGTA)

The Grow Together Allotment (TGTA) is a community initiative provided by Duston Parish Council, offering a welcoming space for local residents and groups to engage in gardening and outdoor activities. Located on the Berrywood Road site, TGTA allows people to work either individually or in groups, fostering social connections while enjoying nature. Overseen by a part-time coordinator, it serves not only as a leisure space but also as an educational resource for schools, nurseries, and youth groups. Duston Parish Council encourages participation by promoting the benefits of fresh air, exercise, and friendships, welcoming people of all ages and abilities with enthusiasm as the only requirement.

Trees

Duston Parish Council owns hundreds of trees, though the exact number is not known. All parks managed by the Parish Council have at least some trees, and these are crucial assets for the community. The Council manages its tree stock under a "Tree Management Policy," which mandates a three-year inspection cycle for all trees. Following these inspections, the Council responds to any recommendations for maintenance or care. Given the high costs associated with tree maintenance, the Council must manage its budget prudently to ensure the continued health and safety of its trees.

Duston Parish Council acknowledges the significant benefits that trees bring to the community:

1. **Environmental Purification:** Trees purify the air by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen, which helps combat climate change.
2. **Biodiversity Support:** Trees provide habitat for countless species, which in turn protect public health and preserve biodiversity.
3. **Climate Moderation:** By offering shade and reducing the urban heat island effect, trees help cool streets.
4. **Flood Prevention:** Trees stabilise soil and filter rainwater, protecting against floods and reducing water pollution.
5. **Mental Wellbeing:** Trees offer beauty, tranquillity, and recreation, which help ease stress and improve mental wellbeing.

The Council recognizes the importance of trees in enhancing both the environmental and social wellbeing of Duston. While the Parish Council supports the planting of more trees, it also emphasizes the need for careful planning to ensure that new trees are planted in locations where they will not cause future problems.

Youth Provision

For many years, Duston Parish Council has been committed to providing youth services, working with various providers to meet the needs of the community. Currently, the Parish Council operates a weekly youth club at Duston Community Centre, offering a safe and supportive space for young people to engage in positive activities.

The Council views youth work and engagement as an essential long-term investment, believing that small contributions today can help prevent larger challenges in the future. While the impact of youth provision may not always be immediately visible, it is seen as a crucial commitment to fostering positive development and outcomes for Duston's young people.

7. FUTURE PROJECTS AND COMMITMENTS

Duston Parish Council is committed to delivering its seven corporate objectives and continuing to provide services to the community.

Below is a list of additional aims the Council intends to achieve by 2030 which will help deliver the objectives

- **Refurbish St. Luke's Playground:** Install new equipment, replace some existing items, and consider adding disabled-friendly play features.
- **War Memorial Survey:** Commission an independent survey to assess the condition of the War Memorial and consider any recommended actions. Care needs to be taken that work undertaken does not damage the structure.
- **New Play Equipment in Mendip Park:** Install new equipment without removing any existing items.
- **Village Green Status:** Secure Village Green status for Mendip Park and Grafton Way Park to ensure future protection. Village Green Status will give these two parks enhance protection against future developments.
- **Westbury Close Swing Replacement:** To remove the small swing at Westbury Close Play Area with some kind of basket swing to cater to a wider age range of children.
- **Increase Capital Reserves:** Reach an earmarked reserve of at least £70,000 by 2030. As of March 31, the reserve stands at £31,219. With numerous assets and services the Council does strong levels of Reserves.
- **Tender for Environmental Maintenance (2028):** Draft a tender document and conduct community consultations to decide on service specifications, such as how frequently parks are maintained. Council may need external expertise help with this. There is a trade-off between stronger specifications and the burden required on the precept.
- **Commemorative Plaques:** Install a plaque in Errington Park to honour the gift from Mr. and Mrs. Errington and one at Rosevilla Hut to explain its history as the former entrance to Timken Sports Field.
- **Community Bleed Kits:** Investigate the possibility of adding bleed kits to defibrillators located on Weggs Farm Road, Chiltern Avenue, and Harlestone Road.
- **"Duston Together" Newsletter:** Continue producing and distributing this newsletter 2-3 times per year to keep residents informed about how their precept money is being spent.
- **Freehold of St. Luke's Centre and Field:** Work towards acquiring the freehold of these spaces from West Northamptonshire Council. Duston Parish Council continues to invest heavily in this Centre.

- **Adopt New Policies:** Introduce a biodiversity policy, a co-option policy, and a policy stating that Parish Council land is not for sale unless there is overwhelming public interest, ensuring open spaces are preserved for future generations.
- **Encroachment:** To record existing fence lines and fight against future encroachment.
- **Repaint MUGAs:** Repaint the Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGA) at Grafton Way and Mendip Park, as the surfaces are worn.
- **Review Noticeboards:** Assess whether existing noticeboards, such as the aging one at Errington Park, need to be replaced or upgraded. Should the smaller noticeboards be replaced by larger ones where possible.
- **New Neighbourhood Plan:** Consider developing a new Neighbourhood Plan, weighing the pros and cons, after the West Northamptonshire Council Local Plan is adopted.
- **Public Open Space Adoption:** Continue the Council's commitment to adopting public open spaces to prevent them from being managed by Estate Management Companies.
- **Outdoor Gym Equipment:** Install 3-4 pieces of gym equipment at Grafton Way Meadow.
- **Partnership Working:** Strengthen partnerships with local stakeholders, such as St. Luke's Surgery, schools, the Neighbourhood Policing Team, businesses, churches, and third-sector organisations.
- **Boundary Protection:** Oppose any changes to Parish boundaries if a Community Governance Review occurs within the next five years. Duston Parish Council wants to keep the current boundary as it is.
- **Staff Handbook:** Create a staff handbook compiling all HR policies. It would be helpful to staff for all policies to be in one comprehensive document. The staff handbook will follow Green Book terms and conditions except for pensions.
- **Issue Reporting System:** Develop a system for residents and councillors to report concerns regarding Parish Council properties and assets. This will help ensure all faults are monitored and acted upon.
- **Planters:** The Parish Council will look to putting up lamppost planters like some other areas.
- **Planter:** To install a planter under the "Welcome to Duston" sign Cotswold Avenue by 2030.
- **Electric Charging Points:** The Council will investigate putting EV charging points at either Duston Sports Centre or Errington Park. The Council would support WNC putting EV charging points outside Duston Library.

- **Errington Park Path:** Work towards installing a perimeter path around Errington Park. This would make the Park more accessible.
- **Annual Events:** Continue organising the Duston Fun Day, Christmas event, and Health & Wellness Fair annually.
- **Defibrillator Maintenance:** Ensure all existing defibrillators remain operational. This is vital and popular service provided by Duston Parish Council.
- **Tree Planting:** Plant one new tree each year from 2025 to 2030.
- **Policy Reviews:** Review all Council policies at least once by 2030.
- **Mendip Park Arm Gate:** Install an arm gate at Mendip Park's entrance. This will tighten security against unauthorised vehicles getting onto the park.
- **Newton Road Bollards:** Place bollards in Newton Road Open Space to prevent unauthorised vehicle access.
- **Green Flag Status:** Investigate achieving Green Flag status for Errington Park, which recognises it as a high-quality public space.
- **Devolution:** Duston Parish Council will actively consider any devolution requests from West Northamptonshire Council. At the present time though there is no indication from West Northamptonshire that they are considering anything for the foreseeable future.
- **Complete Land Transfers:** Finalize the transfer of the following open spaces and allotments:
 - Aquitaine Close Open Space
 - Bants Lane Allotments
 - Berrywood Road Allotments
 - Bramhall Rise Spinney
 - Beaune Close Open Space
 - Triumph Gardens Park
 - The Green, Weggs Farm Road
 - Haydown Green Open Space, Wenlock Way
 - Rose Garden, Main Road
 - Sandy Lane/Alsace Close Open Space
 - Rosevilla Access Way
 - Alfred Knight Main Road (with 3 streetlights).

- **Ongoing Maintenance:** Continue delivering existing services and maintaining key assets, such as Duston Community Centre and St. Luke's Centre, through a regular program of maintenance.

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