



Duston Parish Council Annual Report 2024

The big issue facing Duston residents this year has been the closure of Sandy Lane for months whilst new housing is being put in place. In response Duston Parish Council contacted the developers and West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) to strongly state the objections of local people. Unfortunately, fears have proven to be correct, and more traffic is coming through Duston. It has meant more traffic and congestion on our roads. We will continue to put pressure on West Northamptonshire Council and the developers to reopen Sandy Lane ASAP. The reopening of Sandy Lane should have happened by now.

This past year Duston Parish Council passed on its congratulations to the Boys Brigade (11th Northampton) and the Village Hall who both celebrated their 100th Birthdays. The Council thanked them for their contribution to Duston over the last century.

Duston Parish Council has helped to promote "Duston Market" which has been taking place every second Saturday of the month in the Village Bakery car park.

We have received our portrait of His Majesty King Charles III which now hangs proudly in the Council Chamber.

After persistent months of campaigning, Duston Parish Council was successful in getting West Northamptonshire Council to resurface Limehurst Square. The Square has been transformed with the removal of the old uneven slabs and with new tarmac with the addition of bike racks. For its part, the Parish Council purchased and installed two new benches and planters, enhancing the Square's appearance.

We continue to lobby West Northamptonshire Council about outstanding Section 106 monies. More recently the Clerk, Assistant Clerk, and Chair of the Planning Committee Cllr Mike Ingram have held meetings with WNC Officers to progress the issue further.

Duston Parish Council responded to a consultation by West Northamptonshire Council about e-scooters. Duston Parish Council expressed in detail its serious concerns about the e-scooter

trail but unfortunately, this seems to have been ignored. The e-scooters have been given a further two two-year extension to the trial.

Using funds from the Community Infrastructure Levy, the Council implemented several long standing projects, including the installation of a defibrillator in Errington Park, a commemorative coronation bench on Hadlands Road Open Space, and new play equipment at Haydown Green and the Quarry. We have just this month put a table tennis table at both Errington Park and St Luke's Field.

Since acquiring ownership of Mendip Park, the Council has made various enhancements, such as installing a soakaway, a gate with the Timken estate, entrance signage, and removal of foliage to deter anti-social behaviour. A new bench has also been installed in Mendip Park near the new gate.

The Council installed three more "Welcome to Duston" signs at key gateways to brighten up the area. These are at Weggs Farm Road, Cotswold Avenue, and Tollgate Way. Small benches were placed at bus stops on Weggs Farm Road and Harlestone Road, providing comfort for commuters. Concrete bases were added to benches at the Errington Park play area, and the Covid memorial bench at the cemetery was relocated based on public feedback.

The Council has nearly completed the Tree of Hope project, which has received positive feedback from the community. We have installed three-tier planters at Duston Community Centre and continue to place hanging baskets along Main Road.

Duston Fun Day was a resounding success again, attracting numerous local residents and fostering community spirit. Christmas Market and Community Info Fair were well-received events and contributed to community engagement and well-being. The Council continues to prioritize Health & Wellbeing, hosting regular talks and adopting a dedicated Health & Wellbeing Strategy. The Grow Together Allotment project remains popular among volunteers.

We continue to work with the local policing team, and as a result, the Council installed a Bleed Cabinet at Duston Community Centre and implemented measures to address speeding in the area such as the placement of 30 mph stickers and the purchase of two more speed-activated signs.

Both Duston Community Centre and St Luke's Centre remain important community assets and continue to be well used. The Council has renewed its partnership with Trilogy Active, ensuring their continued operation of Duston Sports Centre until 2042. We very much look forward to working with them on future projects.

Last November Duston Parish Council started working with Free2Talk which now provides a weekly Youth Club that meets every Monday evening including in school holidays. Free2Talk attended the Community Info and Wellness Fair.

A challenge for Duston Parish Council is that with ever increasing responsibilities it needs to be more cautious and prudent with its financial resources. At present the Council is in good

financial health but must make sure it doesn't go into General Reserves to fund day to day revenue expenditure.

Asset transfers continue to be slow, and many parks and allotments have yet to be formally transferred to Duston Parish Council.

West Northamptonshire Council have has set up a Larger Clerks Forum which is a meeting of Clerks for the 14 largest Parishes in the area. Our Clerk is Chair of the forum and regularly raises issues that directly concern Duston.

Duston Parish Council remains committed to enhancing the quality of life for residents through infrastructure improvements, community engagement, and prudent financial management. As we look towards the future, we remain focused on delivering projects that benefit our community and ensure a sustainable and vibrant environment for all.