



DUSTON PARISH COUNCIL

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

FULL COUNCIL

3rd December 2021

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend the Ordinary meeting of Duston Parish Council to be held at Duston Community Centre on Thursday 9th December 2021 commencing at 7.00pm for the purpose of transacting the following business.

Issued by:

Gary Youens
 Parish Clerk, Duston Parish Council

AGENDA

120/21. Election of Chair of Duston Parish Council

- To elect a Chair for the remainder of the ensuing municipal year

121/21. Declaration of Acceptance of Office

- To receive the Chair Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Please note, this is a public meeting and you may be filmed, recorded and published. Copies of all council papers are available to download at www.duston-pc.gov.uk

122/21. Election of Vice-Chair of Duston Parish Council (if applicable)

- To elect a Vice-Chair for the remainder of the ensuing municipal year

123/21. To receive apologies for absence**124/21. To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4th November 2021 (APPENDIX A)**

125/21. To receive declarations of interest under the Council's Code of Conduct related to business on the agenda (*Members should disclose any interests in the business to be discussed and are reminded that the disclosure of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest will require that the member withdraws from the meeting room during the transaction of that item of business*).

126/21. Public Participation Session

(Persons wishing to address Council on an agenda item may register their intention to do so at the above address by telephone or email by 12 noon on the day of the meeting and may speak for a maximum of 3 minutes).

127/21. Engagement and Wellbeing Committee Update

- To receive a report in the form of minutes of the Engagement & Wellbeing Committee meeting of 27th October 2021 (APPENDIX B)

128/21. Planning Committee Update

- To receive a report in the form of the minutes of the Planning Committee of 25th November 2021 and note any decisions made (APPENDIX C)

129/21. Environment Committee

- To receive a report in the form of the minutes of Environment Committee of 18th November (APPENDIX D)

130/21. Draft Budget and Council Tax Precept 2022/23

- To receive and discuss the proposed draft budget and council tax precept for 2022/23 (APPENDIX E)

131/21. Report of the External Auditor 2020/21

- To receive the report of the external auditor for 2020/21 (APPENDIX F)

132/21. Duston Parish Council Banking Provider

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- To consider changing Duston Parish Council accounts to Unity Trust Bank (APPENDIX G)

133/21. St Luke's Centre Renovation

- To approve an additional £15,000 from General Reserves for unexpected repair work during St Luke's Centre Renovation

134/21. Grant Application

- To consider a Grant Application from the 16th Duston Northampton Scout Group (APPENDIX H)

135/21. Exclusion of Press and Public

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

- To approve the minutes of the Council meeting on 15th July 2021 (APPENDIX I)



DUSTON PARISH COUNCIL

APPENDIX A

Duston Parish Council
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FULL COUNCIL

MINUTES 4th November 7pm

CHAIRMAN:

Councillor Pape, in the Chair

PRESENT:

Cllrs Bottwood, Enright-King, Mumford, Ennis-Clark, Maitland, Hinch, Roper, Stonehouse, Ingram.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Gary Youens – Parish Clerk

At the beginning of the meeting a minute silence was held for Heather Wilson, formerly of Duston & Upton Church.

111/21. To receive apologies for absence

- Cllr Golby

112/21. To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7th October 2021 (APPENDIX A)

- **RESOLVED:** The minutes of the meeting held on 7th October 2021 were approved as a true record of the meeting

113/21. To receive declarations of interest under the Council's Code of Conduct

- None

114/21. Public Participation Session

- A member of the public spoke on various issues
- Iain Liddon spoke on e-scooters

115/21. Bank Reconciliations

- **RESOLVED:**
 - a) To approve the bank reconciliations for August 2021 (APPENDIX B)
 - b) To approve the bank reconciliations for September 2021 (APPENDIX C)

116/21. Invoices for Approval

- **RESOLVED:**
 - a) To approve invoice payments for August 2021 (APPENDIX D)
 - b) To approve invoice payments for September 2021 (APPENDIX E)

117/21. Volunteer Policy

- **RESOLVED:**
 - a) The Working Party meets in 12 months time, if necessary, to review the Volunteer Policy
 - b) To approve the draft Volunteer Policy (APPENDIX F)

118/21. Meeting Schedule

- **RESOLVED:**
 - a) Council to meet on the first Thursday of the month at 7pm
 - b) Environment Committee to meet on the third Thursday of the month at 7pm
 - c) Engagement & Wellbeing Committee to meet every six weeks or so on a Wednesday at 7pm
 - d) Planning Committee to meet on the fourth Thursday at 7pm.

119/21. Duston Four Year Plan

- **RESOLVED:** To approve the Four Plan (APPENDIX G)

The meeting concluded 8:23pm



DUSTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Engagement and Wellbeing Committee
MINUTES 27th October 2021 7pm

CHAIR: Councillor S Maitland

PRESENT: Cllrs Roper, Golby, Ennis-Clark, Pape

IN ATTENDANCE:

Nina Villa – Assistant Clerk

EWC019/21. To receive apologies for absence

- Cllr Stonehouse

EWC020/21. To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 23rd September 2021 (APPENDIX A)

- **RESOLVED:** The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 23rd September 2021 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

EWC021/21. To receive declarations of interest under the Council's Code of Conduct related to business on the agenda.

- There were no declarations of interest.

EW022/21. Public Participation Session

- There were no speakers from the public.

EWC023/21. Discuss how the Parish Council can deal with Covid 19 more effectively

- There was a discussion about the Council's existing Covid 19 precautions and whether anything further could be done. Cllr Pape listed the various actions already taken by Council staff to ensure a Covid secure environment but it was agreed that the Clerk should be asked to ensure there are signs asking people to wear masks around the building. All Councillors should be encouraged to wear masks when moving around Duston Community Centre and should be required to inform the Council if they have tested positive in line with Test and Trace. Councillors should also be encouraged to test prior to coming to any Council meeting.

EWC024/21. Discussion on Volunteer Policy

- There was a discussion on the proposed volunteering policy and whether it was required. It was agreed that whilst the Council may not currently have formal volunteers working directly on Council business on a regular basis, it was sensible to have a policy which dealt with volunteer related issues.
- **RESOLVED:** To recommend the adoption of the Volunteer Policy to the next Council meeting (APPENDIX B)

EWC025/21. Should there be a Duston Womens Forum?

- **RESOLVED:** To form a Community Safety Working Group which could discuss matters relating to street lighting, safety and security of women along with any other group who might be more significantly impacted by community safety issues. The first meeting will be in the New Year and the Chair of the Committee will arrange a date and time and seek out potential volunteers from the Council and community groups to participate.

EWC026/21. How do we improve the quality of street lighting in Duston?

- This was discussed in the previous item.

EWC027/21. Further discussion on the Duston Parish Council Four Year Plan

- The Committee went through the proposed four year plan and made various changes and suggestions which were collated by the Chair and will be discussed further with the Clerk for inclusion in the Plan to be formally approved by Council.

EWC028/21. Date of Next Meeting

- There was a discussion about the future days and frequency of the meetings. There was a proposal to move to approximately six weekly and that the meeting be held on a Wednesday evening. This would be discussed further when the Clerk was back from leave.

The meeting closed at 8:36pm

DRAFT



DUSTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Planning Committee
MINUTES 25th November 2021 7pm

CHAIR: Councillor M Ingram

PRESENT: Cllrs Bottwood, Hinch

IN ATTENDANCE:

Gary Youens – Parish Clerk

PC022/21. To receive apologies for absence

- Cllr Barnes

PC023/21. To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21st October 2021 (APPENDIX A)

- **RESOLVED:** The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 21st October 2021 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

PC024/21. To receive declarations of interest under the Council's Code of Conduct related to business on the agenda.

- There were no declarations of interest.

PC025/21. Public Participation Session

- There were no speakers from the public.

PC026/21. Planning Applications

- a) WNN/2021/1014, 225 Main Road Duston Northamptonshire NN5 6PR

RESOLVED: No Comment or Observation

- b) WNN/2021/1037, 9 Stone Way, Northamptonshire NN5 6HW

RESOLVED: No Comment or Observation

- c) WNN/2021/1038, 60 Port Road, Northamptonshire NN5 6NL

RESOLVED: No Comment or Observation

PC027/21. Footpaths

- The Planning Committee noted the verbal update from the Working Party and it has been identified that there are a number of footpaths that appear to be unregistered land and also not on the Highways Register.
- **RESOLVED:** To look at all footpaths in Duston to get a better understanding of the issue.

PC028/21. Meeting with Developers

- **RESOLVED:** To try and get a meeting with Bloor Homes.

PC029/21. Date of Next Meeting

- **RESOLVED:** The next Planning Committee will take place on 15th December 2021 at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 8:26pm



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Environment Committee
MINUTES 18th November 7pm

CHAIR: Councillor P Enright-King

PRESENT: Cllrs Maitland, Ennis-Clark, Ingram,

IN ATTENDANCE:

Gary Youens – Acting Parish Clerk

EC030/21. To receive apologies for absence

- Cllr Pape

EC031/21. To receive and approve for signature the minutes of the meeting held on 21st October 2021 (APPENDIX A)

- **RESOLVED:** The minutes of the meeting held on 21st October 2021 were approved as a true record of the meeting

EC032/21. To receive declarations of interest under the Council's Code of Conduct related to business on the agenda.

- None

EC033/21. Public Participation Session

- None

EC034/21. To discuss declaring a Climate Emergency

- **RESOLVED:**
 - a) To recommend in 2022 that Duston Parish Council declares a Climate Emergency and prioritise those actions in the Four Year Plan that help the Environment.
 - b) To put together a full list of recommendations to date to present to Council early in 2022.
 - c) In 2022 to put together a tree policy to recommend to Council.

EC035/21. Identify an area for Re-wilding

- **RESOLVED:** To look at areas such as Grafton Way Park, St Luke's Churchyard & St Luke's Field for Re-Wilding.

EC036/21. Date of Next Meeting

- **RESOLVED:** The next Environment Committee will be Thursday 16th December at 7pm.

The meeting closed at 7:58pm



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Report to Full Council

Date: 9th December 2021

Agenda Item: 130/21 Draft Budget and Council Tax Precept 2022/23

1. Purpose of the Report

To approve the 2022/23 draft budget and precept demand.

2. Background Information

In calculating the level of precept the Council must establish a budget sufficient to cover the four following classes of items:

- a) Next year's expenditure, including an allowance for contingencies;
- b) Outstanding expenditure incurred in previous years;
- c) Expenditure likely to be incurred before the precepted sum becomes available; and
- d) Payments to a capital fund or building maintenance reserve.

3. Overview

The proposed budget for 2022/23 aims to achieve the following principles:

1. Provide adequate funds for the delivery of services and Council priorities whilst keeping the precept as low as possible to avoid placing unnecessary extra burden on local tax payers.
2. Continue to control costs as the country slowly emerges from the pandemic. The non-precept income has reduced since March 2020 and it is not expected that the pre-pandemic levels will be fully achieved in 2022/23.

3. Freeze some budget lines which, with the current continuing rise in inflation, mean a real term cut. This is part of the strategy to reduce costs and ensure that the precept demand is kept as low as possible.
4. Continue to prepare for the future by allocating funds to cover costs when responsibility for grounds maintenance for four parks (Melbourne Lane, Mendip Park, Grafton Way Park and Errington Park) transfer to the Parish Council in 2028.

4. Expenditure – Key Points

4.1 Salaries.

The salaries model is based on the post review staff structure and working patterns. Staff who are not at the top of their scale are assumed to move up one salary point (where eligible) subject to satisfactory performance.

4.2 The budget allows for a 3% increase in salaries pending the outcome of national pay negotiations. Currently no agreement has been reached between employers and the trade unions. Employers have stated that their final offer is an increase of 1.75% on the national pay scale. The unions are considering industrial action.

4.3 Employer's contributions into the Local Government Pension scheme are currently included at 28.3% of pensionable pay for existing members of staff in that scheme, although we are still awaiting confirmation of the exact rate. New staff members will be eligible to join the council's auto-enrolment pension scheme, employers pension contributions to this scheme are capped at 3%.

4.4 The government has announced that Employers National Insurance contributions are to increase by 1.25% with affect from April 2022.

4.5 In 2021/22 a new post of environmental officer was created. The council has yet to recruit a suitable candidate. The budget assumes that this position will be filled by the start of the new financial year.

4.6 Staff welfare/clothing

The staff welfare budget has increased to reflect the cost of uniforms for new staff.

4.7 Training

The training budget has been maintained at the same level as 2021/22 year to provide sufficient resources for training of new staff, and for the further development of staff.

4.8 Photocopier

During 2021 a new photocopier was acquired for the facilities office. The new photocopier lease requires an additional £500 of funding.

4.9 Stationery

Costs of paper and ink have risen sharply, and although a drive to reduce waste and make full use of electronic means of communication has been implemented, an increase of £300 has been included in the budget.

4.10 Telephone and broadband

Additional funding of £900 reflects the increase in the suppliers costs.

4.11 Finance and legal

The increase reflects the potential legal fees associated with potential asset transfer and new leases with tenants. It also reflects an increase in accountancy fees which have been frozen for the last two years

4.12 Membership Fees

This is a provision for the council's annual NALC and other professional membership fees. This is an estimated figure as officers were not in receipt of the exact total at the time of publication.

4.13 Electricity and gas

Due to the increase in wholesale prices a further increase in electricity and gas costs is expected. This is an estimated figure as the actual costs cannot be predicted with certainty. The increase in the costs at St Luke's will be offset, in part, by an increase in the utility costs recharged to the tenants.

4.14 Water

Water costs continue to increase and the budget reflects an estimate of the additional funding required.

4.15 Building Repairs/Maintenance

In 2021/22 council agreed to release £75,000 from general reserves for the renovation work to be carried out at St Luke's centre (and a further £15,000 is now required from general reserves due to unforeseen expenditure). An additional spend of £15,000 is required to complete the works and this funding will be met from the buildings maintenance earmarked reserves.

4.16 Waste removal

As previously notified, Duston Parish Council has agreed to pay for two litter bins to be installed and emptied. These are at Eastfield Road / Main Road bus stop and at a bus stop on Wrenbury Road. In the Four Year Plan Council stated an aim to install a litter bin in Quarry Road. The cost of the waste removal in relation to the bins and a general increase requires additional funding of £1,600.

4.17 Environment

The proposed increase of £1,500 reflects the anticipated inflationary increase in costs.

4.18 Youth Services

We have not been notified by our contractor of any increases and have frozen this budget line.

4.19 2028 Grounds Maintenance

For 2021/22 a new budget line was created to allow for an incremental year on year increase in preparation to take over the maintenance of Errington Park, Mendip Park, Grafton Way & Melbourne Lane Park. The table below provides a budget allocation breakdown beginning in 2021/22:

		Budget	General Reserve end of year
Year 1	2021/22	3,750	3,750
Year 2	2022/23	7,500	11,250
Year 3	2023/24	11,250	22,500
Year 4	2024/25	15,000	37,500
Year 5	2025/26	18,750	56,250
Year 6	2026/27	22,500	78,750
Year 7	2027/28	26,250	105,000
Year 8	2028/29	30,000	135,000

4.20 At the end of each financial year the unspent funds are to be transferred into general reserves and from there allocated to projects as required.

5. Future Asset Transfers

5.1 WNC Allotments & Parks, Open Spaces

Duston Parish Council has said to West Northamptonshire Council that if there are to be any further asset transfers, then this needs to be done sooner rather than later so there is time to prepare in terms of cost. This is to prevent significant single-year council tax increases or cuts to parish council services.

5.2 Last Phase of Timken

5.2.1 In August 2020 Council agreed to accept the transfer of 4 acres of public open space that is part of the final phase of the Timken development. The maintenance of this land will transfer to Duston Parish Council when the 103rd house on the development has been sold. Duston Parish Council signed the contract in January 2021.

5.2.2 Duston Parish Council will immediately become responsible for grounds maintenance and associated costs upon transfer. The current uplift in house sales suggests that this point may be reached within the next twelve months.

5.2.3 Grounds maintenance costs for this land have been estimated at £12,500 per annum if carried out by an external contractor.

5.2.4 Exact council tax banding for the houses on the new development is not currently known, but based on a Band D average the new properties will generate an additional precept income in the region of £13,180 based on the proposed precept for 2022/23 which will provide adequate additional funds to cover these grounds maintenance costs.

5.2.5 Duston Parish Council will receive no additional precept income for some months after the transfer of the land. Therefore, any initial in-year grounds maintenance costs related to this land will be funded from the earmarked reserve of £50,000 for this purpose.

5.2.6 Ongoing grounds maintenance costs for this land would then be built into the annual budget, with additional precept income from new properties contributing to this.

5.3 Other Transfers

5.3.1 Also agreed in August 2020 was the adoption of two Heritage Features (Timken Gates and Rosevilla Hut & Wall) but this is still with the solicitors. If transferred to Duston Parish Council in 2022/23 any repair work is expected to be low.

5.3.2 In June 2021 Council agreed to take on the Rosevilla Access & Footpath with 3 street lights this was agreed to avoid them being managed by an estate management company. The developer and solicitor have been notified. Duston Parish Council has requested that all of our legal fees are paid by the developer and everything is in a good state of repair prior to transfer. Therefore if these are transferred in 2022/23 any repair work is also expected to be low.

6. Income

6.1 The COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns have continued to have a negative impact on room hire income, however during the latter half of 2021 commercial room bookings have seen a gradual increase. The level of such bookings gives reason for optimism that income will continue to increase during 2022/23 but is not expected to fully achieve the pre-pandemic levels for some time.

6.2 Office 2 at St Luke's was vacated during 2021 and the current market uncertainty has made it difficult to re-let. The budget reflects the expectation that St Luke's will be fully let in 2022/23.

7. Precept

The draft budget proposes a precept of £531,239 which represents a 4.76% increase on 2021/22 and equates to a Band D charge of £96.18 (£91.81 in 2021/22 and (£88.82 in 2020/21).

8. General Reserve / Treasury Management Policy

8.1 The general reserve held by the Council ensures that there is sufficient cash flow in the period from the end of the financial year until receipt of the first precept instalment for the following year (usually late April). The general reserve is also a contingency for unforeseen expenditure or loss of income.

8.2 For the purpose of the precept calculation a prudent target closing general reserve figure at 31st March 2023 would be £344,923 which is the equivalent of 8 months expenditure (net of operating income not including precept). NALC's "Governance & Accountability for Local Councils – Practitioners' Guide" recommends that councils hold a minimum general reserve equivalent to at least 3 months expenditure.

9. Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- a) Council agrees the proposed draft budget for 2022/23
- b) Council notes the proposed precept of £531,239 which represents a 4.76% increase on 2021/22 and equates to a Band D charge of £96.18.

**DUSTON PARISH COUNCIL
BUDGET 2022/2023**

	2021/22 As Agreed	2022/23
ADMINISTRATION		
Employees		
PC Salaries	268,000	270,000
EERS NI	25,000	26,000
EERS Pension	52,000	46,600
Staff Welfare/Clothing	700	800
Travel & Subsistence Cllrs	200	200
Travel & Subsistence EES	500	500
Training	3,000	3,000
TOTAL	349,400	347,100

Councillors Services		
Chairmans Allowances	500	500
Councillors Allowances	5,400	5,400
TOTAL	5,900	5,900

Office Expenses		
IT Licences and Website	4,000	4,300
Photocopier	1,800	2,300
Postage	300	300
Stationery	1,700	2,000
Telephone/Broadband	3,700	4,600
Office Equipment	2,000	2,000
IT Support	3,000	3,000
TOTAL	16,500	18,500

Parish Van		
Van Running Costs	2,100	2,100
Insurance	600	600
TOTAL	2,700	2,700

Audit & Legal		
Finance/Legal	18,500	22,000
Insurance	14,000	14,500
Audit	2,100	2,500
Membership Fees	5,000	5,500
Licensing Fees	1,000	1,000
Elections	-	-
TOTAL	40,600	45,500

	2021/22 As agreed	2022/23
Parish Office		
Electricity	17,000	18,500
Water	3,250	4,000
Rates	2,500	2,000
TOTAL	22,750	24,500

Communications		
Marketing and Communications	7,500	7,500
TOTAL	7,500	7,500

Miscellaneous Costs		
Loan Repayments St Luke's Centre	30,770	30,515

Income

	2021/22 As Agreed	2022/23
Income from room and office hire	213,000	206,000
To be met from earmarked reserves Buildings renovation		15,000
Total Income	213,000	221,000

Budget Requirement Expenditure	720,094	752,239
Income	213,000	221,000
Precept Requirement	507,094	531,239

Precept increase over previous year 4.76%

Allowed for in election earmarked reserves

Loan Repayments Duston Sports Centre	23,947	23,947
Loan Repayments Duston Community Centre	65,127	65,127
Events, Engagement and Wellbeing	18,000	18,000
Building Repairs/Maintenance	10,000	10,000
Bank Charges/Credit Card Charges	1,200	1,200
St Lukes Utilities	15,000	17,000
St Lukes Repairs/Maintenance	5,000	5,000
St Lukes Rates	1,500	1,500
Catering Costs and Equipment (events now)	2,000	-
Cleaning/Laundry/Consumables	6,500	8,200
Waste Removal	6,000	7,600
Security	1,500	2,000
Environment	27,000	28,500
Reception Lease	1,750	1,750
2028 Grounds Maintenance	3,750	7,500
Renovation of Buildings	-	15,000

TOTAL	219,044	242,839
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Community

Grants	10,500	10,500
Youth Services	30,000	30,000

TOTAL	40,500	40,500
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Planning Committee

Planning	200	200
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TOTAL	200	200
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Contingency

15,000	17,000
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TOTAL EXPENDITURE

720,094	752,239
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Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

We acknowledge as the members of:

Duston Parish Council
ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021, that:

	Agreed		'Yes' means that this authority:	
	Yes	No*		
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>	
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>	
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>	
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>	
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>	
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>	
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>	
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>	
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A	<i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

03/06/21

and recorded as minute reference:

MIN 24 2/3 REFERENCE

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman



SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk



SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER WWW.DUSTON-PC.GOV.UK ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2020/21 for

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY
Duston Parish Council

"AS RESTATED"

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2020 £	31 March 2021 £	
* 1. Balances brought forward	628,773	574,776	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	480,092	493,999	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	198,950	206,982	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	306,786	300,926	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	120,354	120,099	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	305,899	255,195	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
* 7. (=) Balances carried forward	574,776	599,537	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	501,392	564,616	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	4,316,064	4,338,523	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	1,698,749	1,647,347	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
		✓	N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2021 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

21/05/21

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

03/06/21

as recorded in minute reference:

MIN 243/2 REFERENCE

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2020/21

In respect of

Duston Parish Council – NH0077

1 Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2021; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

Our responsibility is to review Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with guidance issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (see note below). Our work **does not** constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would do.

2 External auditor report 2020/21

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

None

3 External auditor certificate 2020/21

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2021.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature

PKF Littlejohn LLP

Date

01/09/2021

* Note: the NAO issued guidance applicable to external auditors' work on limited assurance reviews in Auditor Guidance Note AGN/02. The AGN is available from the NAO website (www.nao.org.uk)



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

1. Purpose of Report

To consider changing our bank from Barclays to Unity.

2. Background

Duston Parish Council has used Barclays since approximately 2008 when it changed from Natwest.

Prior to the pandemic starting in March 2020 Duston Parish Council used to write cheques to pay each supplier (excluding wages). The process was

- The Clerk would write out a cheque for each supplier
- Two councillors would have to sign each cheque. The Clerk would make an arrangement with each councillor to get the cheques signed
- The Clerk would put cheques in envelopes with a compliment slip
- A member of the Facilities Team would put stamps on and then post them

This is a time consuming process and it also cumbersome to many small local business that are reliant on the cash flow.

Since the pandemic payments have been made online which has been quicker and suppliers are not chasing payments as much.

Section 150(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 requires that:

“every cheque or other order for the payment of money shall be signed by two members of the council”.

However, in 2014 the Government repealed Section 150(5) saying:

“This rule is a significant barrier to these councils using electronic means of payment, and the effect is to impose additional burdens and costs both on them and on the private firms and other public sector bodies they make payments to.”

3. Current Situation

Currently the Town Council has two accounts with Barclays, a savings account and a current account.

Unity Bank is generally used by Parish and Town Councils as they provide tailor made products to the sector. Many High Street banks bracket Parish and Town Councils with the wider not for profit sector.

The core problem is that online banking arrangements offered by Barclays and many other High Street banks do not mirror the arrangements we had in place for cheque signing. At present our online arrangements involves just two people, the Clerk to set up the payment and just one councillor to authorise.

Alternatively, Unity Bank offers a procedure that is more suited to our financial regulations, in particular the dual councillor authority requirements. With Unity, the Clerk can be given the ability to set up payments but not payment authorisation. Conversely, a number of Councillors can be authorised to make payments but not actually set up the payment itself.

As further sign that banking is going online rather than traditional methods like cheque writing Barclays have taken the decision in the last three years to close three branches of their Northampton St James, Kingsthorpe and Western Favell (due to close in March 2022).

Local organisations that use Unity Bank include – Wootton Parish Council, East Hunsbury Parish Council, Northampton Town Council, Northants CALC.

4. Bank Charges

With our current bank we are paying approximately £140 per annum although this increases with higher turnover. With Unity Bank charges are £6 per month and £0.15 per transaction which would approximately mean £220 per annum.

5. Recommendation

- a) Keep online banking to reduce the administrative burden on making payments by cheques.
- b) To move to both the current account and savings (Reserves) to Unity Bank from Barclays. Once completed then have the Barclays accounts closed.
- c) To ensure with Unity Bank there is a minimum of three councillors who can authorise payments and two staff members are authorised to set up payments. Other people can have a read only access as an when required.
- d) To delegate to the Clerk to make the arrangements, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, with a view to this being done by 1st April 2022.

Dear Gary,

Thank you for your enquiry regarding opening an account with Unity Trust Bank.

We offer single, dual or triple authority with our accounts with no extra cost to our customers. There is a charge of £6.00 per month account fee, which is taken quarterly.

We offer current accounts and savings accounts. If you hold both a current and savings account there is no charge to transfer funds, however if you only hold a savings account there is a charge of £28.00 per payment.

Regarding signatories on the account this needs to be signed in accordance with your constitution of rules.

Cheque books and paying in book are provided with our current account. We do not offer a debit card for our current accounts. You can pay in, or withdraw cash from your local NatWest (England and Wales), RBS (Scotland) or Ulster Bank (Northern Ireland) branch, or we can set up a Post Office Cash Account card for you to pay in cash at a Post Office convenient to you.

We have partnered with Lloyds Bank and MasterCard® to bring you the Unity Corporate MultiPay Card – a charge card designed for Unity Trust Bank customers.

Please be advised that provision for this facility is subject to credit approval. For existing customers, we require evidence of 12 months account activity. For new customers, as part of the application process you will need to provide us with the last 2 years of audited/certified financial accounts. Please include this with your completed application form.

Our FREE account switcher service makes it easy to switch your accounts from another bank or building society:

We'll arrange a transfer of your Direct Debits, Standing Orders and, if you tell us to your remaining balance to your new account – we'll then contact your old bank to close your account with them.

In the meantime, you should keep enough money in your old account to cover any regular fees or payments you may have.

Before completing your application please collect full name, nationality, date of birth and the last 3 years address history for any trustees, signatories or internet users for account.

As you are a Parish Council we would require the following supporting documentation;

A copy of your Standing Orders

A copy of your letter head

A copy of your recent meeting minutes

If you wish to apply for an account, please click the link below to begin your application.

<https://www.unity.co.uk/business-current-accounts/>

FAQ: <https://www.unity.co.uk/account-opening-faqs/>

Kind Regards

Customer Service Advisor
Unity Trust Bank plc

Dear Gary,

Thank you for your email.

This can be set up as a Standing Order or a forwarded dard bill payment.

We also offer Bulk Faster Payments. Please see the link below for further details;

<https://www.unity.co.uk/bulk-faster-payments/>

Kind Regards

Customer Service Advisor
Unity Trust Bank plc

----- Original Message -----

Thank you for this. How do you pay wages / salaries? This would need to be exempt from the 2 dual authorisation rule.

Kind regards,

Gary