

# DUNTON PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

## NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2026

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Dear Residents,

Happy New Year. This feels like the perfect moment to thank every one of you for your support throughout 2025.

It's also an opportunity to recognise our committee members and the many others who have worked tirelessly over the past year. Week after week, they give countless hours of their own time to make Dunton a better place to live. Everything we do is voluntary - none of us take a penny from the RA, and we even buy tickets for all the events we put on.

That work covers a huge range of things: the Helping Hands scheme, running the club (from cleaning to bookings, events, and dealing with legalities like insurance), and organising activities such as line dancing, art classes, knit and natter, and pool nights. Then there are the pub nights packed with games, the karaoke and disco evenings, and all the things you don't see - the accounts, ticket sales, banking, membership records, and the endless form-filling every time we use the hall.

Behind the scenes, we've continued working with management, achieving three pitch-fee reductions in four years. We brought you the additional library on site, which has to be unlocked, cleaned and maintained, and 2025 saw the first of what we hope will be many coach trips. And of course, we deal with a large amount of casework - helping residents who come to us with issues that need resolving.

Ultimately, that's what this is all about: community. Even when the landlord is being difficult, nothing can break the strength and determination of this community when we stand together.

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## WHAT'S ON IN THE CLUB – FEBRUARY

### **Friday 6 February – Bill's Quiz Night**

A classic Dunton quiz night to get the brains working.

### **Friday 13 February – Karaoke Night (8pm–11.15pm)**

Sing your heart out. Tickets £5.

### **Saturday 28 February – Pub Night**

All the usual fun and games. Free entry, but please book a table.

### **More Entertainment Coming Soon**

Race Night and a Bee Gees tribute act coming soon.

### **New Regular Activities**

Line Dancing – Tuesdays, 8pm–9.30pm (hugely popular)

Tony's Art Classes – Every 6 weeks (also hugely popular)

## **GAS CHANGEOVER – UPDATE**

Regency announced they would stop reselling gas to residents, so we began legal action to secure continued supply at fairer rates. By the time the tribunal could consider the case, most residents had already signed with third-party suppliers, meaning the tribunal could no longer offer a practical remedy.

The judge encouraged both sides to negotiate practical solutions instead, and we have now secured the following commitments:

### **Road Repairs**

**Concern:** More delivery lorries meant a risk of potholes, cracking and long-term road damage.

**Agreement:** If gas-delivery traffic damages the roads, **Regency will repair it.**

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### **Gas Safety Checks**

**Concern:** With third-party suppliers, we were worried no one would check pigtails, valves or regulators, or spot leaks during bottle changes.

**Agreement:** Depots will now:

- Inspect from isolation valve to pigtails
- Leak-test if issues found
- Isolate leaks
- Report problems to residents (who then notify the office).

**Outcome:** Safety checks continue at every bottle change.

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### **Responsibility for Equipment**

**Concern:** Uncertainty Regency might shift responsibility for worn or faulty valves, pigtails and regulators.

**Agreement:** Regency agrees responsibility for all supply-side equipment and will replace faulty parts. Regulators will also be renewed every 5 years for everyone.

**Outcome:** No unexpected costs for residents; equipment stays safe.

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### **Teething Issues**

**Concern:** Residents feared running out of gas during the transition due to delays or supplier backlogs.

**Agreement:** Regency will keep **spare bottles on site for six months** for emergencies.

**Outcome:** A safety net while everyone adjusts.

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## **POOR LIGHTING ON FOOTPATH**

Before Christmas, a resident raised concerns about trees blocking the streetlights along the footpath. These trees are on Network Rail land, so we contacted them. By the time this newsletter is delivered, the issue should have been resolved.

## Pitch Fee Negotiations

We informed Regency that we were preparing a tribunal case for April 2026 due to the loss of gas service. This year's increase is expected to be around 3% (Regency doesn't fix this rate - it's the CPI rate announced by the government). Even if a tribunal agreed with us, they could only remove a small fraction of that increase - meaning a long, stressful process for very little financial benefit.

Instead of spending months in a tribunal for a minimal reduction, we negotiated directly with Regency. We set out the impact of the gas changes and the disruption caused. Through that discussion, we secured a **1% decrease** in this year's pitch fee increase.

**Agreement reached:** Regency will **automatically deduct 1%** from this year's increase **for every resident**, with no action required. A 1% reduction might not sound dramatic, but remember - it compounds year after year, so the saving grows over time

**Outcome:** A better result than a tribunal could realistically deliver, achieved quickly and without residents needing to go through a lengthy legal process.

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## VISTRY HOMES DEVELOPMENT – UPDATE

A few months ago, the RA Committee met with Vistry Homes regarding their proposed development around our site. We formally objected through Basildon Council with an eight-page submission. While the application is unlikely to be blocked due to the Council's pro-development stance, we continued engaging with Vistry to reduce the impact on Dunton Park.

Vistry has now agreed in writing to the following mitigation measures:

### Construction Traffic Access

Requested: Use Mandeville Way, not Lower Dunton Road, for construction traffic.

Agreed: Mandeville Way will be the main access route and included in their Construction Traffic Management Plan.

### Privacy Screening Along Back Orchard

Requested: Strong screening between the southern edge of the site and Dunton Park.

Agreed: Enhanced screening will be added to protect resident privacy.

### Relocation of Noisy Features

Requested: Move noisy elements, such as play areas, away from our boundary.

Agreed: The proposed "kick-about" area has been moved to a central location. The area near Dunton Park will become a community orchard.

While we remain opposed to the development in principle, these concessions significantly reduce the impact on our community. With Basildon Council pushing ahead on multiple building fronts, direct engagement with Vistry has proven the most effective route.

## BIN AREAS

We are often told the black bins fill up too quickly. In reality, there would be plenty of space if recycling wasn't being placed in them. A quick look inside shows cardboard, paper, tins, bottles and even food waste – all of which should go into the correct recycling or food bins.

When black bins overflow, foxes tear open the bags, especially those containing food waste, creating a mess in the bin stores. This is entirely avoidable if everyone follows the recycling system properly.

A little extra care will make a noticeable difference for everyone.

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## FLOGAS CUSTOMERS

When ordering a bottle, Flogas call centre will give an estimated delivery date and then pass your order to the local depot who schedules the actual date. Quick tip: If you are running low, call the **Stanford-le-Hope depot direct on 03300 416656**. They can confirm the exact delivery date and, if necessary, bring it forward.

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## SITE LIGHTING

Regency is required under the site licence to ensure the park is adequately lit after dusk. Balancing sufficient lighting with avoiding bright lights shining into windows is always a challenge, which is why the council's licensing officer oversees this.

She visited the site just before Christmas to assess lighting levels. Committee members joined her to highlight poorly lit areas. She has since confirmed she has instructed Regency to carry out several improvements and will return to check progress.

Once again, this shows the value of an active and effective RA continually pushing for improvements.

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## AGM

This year's AGM will take place on **Monday 30 March 2026**.

The AGM is where members vote for the committee for the next 12 months. Over the coming months, we will ask current committee members whether they wish to stand again. We are a strong team and hope many will continue.

If you are interested in joining the committee and have lots of free time (most committee members give at least 25 hours a week), please get in touch and we can explain what the role involves.

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## STAYING UPDATED

For the latest news, updates and documents, please bookmark:  
[www.duntonparkra.co.uk](http://www.duntonparkra.co.uk)