

# Dunton Park Residents' Association

## Newsletter April 2024

### A Message From The Chair ...

We had a great turn out at our AGM last week and it's incredible to think that over 90% of homes have now joined the association. My fellow committee members are all volunteers, working behind the scenes, giving up their time, helping people on site and working to bring about improvements. So, it's really encouraging that so many people support us by continuing to be members. Thanks to you all, the following people were re-elected.

Gary Peckham (Chair), James Hailes (Secretary), Sheila Hobman (Treasurer), Patrick Stapleton, Julie Raby, Pat Moore, Lynda Gould, Denise Rayner.

We also welcomed Sheila Mead who is standing on the committee for the first time.

Unfortunately, Mick Hilton was unable to stand this time around. Being part of the committee is quite time consuming and Mick has too many other commitments at the moment. However, Mick said he's always around if we need his help. We'd like to thank Mick for all his hard work and we'd welcome him back anytime.

At the meeting we gave out membership cards which will get you discounts on events and future trips. If you weren't able to attend the AGM, we have been knocking on members' doors with your new cards but bear with us. We still have around 20 homes where we've visited 4 or 5 times over the last week and there's been no answer, so I'm sure we'll catch up with you all soon.

Finally, it was disappointing that some people told us the meeting was spoiled for them because, even though we had microphones, some tables around them were chatting all the way through. Apologies, and please be assured we'll manage the meeting differently next time.

Thanks, Gary,

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### Charity Donations

Did you know that, with the help of you lovely people, the Association has donated over £3000 to charities in the last year. These include, MacMillian Cancer, Basildon Baby Care, St Luke's Hospice, Breast Cancer Care, Diabetes UK, Alzheimer's, Essex Air Ambulance and Essex Rescue. Thank you for continuing to come to our events and activities (or just making donations) to help support local charities. If you're interested in the association's finances we have a special page on our website with all our accounts.

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### Fish and Chips ...

Don't forget we have a fish and chips van on site every Thursday approx 4pm to 6.30pm.

## Table Tennis

Following requests, at our last committee meeting we agreed to buy a table tennis table for use in the club. We are currently looking at prices and hope to have this in place in the next few months. This will be a fabulous addition to activities available in the hall that everyone can use for free.

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## Drainage Survey ....

The new owners have commissioned a company to do a survey of the site's sewerage infrastructure. Over the next few weeks you might notice contractors on site feeding specially designed cameras into the drain covers. These take high resolution images and map out the whole underground network to make sure there aren't any issues. Regency Living are doing this so they can deal with any problems before any road resurfacing, rather than resurface roads then have to dig them up again at a later date. It's another positive sign from the new owners.

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## Pumphouse Repairs ...

As many of you are already aware, the site has been having real issues with pump breakdowns and this has meant vacuum tankers have been coming on site every day to manually remove waste. The good news is, rather than just arrange a temporary repair, our new owners are spending a significant amount to replace the pumps and control panel - and work is due to commence on 15th April 2024. Thanks to everyone for your patience.

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## Coach Trip ...

We are looking into having a coach trip and our Facebook page has been busy with members discussing ideas for places to go. Suggestions so far include a trip to the seaside, a day at the races, a riverboat trip with lunch, Romford dogs and a theatre trip. However, most votes so far have been Rochester's Dickensian Christmas market.

Voting isn't closed yet because we wanted to know what you think too. If you have a favourite from the list above, please get in touch. You're welcome to pop a note in our black post box on the clubhouse wall (by the front door) by 12 April so we can see what activity gets the most votes.

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## Euro 2024 ....

A number of people have asked if any of the England Euro 2024 games can be shown in the club this May/June. It's a great idea and we are looking into it. Obviously it's subject to licensing being in place and also committee members being available and willing to unlock and oversee. But in principle it's something we'll try to facilitate.

## Election ....

Thursday 02 May 2024 is voting day and once again the club will be used as a polling station. Don't forget, we all need a photo ID to vote in person. Amongst the things accepted are - Driving Licence, Passport, Blue Badge, Older Person's Bus Pass, Disabled Person's Bus Pass, 60+ London Oyster Photocard, Freedom Pass. If you don't have a photo ID you can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate. If you need help applying, call the helpline on 0800 328 0280 but hurry, there's not long to go.

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## Pitch Fee Tribunal ...

Those 100 or so homes waiting for results from last year's pitch fee tribunal. The latest news is that the judge wants to inspect the site and we have supplied our available dates in April. Following the visit, the chair and secretary of the association will need to attend court (normally the same day as the site visit) to thrash things out. The judge will then ponder for a few weeks before issuing his/her final decision as to whether last year's increase is fair or whether there should be a reduction for those who opted for a tribunal determination. You will all get a letter with the decision.

We have all put an incredible amount of time into this case (it's several hundred pages long) so fingers crossed we get a good result.

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## 2024 Pitch Fees ...

The pitch fee increase from April 2024 has been landing on doormats. Unfortunately there was an error on the first form they sent so new forms have been issued with the correction.

The knock on effect of their mistake is - because they have to give residents 28 days notice of an increase, this year's increase can no longer start in April and will take effect from May instead. So, pay what you've been paying until May 1st and that's when the new increase kicks in.

Separately, some people have said they haven't received anything about a new increase this year. If that's you, no need to worry. If you haven't received the notice then just keep paying what you have been. No form means no increase. When/if they do send us a 2024 increase notice, they can't backdate it and they must give us 28 days notice regardless, so enjoy your months with no increase.

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## Helping Hands Scheme

Our volunteers are here to help those less able with small tasks such as collecting prescriptions, driving to GP appointments, trips to the barbers/hairdresser, checking gas bottles and picking up bits from Tesco. In the home we can change lightbulbs, beds, curtains or any other small tasks. We can even just call in for a chat and cup of tea.

Call Lynda 07951 660115

## Our Meeting With New Owners.....

Last week we met with Regency Living management in the office. It was a constructive and positive meeting so we're hopeful this could be the start of something much better at Dunton. We also mentioned how having Toni as park supervisor in recent months has been a breath of fresh air. We had a lovely chat about the site and the new company and Regency seem keen to build a much better relationship than we had with the previous landlords.

Because we're a 'qualifying' residents association, the site owner has a statutory duty to consult with us but that was rarely done with Royale. However, Regency management has a different ethos and they want regular meetings with us - next one already in the diary!

In the last few days, the licence to run the site was transferred from the Administrators over to Regency Living so they are now fully in charge. All residents will get welcome letters from the new company in the next week or so. There will also be a feedback form for residents to share their thoughts.

Also, it was good to hear that Regency are keen to improve current sites before ploughing ahead with any expansion plans, and we've already given them information about the condition of the roads, street lighting and signage at Dunton. Of course, the company purchased over 30 sites so we can't expect everything to be done overnight. But I think we can look forward to improvements as we move forward.

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## The Club ...

The residents association are currently managing the club outside of office hours. We'd like to thank committee members for volunteering to run the hall. It's a big responsibility being keyholders, adhering to the health and safety guidelines, overseeing all activities and keeping the club (and toilets!) clean so without our lovely committee stepping up, we'd be lost.

### **Please help the team by -**

- ~ Taking your rubbish away after events
- ~ Drinking up and leaving by 11.45pm (we have to do final checks and lock up by midnight)
- ~ Being respectful of our neighbours as you walk home

Thank you for your cooperation.

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## Summer Street Party ...

Following the success of last year's street party, entertainment coordinator Julie is planning another in Manstead Close on Saturday 17 August. We have already been liaising with the office and they are very supportive and have agreed to work with us to make sure everything runs safely and smoothly. In the meantime put that date in your diary.

## More Dates For Your Diary ...

**Saturday 27 April** 'Race Night' ~ **Friday 3 May** 'Quiz Night' ~ **Saturday 25 May** 'Karaoke Night'.

As well as monthly events and quizzes, don't forget everyone's welcome to the following activities too -

Every Wednesday - Coffee Morning 11am - 2pm

Every Wednesday - Bingo 7pm to 9.15pm

Every Thursday - Knit & Natter/Craft & Chatter 1pm - 4pm

Every Thursday - Pool 8pm to 11pm

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## Bin areas ....

We have spoken to the office about the need for more bins. Toni is already on the case and has asked the council to supply more but unfortunately they've run out and they're waiting for new supplies. Hopefully we'll get these soon.

Separately, the council has been refusing to empty bins because some people are just throwing everything in the black bins. This makes capacity issues worse so the office has asked us to politely remind people to put things in the correct bins to avoid the council refusing to empty them (which impacts everyone).

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## Footpath Issues ....

Over the last few months we've had lots of issues with the footpath which runs to Tesco/Durham Road.

- ~ Repeated commercial fly-tipping.
- ~ Youths gather around the bench, sometimes intimidating people.
- ~ Flooding under the underpass making Durham Road inaccessible.
- ~ Increasing graffiti.

The association has been raising these issues with the authorities and we are pleased to say we've been making progress.

The area is now included in the community safety warden's rounds to try and deter activity, gather intelligence, and provide some reassurance to residents. The council have also sent a team to try and remove the graffiti

Getting the flooding dealt with has been the biggest headache and we resorted to going to the Essex press who printed an article about our frustration. Soon after publication, the water was drained and we received an email from Essex County Council to say, sorry, but a pump cabinet under the underpass was vandalised, causing the pumps to go down and the area to flood. We did suggest to Basildon Council that CCTV in the area might minimise all these issues and we're pleased to say, CCTV has now been installed near the underpass. Thanks to committee members for their work on this and also to Joy at the council for her help facilitating the CCTV

## How we keep in touch ...

### Facebook/Website

~ We update our Facebook and website several times a week.

~ Our website even has a place to enter your details and have all the news delivered to your email as soon as we post something new.

~ If you don't use computers or smartphones, you're welcome to get family members to join so they can keep you in the loop.

Our Facebook page is [www.facebook.com/groups/duntonparkra](http://www.facebook.com/groups/duntonparkra)

Our website is [www.duntonparkra.co.uk](http://www.duntonparkra.co.uk)

### Newsletter

Alternatively, we do a paper newsletter. Naturally, paper newsletters will always lag behind the times, so if you are able to visit our website you will always be more up-to-date. However, if you prefer a paper newsletter we leave them in the club hall so anyone can pick up a copy.

Also, last year we put a flyer in everyone's door asking if anyone needed a paper newsletter delivered. 38 people filled in the little slip so these homes get newsletters hand-delivered through their letterbox.

### Letters/Notes.

If you want to contact us but don't do 'digital', just pop us a letter or note in our black letter box on the clubhouse wall marked '**residents association**'.

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## New Bank Account ....

Regency Living new bank account for pitch fees is -

Bank: Royal Bank of Scotland

Account Name: AR (Dunton) Limited

Account Number: 21486240

Sort Code: 83-06-08

Reference: Please use your customer number as your reference.

If you are using the old Royale or administrator bank account, don't worry, these will still be active for a few months to allow everyone time to transfer their pitch fees over to the new account. Any questions, call Regency billing on 01329 761840 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm).

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*Until the next newsletter, we wish everyone well. Spring is here, summer is coming and we have encouraging signs from our new owners.*

*Thanks for your continued support. Gary, Sheila H, James, Julie, Denise, Lynda, Sheila M, Pat and Patrick.*