



Friends of Dallington Village – Inaugural General Meeting
Wednesday 10 September 2025, 19:30
The Old School Rooms, Dallington

Chair: Geoff Ashcroft
Secretary (minutes): Andrea Anastasia
Apologies: PCSO Joanna Pole, Cllr Rufia Ashraf

Summary of the Inaugural Meeting – Friends of Dallington Village

The inaugural meeting of the Friends of Dallington Village (FODV) was opened by **Geoff Ashcroft (Chair)**, who welcomed attendees and introduced the newly elected committee: Geoff Ashcroft (Chair), Andrea (Secretary), Laura (Treasurer), Heather (Events and Fundraising), Jo Fletcher (Diversity and Inclusion), and Angus (Community Liaison). Each member gave a short introduction, outlining their background and roles within the committee.

Aims and Objectives: Geoff outlined the committee's aims, which include continuing long-standing community initiatives such as planting, litter-picking, and speed sign maintenance; organising fundraising and social events; ensuring inclusivity by welcoming views from neighbouring areas; collaborating with interest groups (e.g., Flood Action Group, Voluntary Impact Northampton); and strengthening links with councillors, West Northamptonshire Council, the police, PCSOs, Neighbourhood Watch, and Street Watch.

Constitution: The draft Constitution has been published on the website for review. Residents were invited to provide feedback within two weeks, after which the amended version will be ratified.

Finance Report: Laura reported that the group holds a balance of £511, with £300 already committed to insurance, batteries, and meeting room hire. An annual grant of £1,400 from Northampton Town Council supports planting and maintenance. Additional fundraising and external funding opportunities will be explored.

Secretary's Report: Andrea emphasised the importance of effective communication. Channels include the reactivated Facebook page, reinstated email list (friendsofdallingtonvillage@gmail.com), the website, and the village WhatsApp group. The committee will also prepare guidance to help residents report issues to the Council. Community litter-picking and gardening sessions will continue approximately every six weeks. Provision for paper-based communication will remain available to ensure inclusivity.

Village Safety: Geoff highlighted ongoing concerns over speeding and the "jitty," with residents awaiting findings from a Highways review. He stressed the need for a

workable solution. The committee noted the issue and confirmed it would facilitate discussion in a constructive way going forward. A resident also raised safety concerns about poor visibility and speeding at Gibson Lane.

Police and Community Safety: PCSO **Andy Emberton** introduced himself and outlined policing priorities. Dallington Village remains a low-crime area, with issues mainly relating to antisocial behaviour in the park, parking obstructions, burglaries, and thefts from vehicles. He described initiatives including “Car Safe” vehicle checks, school engagement sessions, Street Watch volunteer patrols, and the Northamptonshire Talking alert system.

Neighbourhood Watch: **Tracy Willson**, the new Area Coordinator, introduced herself and explained her role in community safety. She highlighted resources such as the Fearless app, Facebook, leaflets, and window stickers, and maintains a register of isolated residents. She encouraged residents to contact her directly and invited a local point of contact for Dallington. Geoff and Andrea will collate all relevant contact details and publish them on the website.

Flood Action Group: **Moira Dixon** provided an update on flooding issues following the September 2023 flood. Key points included drainage and planning concerns, maintenance of culverts and gullies, road closures affecting vulnerable residents, lack of funding for flood warden training, and debris removal. The Section 19 Flood Report is under consultation and expected to be published by the end of September 2025. **Cllr Sally Keeble** emphasised the importance of ensuring Dallington’s brook is included in Northampton’s flood defence planning.

Events and Fundraising: Heather presented the committee’s collated plans for community events, including Remembrance Day, Halloween, and Christmas celebrations (lights, craft fair, Santa’s grotto at the Wheatsheaf). A distinctive new event, like the Scarecrow Festival themed around the Gray Lady, was also discussed. Volunteers will be essential to deliver these activities successfully.

Closing Remarks: Geoff introduced **Cllr John East** and **Cllr Sally Keeble**, and noted apologies from **Cllr Ashraf**. He thanked all attendees, encouraged contributions in all areas of interest (including ideas for fundraising and fun events into 2026) via the website or directly to Andrea, and confirmed the next general meeting will be held on **28 January 2026**. The meeting closed with a reminder to use the Facebook page and website for updates.

Summary of Actions – Inaugural Meeting

1. **Constitution** – Draft version to remain open for resident feedback for two weeks. Committee to ratify and adopt subject to comments. (*Lead: Geoff & Committee*)
2. **Finance** – Online banking to be finalised. Additional fundraising opportunities and external funding streams to be identified. (*Lead: Laura, with support from Heather and Rafia*)
3. **Communications** –
 - Email distribution list to be reinstated and minutes circulated.
 - Contact details and resources for community safety (Police, PCSOs, Neighbourhood Watch, Street Watch) to be collated and published on the website.

- Guidance on reporting issues to West Northamptonshire Council to be produced. *(Lead: Andrea, with support from Geoff)*
- 4. **Community Participation** – Regular litter-picking and gardening sessions to be organised approximately every six weeks. *(Lead: Committee / Volunteers)*
- 5. **Highways and Safety** – Committee to continue pressing for the outcome of the Highways review on speeding and the jitty. Road safety concerns (e.g., Brook Lane and Gibson Lane speeding) to be monitored. *(Lead: Geoff & Committee)*
- 6. **Cllr John East** has offered to include Dallington Village in an additional funding allocation to provide an extra illuminating speed sign.
- 7. **Neighbourhood Watch** – Local point of contact to be identified for Dallington. Tracy to coordinate and provide resources (Fearless app, Facebook, leaflets, stickers). *(Lead: Tracy Willson, with Committee support)*
- 8. **Flood Action Group** – Monitor publication of the Section 19 Flood Report (expected September 2025) and follow up on action points (drainage, debris clearance, flood warden training, emergency planning). *(Lead: Moira & Flood Action Group)*
- 9. **Events & Fundraising** – Key events will be planned at a committee meeting Wednesday 1 October for delivery 2025/2026, including Remembrance Day, Halloween, and Christmas activities (lights, craft fair, Santa's grotto). Proposal for a unique Dallington event (e.g., Scarecrow Festival) to be developed. *(Lead: Heather & Events Team)*
- 10. **Next Meeting** – Committee to prepare agenda and convene next meeting on **28 January 2025**. *(Lead: Geoff & Andrea)*

Further supplementary detail from the above meeting, for information only.

Introduction of Management and members of the FODV Committee:

- **Geoff Ashcroft**, Chair, opened the inaugural meeting by welcoming all attendees. He noted that while most residents were already familiar with the committee members, brief introductions would be provided for the benefit of those who were not. Geoff introduced himself as Chair, explaining that he and his wife Jane have lived on Brook Lane since May 2023. He is retired, having previously spent 25 years working in government security.
- **Andrea Anastasia** introduced himself as Secretary, and has been resident in Brook Lane for two years.
- **Laura Dunne** introduced herself as Treasurer of the group. She has lived on Brook Lane for approximately five years and continues to work professionally as an accountant.
- **Heather Andersen** introduced herself as a resident of Brook Lane, living at the former Smarts Farm. She is the landlady of the Wheatsheaf public house and also runs a filming company, with extensive experience in managing events and large-scale productions. Heather confirmed that she will be focusing on events and fundraising for the Friends of Dallington Village.
- **Jo Fletcher** introduced herself as a resident of Brook Lane, where she has lived with her family for approximately nine years. She works as a nurse and is an active member of Northampton's wider community. Jo serves as the Diversity and Inclusion Officer for the group and emphasised the importance of ensuring that the committee's work is inclusive and representative of the whole community.
- **Angus Carlin** introduced himself as a resident of Rose Cottage, where he has lived with his wife Gail for approximately one year. He works for NHS Blood and Transplant, coordinating blood donations across the county, and previously served as a police officer for 30 years. Angus expressed his interest in helping to preserve both the historic value and the natural beauty of the local area.

Aims and objectives of FODV

- Geoff outlined the principal aims and objectives of the Friends of Dallington Village, noting continuity with the work of previous committees, while placing emphasis on inclusivity and stronger links with external groups.
- The first priority is to **continue existing initiatives** which have been well supported by residents over many years. These include the upkeep and watering of planted areas, grass cutting, litter picking and Street Watch activities, and the maintenance of illuminated speed signs. The committee also intends to reinstate the speed sign near the Wheatsheaf public house, given residents' concerns about speeding.
- The committee will also maintain and develop **fundraising and community events**, building on the successful activities held in previous years.
- Geoff stressed that although the Friends of Dallington Village exists primarily to represent residents within the conservation area, the committee is keen to **welcome views from neighbouring communities**, even if voting rights at meetings are limited to those within the defined boundary. The intention is to ensure the group is inclusive and not exclusive.
- The committee also aims to **promote closer collaboration with specific interest groups**, including the Flood Action Group (represented by Moira) and voluntary

sector organisations such as Voluntary Impact Northampton, as well as through the work led by Jo Fletcher on diversity and inclusion.

- A further objective is to **strengthen links with like-minded groups and external bodies**, including other “Friends of” village committees, local councillors, and West Northamptonshire Council. Improved channels for reporting issues to the Council were identified as a particular priority. The committee also highlighted the importance of working closely with the local police and PCSOs, alongside Neighbourhood Watch and Street Watch.

Ratification and adoption of the amended Constitution

- Geoff then introduced the **Constitution**, describing it as the document that governs the committee’s operations and sets out the rules by which it works. The draft Constitution has been published on the committee’s website alongside the previous version for residents’ review and comment. Amendments have been made to update wording and to introduce new clauses. Residents are invited to review the draft within the next two weeks, after which — subject to feedback — the committee will sign and formally ratify the document.

Statement by Finance Officer

- **Laura**, Treasurer, provided an update on the group’s finances. She confirmed that the bank account has been successfully transferred from the previous committee, with Geoff, Andrea, and herself now registered as signatories. Any two signatories are required to authorise expenditure, ensuring appropriate financial controls.
- Online banking arrangements are in progress and are expected to be fully operational shortly.
- The current bank balance stands at **£511**, with approximately **£300** already committed to annual costs, including insurance, batteries for the speed cameras, and room hire for meetings.
- An annual grant application to **Northampton Town Council** provides **£1,400**, most of which is allocated to planting, maintenance of planters, and upkeep of white posts along Brook Lane.
- Additional fundraising will be necessary to support the group’s activities. Opportunities include community fundraising events and identifying external funding streams. Initial discussions have taken place with Heather, who will bring forward event fundraising proposals, and further exploration of funding opportunities will be undertaken with Rafia.

Statement by Secretary

- **Andrea**, Secretary, reported on the importance of communication between the committee and the wider community, noting it as a key area identified for improvement.
- The committee currently uses a range of communication channels:
 1. **Facebook**: the official *Friends of Dallington Village* page has been reactivated following a period of inactivity. Members and residents are encouraged to follow the page for regular updates.
 2. **Email**: a distribution list, previously suspended, is being reinstated. The official contact address is *friendsofdallingtonvillage@gmail.com*. The Secretary will also circulate minutes of meetings to members via email.

3. **Website:** the group's website friendsofdallingtonvillage.com provides historical information, committee details, and will be further developed as a resource for guidance with links to crime reporting, council complaints portal, plus updates.
 4. **WhatsApp:** while not operated directly by the Friends of Dallington Village, the existing village WhatsApp group remains an important channel for sharing local information, including safety alerts and general updates. Residents wishing to join should contact Andrea.
- The committee emphasised that it does not replace official reporting routes for issues such as potholes or fly-tipping. Instead, it will compile clear guidance and "how-to" information and links as above to help residents use the appropriate channels with West Northamptonshire Council and local councillors. We encourage members to copy the committee into correspondence where relevant.
 - In addition to communications, Andrea highlighted the continuation of **community participation initiatives**, including litter-picking and gardening events, to be held approximately every six weeks, subject to volunteer availability and seasonal conditions.
 - Both **Geoff** and **Andrea** sought feedback from attendees on the committee's intention to use electronic communication as the primary method of engagement. They asked whether this would be inappropriate or difficult for any residents, and whether alternative methods (e.g., paper-based communication) would be required.
 - Those present were unanimous in endorsing electronic communication; we will however continue to offer paper-based communication, to ensure inclusivity, should it be requested.

Village Safety in the Village and introduction of our local Police Community Support Officer, Joanna Pole

- Turning to village safety, Geoff raised the continuing issue of **speeding** within the village, acknowledging that it has been a long-standing concern. He also referred to the "jitty" and its history as a contentious matter.
- The committee is awaiting the outcome of a review by **West Northamptonshire Council Highways**, to which both committee members and individual residents have previously submitted views. The results of this review have not yet been published, and no date for their release has been confirmed.
- Geoff emphasised that the committee recognises residents' concerns and is committed to finding a **workable solution** that reduces vehicle speed while maintaining access to the village.
- It was noted that some longstanding volunteers, particularly from the older generation, had felt alienated and, in certain cases, had been subjected to inappropriate behaviour both in person and online.
- The committee emphasised the importance of respect, inclusivity, and appreciation for all voluntary contributions within the community.
- The committee reaffirmed its commitment to fostering a respectful and inclusive environment, recognising the invaluable contributions of previous committees while emphasising the need to look forward constructively for the benefit of the whole village.

- In concluding the discussion, Geoff reaffirmed that the committee is fully aware of residents' concerns regarding speeding and related highways issues. He acknowledged the challenges of influencing the Highways Agency but emphasised that this would not deter the committee from pursuing a workable solution that meets the needs of the whole community.
- Residents were encouraged to please continue raising concerns - such contributions are important, and welcomed.
- The committee will continue to press for action and an amicable solution and will publish council response as soon as is available.
- Geoff then introduced **PCSO Andy Emberton**, noting apologies from **PCSO Joanna Pole**, who was unable to attend.
- Andy provided an overview of the role of PCSOs in the community, including their responsibilities for visible patrols, school engagement, and crime prevention.
- **Andy** introduced himself as a long-serving officer for the area. Working alongside PCSO Joanna Pole, Andy has covered the wider Northampton area for nearly 18 years.
- He explained that in recent years, resources have been concentrated on specific estates under the *Clear, Hold, Build* initiative, which temporarily limited visible presence in Dallington. The initiative focuses police resources on problem areas until antisocial behaviour and crime levels are reduced, after which normal patrols are resumed.
- The Dallington policing area is set to expand further and will eventually include Spencer, St James, Upton, Weedon Road, Castle, and Duston/Bants Lane. At present, the area is covered by two PCSOs (Andy and Joanna) supported by four police officers, with an additional PCSO expected in due course.
- Andy noted that **Dallington remains a relatively low-crime area**. Reported issues typically include:
 - Minor antisocial behaviour at Dallington Park.
 - Parking obstructions, particularly during football matches.
 - Occasional burglaries.
 - Theft from vehicles, which has recently increased, with over 20 reports in the past month.
- Vehicle-related crime is often opportunistic, involving insecure cars or valuables left on display. Andy advised residents to avoid leaving items visible in vehicles, noting that even small amounts of cash can be targeted. To address this, police are conducting **"Car Safe" checks**, during which PCSOs look into parked vehicles for items at risk of theft. Where necessary, they will contact vehicle owners to advise on crime prevention.
- Patrols are carried out during both daytime and late evening shifts, sometimes up to midnight. PCSOs also dedicate weekly time to local schools (e.g., Earl Spencer, St Mary's, and Kings Heath Primary) to run *drop-in sessions* with pupils. These sessions help to build trust, encourage positive behaviour, and strengthen relationships with young people in the community.
- Andy welcomed the continuation of the FODV group, noting the importance of community organisations in supporting local policing and partnership work after a period of decline post-Covid.

- He outlined the **Street Watch scheme**, where volunteers are provided with identification tabards and act as visible community representatives during their normal activities (e.g., walking the dog). Volunteers are asked to report suspicious behaviour or concerns directly to the police, providing valuable early intelligence while remaining anonymous if preferred.
- Andy also promoted **Northamptonshire Talking**, an email alert system operated by Northamptonshire Police. The system provides timely updates (within hours) on local incidents such as burglaries, thefts, and suspicious activity, and allows residents to submit information or evidence, such as doorbell camera footage, directly to the police. The system has already led to successful identifications following recent burglaries.
- A resident raised concerns regarding visibility when exiting **Gibson Lane**, describing it as a blind spot. Drivers are required to edge out cautiously in order to check for oncoming traffic, creating a risk of near misses and the need for oncoming vehicles to take evasive action.
- Geoff introduced **Tracy Willson**, noting her dual involvement in **Neighbourhood Watch** and **Street Watch** initiatives.
- **Tracy** is the new Area Coordinator for Neighbourhood Watch, covering Dallington as well as Kings Heath, where she lives. She explained that her decision to take on the role was motivated by a desire to bring residents together to address local issues collectively.
- With a professional background in nursing and a strong personal commitment to supporting others, Tracy emphasised her focus on community safety and partnership working. She noted that Neighbourhood Watch in Kings Heath has developed strong links with both the police and the council, and expressed her intention to establish the same constructive relationships within Dallington. She provided her contact details and encouraged residents to reach out to her at any time for advice or assistance. These will be made available on the FODV website.
- She emphasised her commitment to helping residents work collectively to address antisocial behaviour, highlighting concerns about vehicle crime, drug use, and the impact of such activity on young people. Tracy expressed her determination to ensure children can enjoy their community safely and without fear.
- Tracy is also involved in setting up a Residents' Association in Kings Heath, which has worked closely with the police and local councillors, and she hopes to foster the same strong partnerships in Dallington.
- Looking ahead, she outlined aspirations to establish a community centre as a focal point for activities, events, and further community engagement.
- Tracy confirmed that she is currently the sole active representative for Neighbourhood Watch in Dallington, although she has strong support from members in Kings Heath. She acknowledged that some residents are reluctant to participate directly due to concerns about possible repercussions, and reassured attendees that she is willing to take forward reports on their behalf.
- She expressed frustration at ongoing antisocial behaviour, including individuals openly acting in a threatening manner, and stressed that such behaviour must not be tolerated.
- Tracy highlighted resources available to residents, including:
 - A **Kings Heath Neighbourhood Watch Facebook page**, which provides guidance on reporting issues.

- The **Fearless app**, which enables anonymous reporting of incidents, free of charge.
- Leaflets and **window stickers** to help deter antisocial behaviour and demonstrate that the community is alert.
- She also maintains a **register of isolated and vulnerable residents**, ensuring that they are included and supported within the Neighbourhood Watch framework.
- Geoff agreed to take forward an action, working with Andrea, to **collate all relevant contact details and resources** onto the FODV website.
- This information will be published on the committee's website to provide residents with easy access to guidance and reporting channels.

Statement by Dallington Flood Action Group

- **Moira** introduced herself as a resident of Brook Lane and lead of the Flood Action Group, established following the severe flooding of **23 September 2023**. A WhatsApp group was created to support affected residents, with Rafia acting as liaison with the Council, Environment Agency, and Kier Highways.
- Moira outlined the group's purpose: to share support, information, and concerns regarding mitigation measures. Heather had previously presented to the Full Council on the flooding's impact, leading to a follow-up meeting in May 2025 with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), Environment Agency, Anglian Water, and Kier Highways all involved.
- From that meeting, a number of **action points** were raised, including:
 - Clarification of flood prevention measures for listed buildings.
 - Registration for flood alert and flood warning systems.
 - Provision of technical information (e.g. Flood Mary and the 2018 Flood Risk and Mitigation Report).
- Moira provided the **current position**:
 - **Drainage and Planning**: The LLFA was asked to review drainage plans for developments near Dallington, including Roman Road and the proposed 100 houses at York Road. Two consultation responses have been submitted with conditions recommended.
 - **Highways and Maintenance**: Kier Structures were to review maintenance schedules, including concerns about uncleared drains. The culverts in Dallington are on a biennial inspection schedule, last inspected in December 2023.
 - **Emergency Planning**: Concerns remain about road closures and access for emergency services, particularly affecting Brook Lane and Tennyson Close.
 - **Flood Warden Training**: Training and community resilience work were discussed, though funding is not yet available. Moira suggested provision of a community flood store (e.g. for sandbags and signage).
 - **Section 19 Flood Report**: Required when flooding affects five or more properties, to be completed within six months. The report is currently under consultation and is expected to be published by the **end of September 2025**.
 - **Debris Removal**: The Environment Agency has been asked to clear debris, silt, and rocks from the concrete channel to prevent blockages; progress is pending.
 - **Gully Maintenance**: The gully at 7 Dallington Green has been reset, and the gully at 34 Lane identified for further checks. The Brook Lane gully was scheduled for inspection last week.

- Moira confirmed that once the Section 19 Report is published, it will be available on the Environment Agency's website under "Flood Investigation Reports." Affected residents will also be notified directly.
- **Cllr Sally Keeble** addressed the meeting on the wider issue of flood defences in Northampton. She noted that scrutiny work is being undertaken in this area and expressed concern that Northampton has, on occasion, lost out on funding allocations for flood defence. She emphasised the importance of ensuring that **Dallington Brook** is fully included in these considerations, as it is often overlooked in favour of larger schemes, despite its recent flooding impact.

Fundraising and fun activities for 2025/26

- Geoff thanked contributors for their input and acknowledged that, although the meeting had overrun, it was important to hear from invited speakers at this inaugural session. He assured residents that future meetings would be managed within tighter timeframes.
- He then introduced the final agenda item on fun and fundraising activities, noting its importance to the community.
- Heather gave a summary of the key events we hope to organise between now and Christmas, including **Remembrance Day** and **Halloween activities, festive lights around the village**, a **craft fair**, and a **Santa's grotto** at the Wheatsheaf public house.
- A discussion was held on creating a distinctive event for Dallington, with suggestions such as a **Scarecrow Festival** themed around the local legend of the *Gray Lady*.
- The success of these initiatives will rely on the support of volunteers, and the importance of wider community involvement was emphasised.
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Any Other Business (AOB)

No AOBs.

Date of next meeting

- **Geoff** announced that a forthcoming committee meeting would be convened to focus specifically on organising fundraising and community activities for the year ahead, (subsequently set for Wednesday 1 October).
- Community members were encouraged to contribute any ideas via the website or by submitting them directly to **Andrea**.
- **Geoff** introduced **Cllr John East** and **Cllr Sally Keeble**, thanking them for their attendance. He also noted apologies from **Cllr Ashraf**, who was unable to attend due to another engagement.
- Geoff thanked all attendees for their participation and confirmed that the next meeting would be held on the **28th January 2026**.
- **Geoff** invited any final questions and expressed thanks to all participants for their contributions.
- A brief discussion was held on the use of the Facebook page *Friends of Dallington Village* as a key communication channel.
- Geoff concluded the meeting by reminding attendees to check the website for updates and to submit their ideas for consideration.

