Hopefully spring is on its way and Upton residents will be able to out and about to enjoy better weather. To encourage more wildlife into the area I have spent the last of my 2016/7 ward budget on bird boxes and bee and bug hotels. Some of these will go up in the Cockpit, Lodge Gardens and the garden at the Acorns. The remainder will be stored and used when and where I receive requests for them. I'm hoping the Parish Council will take advantage of this, perhaps at Chemistry Pits and the Queen Elizabeth playing field for example.

There have problems on Wealstone Lane with parked vehicles and congestion caused mainly by the early arrival at the school of the childrens' transport at Dorin Park school. Following a meeting at the school which I attended along our CWaC officers and PCSO Jenna Tapley the issues have hopefully been resolved. The situation is being monitored and residents of Wealstone Lane are satisfied with the improvement.

It is taking a while for the new speed limit to embed itself in the area and drivers are still, in some cases reluctant to abide by the 20mph limit. The situation is not helped by the manner in which the limit has been introduced piecemeal across Upton, so drivers constantly move from speed zone to speed zone. PCSO Tapley has agreed to hold some speed awareness days in Upton with the SID to determine whether and where she should deploy the speed gun. The idea is to remind drivers of the need to comply with the speed limits.

There is good news that during the next financial year the carriageway on Gatesheath Drive will be repaired. Residents have asked me for dropped kerbs at the junction of Rushton and Gatesheath Drives and I'm pleased that our Highways engineer has agreed to include the work during the road repairs. I'm hopeful that some patched repairs on the pavement will also be carried out at the time.

I have received complaints from residents in who enjoy the green space on Dunham Way because the grassed area is being used by drivers as part of the highway. This is both dangerous and antisocial and leaves the grass badly rutted and unsightly. Working with residents and our locality team I want to invest some of my ward budget in planting on and generally improving the area. Residents and I hope this will make the area more of a community space and discourage its inappropriate use.

Following the theme of spoilt green spaces I'd like to make a plea for the grass verges in Upton. The verges help to define Upton and it's a real pity that some residents and visitors don't respect them. Many of the verges are looking quite frankly a mess because vehicles are parked on and driven over them. It is virtually impossible to take any official action unless it can be proved categorically who is causing the damage. So I make a plea to all residents please help to keep Upton looking at its best and don't destroy the verges by inconsiderate and careless parking.

Last September The Frog public house was confirmed and listed as a community asset. This is great news not only for Nathan and his team but also for Upton. Should the pub ever be considered for sale our community will have a say and an influence in any future use.

You may have noticed the improvement to the garden area adjacent to The Acorns on Caughall Road. This is thanks to the tenacity and commitment of one of the residents with excellent support from two of our officers. I'd like to add my thanks and admiration for the work which is an example of what can be achieved in a short time when neighbours pull together.

Residents on Mill Lane have regularly let me know that they experience problems with the no 1 bus driving too close to their properties. This results in broken wing mirrors and glass in the carriageway. The issue has been addressed with the bus company and we are all hopeful that the bus drivers are now taking a little more care on the route.

The concrete defenders at the Moston wildlife area are in place and it's great to know that the area is properly protected from incursions from unauthorised groups. Residents now are able enjoy a truly wild and peaceful area.

Members of the Wildlife Connections team from the Zoo have started working in the 'pocket park' at the end of Flag Lane North, with pupils from several of our Upton schools and I'm looking forward to seeing the results. Once the work is complete we can install an interpretation board and a bench.

A change in the arrangement with the Baptist Church on Flag Lane South has meant that the parking near Upton Heath School is again a problem with which PCSO Tapley is dealing. I'm hopeful that p the use of the church car park can be regularised and that we can find a solution acceptable to residents in the area.

You may have noticed that a mature oak tree on Caughall Road has recently been cut down. This was as the result of a private action taken against CWaC because the roots of the tree were causing damage to nearby properties. It's always sad to lose a beautiful tree but on this occasion there was no alternative.

I'm not sure when my ward budget for 2017/8 will be available, but because it is now only £5000 and because it has been a case of use it or hand it back, I have no spend to carry over from the last financial year. I will therefore need to be more circumspect about the projects I can support.

Jill Houlbrook

20.2.2017