Borough Councillors Report 04.12.17 - JH

The winter weather has really set in with wind and rain and many residents have contacted me to complain about how unsafe they feel walking on the many slippy leaves that are strewn around our pavements.

I have reported many areas in Upton that need a really good clean. Pavements, behind bus shelters, blocked grids for example. I had been using the SMYLE app which was extremely useful when out and about. I discovered only by accident that this app has been withdrawn and that many of the reports had seemingly disappeared into a big black hole. It is disappointing that local Councillors and this applies across the political divide, were not informed that SMYLE had been discontinued. This meant I had to try to retrieve all my reports and send them by other means.

Consequently I have spent some time lobbying CWaC about the issues residents and I had reported for action and to which we had received no response. My complaints using Twitter seem to have hit home and I’ve been contacted by email with the news that some work will take place. Specifically on Mill Lane and Church Lane and in the cockpit and Lodge Gardens. There will also be a second leaf sweeping Upton.

I’m still chasing quite a few unresolved matters like the blocked grid on Caughall Road.

Several new street name signs have also been ordered. Again I found out only by

accident the local authority does not clean or repair street signs, they order new ones. In fact a Councillor from a neighbouring ward alerted me to this because she was also so frustrated in getting signs replaced. There is likely to be a considerable wait because the signs are bulk ordered, so I cannot give residents any idea when the new signs will be in place.

One of most regular reasons residents contact me is to report hedges and trees which are overhanging and obstructing pavements.

In turn I report these to our teams at CWaC. If the offending tree or hedge is in Council land then I assume it will be cut back. If the land is privately owned a request to attend to cutting back, is made to the owner of the property.

There are powers which can be used when the highway/pavement

is obstructed but I’m loath to ask officers to go down this route as I’d rather ‘ask nicely’.

Keeping trees and hedges cut back is just being community minded, something we can all appreciate, so it would be great if all Upton residents would just check their hedge or tree isn’t overhanging or encroaching onto a public space and now is a good time of year to trim it back and make life that little more pleasant for our community.

Over the last month local residents joined me in planting another 700 daffodil bulbs on the green space on Bolesworth Road. Next week we will be planting 350 bulbs on Meadowsway and pupils from Upton Heath school will be planting 350 bulbs in the Cockpit. Planting these bulbs has been really well received and it’s my intention to order some summer bulbs for planting next year. I’m looking forward to seeing Upton bright and cheerful.

Residents of Rushton Drive have been waiting for several long weeks for the broken lamp outside no 32 to be reconnected. I’ve just been told that the work will happen this week so I’m watching and waiting for the electricity company to complete the repairs.

I am meeting with the street scene manager for a ward walk so please do let me know if you would like us to visit any grot spots I haven’t noticed. In order members can report issues I have included the following for your information:

Street scene phone number is 0300 123 7026

Highways phone number is 0300 123 7036

This is also a useful link

https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/contact-us/contact-telephone-numbers.aspx

This is the link which enables anyone to report online

<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/contact-us/report-it/report-it.aspx>

PC Rob Brown and PCSO Jenna Tapley met with me last weekend and I’d like to thank them for taking time out of their busy shift. It was a useful and productive chat about Upton. It’s good to know there are no big ongoing issues of anti social behaviour. We did discuss the usual problems of parking and obstruction and where in Upton we can deploy the speed indicator device. Rob and Jenna are always available to residents who may wish to contact them.

At the meeting held with the Police and Crime Commissioner last week he explained that the previous way in which our PCSOs worked and communicated with communities is being reinstated. This means that Jenna will clock on at the Blacon Police Station but will spend her time in Upton using, hopefully, the Pavilion as her base where she and PC Rob Brown can meet with residents. This will be replicated across the borough but in some areas the PCSO will clock on at the nearest Police or Fire Station.

During our meeting I raised with Rob and Jenna the incident that we reported after the last Parish Council meeting. They have followed up on our report and will continue monitor for incidents of drug taking or smoking on the QE11 field.

We also discussed the report from residents that a vehicle instead of using the road had been driven over the grass verges on the junction of Weston Grove and Gatesheath Drive. This was at the very least an irresponsible and dangerous act and I have asked for the white marker posts to be extended round the corner.

I was privileged to join our Chairman and many residents for the annual Remembrance Day service at the Parish Church and for the two minutes silence at the War Memorial on November 12th. It was gratifying to see so many people gathered to remember those who had paid and continue to pay the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

May I echo many comments I heard at the Royal British Legion praising the manner in which the morning has been organised this year? Much of this was due to Councillor Alison Bennion who was also one of the RBL standard bearers.

Turning to planning matters you will probably know that the application for 55 Daleside was approved by committee. This was disappointing for neighbours.

The application for the development at White Gables is being referred to the planning committee on 9th January. I have arranged a further meeting for residents. The previous meeting was extremely well attended showing the strength of feeling about the proposals.

The application for the former Mercedes Benz garage will be considered at the planning meeting next week. Although I called in the application I have had no further involvement and Councillor Richard Beacham has been the point of liaison.

Also on the agenda for next week is the application for Moston Garage. I am meeting with residents this coming week so they can understand the process should they wish to speak at the meeting. I was surprised to be told by the case officer that no comments had been received from the Parish Council and I trust this has now been rectified.

I recently had a really productive meeting with the landscape officer from CWaC. We discussed embryonic ideas for improving and upgrading some of the under-utilised green spaces in Upton by Chester. We focused on Bolesworth Road, Queens Crescent and Rushton Drive. Nothing is going to happen before we’ve shared ideas and consulted with the neighbours and nothing is going to happen suddenly but I’m hoping for some ideas that will add to and improve the community environment.

Jill Houlbrook

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