Borough Councillor’s report JH 21.05.18

Report for Annual Parish Council

The past 12 months since the last Annual Parish Meeting seem to have flown past and lots has happened in Upton since May 2017. I’m pleased and privileged to have been part of the Parish Council and in my borough Councillor role working with members to help Upton grow and prosper.

I’m really pleased that in a couple of weeks Upton will host its first festival. Residents and visitors alike will have the chance to showcase our ward.

My report is a little shorter than usual because I have been on holiday during May. I continue to work for residents on a variety of issues. To me part of my role is to support and assist across the ward and I never know what might pop into my inbox or what telephone call I might receive.

This is my report for the Annual Parish Council and over the past year I have dealt with planning, large and small. White Gables rumbles on with no recommendation yet. I’ve supported individual residents when neighbours apply for extensions and I’ve talked to developers and planners about how residents feel.

I’ve dealt with neighbour nuisance, housing issues, broken lights, blocked drains and grids, broken paving slabs, broken street signs, inconsiderate parking. I regularly attend residents’ meetings, report ASB and request speed checks. These are just a sample selection of what comes along, day to day. Along with residents and school children and other members of the Parish Council I’ve planted bulbs, tidied Lodge Gardens, weeded at the War Memorial and played bowls at the Pavilion.

I’m really pleased that members of this Parish Council have agreed to support my idea that a Christmas Street Market on Weston Grove will benefit the businesses and residents alike.

I feel I have now built a relationship with the Street Scene team which can only be if benefit to Upton.

Grass cutting in Upton has started and within hours of the first cut I received complaints about the standard of the work. Grass cuttings left on the road, pavements and in untidy piles on the grass verges. This slipshod workmanship appears to be a common factor across the Borough.

I have started using the SMYLE app again but I’m not convinced it’s working properly. The problem is I understand that the information is transferred to another recording system and I think that’s where the problem lies as errors are being made. I reported potholes but the confirmation the report has been actioned told me the street had been swept.

A consultation on the double yellow lining on Bache and Egerton Drives has taken place and residents have indicated their preference. The next step is to seek approval from the Highways Commissioner to hold a formal consultation on the chosen scheme. Residents will receive notification of the plan and likely timescales.

Residents of Queens Crescent have chosen to make the street one way and the process is now to apply for a TRO (Traffic regulation order) and Highways will move ahead with this as soon as they can but there is no implementation date and of course that depends on the TRO being approved.

I mentioned in my April report that there had been no progress on the cycleway agreed in 2015. I’m pleased to say that following my enquiries about section 106 money the plan is with the contractor to be costed. Once this is received Kay Parry can apply for the money and then go out to public notice. It is disappointing that this has taken such a long while but at least I’ve managed to get some progress and I’m hoping the cycle lane will be in use before another 12 months have passed.

There is no date for the installation of the crossing on Wealstone Lane, but I understand the most likely date will be in the upcoming half term holiday.

It’s worth mentioning that because we are in the breeding and nesting season the local authority will not cut trees or shrubs until the end of August.

On Tuesday 15th residents gathered to discuss the change of route of the number 1 bus service. The meeting was arranged to find a solution to the reasons for the changes and it was attended by officers from CWaC, Jamie Reid from Stagecoach Bus, our Parish Clerk and Chairman, Councillor Bryan and I.

I’d like to thank Councillor Bennion and the Royal British Legion for hosting the meeting.

The discussions were lively with residents expressing a variety of views.

From the meeting we are taking forward some ideas for discussions and action.

Jamie Reid from Stagecoach has agreed to look urgently at changing the bus timetables so that buses do not run down Upton Lane while children exit school each afternoon.

Councillor Bryan and I will engage with our Highways and Travel Officers and Stagecoach Bus to look at how we can make Mill Lane ‘safe’ for buses. This will mean finding a way and the finance to remove telephone poles and to work with residents to persuade them to cut back hedges.

Jamie Reid has arranged to send one of his inspectors (today Wednesday 16th) to meet and spend some time with one of the residents who attended the meeting and who has video evidence of buses driving in a reckless manner. I hope for an update which I can give you at Parish Council.

I look forward to another busy and productive year.

Jill Houlbrook

16.5.2018.