

Borough Councillors Report – Cllr Houlbrook 01 March 2021

As we look forward to the prospect of the easing of lockdown it's great to see signs of spring across Upton. Cheerful flowers and buds can lift the spirits.

Unfortunately, not everyone respects the environment or our community and this is very evident by the dreadful fly tipping on Dutton's Lane and the dumping food on the grass verge by the shops on the A41. This kind of behaviour is just unhygienic, anti-social and likely to attract vermin. Several residents and I reported the huge pile rubbish on Dutton's Lane but regrettably to date it has not been removed. Not only is it visually appalling but it's also blocking the ditch and interfering with the water flow in an area where the water level is already very high.

A local firm has been regularly cleaning street signs. So thank you Abbey Window cleaning who have recently been in Upton. I wonder if Parish Councillors would support an idea that encourages residents of every street to get together and clean their street name signs? It's one of those jobs that gets overlooked.

I would like to thank residents who have made me aware of the misuse of Zoo land in Upton. There is a huge amount of litter and evidence of barbecues. I have contacted Chester Zoo to alert them to the situation. It is so sad and infuriating that people treat the countryside in this manner.

During the cold snap there was a burst water pipe on Gatesheath Drive and gallons of water were pumping onto the road. The water froze overnight causing danger for driver and pedestrians. I received reports of falls. The original leak was overnight on the Friday but it took until Monday for Severn Trent to attend by which time a huge amount of water was lost. Following the repair there is much grit and muck left in the gutters on Gatesheath Drive and I have reported this hoping it will be cleared before it has the chance to block the gullies.

The work to remove the tree stumps at the little area by the bus stop on Upton Lane is now complete and it is now a matter of choosing appropriate planting. I am meeting there with one of our green space officers and a member of the Upton Community Group on Friday. Socially distanced of course.

I submitted a question to Council about the youth club building as I hoped that our community might benefit from some proceeds of the sale. Although we were aware this would happen I feel it would have been helpful to know that the signs were going up rather than them just appearing. I have received a reply to my question from Councillor Beacham. I would like to thank him for the swift response and for clarity.

'The Council uses the capital receipts it receives from the disposals of property and assets to fund its wider capital programme across the borough. As a general rule, the receipts from the sales of these assets are not ring fenced for investments in particular parts of the borough.'

The old Blacon Library sale was subject to a 'call in' in September 2019 and in that meeting the committee examined the exceptional circumstances that had led to the decision to ring fence this receipt for projects designed to improve the health and wellbeing of people in the Blacon community. The committee supported the decision because the old Blacon Library had previously been transferred to a local organisation that runs services in the community on behalf of the council.

Therefore this unique situation has not set a precedent for future decisions. There would need to be a similar set of exceptional circumstances in order to follow a similar course of action in Upton, or elsewhere in the Borough.

The council is very supportive of community partnerships that deliver youth services in local areas and I would be keen to hear more about these plans to see if there are any alternative avenues of support available. One option could be the use of s106 from any future development of the land.'

I have asked Councillor Beacham if he will come along to a Parish Council meeting and he has kindly accepted.

It's good news that Weston Grove will be fully resurfaced in March. Our Highways officers have confirmed the full length of the road will be repaired although I do not yet have a definite start date. Work will not commence until work on the new house by Westlea School is completed.

There are lots other footways and roadways in desperate need of repair in Upton. Mill Lane and Upton Lane are sources of numerous complaints. Many of our roads were not designed to take heavy goods vehicles, buses or the sheer volume of traffic now using them.

Residents on Upton Dene have again been disturbed by and complained about the use of motorcycles on Parsons Lane and the Country Park travelling over Knolls Bridge to the old golf course. Recently Cllr Simon Eardley (Mollington and Saughall ward) and I met with PCSO Jenna Tapley and our Public Rights of Way Officer to discuss how we can mitigate the issues and deal with the anti social behaviour. To prevent any vehicular access to Parsons Lane another post is being installed at the Deva Lane entrance. I am funding this from my community budget.

The staff at Wealstone Nursing Home are about to start sprucing up the residents' garden and are looking for garden related items to use. Anything that can be planted or up cycled including garden benches and plants are welcomed. Because of Covid restrictions volunteering is not possible at the moment. Please just drop any donations at the home.

Repairs to the bridge on the Public Right of Way (PROW) on Liverpool Road have now been completed and the route has been made tidy. The area of the footpath which runs along side the field is still in a poor state but this will be addressed by the new tenant on the land. I would like to say a big thank you to Richard Ankers of the PROW team for all the work that has been carried out.

And finally may I remind our community that green waste bin collections recommence this week across CWaC. Collection days can be found on the website and the calendar provided to each household.

Jill Houlbrook
1.3.2021.