

Borough Cllrs Report – JH 13.09.21

Although traditionally August is a quiet month for Council activities I have been kept busy with an increasing number of individual complaints, issues and advice sought by members of our community. These range widely but have included planning, environmental concerns, trees, grass cutting and contact with housing associations.

Part of the charm of Upton is the number of grass verges on our streets. Pavement Parking in Upton is a continuing problem and raises many complaints. Not only because parking on verges destroys them but also because parking in pavements is antisocial and often the footway is obstructed and damaged by parked vehicles. In addition I continue to receive complaints that some drivers just don't think about the impact on the community of when they park on corners or outside or opposite driveways. It is clear that as a community we for an affordable and practical solution. I convened a meeting last week CWaC officers from Highways, Safety and Enforcement and with two members of the community representing the Living Streets movement in Upton. As a result of this the officers recommendation is that we start with a very soft approach of letters to residents in a couple of targeted streets. The original suggestion was that I asked members to agree the letters came from the Parish Council but since the meeting officers have let me know that the preference is for the letters to be issued by CWaC. Since the local authority is responsible for Highways matters I feel this is the better option.

A member of our community is proactively encouraging the PROW team to improve and develop the bridleway through the Zoo. So last week he and I were pleased to be part of a meeting with Chester Zoo to investigate how the bridleway can link in with the new Nature Recovery Corridor Project. This is an exciting project and we discussed the possibilities that could be opened for various green spaces in Upton. I have included below information from the Zoo in which I hope members will be interested and I would like to suggest that the Clerk invites the lead project manager, Hannah Brooks to the next full Parish Council meeting.

Here is the link for the Nature Recovery Corridor on our website. As the project progresses lots more information will be added but the general overview is there so this should be enough to get started with - <https://www.chesterzoo.org/what-you-can-do/nature-recovery-corridor/>

This project is building on our Wildlife Connections Campaign which as it has been running since 2016 has more information on the website - <https://www.chesterzoo.org/what-you-can-do/campaigns/wildlife-connections/>

Given all the public interest and concerns about safe cycling I have also attached the link to the autumn addition of Cycling Matters. There is lots of useful information.

<https://www.chestercyclecity.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Cycling-Matters-Autumn-2021.pdf>

Last Friday local resident Wendy Thompson and I met with our greenspaces officers in Lodge Gardens to discuss the next steps in the improvement plan. I must thank Wendy, who is taking the lead on this, she is indeed a champion volunteer in our community. Wendy has a depth of knowledge and understanding about horticulture which I envy! We now have a list of the plants we hope to see in Lodge Gardens and a ground planting plan

is underway. We are aiming to start planting during October but it will go on for some time. The CWaC autumn cut back will begin very soon and there will be considerable work going on in Lodge Gardens. Wendy and I are particularly eager to see the beech hedge on the boundary restored. It must be a very long while since it received any attention and is now just a series of straggly trees. The dead tree on the grassed area will be removed too. This is a long project into which I have put £3000 of this year's ward budget and I shall continue to support the work.

Residents on Liverpool Road who live close to Moston have ambitions to revitalise parts of the green area that is green belt so we are starting to think about how we can achieve changes and I have asked Hannah Brooks if this area can be included in the Nature Recovery Corridor project. However this is at a very early stage and may need considerable financial as well as practical input.

I cannot ignore in this report the ongoing problem on the A41 not only with the changes in the priority at the Mannings Lane junction but also the original decision to restrict the road to one lane for motor vehicles. This issue continues to generate more complaints and comments than any other that is currently ongoing in Upton. I am still waiting for a comprehensive and considered reply from both the Head of Highways and the Chief Executive. It is disappointing that there appears to be a distinct lack of communication and willingness to consider that other views than those of the officers involved may be valid and practical.

The work by CityFibre and their contractors is still generating complaints in Upton but I am pleased to say that Julie Derbyshire is swift and effective in dealing with them.

I do not have any dates for this the signing and lining work due on Wealstone Lane and Weston Grove and I have been told that Highways surveys are basically bottom of the list.

It's pleasing to see that Archway Homes are on site and the new street signs for White Gables Close are in place.

The old Youth Club site continues to be vandalised. It is unsafe and attractive to some young people. Both Councillor Bryan and I have sent several strongly worded emails to senior managers and the Chief Executive and we have both requested building is demolished immediately. I have not received a reply.

Finally may I thank our Darren and Peter for their expert tuition on the bowling green at the community picnic, so many people had a great time learning the skills of thumb or finger bias and bowling in a straight line! A thank you too to members who helped out.

Jill Houlbrook
12.9.2021