

Borough Councillors Report – Cllr Jill Houlbrook, 14.03.22.

I continue to receive complaints and questions about the new waste collection service, many of them from residents who have not received their bin sticker, replacement bins and lids and many from residents about the latest charges. These are for such things as taking rubble from home improvements to the household waste recycling centres. Our residents fear that the charges will lead to an increase in flytipping in our country lanes. At the request of residents I have asked for detailed information and some financial details.

In 2021 there was an 18% increase in flytipping across Cheshire West and Chester. That year alone the cost to the council was over £347,000.

The state of many footway and road surfaces in Upton continue to deteriorate and residents continue to comment on the potholes and dangers of the crumbling footways. While using the app is an excellent way to report and can be used on the go, this doesn't help when a whole street needs attention. In these cases I copy the report to highways in the hope of more than just patching.

An example is this report I made following a message from a resident concerned about the footway on the A41 from Flag Lane South towards Demage Lane. I reported the poor state of the surface. I have just received this reply. I hope we will see some action and repairs.

*Thank you for your enquiry regarding the overall condition of the footway on A41 between Flag Lane South and the school*

*Our maintenance budgets are prioritised and allocated based on well-established condition data; all carriageways across the borough are considered on an equal basis.*

*Using our asset management approach to maintaining a safe highway network across the borough, whilst those carriageways which are in the poorest condition will often be treated first, other sections of carriageway, which may not appear in need of repair, may receive a preventative treatment to prolong their life. This approach is used on all roads across the borough to optimise the funding we have.*

*Condition of the Highway network is annually assessed by our Asset Management team who then formulate our resurfacing and surface treatment schemes for future capital improvement programme*

*The condition of this road will continue to be monitored through the annual condition surveys and in the meantime, we will continue to undertake regular inspections of the road in accordance with our Code of Practice for Safety Inspections; defects highlighted during such inspections will be prioritised and repaired where required.*

For further information on our Highways asset management strategy, please see link to document <http://westcheshireyourstreets.co.uk/asset-management-framework/>

There has recently been a spate of dog fouling on some streets in Upton. This has been reported and I am supporting the local Living Streets group in looking for solutions to the problem. I am waiting for response from our officers to questions about extra bins.

I am also still waiting for details of the number of visits carried out by parking services in Upton and how many FPNs were issued as a result. It is regrettable that it takes so long to obtain not only a response but also the requested information on so many occasions.

It's so frustrating when I have to chase up information for residents and for me too. I need the details to support our community.

Members may have noticed the Cheshire railings on the corner of Flag Lane South and A41 are in a need of attention. I have been talking with the Baptist Church on whose land they are to see if we can save the railings. They are not protected, as I thought they might be, and the Church authorities can remove them if they do wish. However we have discussed the fact that they are very much part of the Upton scene and one of the Church members has kindly volunteered to attempt to repair them. I'd like to thank the Church for their community spirit.

The planning application for work on the stables at Chester Zoo has not yet been decided and so residents still have time to resister comments if they have them. There are still concerns about the impact on Caughall Road although the Zoo is working with neighbours to mitigate their worries with the use of the gatehouse.

Parking continues to a major part of my postbag. I'd like to thank members of the Living Streets group, our PCSO and our CWaC school safety officers for working with Westlea School in an effort to persuade parents and carers to be respectful when they park and to encourage more to walk to the school with the young people. I am doing what I can to support them but it is really satisfying that members of our community are working together to find solutions to long standing issues.

I am very excited to be working with Chester Zoo on the Upton Nature Project and encourage members of the Parish Council and our community to come along to the United Reformed Church on Friday 18th March at 6.45 for a chat and a cup of tea. Kieran Thomas from the Zoo team will tell us all more about the project.

The public consultation on the Wetland Project at the Countess of Chester Country Park is taking place on Saturday 19th March at the friendly bench between 11.00 and 2.30. I do hope that Parish Councillors as well as many members of our community will go along to give their views on the exciting plans for creating a unique wetland habitat at the park. There also an oppportunity to plant trees and scatter wildflower seeds.