Borough Councillor’s Report JH – 14.01.18

Although we are now two weeks into 2019 I’d like to wish everyone a peaceful and happy New Year and I look forward to working together towards another successful year for the Parish Council.

My report may be a little less full than usual because we’ve had a seasonal break but there have still been ward matters with which I have been concerned.

Firstly members you will be aware that the Stagecoach no 1 bus route will continue on Upton Lane. The decision to retain the service as it now is was made just before Christmas and after careful consideration by the area manager. I am very aware that this has not been universally welcomed and that some residents are reluctant to accept the decision.

The option to reroute the bus via Liverpool Road and the A41 as favoured by many residents of Upton Lane was considered but this would have meant no service for this area leaving many residents socially isolated and disenfranchised. A local resident who was concerned leafleted the Daleside/Demage Lane area and this resulted Stagecoach receiving around 40 emails/letters supporting the route on Upton Lane.

There is no new information on the Plush Spice site Newhall Road. The latest update from the planning case officer confirms that the applicants are negotiating a sale to a registered social housing provider (unsure which) and this is delaying the section 106 being agreed.

Hot off the press is the welcome news that the White Gables planning appeal will be a public hearing. The likely date is 7th February and the venue Chester Town Hall. This hearing will be the culmination of a long hard fight by residents and the Parish Council and by me for the application to be refused. The public hearing gives an opportunity for new evidence to be presented and a chance for members of the public to speak. I am now in the process of arranging a further residents’ meeting to proceed with the hearing.

The hearing for the Ellesmere Port, Portside North planning appeal begins on 15th January at the Town Hall in Chester. This hearing may well be of interest to many Upton residents and to members of this Parish Council.

The latest information regarding timing for public speakers looks like being Friday morning 18 January. Prior registration of a request to speak is still required. The inspector has separately requested attendees to arrive 30 minutes before the inquiry starts each day, although everyone doesn’t need to attend every session. I understand that the order of evidence will be Council, FFEPU and Appellant and an additional day has been agreed to hear evidence on Thursday 24th. Anyone wishing to speak can register at the email below.

Email: tim.salter@pins.gsi.gov.uk

Residents on Egerton Drive and Bache Drive have continued to contact me with their concerns about the implementation of double yellow lines and the removal of those which were installed during the work on Brook Lane bridge. I have had several meetings with Highways Officers, the latest being last week, where we discussed the feasibility and options available. The traffic order for the double yellow lines on Egerton Drive has expired and is not enforceable and it will not be renewed in its current form. Highways confirmed that when the lines were painted and the Traffic order laid, residents did receive notice that this would be a temporary measure. The implementation of double yellow lines is on road safety grounds and it is considered that the protection of the junctions on Egerton Drive with Mill Lane and Bache Drive is sufficient. However I have obtained a commitment that the situation will be carefully monitored and I urge residents to keep me informed.

 The latest tranche of 20mph zones have been implemented in Upton and as a result residents are questioning the feasibility and cost of signage in cul de sacs where the speed has always been very low, for example St Christopher’s Close. The general opinion is that the money would be better spent on the upkeep of the roads and footways.

 Because so many residents objected to Demage Lane being excluded from the 20mph zone a further survey of this and has recently taken place to determine if the mean speed will meet the criteria for 20mph. The results will not be known for a few weeks.

As a result of the no 1 bus remaining on Upton Lane I have asked our Highways team to do some further investigation into the safety and stability of the area just beyond the golf club. This bank is privately owned but nevertheless it’s been agreed that an engineer with the relevant experience will take an in depth look. I’m concerned that heavy rain or strong winds could cause slippage on the bank.

Discussions about the proper and formal provision of a youth service in Upton continue to be positive. I am very hopeful that funding from the local authority will be available to support the service and to offer training for a local Youth worker.

My regular meeting with the Localities Team is on 16th January. Because applications for ward funding closed some while ago I have no money available but we are talking about some new and exciting innovations which I hope we can bring to Upton. There are ideas around volunteering and the friends of group we hope to establish at the Cockpit and Lodge Gardens. I’ve already been contacted by interested residents.

The Woodland Trust has recently opened another opportunity for communities to apply for trees.

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/free-trees/>

I’d like to again remind drivers that just a little bit of consideration and neighbourliness when parking makes a huge difference. There really is no need to park on our lovely grass verges which in some streets are being systematically ruined. The verges are part of Upton and can be a reason people choose to live here. Residents can apply to the local authority for white posts to be installed but the cost will be passed to the requesting resident.

Friends of the Countess of Chester Country Park and the Land Trust discovered the dreadful state of the bins on the park after the holiday break. It’s quite shocking that some dog owners/walkers were so irresponsible and antisocial as to simply dump the poo bags on and around the bins.

The bins are in the park for casual litter and they are currently emptied as a favour by the CWaC street scene team and by TVC volunteers. They were installed as a gesture to help people who use the park but if

this kind of inconsiderate behaviour continues its highly likely we will lose the hard won Green Flag status we were recently awarded.

I hope the Parish Council will help disseminate the message that anyone using this fabulous local facility should consider simply taking litter home and most certainly not to fly tip around the bins or anywhere in our lovely park.

Jill Houlbrook

11 January 2019.