

## Uppingham NPAG:

### Notes from our Sub Group: Amenities, Community Facilities, Services and Open Spaces Group.

Dated: Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

Team: Pat Taylor, Sharon Aumais, Janet Thompson. A full discussion took place on the subjects below, it was noted that this Amenities Group has been depleted by 2 of our group stepping down, this was a disappointment.

NB: All points discussed at previous 'Amenities' groups have been collated and taken into consideration.

Uppingham is well equipped with at least 13 community meeting spaces but many of them are not up to standard and could be enhanced during the NPAG project. It was felt that the existing Neighbourhood Plan should be updated rather than totally re-written, this will however, be discussed by the whole NPAG.

#### **Areas of discussion:**

A: Toilets	B: Post Office	C: Library	D: Car Parking
E: Public Transport (including Hopper)	F: Bike Racks	G: Youth Facilities	H: Allotments
I: Tod's Piece & Parks	J: Litter & Dog fouling	K: Town Hall & Tourist Information	

#### **A: Town Toilets: Market Place and Tod's Piece.**

The location of the existing toilets in the Market Place is ideal and they are used by a great deal of residents and also prove invaluable for the market traders on a Friday. However, the existing facilities are a disgrace and they let the town down. It is not hygienic to have the manhole in the centre of the Ladies toilet and there is never any soap available. It is imperative that hand washing facilities are adequate and soap and sanitiser is required, and the updating is implemented in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The toilet in Tod's Piece is not in the ideal location.

- **Action point:** The toilets in the Market Square should receive an overhaul/update to bring them in line with current hygiene and safety standards to enhance the facilities in the town. Moving in line with gender equality, the toilets should be redesigned completely and have individual doors onto the pavement area and should be designated as 'gender neutral toilets along with the disabled access toilet should have baby changing facilities updated. They should be maintained to a much higher standard, checked and cleaned on a more regular basis.

The toilet in Tod's Piece should have signage to indicate its location along with details of the times when it is available.

#### **B: Post Office**

The Post Office is not a town or council property but a private enterprise, it is used extensively by residents, even more so now that we do not have any major banks in town. The interior has been reconfigured by the Manager, however there isn't any disabled access to the building. The pavement is not very wide but needs to sustain a ramp.

- **Action point:** Further investigation is requested by this group and the NPAG for a County Council appointed Surveyor to investigate the viability and move forward on providing access from the right-hand side of the building or far left side.

**C: Library:** This building is very old and is not used to its full capacity. Discussion has taken place over many years as to the viability of relocating it to the Town Hall. The issue was discussed by the group but it was felt that the existing Library building could be used for other purposes (see section 'G').

- **Action point:** survey should be conducted with the residents to ascertain what percentage or how many people frequent the library. Following the outcome we should look at the possibility of closing the library and instigating the visits from the 'Mobile Library'. Residents could order on line or on the phone for specific requests.

#### **D: Car Parking.**

We have 2 main car parks and we could not come up with a viable addition. This matter was deferred to the main NPAG for more planning.

#### **E: Public Transport.**

With Covid-19 the use of public transport had been discouraged, it is now coming back into force and it is mandatory for passengers to wear face-coverings. The bus stops are positioned correctly. Any further points were deferred to the main NPAG.

On a side note we discussed the Uppingham Hopper Bus. The Hopper Bus's normal route around town was suspended during lock down, but the bus was used for deliveries etc. The normal route and timetable is back in operation. Due to the suspension during lock down the bus has not received the usual grateful donations from passengers but has performed a great community service.

- **Action:** Funding should be sort from UTC to the RCC Covid-19 fund should be applied for to contribute towards the running of the Hopper Bus which provides an invaluable service to many residents.

#### **F: Bike Racks.**

The Council discussed the possibility of installing a temporary 'bike rack' during Covid-19 to assist residents to shop.

There is a Covid -19 support fund is now available from RCC. It was therefore proposed by Janet Thompson at the July Council Meeting to request funds from RCC for a permanent 'bike rack' within the Town Centre. Janet conducted a fully survey of the area and proposed 6 possible areas. The most prominent site would be in the walkway between the Falcon Hotel towards the car park. An update on this proposal has not been fed back to Janet by the Council.

The pathway between The Falcon and The Uppingham Book shop is owned by Uppingham School and has previously been used by Uppingham School vans and parking by the Manager of the shop and therefore would make an ideal location for the bike rack.

- **Action:** The installation of a bike rack could be funded by RCC Covid-19 fund and constructed in a suitable site, this would totally enhance the Governments idea of getting people fitter and encouraging them to cycle. This isn't any downside to this and should be supported by the Town Council

#### **G: Youth facilities.**

The Scouts, Cubs, Guides & Brownies groups withing Uppingham provide a great social and education provision for children from 7-18. A new 'Rainbow' unit commenced at the beginning of the year.

There is a lack of facilities for bored teenagers. Youths just 'hanging around' has been a problem in the town. A lengthy discussion took place and many attempts to create a 'youth hub' have been tried in the past. We discussed using the Library building to create a 'youth café' which provided structure, refreshments, games, relevant interesting career talks for youngsters. This would have to be funded rather than being reliant on volunteers.

- **Action:** Further discussion required (pending section 'C').

### **H: Allotments.**

There are 3 sets of Allotments within the Town at £25.00pa each plot. Many are well used but many are also unkempt and very overgrown.

Action: A monitoring system should be put into place and the state of the plots checked on a regular basis and owners made to adhere to the regulations. A note of the current regs should be sent from the Clerk from the Council's database to all plot owners. The plot owners should be encouraged to set up their own 'Allotment Association'

### **I: Tod's Piece & Parks.**

'The Elms' play area for children has not yet commenced. There are other small parks/children's play areas around Town.

Tod's Piece is a well-used area by residents, the football club and the youth groups from the Scout Hut.

The new 'under 5's' area has just been updated. There has been some vandalism in the area and many residents have complained about the amount of litter in the park. A resident has also noted that she received abuse from some youngsters whilst in the play area with her children.

- **Action:** For the protection of residents, children and for the apprehension of vandals, it is proposed to look at the possibility of places more CCTV cameras in the area. We would need to investigate the 'privacy' element but the advantages of more CCTV systems could outweigh the disadvantages. The proposal of CCTV cameras should be put to the Council and to the residents. 'People with nothing to hide from CCTV have nothing to fear'.

### **J: Litter bins & Dog fouling**

This is an increasing problem and currently a major problem on Tod's Piece (see section 'J'). More bins are required along with polite notices. Again, CCTV systems would act as deterrent and would also help to catch offenders.

The dog fouling problem is not helped by the fact that RCC no longer have a commissioned 'Dog warden' and RCC and Police are reluctant to issue any fines. There is a dog bin outside the Scout Hut which is not ideally suited and would be better placed elsewhere.

- **Action:** More bins are required around town and the main roads. More signs re 'anti dog fouling' from RCC should be made available and posted around town and especially in communal areas/parks.

### **K: Town Hall**

The use of the Town Hall is already documented in the existing NPAG but it is not a building which is very welcoming and can not be used for all the community. It is however, extensively used for private hire and brings most needed income to the Council. It could be used in a better form for Tourist Information.

- **Action:** More discussion needed.

### **Reiterating the need for a survey:**

A survey should be sent to residents for their opinions on:-

- The closure of the Library and the instigation of a mobile Library.
- The installation of CCTV systems on Tod's Piece
- The construction of a disabled access to the Post Office.

Report of this discussion group will be forwarded to the next NPAG Meeting for 20<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

Also enclosed will be a copy of the 'bike rack' proposal.