

Walkergate Ward

FOCUS

Edition 77 - Summer 2010



Serving local communities across Walkergate, Walkerdene, Walkerville, Walker, Eastfield and Daisy Hill

All Year Round

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GREEN MAKE-OVER FOR WAVERDALE

During July, over 200 volunteers spent a day transforming part of the Waverdale site into a wildlife area for everyone to enjoy in the future.

Local Lib Dem councillors **Pauline Allen** (pictured inspecting the plans) and **Peter Allen**, supported by **Dave Besag**, pushed for the crea-

Sir Charles Parsons School on other parts of the site.

The scheme is designed by the Groundwork Trust, with volunteers coming from a range of businesses which are all part of Business in the Community. Local people and school children also got involved on the day.

The work in July is just the start, with the volunteers coming back on a regular basis to continue making improvements.

In the past, much of the area was overgrown and inaccessible. Now new footpaths are being installed and trees and bushes trimmed back to encourage a wide variety of flora and fauna. The area is now accessible by foot from **Fossway** and **Westbourne Avenue** - why not take a walk and check it out?



Volunteers building a new footpath into the Waverdale wildlife area from Westbourne Avenue



tion of the wildlife area as part of the plans to build the new Walker Technology College and

If you would like to get involved in helping with the further work planned for the wildlife area then get in touch with the Focus Team (*contact details over the page*) and we will put you in touch with the project team

Dealing with Speeding Traffic

The Focus Team are continuing to seek action to deal with speeding traffic problems reported to them by local residents across Walkergate.

20 MPH Zones

By early 2011, a statutory 20 mph zone should be in force across Walkerdene - meaning that 20 mph will then be the limit across all residential streets in Walkergate.

Westbourne Avenue

The Focus Team conducted its own survey on residents attitudes to speeding cars on Westbourne Avenue. Whilst most residents thought at least some cars exceeded the speed limit, the majority of residents were against blocking off the street or introducing speed humps. The Focus Team have also got Highways Engineers to do an electronic survey on the street to ensure they have up-to-date information on traffic speeds.

Welbeck Road

Following a request from residents, engineers are working on plans to install a pedestrian refuge on Welbeck Road.



Radar Speed Monitors

The Focus Team are now working on a project with Highways Engineers and the Police to install radar speed signs on the streets most affected by speeding traffic. In particular we are looking to erect these monitors on **Stotts Road**, **Ennerdale Road**, **Welbeck Road**, **Westbourne Avenue** and **Apple-tree Gardens**. These monitors are likely to be permanent, but movable monitors could also be installed on other streets with problems. All these signs would be backed up by regular "speed traps" conducted by the Police.

Local News & Action from across Walkergate

Fire Safety Checks

Following the tragic fatal fire in **Rowantree Road** earlier this year, the Fire Service have asked the Focus Team to promote their free fire safety checks for all residents. Call 0191 444 1121 to arrange a check for your house and stay fire safe.

Eastfield Flats Cleaning

Earlier in the year, Dave Besag took up the problems of poor cleaning in the tower blocks with YHN. He received an apology along with details of the action plan to ensure things improved.

Fossway - Old Fire Station

Work is now underway on site to build bungalows and apartments for people with learning disabilities and their families.

Vauxhall Road - Takeaway

Peter Allen is working with council officers to get the owners of the old takeaway to tidy up the building. Renovation is also planned once the building is sold to new owners.

Benfield Road - Paper Factory

Following a series of fires in the building, the Focus Team are working with Council Officers to get the owners to improve security and also discuss their long-term plans for this site.

Ray Gray Playgroup

Good luck to the new play group that has started at the Ray Gray Centre near **Stotts Road**. The group received a grant for some of the equipment they needed from your local councillors.

No Cold Calling Zone

Pauline Allen and Peter Allen have suggested that the older people's housing development at **Maplewood**, off Benfield Road, is used as a pilot project to prevent unwanted and bogus sales people coming to older residents' doors. If the scheme is successful then we will push for it to be extended to other parts of the Walkergate area.

We will keep you informed of progress on these stories in future editions of Focus.

Focus 77 - The Service and Action Goes On All Year Round



Play Areas Update

Many local kids have spent their summer holidays enjoying the new play equipment installed in the play areas at Swans Field (off **Stotts Road**), Walkerville Park (off **Appletree Gardens**) and **Woodside Avenue**.

Following the report in Focus 76, **Pauline Allen** and **Peter Allen** worked hard with Council officers to get more new swings, slides and climbing frames installed in time for the holidays.

Work at Walkerville Park was delayed until the end of the first week of the holiday but this just built up the anticipation of local youngsters, with a new set of goalposts and a basket ball hoop erected (pictured above) alongside the other new and renovated equipment.

The play area at Swans Field, which included new equipment for younger children, a new fence and seats, was finished just in time for the Eastfield Fun Day in July, which was attended by hundreds of local people.

Many thanks to Newcastle East End Juniors FC and Eastfield Action Group for organising another successful event.

Freeman Hospital - New Bus Route

Nexus are proposing to launch a subsidised bus route next year connecting Walkergate with the Freeman Hospital. The new 3B service would come from Wallsend, up Benfield Road, through High Heaton past Sainsbury's and on to the Freeman Hospital.

The current proposals are for buses to run every 30 minutes between 7am and 6pm, Monday to Saturday. During peak times the service will also continue to the Regent Centre.

This is an improvement on the original proposals but still won't help hospital visitors on an evening or Sundays.

Local Lib Dem councillors will continue to press for more timetable improvements and we'll let you know the outcome in Focus.

Older People's Information Website

Want information on services like home hairdressing or care alarms; reliable trades people like plumbers or builders; or advice on sheltered accommodation? Then try this website - ask at the library if you don't have a computer.

www.informationnow.org.uk

Council Protects Services Following Cuts to Funding

There will be no cuts in front line services this year despite the Council losing £9.9 million of funding as the new Government starts to reduce the national budget deficit.

The Council was able to deal with the drop in funding by using one-off savings it had already made and using contingencies and reserves it had put aside in anticipation of potential reductions. It also re-phased some capital projects to maintain spending this year.

Cllr Peter Allen, who leads the finance team, said "by concentrating on making the Council more efficient in recent years we have been able to deal with this drop in cash. Funding is likely to fall over the next few years but we will continue to work hard to protect services for local people."

Free Swimming to Continue

- **Free sessions for under 18s**
- **Parents can join in as well**
- **Free sessions for over 60s**

Following the axing of the national free swimming scheme, the Council has launched a revised free programme for all the city's pools.

Each pool is offering a series of convenient sessions, such as after school for youngsters. Unlike the national scheme, all young people under 18 can join in, not just under 16s, provided they get a free Fusion Card.

Parents and grand parents will also be able to join their children in the pool during these sessions without charge.

A range of free swimming sessions are also being offered for the over 60s.

Kids can also use their Fusion cards to access other free and subsidised sports sessions in the Council's Leisure Centres.

Cllr Pauline Allen, who launched the Fusion scheme, said: "Exercise is good for us all, so that's why we have chosen to continue to offer free swimming and other sports to young and old."

Contact the pool or sports centre for details.

Council Tax Freeze for 2011/12

Council Tax rates for Newcastle are likely to be frozen next year following the Coalition Government's announcement that it will fund the difference, provided councils keep proposed tax rises low.

The final decision will be taken in February 2011, but this will be the 7th year in a row that the Lib Dems in Newcastle have kept their promise to keep Council Tax rises below inflation, unlike the above inflation rises year after year when Labour ran the Council before 2004.

What the Papers are not saying

Some of the stories about the new coalition government and Labour's record that have not been well reported.

We were deep in a pit of debt and still digging

Peter Mandelson on Labour's mis-management of the national debt

Pensions link to earnings restored from April 2011 by new Government

The Liberal Democrats make good on the promise Labour failed to keep

Budget takes 880,000 low earners out of income tax

The Liberal Democrats start to deliver on their commitment to stop low earners paying Income Tax

Planning News

Cllr Peter Allen has met with managers from ASDA who want to convert the old Woolworth's store at the Newcastle Retail Park (near old Shields Road in Byker) into a supermarket. He expressed strong concerns about the road junctions into the site off **Shields Road** and **Fossway**, as well as plans to build a delivery entrance into the store off **Millers Road**.

Cllr Pauline Allen is supporting the planning decision to stop the conversion of the florists on **Shields Road**, near Walkergate Metro Station, into a takeaway due to traffic concerns.

Down on the Tyne, work is underway at Shepherd Offshore to strengthen the quayside so that the wind turbine blades built in the new factory can be loaded onto boats for transfer.

Getting in Touch

To contact the Walkergate Liberal Democrats Focus Team if you have a problem or issue:

Telephone: (0191) 263 5947

Write to: Liberal Democrats Focus Team, 45 Laburnum Avenue, Walkerville, Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 4PP.

Email: focus@walkergatelibdems.org.uk

Surgeries: The Focus Team hold surgeries at Walkergate Primary School, Sutton Street, on the first Saturday of every month, except in August and over Bank Holiday weekends, from 11 am to 12 noon.

Fiona Hall MEP:

Telephone: (0191) 383 0119

Email: fiona@fionahallmep.co.uk

Wendy Taylor - Newcastle East

Parliamentary Spokesperson:

Telephone: (0191) 281 7018

Email: wendy.taylor@newcastle-libdems.org.uk

Can you help the Focus Team?

Please get in touch if you would like to help your local Liberal Democrats Focus Team by delivering Focus in your street.

Tell us what you think!

Please use this form to tell us about any problems or issues there may be in our area. We'll do what we can to help.



Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____

Email: _____

Return to:

Liberal Democrats Focus Team

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