

# Election result in North Jesmond ward

In a very close contest, Gerry Keating (right) was elected as a Liberal Democrat councillor for North Jesmond ward on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, along with two of the Labour candidates.

**David Besag** and **Crispin Welby** just missed out. The official aggregate result was Labour 43%, Liberal Democrats 39%, Conservatives 14%, and Green - with only one candidate – 5% We thank all of our supporters who turned out in such numbers.



On North Jesmond ward

From Gerry Keating  
and your local  
Liberal Democrats

Summer 2018

## GERRY REPORTS BACK

**“Streets for People”** : Initial evidence indicates that the Council has listened to consultees, and that some of the very controversial proposals, such as making Forsyth Road one way, closing Haldane Bridge to cars, and unnecessarily duplicating provision for cyclists in the Moorfield area, will *not* go ahead.

**Refuse issues** : Many of the perennial refuse problems linked to the departure of tenants are again present in Jesmond. Having visited every back lane and front street in the terraced areas, we are sure that the most challenging streets are those with large H.M.O.s, inadequate bin capacity, and a simple failure to enforce good practice, such as not bringing bins in after collection, and not using blue bins for general waste. Any solution must start with these and related issues.

## Extension of waiting restrictions: north end of Osborne Road

The Council is proposing to extend the double yellow lines to stop cars – usually about ten in number – from parking on the carriageway and pavement here. Disabled drivers will not be affected. We support this in principle, but have expressed concerns that this will intensify parking in the Conservation Areas, even though parking permits in Lyndhurst Avenue will be available.

We are pressing for more **parking surveys** in the early autumn in the **Adderstone Crescent** and **North Jesmond Avenue** areas, since it is obvious that more non-residential traffic is parking there.

**The Hoppings** : We thank the Police for their highly visible presence in the Highbury area, also the local residents – and eventually the Council – for removing much of the litter overnight. The good weather helped in all sorts of ways. But police reports of a spate of car thefts from those visiting the Town Moor were worrying, especially as they stated that 90% of them were from cars left unlocked.



## CRISPIN'S CORNER

“Residents will know that Barclays Bank on Acorn Road is due to close this August (10th). Barclays have their own reasons and we understand that the way banking is changing requires this private sector firm to change with the times. It does not say much for those who have stayed loyal to them over many years. I'm not one of them. They made me think that my modest Euro account was as complicated - and unwanted - as a drunk at a tee-total meeting So what do people with disabilities do now? And local traders with cash to deposit nightly?”

Through contacts in the banking world I have discovered a London -based bank currently without a presence in the North East and asked them to consider taking over the site. They are studying it and are visiting the area imminently. If this falls flat I will search for another possible outlet. Meanwhile keep putting it under the mattress. This can't be right. The banks in the City centre seem pretty competitive when it comes to opening for new business (when your type of banking suits what they want to do with you) so until I can find an alternative - best not to be over-optimistic - good luck.”

Crispin Welby  
writes:



## Planning rules and applications

David Besag writes: “Much of North Jesmond ward is situated in Conservation Areas, where the bases of planning decisions are not only National Planning Guidance and the Council’s statutory plan, but also the requirement that development must preserve and/or enhance the character and/or appearance of the Conservation Area. Two recent important applications relate to alterations at St. George’s Church Hall after a previous application was withdrawn. This application will probably be determined by Planning Committee. Other relatively minor applications are dealt with by officers of the Council.”

Gerry Keating is a member of Planning Committee, which restricts, but does not prevent, his capacity to formally comment on planning applications.

However, he has formally objected to the application for the Jesmond Exchange/**Manor Court** block (former Telephone Exchange by Jesmond Gardens) to remove the condition which enforced fixed and occluded windows.



## Parks and Allotments - Latest news on the Council’s plan to hand them over to an independent trust

Well, actually, there is no news. The Council can’t find anyone to chair the Trust that will manage our parks and allotments.. So we don’t know who will be accountable nor what their plans will be. The Chronicle recently reported “Council bosses have yet to appoint a chair for the Newcastle Parks Charitable Trust’s board, more than three months after the top job was advertised. It has now been revealed that a headhunter (at a cost of £18,000) has been appointed to recruit a chair, as well as a chief executive, for the trust - which will control 32 parks and more than 60 allotment sites in the city. A £10,000 salary could also be offered as an incentive for the chair’s role, which was meant to be a volunteer position. The chief executive will be paid around £75,000 plus pension”

### OUR VIEW

- Management by a Trust will remove essential democratic accountability for our green spaces;
  - This loss of accountability could lead to over-commercialisation of parks;
- The thinking around the Trust is based on many dubious assumptions and unrealistic financial projections; and none of the income opportunities identified actually require the formation of a Trust.
- Other Councils who have considered the Parks' Trust model have abandoned the idea.

Gerry says: “The council is spending a staggering initial £9.5 million to set up the trust - can it ever be self-sustaining? Remember, the Council has made millions from selling off the Jesmond Dene nursery site but refuses to use any of that windfall to help maintain local parks and green spaces, as Lib Dems proposed.



The whole thing is a farce, and park users and allotment holders across the city are understandably concerned at what might happen when this risky idea is implemented.”

Meanwhile, we thank the Friends of Jesmond Dene, and volunteers at Exhibition and Brandling Parks and elsewhere for their dedication to keeping our green spaces well looked-after - you can read the minute of the *Friends of Jesmond Dene* here:  
<http://www.jesmondene.org.uk/agm-minutes-from-18th-may-2018/>

**Contact with Envirocall** Gerry has received many complaints about the failure of Envirocall to even answer the phone. There is an efficient hotline for councillors, so please contact Gerry if you need help with an environmental issue.

**How to Get in Touch - Surgery** 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of every month, 10.00 a.m., Jesmond Library, St George’s Terrace. No appointment needed - just call in if you have an issue or concern to air.

Or contact Gerry directly at: [gerry.keating@newcastle-libdems.org.uk](mailto:gerry.keating@newcastle-libdems.org.uk)  
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