

# FOCUS

## On Ouseburn Ward

Edition 37: Spring 2011 ~ Edited by Gareth Cooper

Delivered free to Shieldfield, Battlefield, West Heaton and the Quayside

### GREEN DAY in Ouseburn

Saturday 19th March 10:00–2:00  
at Ouseburn Community Centre

Bring unwanted stuff to swap!  
Learn more about green living ...  
Bikes, Bats & Recycled Computers

See overleaf for more details!

# Council Tax Frozen

## A Fair Budget for Tough Times

- ◆ Lib Dems Keep Council Tax Promise for 7th Year Running
- ◆ Labour Shambles Would See £8m Rise

The Lib Dem run council has announced that it intends to freeze council tax next year to help Newcastle residents. Because of the work we have done in previous years sorting out the council's finances, there will not be huge cuts to services such as those announced by Labour run councils like Liverpool and Manchester. Our positive budget will continue to:

- Maintain free weekly bin, fortnightly recycling and garden waste collections
- Keep open all 18 libraries across the city
- Keep open all 7 leisure centres and 5 swimming pools
- Protect local neighbourhood response teams who tackle litter, graffiti and fly tipping
- Maintain the night-time noise service 7 days a week
- Protect Children's Centres so that kids get a good start in life
- Maintain care for the vulnerable and elderly at the same level

The council will lose 660 mainly backroom jobs, and there will be increased charges on bulky rubbish collection, car parking and some social care (based on ability to pay).

For yet another year, Newcastle Labour Party failed to produce any alternative budget. In a shambolic Budget debate in early March, they verbally proposed a series of half-baked measures which would cost a typical Band D home an extra £102.56 a year, or almost 7% more.

It's no wonder that Labour councillors do not want anyone to examine their plans. And yet they are now crowing publicly that they will be taking back control of "their" city soon!

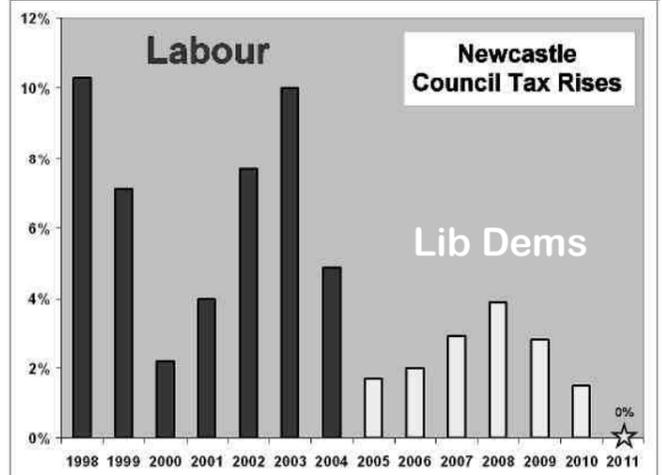
Gareth Cooper said: "Labour under Gordon Brown botched the national economy by spinning us into overwhelming public debt. Newcastle Labour mismanaged the Council's finances until 2004, with Council Tax rises of twice the rate of inflation. They are totally incompetent financially, and it would be a disaster for Newcastle's hard-pressed residents if they got back into power in our city. And yet they arrogantly seem to assume this will happen. We hope that voters will choose the Liberal Democrats, a party which has delivered what it promised here: a well-run, efficient Council which is cleaner, greener and fairer."

### Social Club to become Hall of Residence and Mini-Mart?

Shieldfield Social Club have decided to demolish their building and erect a 100-bed student hall. A smaller Club and a mini-market would also be included on-site. Your Lib Dem Team have been listening to local residents' views, and have been asked to present a petition opposing the proposal.

Stephen Psallidas commented: "Some residents have told us that they would welcome refurbished premises for the Club, along with improved shopping choice. Many others are concerned about the continuing increase in student halls in the neighbourhood, and potential competition for Wretham Place shops. We will be presenting the petition to Council in April."

Plans have been on display at the Club for some weeks. Residents should submit their views in writing to the Planning Department by 28th March or by calling 0191 2115631.



### Alerting Drivers to Speed Danger

Your Lib Dem councillors have received concerns from residents over the years about traffic speeds in the ward. FOCUS readers will know that most of the ward is now covered by enforceable 20mph zones.

In a further step, we have now bought a 'flashing warning sign' to alert drivers to excessive speeds. The sign is re-locatable, and we have used your feedback to identify 6 initial locations to put the sign (see below). It should be on our streets by summer. Let us know your suggestions for any other places you would like to see the sign!

Suggested locations: **Crawhall Rd, Melbourne St, Howard St, Shield St, Warwick St, Heaton Park Rd, Stratford Rd Bank.**



Gareth Cooper standing alongside a radar operated speed information sign.



Gareth Kane pitched in with volunteers to help at the March litter-pick organised by Ouseburn Farm.

### Spring Cleans and Heaton Park Update

Work continues on the massive lottery-funded project to improve Jesmond Dene, Armstrong Park and Heaton Park. "We're very excited about this development" said Cllr Gareth Kane, who met the National Lottery judges to help make the case for the funding, "there are lots of fascinating monuments in the parks like the windmill and King John's Palace. The new paths and fences will make them and the surrounding area much more accessible and inviting."

As part of the funding, we are getting more park keepers, whose duties will include keeping the banks of the Ouseburn river itself clear of fly-tipping and litter.

We have raised the issue of standards of cleansing further down the Ouseburn Valley after being copied into several complaints. They highlighted fly-tipping in the area with broken glass often found along some of the footpaths. We are investigating the possibility of offenders from the Community Payback scheme litter-picking the area on a weekly basis and we are also hoping to lend extra support to the volunteer clean-ups organised regularly from Ouseburn Farm.

Finally Your Homes Newcastle has started to organise community clean-up days in Shieldfield, the first of which was in early March around the tower blocks. Why not join in the next one?

Your Local Lib Dem Team—Making a Difference You Can See!



Gareth is pushing for investigation of a 'Safe Routes to School' project at the front of Christ Church Primary school, where he is a governor.

## Upcoming Events

### Green Day in Ouseburn — all welcome!

This is the first of what we hope will be many community-led green events in the ward. There will be a swap-shop stall where you can bring DVDs, books, children's toys and other items you think others can find a use for. Acorn Computer Recycling will be there to accept your old PC parts and put them back to work.

The Bat Conservation Trust will be running bat craft sessions and you can win a £50 voucher for Recyke y' Bike who will be there with their popular Dr Bike health checks.

For more information about the Green Day or to take part please contact the Ouseburn Ward Coordinator Cass Winlow on 0191 277 3635 or email [cass.winlow@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:cass.winlow@newcastle.gov.uk)

### Street Party at St Ann's

St Ann's Community Association are planning a Royal Wedding street party on 29th April. Your councillors are happy to support this event with ward grant aid. Please contact Beverley Rees on 0191 230 1859, for more details.

*If your community group would like small-scale funding for an event, some equipment purchase, or other support, please contact our ward coordinator Cass Winlow (see above for details).*

### Ouseburn Festival – Can you help?

The Ouseburn Festival is at risk unless enough committed volunteers come forward to offer their time well in advance of the day. If you are interested please contact Dave Cross on 07831 267 941 or by email [dx@newcastle.uk.net](mailto:dx@newcastle.uk.net)



**Tell us what you think and Make a Difference!**

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Please return with your details to:

**Gareth Cooper**, 119 Whitefield Tce, NE6 5SS  
 email: [ouseburn@newcastle-libdems.org.uk](mailto:ouseburn@newcastle-libdems.org.uk)

The Liberal Democrats and their elected representatives may use the information you've given to contact you. You can opt out of communications any time by contacting us.

## St Ann's Tragedy

In February the Evening Chronicle reported the drug-related death of a homeless person in St Ann's churchyard, using lurid headlines.

Your councillors had already been alerted to this incident but unable to comment publicly. Cllr Gareth Cooper sits on the local Safe Neighbourhoods panel and had been working with the various agencies to investigate what had happened, and any lessons to be learned.

Gareth commented: "This is a regrettable but very isolated incident. St Ann's is generally a safe and stable area - newspaper sensationalism is unacceptable."

We have supported the local vicar Father Allan Marks, who complained to the Chronicle and has received an apology from the Editor.



## Do you need a Minibus?

Caring Hands in Shieldfield has a 16-seater minibus available for hire at very fair rates. Please contact 0191 2615234 for details.

## Local News and Diary Shorts

**Network Rail** are carrying out major maintenance to the Byker Railway Bridge in the coming months. Residents may notice a works compound being set up at the bottom end of South View West. As there may be some disruption and extra traffic in the area, your local councillors have negotiated that Network Rail will contribute to both an improved new riding arena for **Stepney Bank Stables**, and also our planned new **allotment site on the City Stadium**. Stephen Psallidas commented: "This shows good working between the Council and external agencies like Network Rail, to get a project of benefit to both parties."

With matched funding from YHN we are installing two new street lights on the dark footpath running alongside **Shield Court**, from Barker Street to Portland Street.

**Harrison Place** residents asked if we could fit new grit bin at the end closest to Sandyford Rd and the bin should be in place soon. We have also approved a new litter bin for the seating area in **Henry Square**.

A quick update on the locations of 21 council homes in the ward which are being fitted with solar photo-voltaic panels—these will be on **Copland Terrace** and the **Miltons estate**.

The new **Students in Newcastle Forum** met last month. It will discuss student housing, welfare, community safety and noise issues—Cllr Gareth Kane is Ouseburn's representative.

Our **Kittiwakes** have been getting some media attention after appearing in a report looking at the future of the Quayside. There are no plans to move them from their Tyne Bridge home.



## U Decided!

Gareth Cooper shown with residents who have been taking part in the successful **Shieldfield Green U-Decide Project**.

Residents voted to have 'traditional' style outdoor furniture for the new park, and later in the year there will be a voting exercise for residents to say what extra services or features they would like. Subject to resolving a land issue with the St Mary Magdalene Trust, works should start in the summer.

In February, the project reached the finals of the Chronicle's Environment awards. Congratulations to all involved!

## MUGA Update

Meanwhile, plans are being finalised for the 'MUGA' outdoor games area for young people on Napier Street. Planning permission is due to be submitted shortly.

## Trees, Please!

We received some concerns from residents about the loss of five trees from the ex-Napier House site. Cllr Gareth Cooper had already complained to developers YHN and also to the Planning Committee about this and as a result there will be five new pear trees installed at locations around Shieldfield in due course.

## Blagdon Quad Parking Ditched

Gareth Cooper's swift action at Blagdon Close ensured that the green area in the 'quadrangle' was saved from being tarmacked for car parking. After calls from concerned residents, he demanded an immediate cancellation of this action by Your Homes Newcastle.

Gareth (pictured) said: "This scheme had no consultation with residents or councillors. YHN have assured residents that they will properly consult in future. In fact, far from removing it, we have identified extra funding to improve the play area, and will be consulting residents soon."

