

PEOPLE POWER!

Thank you! YOUR support for our back-lane dumping petition succeeds in spurring the Council into action



Local Liberal Democrat Councillor Stephen Psallidas (left) and Lib Dem Focus editor Stephen Howse with the petition of over 230 local residents calling on action for the back lanes

Your Lib Dem team would like to thank everybody who signed our petition calling on the Council to act on back lane dumping. Local Lib Dem Cllr Stephen Psallidas formally presented it to the October meeting of Council. We also sent senior Councillors and Council Officers the following three point action plan - and the petition seems to have triggered some action - at long last!

1. Put in place a student house clear out scheme

Many other University Cities have a scheme to help students clear out their houses at the end of the year to stop the problem at source. Cllr Gareth Kane has been asking the 'Students in Newcastle Forum' to work up such a scheme for Newcastle for 18 months but the Labour Chair of the Forum, Joyce McCarty, refused to allow it on the agenda. Now the penny has dropped, Cllr McCarty has agreed to discuss the issue at the February 2015 meeting.

2. Crackdown on landlords

We asked the Council to get tough with landlords who dump material they find left behind in student houses in the back lanes. The Council has told us they will start using 'civil recovery' measures to fine errant landlords. This is a step forward, but we also need to make sure the threat is communicated properly.

3. Put 'no dumping' signs in the lanes

Initially the Labour Councillor in charge of street cleanliness, Hazel Stephenson, told us bluntly that signs "wouldn't work." However you may have noticed in their rather panicky recent leaflet that Labour are now promising "visuals in particular neighbourhoods" - if this means signs for our area, then we welcome this U-turn as a victory for common sense.



Action, not words: Lib Dems Gareth Kane and Stephen Howse inspecting the mess in back lanes over the summer.



Wendy Taylor for Parliament!

We are delighted to announce your local Lib Dem candidate for the Westminster elections in May will be Dr Wendy Taylor (pictured above in Shieldfield with Stephen Howse and Stephen Psallidas).

Wendy has been a councillor for Dene Ward for 26 years and is a highly respected cancer doctor. She lives in High Heaton with her husband and has two grown up children.

Many residents will have met Wendy during last year's local elections when she helped with Gareth Kane's successful re-election. She's certainly been seen in the area far more than sitting Labour MP Nick Brown!

Heaton Park Road improvement scheme descends into farce

For months local residents, councillors and representatives of Sustrans have been working on the DIY Streets scheme to revitalise Heaton Park Road. Now, just as plans are being published, the Council has informed us that they won't be funding the proposals out of the £6.7m the Government gave them to promote cycling after all.

"This is a kick in the teeth for all the residents who gave their time and effort to take part," commented Gareth "We're trying to rescue the situation, but we are told the money has been promised to South Heaton."

One piece of good news is that the proposed zebra crossing on Heaton Park Road is progressing as it was proposed separately by your Lib Dem team before the DIY Streets plans came forward.



Gareth Kane at the location of the proposed zebra crossing on Heaton Park Road

City Stadium Revamp Progresses

We are delighted with the progress on the City Stadium cycle/pedestrian path. The plans for this were developed by your Lib Dem councillors following extensive consultation with residents back in 2010. The 'dual carriageway' has been completed and the exercise equipment installed. We are waiting for the bollards to be replaced at each end.

After comments from residents, Stephen Psallidas got extra cycle stencils put on the cycle side. We have also asked for the pedestrian side to be sealed properly as bald patches have appeared in the fine gravel.

Following some incidents on the Stadium, Stephen Psallidas proposed and helped to arrange funding for a CCTV camera near the Hotspur St end. This will be installed soon. He has also had some of the undergrowth cut back in this area to improve visibility.



Stephen Psallidas and Stephen Howse with the exercise equipment which has been installed on the City Stadium.



Action: Many residents have been having problems with the new intercom system at St Ann's Close. Stephen Psallidas has asked YHN to sort it out as soon as possible.



Stephen Psallidas and Stephen Howse on Stratford Grove West where parking pressures have become intense.

Heaton Parking Progress

For many years residents have been complaining about parking pressures on Stratford Grove West/Terrace. This year, they have been joined by residents of lower Hotspur Street and lower Mowbray Street. We have arranged a consultation on a parking permit scheme in these three streets.

"A previous consultation on parking permits for the whole 'Stratfords' area led to stalemate as the residents at the eastern end didn't want a scheme, but pressures at the west end are intense." said Cllr Stephen Psallidas "So we decided to alter the consultation area to cover the worst hit areas only. **We would urge residents in these streets to support a permit scheme** as it is the only practical way to manage the parking situation."

Stepney Bank Progress

Unlike the Heaton Park Road project (see front page), the DIY Streets project to improve pedestrian and cycle access on Stepney Bank is progressing well. During a trial layout, users welcomed the increased space for pedestrians and cyclists, but indicated they didn't want to restrict the road to one-way motor traffic. The next iteration of the plans is now being worked up.



Action: At the request of Shieldfield House Residents' Committee, Gareth Kane got these barriers installed to dissuade cyclists from taking a short cut across the door and putting residents at risk.



Action: Stephen Psallidas got these double yellow lines re-painted at Cox Chare on the Quayside to try to stop fly-parking around the Law Courts.

News Shorts

Stephen Psallidas has been tidying up a few loose ends on the Shieldfield Green refurbishment. He has requested improved lighting, inspection of the paths surfacing and getting a redundant path removed.

The newly reformed Shieldfield Forum is looking at a number of issues in the neighbourhood including football coaching for local kids in the games area and regular tidy-ups. Contact us if you want to take part.

The Council sold the ex-Sinfonia Centre in Jesmond Vale some months ago - the new owners have now closed the car park to the public which may exacerbate parking problems in the Stratfords area (see below left).

After thieves stole a swing in Heaton Park, Gareth got it replaced. Apparently this has been a problem in the West End, so if you see any suspicious activity, please report it.

Gareth has been pressing the Labour administration at the Council to respond better when residents tidy up litter on their own initiative. The Council tried to charge one Ouseburn resident a fee to collect the bags of litter she had collected from her street.

YHN is planning to remodel Shield Court sheltered accommodation in Shieldfield to make the flats bigger. We've been asking YHN to ensure all residents who want to return after the work will be able to.

We're still trying to get progress on the allotments on the City Stadium - it is taking far too long to get residents onto the plots.

We're also still waiting for the extended parking schemes at the St Ann's 'open garages', Shieldfield House and under Clarence House to be implemented. It is over 3 years since Gareth and Stephen Psallidas arranged for these loopholes to be closed.

Gareth is trying to get a right of way issue around Mariners Wharf on the Quayside sorted out. It appears Hadrian's Way has been routed over private land sometime in the past.

Your Lib Dem team are opposing the conversion of offices in Melbourne House into student accommodation.

Despite attempts by Labour councillors to impose 'communal bins' on residents without consultation, Newcastle Lib Dems have ensured that a full consultation will take place, starting in January for Ouseburn Ward.

Contact your local Lib Dem Team:

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