

# NEWS IN BRIEF FROM ACROSS PARKLANDS WARD



**Brunton Park Flood Works Restart**  
Pauline Allen and Robin Ashby (pictured) report that Northumbrian Water are due to restart work on the Brunton Park flood alleviation scheme on 29 March.

The works will include creation of the new Ouseburn channel, building of new flood defence embankments and walls, diversion of surface water outfalls and excavation of the sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS) water basin. The area will then be landscaped and reinstated, with the play park back in use in time for the school summer holidays. Details on the scheme are available from: [www.bruntonparkfloodalleviation.co.uk](http://www.bruntonparkfloodalleviation.co.uk)

## Melbury Adoption Latest News

The Focus Team recently delivered a special Focus leaflet to houses across Melbury giving an update on progress on adoption of the estate by the Council.

In December, the Parklands Ward Committee were told that the Council and the Consortium had agreed to work towards full adoption within 2 years. To keep up to date on progress sign up for Gosforth eFocus (details below).



**Gosforth Library Petition - Update**  
Gosforth's Lib Dem councillors have collected hundreds of signatures protesting against the cut in hours at the Library (Cllr Pauline Allen pictured here with Cllr Nick Cott). The petition will be presented at the next Council meeting, with a call for the Council to work with local volunteers to help maintain this vital service.

## Bridge Camera - Council Response

Council Officers have told the Focus Team that the bridge camera signs on Brunton Lane are legal. We have asked them to warn drivers earlier that there is no through road for most cars & lorries. We have also asked the Highways Agency to modify signs on the A1 about Great Park access.



## Gosforth eFOCUS

Do you want extra news from us?

The Gosforth-wide eFocus brings you up-to-the-minute news and views from your nine Gosforth Lib Dem Cllrs. To subscribe for free send your email address to:

[gosforth.efocus@gmail.com](mailto:gosforth.efocus@gmail.com)

### CONTACTING THE PARKLANDS FOCUS TEAM

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[www.newcastle-libdems.org.uk/en/page/parklands-ward](http://www.newcastle-libdems.org.uk/en/page/parklands-ward)  
Surgeries :  
Gosforth High Street - 1st Saturday of month 10 - 11 am  
Gosforth Library - 1st Saturday of month 11:30 - 12 noon

**Could you help the Parklands Focus Team?**  
Your regular Parklands Ward FOCUS newsletter is written, produced and delivered by voluntary effort. Could you spare a few hours each month to help? Contact Cllr Pauline Allen (details above) if you would like to get involved.

**WORKING TOGETHER FOR PARKLANDS**

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# Parklands Ward FOCUS

Serving Brunton Park, Grange Estate, Great Park, Halls Estate, Melton Park, Great North Road & Whitebridge Park for over 40 Years  
Edited by Cllr Pauline Allen  
Volume 42 No. 4 - Early Spring 2016



- Campaign started after Council tries to close service road entrance without consulting residents on the revised cycle lane plan for the Great North Road
- Concerns expressed that the revised plan would make the cycle lane more dangerous and residents would not be able to park outside their homes

Local residents and the Parklands Focus Team have combined forces to oppose parts of the Council's revised plan for the Great North Road cycle path between Broadway and Brunton Lane.

Back in November 2015, the Council asked for views on their cycle lane plan, including moving the access to the service road from the roundabout at Polwarth Drive a few yards further north up the Great North Road. This was seen as dangerous, with some cars slowing for the junction just as others accelerated off the roundabout.

The Council has now decided ask for Traffic Regulation Orders without asking for views on their revised plan. These orders will close the entrance to the service road at the roundabout, forcing all traffic to use Polwarth Road instead, whilst opening the service road to two-way traffic between Polwarth Drive and Norwood Avenue, with parking restrictions outside residents' homes.

The plan means cyclists would have to share the space on the service road with two-way traffic, with more cars using residential streets in Brunton Park and more pressure on on-street parking.

Pauline Allen, Robin Ashby and David Down have joined with residents, many of whom support the idea of a safe cycle way, to call on the Council to think again. A petition will be presented to the next Council meeting and a formal question will be asked at the same meeting.

Residents from Greystoke Park are also raising other concerns about the plan between Broadway and Polwarth Drive.

Pauline Allen has also written to the Council's Highways Chief to raise the residents' concerns and to ask him to rethink, saying: "The Council needs to listen to concerns and develop a plan that is safe for cyclists, pedestrians, and car users that also respects residents' needs."

**Liberal Democrats - Action All Year Round**



## Grants Awarded to Local Groups

Over the last year, the Parklands Ward Committee, headed by **Cllr Pauline Allen**, **Cllr David Down** and **Cllr Robin Ashby** have awarded over £20,000 in grants to support local groups active in our area. Brunton Park Scout Group was one recipient (Robin and Pauline are pictured above by the Scout Hut). Other grants have included awards to Gosforth Central Bowling Club, the Great Park Community Centre, Three Mile Allotments Association, Brunton Park Indoor Bowls Club, the Natural History Society of Northumbria (Gosforth Nature Reserve), Semitones and Citizens Advice Newcastle.

However, cuts imposed by the Labour-controlled City Council will see the Parklands' grants budget slashed to £5,000 from April. The budgets for many Labour-controlled wards are largely untouched - despite Parklands residents paying more Council Tax than anywhere else in the City. Council bosses also want to cut the number of ward meetings per year to one - so much for Labour's claim to be a "Listening Council".

## School Safety - Ela says...



She may only be seven, but Pauline's grand daughter **Ela**, is clearly a "chip off the old block". Whilst visiting Newcastle she was keen to discuss road safety and to check out how local youngsters get to school. So **Ela** "arranged" a quick tour with Parklands' councillors **Robin Ashby** and **Pauline Allen** (pictured above). After the tour, she then asked that a message go into the next Parklands FOCUS to remind drivers to take extra care around schools - so here it is!

## Turning a Deaf Ear?

At February's Council meeting, **Cllr Pauline Allen** raised the problems experienced by local residents who find it difficult to use the Council's automated telephone system due to poor hearing. The Labour Cabinet Member responsible for customer service was unable to answer Pauline's question but promised to respond later.

Despite Pauline raising the issue again at March's Council meeting, writing an email to Cllr Stockdale and even writing an open letter to *The Chronicle*, she is yet to get a reply from him.

Pauline will continue to call for a response and get action to address the problem. In the meantime, if you have problems with the automated telephone system just keep saying "operator". Eventually, you should get a real person to respond to your call.



## Budget Cuts & Council Tax Hike

At the March Council meeting, Newcastle's Labour councillors used their majority to raise Council Tax by 3.95% and to impose cuts on support for vulnerable older people & children; reduce opening hours at the remaining council-run libraries, including Gosforth Library; withdraw the handyman service for older people; stop neighbourhood-based street cleaning and slash grant funds for ward committees in more affluent areas, like Parklands (see the story above left on impact).

Liberal Democrat councillors outlined a range of ways in which other savings could have been made including by reducing bureaucracy, cutting senior manager posts and becoming as efficient as other councils on things like energy saving. But these suggestions were rejected by Labour councillors intent on blaming "Government cuts".

Speaking in the budget debate, **Cllr Pauline Allen** pointed out the impact of Labour's cuts and Council Tax hike on residents across Parklands. She said: "Everyone knows that there isn't a lot of money around at present but continually blaming the Government instead of working out ways to run services for the benefit of all residents won't get any of us anywhere."

## Is Now the Time for a Gosforth Town Council?

Many local residents tell us that the City Council ignores their views and does not deliver the services they want. So **Cllr Pauline Allen**, along with her Lib Dem colleagues, kicks off a debate about creating a Gosforth Town Council.

The northern parts of Parklands Ward are covered by North Gosforth Parish Council (Melton Park, Brunton Park and Great Park, east of the A1). But Grange, Halls Estate, much of the Great North Road and Whitebridge Park are not. So should they join the rest of Gosforth to create a town council, to work alongside the existing North Gosforth Parish Council?

**Pauline Allen** says: "Decisions are already being made by the City Council, which local people have not voted for and do not support. More accountability to local residents in Gosforth is needed and more decisions need to be made by people who live in, and represent, the area. We think a town council may be a step that can secure better governance and more accountability for the future."

### What Is A Town Council?

A town council is an elected body, made up of people who live in the local area. Town councillors don't get paid, so give their time voluntarily. Town councils are funded through an additional charge on the Council Tax, normally of around £10 to £50 per household annually, depending on the powers of the council and the ability of residents to pay. This charge typically pays for funding of initiatives such as environmental improvements, grants to businesses and community groups. A town council could also take over funding of 'non-statutory' services that have been cut in Newcastle (like Gosforth Library?), which the local community want to retain.



**Cllr Pauline Allen & Cllr David Down** take a look at planters soon to be looked after by North Gosforth Parish Council.

Commenting on the Town Council's role **Pauline** says: "Importantly, money raised by a town council would be spent on services in Gosforth. This is like North Gosforth Parish Council, which raises £12,000 per year to spend locally on things like grass mowing (and picking up the cuttings afterwards) and floral displays."



**Dominic Raymont** (East Gosforth), **Cllr Pauline Allen** (Parklands) & **Cllr Nick Cott** (West Gosforth) at Gosforth Central Park which could be supported by a new Gosforth Town Council.

### Working Together - A Voice for Gosforth

Finally, **Pauline** says: "What's more, a town council would give Gosforth another voice. Town councillors would all be local people, they would be in touch with issues of concern. This is particularly important when the City Council is reducing support for the local community.

"A town council could help to consolidate and expand pride in the local community. It could bring people together by developing relationships with communities of interest, such as religious organisations, local businesses, the Friends of Gosforth Central Park, and the SPACE for Gosforth group.

"Many residents, who remember when Gosforth used to have its own Council, before 1974, say that the community was much better catered for, and the idea was well received when it was raised at the recent Parklands Ward Committee."

### What Are The Next Steps?

Liberal Democrat councillors across Gosforth are keen to consult with local residents about the issues involved and identify whether or not the idea has support. Ultimately, a petition would have to be raised of about 10% of all registered electors in the area before the city council is obliged to consider the idea and how it could be implemented.

If you would like to know more about the idea for a Gosforth Town Council then a longer version of this article is available in the latest Gosforth eFocus (see the back of this leaflet for details of how to sign up).

**Cllr Pauline Allen** and the rest of the *Parklands Focus Team* are also keen to hear your views, both for and against a new town council. You can contact her via phone, email, letter or social media - details are on the back page of this Focus leaflet.