

STOP PRESS ... STOP PRESS ... STOP PRESS

Two Accidents on Great North Road

Just as FOCUS was sent to the printers, **Robin, Pauline & David** heard of two accidents on the **Great North Road**. We immediately met with senior highways engineers at the Council to investigate whether the new road arrangements had had an impact.

This is the message they sent back to us: *"We are aware of the two road traffic collisions that occurred last week on 12 November in the vicinity of Broadway roundabout and on the Great North Road. We have requested detailed information from the Police about these incidents and will provide that information to you when we can."*

"In advance of receiving the information about these collisions I can confirm that before the recent changes to the roundabout there had been 13 reported road traffic collisions in the last five years resulting in 18 casualties (of which 17 were 'slight' and one 'serious'). Of the 18 casualties, six were people on bikes, including the serious injury."

"Admittedly we can only provide you with data on reported collisions. The limitations of the data available is outlined in this report:

<http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/newroadsafety/Library/Vehicle-Specific-Issues/55-Pedal-Cyclists.pdf>". More in the next edition of FOCUS.

Community Speedwatch Scheme

The Police are looking for local volunteers for a speed monitoring scheme to hopefully cover all of Parklands Ward. Working with the Police, the volunteers will use hand-held speed monitors to check car speeds on local roads - though not in their own street.

If you are interested in volunteering contact:

newcastlespeedwatchscheme@northumbria.pnn.police.uk

CONTACTING THE PARKLANDS FOCUS TEAM

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Surgeries :

Gosforth High Street - 1st Saturday of month 10 - 11 am

Gosforth Library - 1st Saturday of month 11:30 - 12 noon

Red House Farm F.C. Planning Application

In the last few days of October the Focus Team received some idea of how the impasse over the football pitches used by Red House Farm Football Club could be resolved.

Decisions by both the Council's Planning Committee and the Council's Leisure Department, who are "landlords", suggest a way forward for both residents and the club.

The Planning Committee approved an artificial pitch with floodlights and 3m fence to surround it. They also gave permission for a 3m fence around a second pitch.

BUT the Council's Leisure Department said it would allow ONLY the artificial pitch to be fenced, NO others - and their decision overrules the planning committee.

AND the Planning Committee added an extra condition that there MUST be a "community use agreement" put in place if the artificial pitch comes about.

This complex outcome has probably left no-one 100% happy. But at least the compromise may be the basis for starting to try to build bridges between the club and the local community.

Councillor Pauline Allen agreed with her colleague from Fawdon Ward, **Councillor Brenda Hindmarsh**, who said: "It's clear that both the Planning Committee and the Leisure Department see the space being one that the Club and local residents should share, on a sensible basis".

It will take some time for the club to see if it can raise the money to fund the artificial pitch so nothing is likely to happen, in a hurry - perhaps even for two or three years.

Following both decisions, **Councillor Robin Ashby**, who addressed the Planning Committee after meeting residents from both wards, said: "The councillors in both Fawdon and Parklands Wards want to express our willingness to help create better relations and end the war of words that has gone on for too long".

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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

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GREAT NORTH ROAD TRAFFIC SCHEME

Reporting back on the issues raised by residents about the roadworks

Around 150 people attended a packed meeting, set up by Parklands' councillors, to ask Council officers about the Great North Road road works.

In addition, Pauline, Robin and David have been in regular contact with officers about problems that have been raised and recently they met the engineers on site to go through further details.

This edition of FOCUS reports back on the officers' responses and latest news.



David & Robin use the new crossing on Broadway East

Protecting the Cycle Lane

A number of residents have asked what the purpose is of the small humps at the edge of the cycle lanes on Great North Road.

The humps are called "orcas" and they are there to segregate the traffic. This helps to protect inexperienced cyclists like children and encourage more people to get cycling.



Pauline and a local resident inspect the cycle lane orcas

Some residents are concerned that the new crossings on **Broadway East** and **Broadway West** are too close to the junction to allow pedestrians to cross these busy roads safely. Over 30,000 vehicles use the junction each day

The engineers sited the crossings based on 'the desire line' of people crossing these roads. They say if the crossings were further away from the junction there is a risk of pedestrians and cyclists shortcutting the crossing and putting themselves in danger. In addition, motorists have a duty to give way to pedestrians at crossings.

Meanwhile, the new light-controlled crossings on **Great North Road** are fitted with the latest technology to sense slower pedestrians and automatically increase the crossing time - so there is no need to rush if you are not as nimble as some.

Access Issues on the Great North Rd

As in the past, double yellow lines prevent parking on **Great North Road**, but vehicles can pick up and drop off adjacent to solid white lines. In addition, the parking rules will be changed to allow cars to stop briefly across the cycle lane between ASDA and Broadway roundabout, provided they are just dropping off or picking up. This is particularly to help residents with mobility problems.

Cyclists are asked to slow down and give way to pedestrians where the cycle lane crosses near bus stops. New green surfaces to mark out cycle crossings have also been laid, but will not come into force until new traffic regulations are released by the Government next year. Until then, cyclists should dismount before crossing.



Robin says take care cycling near bus stops

WORKING TOGETHER FOR PARKLANDS

Liberal Democrats - Action All Year Round



First they said it was £18m, now Labour's Council chiefs have admitted they will borrow £45m to pay for a Civic Centre make over.

As a result, Council Tax payers will be responsible for the repayments, including interest, for the next 25 years.

Opposition Lib Dem councillors have led criticism of the Labour administration's "crass and misguided" priorities, which will see offices refurbished whilst there is no money for libraries, parks, swimming pools, pavements and street cleaning.

Commenting on the proposals, **Cllr Robin Ashby** said: "Labour's claims that they will save £32m with the scheme just don't add up. Instead they have revealed their true priorities for Newcastle, putting plush offices ahead of local services and expecting hard-pressed Council Tax payers to foot the bill."

Sandy Lane - three years of road works

North Tyneside Council has announced a £4.8m project to upgrade junctions on the A1056 Sandy Lane. Work is due to start later this year and is planned to continue, in three stages, until 2018.

The road works come as a result of the new housing and commercial developments within North Tyneside, near to the Weetslade roundabout.

Work has already commenced on a new junction on the A189 for traffic accessing the Wyevale Garden Centre. Once this is completed, the access off the Weetslade roundabout will be closed.

There will be new traffic lights at the entrance to the Sandy Lane Industrial Estate and a widening of Sandy Lane at this point to accommodate turning traffic.

The A1056 Sandy Lane/B1318 Great North Road roundabout will be replaced with a T-junction, and two northbound lanes will be created onto the A1056 Great North Road between Rotary Way and the B1318.

North Tyneside Council claim that journey times will be improved once the scheme is completed - but you may wish to avoid the area if you can during some of the construction period!

Traffic Concerns Near Care Home Site

David Down took up residents' concerns about speeding and inconsiderate parking by vehicles linked to the building site for the Melton Park Care Home.

The main contractor has responded to David to say that they have spoken to all their staff, and contacted all their sub-contractors and suppliers, to remind them of their safety responsibilities and the need to be courteous to local residents.

Chasing the missing footpaths money

Many residents have contacted the Focus Team about the poor state of the footpaths across Parklands Ward.

Despite agreeing with local councillors a list of streets across Parklands Ward of pavements that need relaying, the Council has not started on any of these schemes for more than two years.

When the Lib Dems ran the City, each ward received a budget to tackle their worst streets each year. Labour have now centralised footpath spending and Parklands Ward has lost out along with many other areas.

Across the City, over 600 streets are identified as being in a very poor condition and many more as sub-standard, yet £500,000 from this year's budget remains unspent.

So **Pauline Allen**, **Robin Ashby** and **David Down** joined with fellow Newcastle Lib Dem councillors to highlight the issue in a motion to September's City Council meeting.

However, Labour councillors used their in-built majority in the chamber to vote down the motion. They seem to prefer inaction rather than trying to make our footpaths safer for all pedestrians.

World Cup Joy for Local Youngsters



Pauline Allen and **Robin Ashby** (pictured) were able to bring World Cup excitement to three young rugby players. The Council received complimentary tickets for the Scotland - Samoa game at St James' Park.

Parklands' councillors passed their allocation on to these keen young players, who were chosen by Gosforth Sports Association. Scotland won the game 36-33 in one of the most exciting finishes of the tournament.



New Community Mini Bus

Pauline Allen and fellow Gosforth councillors attended the unveiling of the new Gosforth Community Mini Bus. Diane Packham, a former Parklands councillor and Lord Mayor, also attended the ceremony as she was involved with the campaign to buy the original community mini bus which is used to support local groups across Gosforth.

If you would like to volunteer to drive the new minibus or discuss hiring it for your group, then contact Margaret Gillon at johnmarggillon@aol.com.

Former Newcastle Student Leads Lib Dems' Fightback



Tim Farron, the Liberal Democrats' new Leader on an earlier campaigning visit to Newcastle

Tim Farron, the MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale was elected as the Liberal Democrats' new Leader in July.

Tim is no stranger to Newcastle, or to the Parklands Focus Team, as he studied for his degree at Newcastle University and was an active Lib Dem campaigner whilst he was here during the 1990s. We are looking forward to working with him again.

Gosforth Sports Association

Gosforth Sports Association – the umbrella group for Gosforth Rugby FC and Newcastle City Cricket Club – has moved a step forward with granting of planning permission to enable an improved club house to be created, off street car parking to reduce nuisance on match days, and lights to enable rugby training to take place 2 nights a week in winter. Three rugby pitches will be laid out north-south (posts can already be seen) but the application didn't include any fencing off. Community activities like the annual fireworks display and responsible dog walking will still be welcome.

Coquet Avenue - new parking bays

Your Homes Newcastle have contacted Parklands' councillors to say that they will be improving parking on **Coquet Avenue**. The project was agreed after many residents on the street voted for it as part of YHN's "You've got the power" environmental projects scheme.



The first phase of the flood alleviation scheme undertaken by Northumbrian Water is now complete. The second phase will begin in March 2016 with a re-start of the compound on Lincoln Green and the re-installation of the temporary bridge at Fairway Close.

Phase two of the work will include completing the new Ouseburn channel; the flood defence embankments and walls; the diversion and construction of surface water outfalls and excavation of the sustainable drainage system (SUDS) basin. Once this work has been completed the site will be re-instated and landscaped. The end date we have been given for this work is 18 July 2016.

Northumbrian Water are to work with the Council, local residents, play groups and schools to design the new play area for Lincoln Green. This play area should be in use by May 2016. Anyone seeking more information about the play area should contact the Northumbrian Water customer centre on 0345 717 1100 and ask to speak to Paul Davison, Project Manager for the scheme.