



Working Together to Tackle Litter

Your local councillors, **Robin Ashby**, **Pauline Allen** and **David Down** are pictured above with the litter picking equipment they have purchased for use by local residents' groups to help keep Parklands clean and tidy. The equipment includes litter pickers, gloves, hi-viz jackets and plenty of bin bags. Robin, Pauline and David can also arrange with the Council to take away the litter collected at no charge.

If you are part of a group that would like to do something similar to keep your neighbourhood looking good, then get in touch with the Focus Team - details below.

Whitebridge Park Residents Association

Cllr Robin Ashby has written to all homes across Whitebridge Park inviting them to get involved with reforming the residents' group for the estate.

Robin says: "The intention of the group is to work together to help look after the neighbourhood. Council cutbacks mean that maintenance of the children's play areas are under threat. Other residents have contacted me about setting up a Neighbourhood Watch for the estate. There is much we can do together."

If you would like get involved in this new residents' group then get in touch with Cllr Robin Ashby - details below.

CONTACTING THE PARKLANDS FOCUS TEAM

Cllr David Down - 0191 236 3161

Cllr Robin Ashby - 07947 114820

Cllr Pauline Allen - 0191 263 5947

Email - parklands@newcastle-libdems.org.uk

Post - 9 Chelton Close, Newcastle upon Tyne NE13 7NF

Twitter - @parklands_ward

Facebook - Parklands-Ward-Liberal-Democrats

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

Brunton Park Community Centre - 3rd Wed of month 6:30 - 7

Action to Repair the Bridle Paths

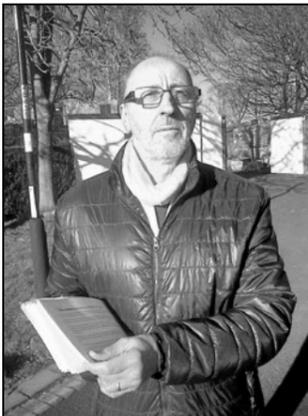
After spotting a number of potholes on the bridle paths across the east of Parklands Ward, **Cllr David Down** wrote to the Council's Public Rights of Way officer.

The bridle paths have now been inspected and the Council has promised to carry out repairs. David will continue to monitor the bridle paths until the work has been finished.

Keeping in Touch across Parklands

Led by **Cllr David Down**, the Parklands Focus Team is currently knocking on doors around the ward to find out your views and to take action on local problems.

If you would like to let us know your views before we get to your door, then an online survey is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/gosforth-survey>



Summer Grass Cutting for Parklands Ward

During February, your ward councillors were asked for their views on the Council's grass cutting plan for 2015. This new approach was introduced for 2014 and officers claim that it led to a reduction in complaints by residents of 41.4% compared to 2013.

As Spring arrives and grass cutting commences, please let the Focus Team know if you experience any problems and we will take it up with the Council.

Health Advice Leaflets for Parklands

A leaflet with useful information and advice on health issues is being delivered across Parklands Ward in an initiative started by your ward councillors and paid for from their new local public health budget.

As a school governor, **David Down** inspected the routes taken by pupils walking to the school and saw that the link road between **Norham Road** and **Kirkley Close** was poorly lit. After investigating further, he found out that a light should have been put there years ago as part of the lighting contract. The Council has now agreed to correct this omission.



Parklands Ward FOCUS

Serving Brunton Park, Grange Estate, Great Park, Halls Estate, Melton Park, Great North Road & Whitebridge Park
For 40 Years
Edited by **CLLR DAVID DOWN**
Early Spring 2015

LIB DEMS OPPOSE LABOUR'S UNFAIR COUNCIL TAX HIKE AND BUDGET CUTS

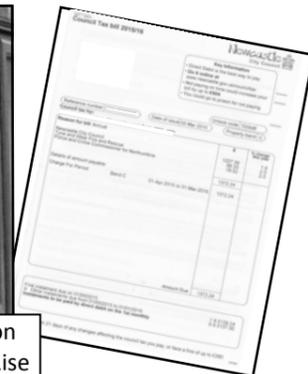
On 2 March, Liberal Democrat councillors voted against the inflation-busting Council Tax rise and cuts in vital services imposed by Newcastle's Labour administration.

Over the last three years, Labour councillors have made much of their promise to freeze Council Tax - thanks only to a grant from the Government. This year they did a complete U-turn - and voted to increase local taxes by almost 2% - more than six times the rate of inflation.

At the same time, Labour councillors voted to close the tourist information centre, cut back the Night Time Noise service and start charging disabled Blue Badge holders parking charges - so much for Labour's claims of fairness. Lib Dem Leader, **Cllr Anita Lower**, attacked Labour's failure to save money by cooperating with other Councils across Tyneside: "Why have separate legal, accounts, HR, and electoral services departments - it's time to cut empires and save on overheads and management costs".



Cllr Anita Lower - led the opposition to Newcastle's unfair Council Tax Rise



Cllr Robin Ashby used his business experience to highlight Labour's failure to manage costs: "The Lib Dems' last budget in 2011, halved the number of managers and their cost, but since then management costs have stagnated and the bill for the Council's top bosses has risen by over 31%. Under Labour it's a case of pay more and get less."

Battle On To Keep Quiet Nights



It's been a long, hard week and you and your family are looking forward to a well-earned quiet night in. But then the sounds of a nearby party start to deafen you and your neighbours and looks like continuing into the wee small hours. What can you do?

Up till now, the answer was the Council's Night Noise Service, which could come out immediately, investigate and, if needed, take action to stop the noise.

Over the past few years, many residents have rightly welcomed this very needed service, which started when the Lib Dems ran the Council.

Now Labour have decided to cut back the service. Parklands' councillors **Pauline Allen**, **David Down** and **Robin Ashby** think that Labour have got this wrong - along with much else - so they are campaigning with their Lib Dem colleagues to save the service.

It's one of those things that you might not miss - until the time comes when you really need it! If you would like to help our campaign, please sign our petition at:

<http://tinyurl.com/noise-campaign>.

Anita Lower to Fight Newcastle North

Newcastle's Liberal Democrats have selected local councillor **Anita Lower** as their prospective candidate for May's General Election. Anita represents Castle Ward and is Newcastle Council's Leader of the Lib Dem Opposition.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR GOSFORTH

Liberal Democrat Action All Year Round

Football Club Dispute - Latest News



Cllr David Down outside Red House Farm Football Club

Last month, in a victory for local residents, plans by Red House Farm F.C. to fence off over 70% of the playing fields north of **Kingston Park Road/Broadway West** were deferred by the City's Planning Committee.

A large number of residents, including Sea and Royal Marines cadets, were at the meeting. **Cllr Robin Ashby** spoke to the committee and his full comments can be seen at: <http://tinyurl.com/FC-plans>.

Following the Committee, the Football Club agreed to sit down with local councillors for the first time to discuss their plans. One meeting has now taken place and another is planned.

After the first meeting, **Cllr David Down** said: "I'm delighted that we now have a dialogue with the club, and hope that it will continue to be calm, focused, reasonable and rational. We have always said we are supportive of football, especially for younger people, but 3 metre high fences surrounding most of the public open space is neither necessary nor acceptable."

ANY NEW LEASE NEEDS TO REFLECT LOCAL NEEDS

Critically, planning permission alone isn't enough for the club to proceed. It also needs Landlord's Consent to any works and a new lease from the Council.

So, your Lib Dem councillors are petitioning the Council to ensure the needs of local users of the open space are taken into consideration. You can sign the petition at:

<http://tinyurl.com/football-plans>

Gosforth eFOCUS

Do you want extra news from us?

The Gosforth-wide eFocus brings you up-to-the-minute news and views from your 9 Gosforth Lib Dem Cllrs. To subscribe for free send your email address to:

gosforth.efocus@gmail.com



Questions need answering on Melbury

David Down will demand answers from the Council's relevant Cabinet member after hearing of more delays on the adoption of the highway on Melbury. This move comes after Parklands' councillors met recently with the new project director for the Great Park Consortium.

The project director said that the highway and drainage on Melbury had been brought up to standard, but that Council officers were saying that the developers must now continue to maintain things for another year.

Residents were originally told back in 2013 that phased adoption would start that year. Commenting on the situation, David said: "Surely, once a road has been accepted as up to the standard for adoption, this should happen. If anything needs doing after that, the Council should deal with it. The residents are Council Tax payers and they have waited far too long for this to happen".



Labour avoids answers on High Street problems

Labour's Council Cabinet Member responsible for the traffic plans on the High Street, has ducked out of a promised meeting with Gosforth's Lib Dem councillors to discuss the current chaos. Instead, he got officers to write and say that the problems are temporary and they will press on with their plans regardless of local views.

In a new move, a local resident has now launched an appeal to the Local Government Ombudsman over the Council's mis-management of the whole process.

Cllr David Down said: "The whole plan is in a complete shambles, but the Labour-controlled Council doesn't want to listen to anyone - what arrogance! Like local residents, we'll continue to press them for answers."

Core Strategy approved but worries continue over Gosforth Wildlife Reserve

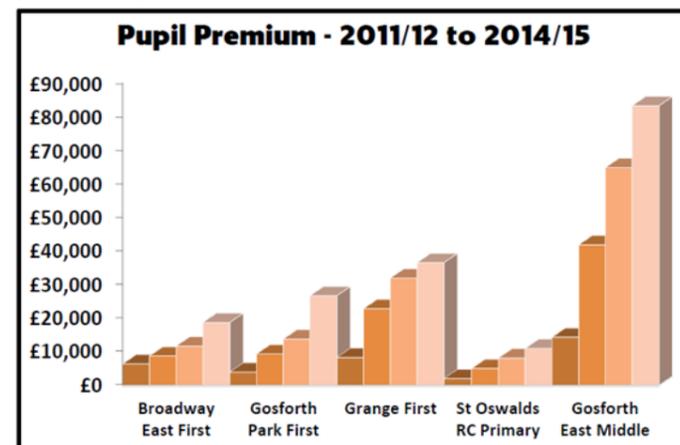
Council meetings in both Newcastle and Gateshead are set to adopt their joint Core Strategy at the end of this month after it was approved by the Government's Planning Inspector.

The Strategy will protect Gosforth Wildlife Reserve from developers. However, there are concerns about newly revealed plans for a leisure centre on adjacent land in North Tyneside. *Save Gosforth Wildlife* are planning a protest as we go to print.

Extra £1/2 million for Our Schools



Thanks to the Liberal Democrats' pupil premium initiative within the Coalition Government, Parkland's first and middle schools will share more than £176,000 in additional funding this year. The table below shows how the money for our children has increased over the past four years.



In addition, this year the schools will share over £123,000 in a grant to support free school meals for the youngest children.

Overall, children in these local schools have benefited from an additional £552, 899 of funding on top of the ring-fenced schools grant since 2011.

Labour bickering sees North East lose chance to join up Health & Social Care

The Coalition Government plans to devolve decision-making on health and social care spending to the local councils and NHS in Greater Manchester. By combining budgets and working together locally, professionals on the ground hope to provide a more integrated service and address problems like bed blocking.

Here in the North East, Labour councillors on the North East Combined Authority have spent months arguing over who is in charge and achieved nothing. Commenting on the mess, **Cllr Pauline Allen** said: "In Manchester, everyone is getting on with the job of delivering better services. But here in the North East, all Labour politicians can do is bicker over who rearranges the deck chairs."

Protecting Our Play Areas



Cllr Pauline Allen and Cllr Robin Ashby inspecting the play area at Links Green

Labour-controlled Newcastle Council has cut all funding for maintaining and replacing children's play equipment. In response, your Parklands councillors got senior council officers to come with them to inspect the play areas across **Whitebridge Park** and **Links Green**.

After the visit, **Cllr Pauline Allen** said: "We are exploring innovative ways to ensure we have well-equipped play areas for our children into the future. We'll keep parents informed on progress through FOCUS."

Following Up on Parking Concerns



After hearing residents' concerns about the enforcement of parking regulations, **Cllr David Down** recently met with our local Community Enforcement Officer on patrol on Brunton Park.

With **Cllr Robin Ashby**, he highlighted "hot spots" around Parklands and pointed out that the revised arrangements around the Broadway East schools would create further parking issues which the Enforcement Officer might be called upon to tackle.

David and Robin were also briefed on the new uniforms that have been issued to the Officers, and the wearable video cameras which means that any contentious issues would have a permanent audio and visual record.