

Focus on Whickham North

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Issue 160
Winter
2022

Dunston Baths at risk

The future of leisure facilities, including Dunston Pool will be reviewed by Gateshead Council in 2022.

Initial proposals for public consultation were due to be debated at Council Cabinet in December but were delayed to give officers more time to work on them.

After Lib Dem councillors raised worries that the delay could restrict the opportunity for residents to be consulted, the proposals were brought back to the Council Cabinet in January. Consultation then opened in February.

“Any changes to leisure centres or swimming pools in Gateshead could be a bad thing for local residents,” said **Chris Ord**. “The Council have a statutory duty to improve public health.”

“Gateshead Council has already stopped supporting Whickham Thorns and Dunston Activity Centre.” said **Sonya Hawkins** “Residents are worried that Dunston Leisure Centre might be the next to go.”

“I remember Dunston Baths opening in the sixties and it has been a huge source of pleasure for residents ever since.” said **Peter Craig**. “It is also a very good way for people to exercise, so we will be campaigning to keep it open.”



• Dunston Leisure Centre is currently under review by Gateshead Council.

Chase Park under threat



• Councillor Peter Craig has objected to the plans on behalf of residents.

Plans to build four houses in Whickham's historic Chase Park have now been submitted to Gateshead Council.

The all-Labour council cabinet offered the site for sale last year and accepted an offer from a developer subject to planning permission being granted. The site includes the main entrance at the Rectory Lane Front Street junction which would become the entrance to the new development.

Your local Lib Dem Focus Team opposed the sale of the site which is in the heart of Whickham village. Labour tried to claim the site was not in Chase Park! The planning application aims to build 4 houses on the site, each with 4 bedrooms.

Chase Park is part of our much loved historic centre of Whickham and Labour's decision to sell off part of it for housing has appalled many residents.

Focus Team member **Peter Craig** said, "Residents have told us that they do not want housing in Chase Park. This sale is totally unacceptable. The park belongs to the people of Whickham and is meant to be used for recreational purposes, not housing. I have objected to the plan on behalf of residents."

“If these plans were to be approved, what is to stop the Council building on the rest of the park in future?” said **Sonya Hawkins**. “I have also objected to the plans.”

[Note: Chris Ord sits on the Planning Committee and is not allowed to comment on any planning applications.]

Liberal Democrats Focus Team - working for you, all year round

Survey Results



Last year we carried out a survey - collecting the views of residents, so that we can focus on the things that matter to you!

We have had a huge response to our survey and it has taken us some time to go through all of the forms.

We will reporting back via Focus, the results and any progress against the issues raised.

Road repairs and potholes

Road repairs and potholes as well as traffic issues is one of the top 3 things that concern residents. Last year we asked the Council to reconsider their traffic plans for Central Gateshead as residents were left stuck in traffic jams for hours.

As the Focus Team become aware of potholes that need fixing, we report these into the Highways Team for action - and we also input to the road repair list.

Below is the current list of road repairs in the area.

Cromwell Road & Crowley Avenue Whickham - Resurface carriageway
Ancaster Road, Whickham - Overlay carriageway
Reserve scheme:
B6317 Whickham Bank, Whickham - Reconstruct & resurface carriageway



Regular bin collections

Regular bin collections is the number 1 item that residents expect in return for paying Council Tax.

Improving street cleaning remains one of the Lib Dem's priorities - and we will keep opposing all attempts to reduce the frequency of our waste bin collections.

Have Your Say: there is still time to complete a survey if you haven't already. Please contact one of the Focus Team and we will send you a form.

Inquiry delayed



The public inquiry for Banktop was set for November, but has now been delayed until February.

Residents together with ward councillors **Sonya Hawkins, Chris Ord and Peter Craig** have given evidence to the Planning Inspector, who will also visit the site during the process.

The Inspectorate will then make their decision as to what will happen to the building. We will keep you up to date as the outcome of the public inquiry.

Cleaner streets



Cleaner streets is another of the top 3 people's concerns.

Residents have reported a huge increase in littering since the Council stopped using street barrows.

These days the streets are litter picked rather than swept and requests can be made in addition to the regular schedule.

Contact the Focus Team if you would like to request an area to be cleaned.

Focus Newsletter

91% of people who replied to our survey read either Focus or eFocus.

99% of those said they found it a useful source of local news.

Focus is produced several times a year, but if you want to keep up to date with local news on a more regular basis, there are two ways that you can do this:

Sign up to our email newsletter; eFocus by contacting one of the Focus Team with your email address.

Or visit our Facebook page: Focus on NE16



Street Surgery:

Saturday 12th March

10:30 am to 11:00 am

Outside Whickham Library

Virtual Surgeries:

Every 4th Saturday of the month

10am - 11am

Join via Google Hangouts:

meet.google.com/ynm-zpue-rar

or by phone:

020 3937 1322 PIN: 282 579 909#

If you need help to log in just give one of the team a call.



• Between them, Peter, Sonya & Chris have 55 years experience as a ward councillor and are always available to help if you need them.



Write to the team or call them:

Peter Craig

73 Whaggs Lane NE16 4PQ
Tel. 488 0787

Sonya Hawkins

50 Kingsley Place NE16 4BQ
Tel. 422 2206

Chris Ord

35 Fellside Road NE16 4JR
Tel. 488 2545