

Focus on Swalwell

Issue 161
March
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Community News



There are lots of good things going on at the moment in Swalwell.

Swalwell Orchard

Holy Trinity Church have got together with Swalwell Primary School and Gateshead Council to plan an orchard for Swalwell. It will be planted in Swalwell Park in March.

Free Fitness Classes for Over 50s

Gateshead Older People's Assembly have been funded by the National Lottery to provide a new opportunity for over 50s to Improve their health.

On Friday, March 4th a new keep fit class will be starting at Swalwell Community Centre called Keep Fit, Strong, and Steady. It will be held every Friday and will be free for the first 6 weeks, then £4 after that. To reserve a place, please call Sharon on 07399 461 290

Covid 19 Funding for Community Centre

The Trustees have successfully applied for funding from Gateshead Covid Champion Fund for three things:

- Drop In Coffee Morning - Thursday 11:00 to 12:30 pm
- Stay and Play - Tuesday 9:30 to 11:00 am & Thursday 1:00 to 2:30 pm
- Book Club - new shelving to allow a bigger choice of books



Dunston Baths at risk



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

"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."

"The Council has already stopped supporting Whickham Thorns and Dunston Activity Centre." said **Sonya Hawkins** "Residents are worried that Dunston Pool might be next."

"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."

Chase Park under threat

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

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



• Peter Craig has objected to the plans to build houses in one of our parks.

Focus Team member **Peter Craig** said, "Residents have told us that they do not want housing in Chase Park. The park belongs to the community 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**. "or even in Swalwell Park for that matter? I have also objected to the plans."

[Note: Cllr. 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

643 bus service



This hourly, inter-peak, Monday – Saturday route was introduced in September 2021 following major network changes by Go North East.

The service is currently being funded by Go North East's Bus Recovery Grant, due to end in March 2022.

Nexus are looking to see if they can retain the existing route and timetable using Nexus subsidy, but this may depend on how many people use the service. We are hoping that it will be kept on - the 643 serves parts of Swalwell, Whickham and Sunnyside which would otherwise be left un-served.

Housing Plans



A planning application has been received for Leven House.

It is for a change of use to a 19 bedroom house with multiple occupation.

You can visit the Council's Planning Portal if you would like to know more about the plans, using the reference DC/21/01468/COU.

Anyone can comment on a planning application either via the Planning Portal or by sending an email to planning@gateshead.gov.uk, with the reference number.

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 together with any progress.

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.



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.

Road repairs and potholes

Road repairs and potholes as well as traffic issues is one of the top 3 things that concern residents in Swalwell. 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, these are reported to the Highways Team for action - and there is also input to the road repair list.

Below is the current list of road repairs in the area. The 2022/23 list will be approved soon.

Axwell Terrace / Ridley Gardens, Swalwell - Resurface carriageway
Reserve scheme:
B6317 Swalwell Bank, Swalwell - Reconstruct & resurface carriageway

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

09:30 am to 10:00 am

Swalwell Community Centre

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