

# FOCUS on

Issue 162 - Annual Report

# Whickham North & Swalwell



Reporting back on Focus Team action on your behalf over the past year

## Lib Dems oppose Council Tax Rise Some reserves used - but not to reduce our bills



Gateshead Council have yet again voted to increase residents' Council Tax.

Gateshead Council have set a budget for the year ahead. The key features include:

- Council tax will increase by 2.99%, the highest increase allowed without a referendum.
- Some of the £48M reserves will be used, but not to reduce Council Tax for residents.
- Labour have put up council tax by almost 3% when people in Gateshead are paying the highest council tax (Band D) of any metropolitan council.
- 75% of those who responded to the Council consultation disagreed with a Council Tax increase.

Lib Dems voted against the Council Tax increase at the Annual Budget meeting in February this year, but this was voted through by the Labour run Council.

### Planning & Transport

Ward councillors and residents have given evidence at the planning inquiry for Banktop in February. We are now waiting to see what the Planning Inspector's decision will be.

Ward councillors have also commented on the following planning applications and these will now be heard by the Planning Committee:

- Housing development in Chase Park
- Convert Leven House to a multi-occupancy home
- Extension of the Jamdani outdoor area



The Focus team has been working with residents and Nexus to secure the 643 service. The funding for this was from Go North East's Bus Recovery Grant but it ended in March. We are delighted that a new subsidy from Nexus means that the route will continue for another year - with an extension to serve IKEA.



### Resident surveys



The Focus team has sent survey forms to every house in Whickham North and Swalwell, so that we can understand what residents' priorities are.

We have also used the results to develop our Six to Fix.

There will be more on the Lib Dem "Six to Fix" in future Focus editions.

### Local Community Fund

The ward councillors have supported the following community projects in the last year:

- PA system for Swalwell Community Centre.
- Afternoon teas for The Big Lunch in Chase Park.
- Guest speakers for the Whickham History Society
- Swalwell Christmas Tree
- Chase Park gardeners



Swalwell tree

Another year of action from your local Lib Dem Focus Team

# Liberal Democrat Focus Team Caring About Our Community

## Helping people with their concerns and issues

It has not been possible to hold the usual library surgeries, but street surgeries have been restarted and on-line surgeries have continued to be held each month instead.



Street surgeries have restarted - check your regular Focus for details.

Between Chris, Peter and Sonya, there is almost 60 years experience as ward councillors and they have continued to help with issues that residents have raised, e.g.:

- Road repairs, Grass cutting, Pavements
- Housing problems, Planning issues
- Dog fouling, Fly tipping and Littering,
- Bin collections, Tree queries, Bus concerns
- Traffic issues, Blocked drains, Parking

We are always here to help if you need us.

### Surgeries:

Your local Lib Dem councillors are still running virtual surgeries at the moment.

Every 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the month

10am - 11am

Join via Google Hangouts:

[meet.google.com/ynm-zpue-rar](https://meet.google.com/ynm-zpue-rar)

or by phone:

020 3937 1322 PIN: 282 579 909#

If you need help getting logged in just give one of us a call.



## To keep a strong Focus Team

## Supporting our community



We've been in partial lockdown for most of last year and most community events were cancelled, but we've still been able to:

- Meet regularly with fellow Friends of Chase Park trustees to look after our park. The Bowling Green has been asset transferred to the group and a cafe has started up.
- As trustees, successfully bid for funding to develop new activities at Swalwell Community Centre.
- As active members of Lighting up Whickham & Swalwell Community Group, help to provide Christmas trees for the community.
- Support the volunteer planting groups in Whickham and Swalwell.
- Work with our fellow trustees of Whickham Volunteer Library Association, to keep the library open whenever it was safe to do so.
- Organise and support Remembrance Day events in Whickham and Swalwell.

## Contacts

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

Vote on 5<sup>th</sup> May

**Peter  
Craig**

