



Work starts on Labour's Chase Park houses

Plans to build an exclusive gated community of 4 executive homes in the heart of Chase Park are now being put into action.

The controversial sale of the historic stable block was championed by Labour in Gateshead who claimed the site was not in Chase Park!

The all-Labour cabinet of Gateshead Council agreed to flog off the historic stable block for house-building in 2021. Lib Dems fought against the sale.

Gateshead have now approved a planning application to demolish the Georgian stable block, which was left to become derelict by the Labour-run Council. Access to the new development will be via the Rectory Lane/Front Street entrance, which will be temporarily closed to the public for safety reasons while the work is underway.

"Many residents are fuming about what Labour are doing to Chase Park," said Lib Dem Councillor **Jonathan Mohammed**.

"And they are angry that there is no guarantee that any of the money from the sale of the site by Gateshead Council will be spent in Whickham."

"Labour's majority on Gateshead Council was the main reason the Chase Park sale was given the go-ahead," said Cllr **Sonya Hawkins**.

"The sooner we can demolish the red wall of Labour in Gateshead, the better."



●Boarded up: access into Chase Park via the Georgian stables has been closed so that the buildings can be demolished. Under plans approved by Labour in Gateshead, 4 executive houses in an exclusive gated community, will be built in the heart of Chase Park.

Whickham remembers



There was another big turnout for the Remembrance Day parade and service on Sunday 12th November in Whickham.

Almost 50 wreaths were laid at the ceremony which many consider to be the biggest parade and service in Gateshead.

Councillors **Sonya Hawkins, Peter Maughan** and **Jonathan Mohammed** (see photo on left) laid wreaths of behalf of residents of the Whickham area.

"We estimate that over 1000 people joined the parade or the service," said Cllr **Peter Craig**. "The event is very important to the residents of Whickham."



Gateshead Council to remain at 66 councillors

Your local Lib Dem Focus Team are disappointed to report that the number of councillors in Gateshead will remain at 66 following a campaign to cut the number.

The Local Government Boundary Commission, which decides the size of councils as well as where ward boundaries should be, had reviewed the number of councillors in Gateshead and decided to leave it unchanged.

However, the Commission is planning to redraw all the boundaries of the 22 wards in Gateshead. And they want to hear what residents and organisations think about their local area. A 10-week consultation inviting proposals for new wards closed on 30 October 2023.

The reason for the redrawing of boundaries is because of changes to the population across Gateshead. Some areas have seen or are about to experience house building on a large scale while some areas have seen slum clearance.

"We are disappointed that the Commission did not grasp the nettle and reduce the number of councillors in Gateshead," said Cllr **Sonya Hawkins**. "The functions of the council have been cut over recent years and Gateshead has more councillors for the population than other similar authorities."

Cllr **Peter Craig** said, "Our focus now is to put a case to the Commission for new boundaries that ensure communities are properly represented on Gateshead Council."

Gateshead Council have submitted a set of draft proposals for new wards which include lots of ideas put forward by the Lib Dem group. The Boundary Commission will look at Gateshead's proposals and decide whether to adopt them in part or in full or reject them in favour of their own proposals. Any proposals will go to public consultation in the new year.



Can you help to plant up Whickham?

Planting Up Whickham are a local community group that plant, maintain and pay for the flower beds in Whickham.

Perhaps you could spare some time to help them with planting? They are a friendly bunch and no experience is required. If you are able to assist, please contact the group via their Facebook page: facebook.com/Plantingupwhickham.

The group were formed in 2013 - after Gateshead Council had taken the decision not to maintain many of the flower beds within the borough. Ten years later, they are still going strong but need to raise around £5,500 each year to continue. Your contribution would make this possible.

If you are able to donate to the group, please connect to the Just Giving page and give what you can. Please share this with your friends and family.

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/PlantUpWhickham2023>

Or if you would like to be a sponsor of one of the beds or make a regular contribution please message the group via their Facebook page.

All money whether from a one off donation, standing order or sponsorship goes to the buying of plants and other materials.



Get our email newsletter eFocus

As well as producing our Focus newsletter, the Lib Dem Focus Team also produces an email newsletter called eFocus.

Over the coming year we will be aiming to produce eFocus monthly. As it is an email communication, we can use it to get more up-to-date news to you.

If you would like to receive it, please email the Lib Dem Focus Team on jonathanwallace@btinternet.com with the message "Subscribe". Please include your name and home address.

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Work restarts of Whickham Bank house



The 20+ year saga of the unfinished house on Whickham Bank is heading for completion.

In 1998 Gateshead Council granted planning permission for the 3 storey house but when work commenced it was realised that it would overshadow neighbouring properties and cause a loss of privacy. Work therefore stopped.

Stuck in the planning and legal system for years, a planning inquiry earlier this year resulted in an Order from the Secretary of State. This required the pitched roof to be removed and replaced with a flat one, together with alterations to three windows. Work to do this is now underway.

"At last, progress is being made," said Cllr Sonya Hawkins. "Hopefully the property on one of the most prominent sites in Whickham will soon be completed."