

Focus on Low Fell

Issue 165 - January/February 2020

www.lowfellfocus.org.uk

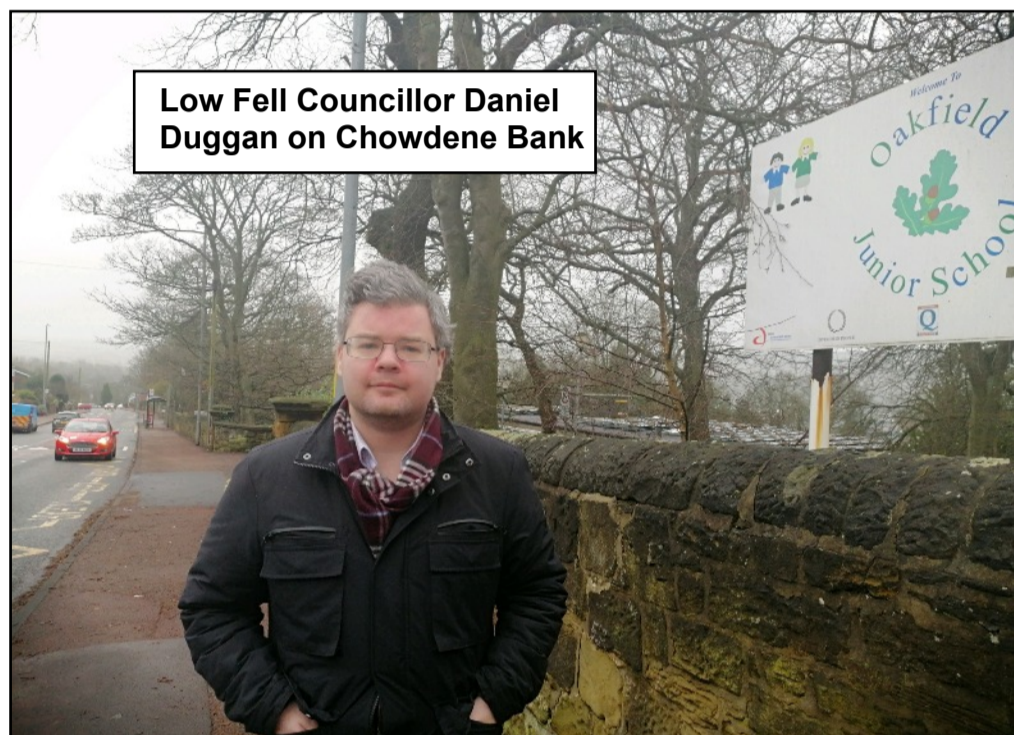


Council rejects safety crossing outside school

Gateshead Council has rejected calls from local residents for a safety crossing outside Oakfield Infant and Junior School on Chowdene Bank.

Late last year local Councillor **Daniel Duggan** and concerned parents met with the Council's traffic engineers to discuss how to improve safety outside Oakfield. After carrying out a traffic survey, the Council officers have concluded that "the level of pedestrians at Chowdene Bank is not high enough to justify a controlled pedestrian crossing".

Daniel said "Road safety is so important. We know that a pupil was knocked over in November and people are concerned that more accidents may occur, especially at school opening and closing times. Although there is a school crossing patrol officer outside Oakfield once again, residents and parents have told us of their disappointment that the Council won't be installing a safety crossing. There is some good news because Council officers will be starting road safety campaigns this month and will be meeting with the police to discuss other options to improve safety. We will be monitoring this issue closely".



Low Fell Councillor Daniel Duggan on Chowdene Bank

Low Fell's Christmas Lights 'switch on' a success!



Hundreds of local residents attended Low Fell's Christmas light 'switch on' in November.

The event, which is organised by the Low Fell Forum, is now in its ninth year.

Councillor **Susan Craig**, Chair of Low

Fell Forum, said "We would like to thank the following for helping make the event such a success: **Alfie Joey** of Radio Newcastle for serving as Master of Ceremonies, **Craghead Colliery Band**, **Bluebell Theatre Productions**, the **Caprian Theatre Company** and the children from **Oakfield School** and **St. Peter's RC Primary School** for their wonderful singing.

Also a big thank you to the children who decorated baubles and the **Low Fell Volunteer Gardening Group** who decorated the area around the tree. A thank you to **Rosa Twelve** restaurant for the refreshments, **Kip McGrath** for the goodie bags and **Socketts Newsagents** for the sweets for the children. We must also thank **Gateshead Council** for their support and the **Fell's Angels WI** and **Low Fell Forum** members for stewarding the event.

Finally, without the sponsors the event would have simply not been possible so a huge thank to the following excellent businesses for sponsoring the tree and lights: **BCE Northern Ltd**, **Belle Vue Estates**, **Dean Taxis**, **Eve Trew School of Dance**, **Gateshead Arms**, **Imperial Restaurant**, **Kip McGrath**, **Nisa store**, and **Spot On Window Cleaning Services**".

Well done to local businesses!

Many congratulations to **'The Dotty House'** on Dryden Road for winning the Gateshead Council Award for 'Best Small Business' 2019 and to a number of other Low Fell businesses including **'Turner's of Low Fell'**, **'Open House and the Spare Room'**, **'The Nest'** and **'Fabulous Frames Corbetts Creations and Gifts'** who were all named as Runner Up.

Councillor **Ron Beadle** said "We have some great businesses in Low Fell and it's important that we shop local to support the Fell. It's great to see these awards. Recently, the Focus Team provided businesses in Low Fell with a survey to find out more about their concerns. One of the issues they raised with us is the impact of the parking charges at **Lowrey's Lane** and **Cross Keys Lane** car parks are having on business and this is something we will be raising with Council officers".



The Focus Team are encouraging residents to shop local

Winter gritting information

If your salt bin needs topping up please contact Gateshead Council on 0191 433 7000 or at customerservices@gateshead.gov.uk or let us know and we will make sure it gets filled up.

Low Fell Focus: News and Action all year round

Bus Tax Approved



We would like to thank all those who signed our petition calling on Newcastle, Gateshead and North Tyneside Councils to scrap their plans for the bus tax. Despite the bus companies warning that higher fares would be "inevitable", Labour Councillors have agreed to implement a bus tax of £50 a day on buses they consider highly polluting. However, we will continue to make the case for measures that encourage people

to use public transport and against measures, like the bus tax, that could make public transport more expensive.

Fixing Potholes

Residents often tell us about potholes and how bad they are. They cause injuries and damage vehicles.

Susan Craig said "We frequently report potholes to the Council and, though Council officers do a good job of fixing them, we really do need the Council to make this more of a priority and spend more on fixing potholes. We will continue to press them do so in the forthcoming Council budget".

News in brief

Trees to be pruned in Kells Lane Park

After residents from **Robinswood** got in touch to tell us that branches from the trees in Kells Lane park were hitting their windows we have arranged for council officers to trim them back.

Garden waste bin

You can now sign up for next year's garden waste bin collection by visiting www.gateshead.gov.uk or phoning 433 7000. Unfortunately, the garden waste collection ends in October, but we are continuing to press the Council to extend it until November as we know many people still have leaves in their garden at that point in the year.

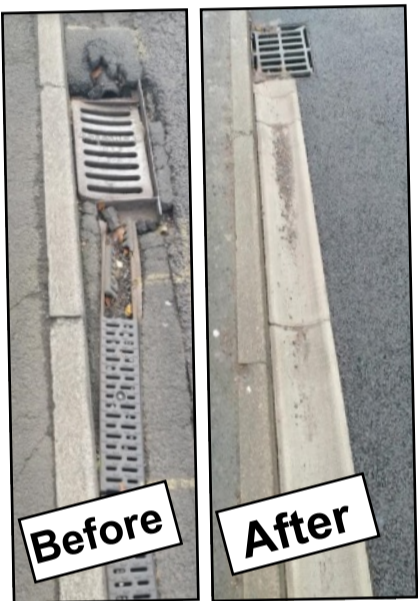
Speeding on Saltwell Road South

Council Officers have told us that they are preparing a list of new 20mph zones and that this could include parts of **Saltwell Road South** where excessive speeding has been recorded. This work should have been undertaken months ago and the Low Fell Councillors are continuing to raise the issue.

Noise on Clement Street

Following a legal notice from the Council, British Telecom have said that they will undertake work to reduce the noise disturbance to neighbours. Council Officers have worked hard on behalf of residents to resolve the issue and we have thanked them.

Drainage improved on Kells Lane!



After residents told us about flooding happening on **Kells Lane**, near the Black Horse pub, we arranged for officers to replace the damaged gully with a new one. Although the problem has not been entirely solved, residents have noticed an improvement.

Action on graffiti continues

The Focus Team are continuing to get graffiti removed throughout Low Fell, including on the post box on **Durham Road** (below). **Daniel Duggan**, who asked Royal Mail to remove the graffiti, said "It's so important we keep Low Fell looking nice. I am also raising the issue of graffiti with the local police".



Council reserves grow as Labour plans hike in Council Tax

Gateshead Council will be setting their budget for the year ahead next month and there is concern that another Council Tax hike is planned.

This is despite news that the Council has been building up huge reserves. Lib Dem Councillors – who are the only opposition to Labour on the Council – have discovered that Labour bosses have been building up vast reserves. Reserves now stand at £39 million.

Labour-run Gateshead Council already charges the highest level of Council Tax of any metropolitan borough in the country.

Ron Beadle, Deputy Leader of the Lib Dem Opposition, said "Labour are planning to hit Council Taxpayers again whilst building huge



Labour bosses have been stashing away millions while planning another Council Tax hike

levels of reserves. It is right to plan ahead, but Council taxpayers deserve a break. Piling up huge sums of money in the bank while local residents struggle to pay their Council Tax and public services are cut just isn't right".

Lib Dem Councillors will be carefully scrutinising Labour's planned budget.

Councillor **Daniel Duggan** said "Many people are really feeling the burden of year on year increases in Council Tax and Labour bosses at the Civic Centre need to realise this".

To receive more local news sign up to our email newsletter at: www.subscribe.lowfellfocus.org.uk



Have your say, get involved:

Please use this space to tell us what you think needs doing in Low Fell, or to let us know of any local problem needing attention - and if you can help the **Focus Team** get more done, please let us know.

- I want to receive your email newsletter (please state email address below)
- I want to join the Liberal Democrats. Please send me details
- I can spare 1 or 2 hours every few months to help deliver 'Focus' newsletters

Name: Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms

Address.....

Phone

Email

If you return this form, the Liberal Democrats, locally and nationally, may use information provided, including your political views, to further our objectives, share it with our elected representatives and/or contact you in future using any of the means provided. Some contacts may be automated. You may opt out of some or all contacts or exercise your other legal rights by contacting us. Further details are in our Privacy Policy at www.libdems.org.uk/privacy

Please return to:

Ron Beadle: tel 421 1269 or **Susan Craig:** tel 488 0787 or **Daniel Duggan:** tel 487 4613
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