



LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

FOCUS

ELECTION SPECIAL

Delivered free to 4,000 homes in Bill Quay, Heworth, Pelaw and Wardley

Issue 110 - April 2023

Only **Paul Diston** and the **Lib Dem Focus Team** can beat Labour in Pelaw. The Conservatives came a distant third place last year and just won't win here. Only **Paul** can beat Labour – voting for anyone else could let Labour win.

Lib Dem Focus Team 1255	Lab 995	Can't win here ↓ Con 149
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The result in Pelaw and Heworth last time

Paul Diston to fight for Pelaw and Heworth

I am Paul Diston and I have been chosen by the Pelaw & Heworth Liberal Democrats for the Council elections on 4th May 2023. I have been a Councillor for the last four years, alongside Ian Patterson and Dr Amanda Wintcher.

I do not just appear at Election time to ask for your vote. I fight for the residents of Pelaw, Heworth, Wardley and Bill Quay all year round.

I have voted against Council Tax rises pushed through by Gateshead's Labour-run Council. With my colleagues, I objected to the threatened closure of Heworth Leisure Centre and others across Gateshead. I held Labour to account over the enforced closures of the Centre over maintenance and staff shortage issues, and asked why it had taken so long to resolve them.

I have flagged up many repair issues to the Council, some of which have dragged on for months, including spreading damp and mould. I have listened to the public over off-road biking incidents that include racing across parks full of children playing football. I and my ward colleagues have had many discussions with the Police over these incidents.

Together with Ian and Amanda I have reported potholes that cost people money when fixing damaged tyres. I have listened to residents' concerns about car parking issues and have asked the Council's Highways department to come up with solutions.

I regularly check on known fly tipping spots in back lanes, industrial estates and country roads. Everything from mattresses to fridges and furniture have been reported and removed. I worked hard in the aftermath of major storms in 2021 and 2022, reporting fallen trees when people couldn't get through to the Council.



The choice for Pelaw and Heworth		
	Paul Diston	Labour
Would cut the number of councillors	✓	✗
Keeps in touch all year round	✓	✗
Voted against Council Tax rises	✓	✗

I also support the wider community, for example persuading Felling Asda's leadership team to provide a donation point for the Felling Food Bank. For many years I have made an annual personal donation to the food bank. Together with my ward colleagues I have sponsored events such as the Bill Quay Festival and arranged funding for community groups.

By voting for Paul Diston on 4th May, you will get a councillor you know works for you, fights against Council waste, and stands up against the Labour Party doing what they think is best rather than listening to what local people want.

Gateshead tops Council Tax league

But this is a league that residents don't want to be top of. Gateshead Council tax rates are higher than neighbouring authorities in every band.

Labour blame high council tax on the numbers of Band A properties in Gateshead. Band A is the lowest and so the more homes in this band, the higher the council tax has to be for everyone. Yet neighbouring councils like South Tyneside have an even higher proportion of Band A properties! But **their council tax is LESS** than in Gateshead.

Do you think you are getting better value for money than our neighbours in South Tyneside? You can decide on May 4th.



What do your neighbours pay?			
Council Tax Band	South Tyneside	Gateshead	You pay more:
A	£1,393.88	£1,554.49	↑ £160.61
B	£1,626.19	£1,813.57	↑ £187.38
C	£1,858.50	£2,072.65	↑ £214.15
D	£2,090.81	£2,331.73	↑ £240.92

Data on property types from the Valuation Office Agency at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/council-tax-stock-of-properties-2022>

Local news and action

Speeding incidents damage cars and gardens

There were two separate traffic incidents in March involving speeding drivers ignoring traffic calming measures and crashing into parked cars and telephone poles. In both cases drivers crashed into garden walls and hedges, while parked cars were damaged beyond repair.

Amanda said, "I asked council officers about speeding on Gosforth Terrace a few months ago, but they told me that the safety measures already in place meet the standards. But with two serious incidents on the same evening it is clear that they aren't working as well as they should, even though other factors were involved. I met with a Council officer and they have asked for a review of speeding and traffic calming measures in both locations. People deserve to feel safe without worrying that a speeding vehicle will crash into their living room." Officers will also liaise with the Police to share the results of their investigation.



One of the parked cars that was hit by a speeding driver and a damaged garden wall on Gosforth Terrace

Bypass potholes set to be repaired

Many residents have contacted us about the potholes on the Felling bypass and associated problems including blocked drains and damaged footpaths. Ian has recently had confirmation from the Council that these will be repaired as part of resurfacing works that will begin in the next month or two.

Ian said, "Although these areas have been patched many times, there problem has persisted. The resurfacing should be a longer-term fix."



Lib Dem live stream motion passed

During the pandemic, Council meetings were live-streamed so that residents could see the decisions the Council was making. At the Council Meeting in March Lib Dems proposed that all future Full Council meetings be live streamed and made available afterwards via You Tube or a similar service. This would cost next to nothing and would allow residents who are unable to attend the meetings in person to see what the council are doing. We are pleased to report that the Labour group has accepted our motion, with a minor amendment.

Lib Dem Candidate Paul Diston said: "If I am elected on May 4th, residents should be able to see what I am saying and how I am voting in Council Meetings. Parliament has been televised since 1989 and the Council should be no different. Live streaming during the pandemic gave many people the chance to see meetings and events that they wouldn't normally be able to go to. We should continue to give people the chance to participate in democracy."



Have your say:

Please use this space to tell us what you think needs doing in Pelaw and Heworth, or to let us know of any local problem needing attention

- 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

Please return to:

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Can we keep you updated about our activities including campaigns, events, fundraising and details about how to get involved? Yes please No thanks The Liberal Democrats will use your contact details to send you information on the topics you have requested. Any data we gather will be used in accordance with our privacy policy at libdems.org.uk/privacy. To exercise your legal data rights, email: data.protection@libdems.org.uk.