

# FOCUS

Edited by Amanda Wintcher &  
Councillors Ian Patterson & Paul Diston

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

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## Fears that Council Tax will be increased again!

There are fears that Labour-run Gateshead Council is planning to hit residents with another Council Tax rise.

Gateshead Council will be setting their budget in late February. Gateshead Council already charges the highest Council Tax of any metropolitan Council in England.

Local campaigner Amanda Wintcher said "Many residents are really feeling the rise in the cost of living at the moment. Another hike in

Council Tax will only make this worse. Lib Dem Councillors will be looking at the proposed budget very carefully and will be calling on Gateshead Labour bosses to give residents a break".



## Council promises that local libraries will remain open



The Council's decision to carry out a review of library services in Gateshead has sparked concern amongst many residents. Residents have contacted the Focus Team with concerns over whether Pelaw Library and Leam Library will be closed as a result of the review.

Ian Patterson and Paul Diston have raised this

matter with Council officers and have been assured that neither Pelaw Library or Leam Library will be closed.

Paul Diston said "Our libraries are a lifeline for many people. Closing them would be completely unacceptable. We will be monitoring this situation very carefully and holding the Council to their word".

The consultation for the library review has now closed and as soon as we know the results, and what the Council plans to do, we will let residents know.

## £1 million in traffic fines!



Ian Patterson, Tim Farron MP, Amanda Wintcher and Paul Diston in Gateshead town centre

The Council has now received over £1 million from drivers fined for using the new bus lane on Askew Road. Local campaigner Amanda Wintcher met Lib Dem MP, Tim Farron, on his recent visit to Gateshead and told him that residents have complained that the fines are unfair because of inadequate signage.

Amanda said "Forcing drivers to turn right when they are trying to get to Newcastle actually worsens pollution in the town centre and adds to congestion. The Labour-run Council may be making a lot of money from this but at what cost to the environment and health?"

## Focus Team demand action on potholes



Ian and Amanda on Bolburn. The Team are continuing to demand action to fix potholes in our area.

The Focus Team continue to demand that the Council prioritise fixing potholes.

**Bolburn**, like many other local streets, is showing signs of distress as potholes appear in the road surface.

The Focus Team have told the Council about this and asked that the potholes are filled. If you notice potholes needing attention please let us know.

**Lib Dem Focus - working for you, all year round**



# Local news and action

## Harrison Close almost complete



Paul and Ian on Harrison Close

The new build of **Harrison Close** is now largely complete.

As the development is technically outside of the 20mph zone in Bill Quay, Ian has contacted the Developer to get the paperwork required to the Council.

Increased vehicle activity in **Gullane Close** has led to a deterioration in the state of the roads and kerbs. Ian has told the Council about this and asked them to make improvements.

## Improving Brack Terrace

As Bill Quay residents will know, the turn from **Station Road** onto **Brack Terrace** can be tight for the 68 bus and for residents, when vehicles are parked on the northern side of Brack.

Ian and Paul have told Gateshead Council about this and are asking the traffic engineers to come up with solutions to address this problem. We will keep residents updated on this.



Paul, Amanda and Ian are asking the Council to address the problem on Brack Terrace

## Calls for Council to fix garages



Ian, Amanda and Paul outside the garages in Wynn Gardens

Some garages in **Wynn Gardens** that are owned by Gateshead Council are looking in need of repair.

Not only do some of the garages look unsightly and so let down the area, but being being in such a poor state the Council is unable to rent them out. At a time when the Council says it needs to generate more income, it is disappointing that they are not taking better care of their property.

## Anger as Labour-run Gateshead Council increases rent

In January, Gateshead Labour Councillors voted to increase the rent for Gateshead Council tenants by 4.1%. Liberal Democrat Councillors, including Ian Patterson and Paul Diston, opposed this.

Paul Diston said "This increase will be a big blow to residents. Many people are really feeling the cost of living crisis and this increase will only make things worse for many people. This is more money out of people's pockets and more into the Council's coffers". The rise will be introduced in April.

## Focus Team report fallen trees and get action



Amanda Wintcher (below) and the Team have been asking the Council to remove fallen trees, like this one in Cole Gardens

After the recent storms we have had, such as Storm Malik at the end of January, the Focus Team has been reporting fallen trees to the Council. We want to thank the Council for removing trees that had fallen down. Amanda said "The strong windy weather has damaged various trees in our area and we reported these to the Council as soon as we became aware of this".



## Have your say, get involved:

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 - and if you can help the **Lib Dem Focus Team** get more done, please let us know.

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I can spare 1 or 2 hours every few months to help deliver 'Focus' newsletters

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