



www.stocktonlibdems.org.uk

Billingham North Ward
FOCUS
Number 111

Editors: Councillor Lynne Apedaile 01740 645216
Councillor Colin Leckonby 01642 872896
Hilary Aggio 01642 564358



Lynne and Colin wish to welcome Hilary as part of the editorial team for the Billingham North "FOCUS" newsletter. Hilary, along with Lynne and Colin are watching the development plans for Billingham Town Centre and the Forum Leisure centre with interest. After years of neglect by the Labour controlled Stockton Borough Council it is good, to, at last see some light at the end of a long dark tunnel. Even when there were four Billingham Councillors on the cabinet of Stockton Borough Council the Billingham Town Centre and the Forum Leisure centre were neglected.

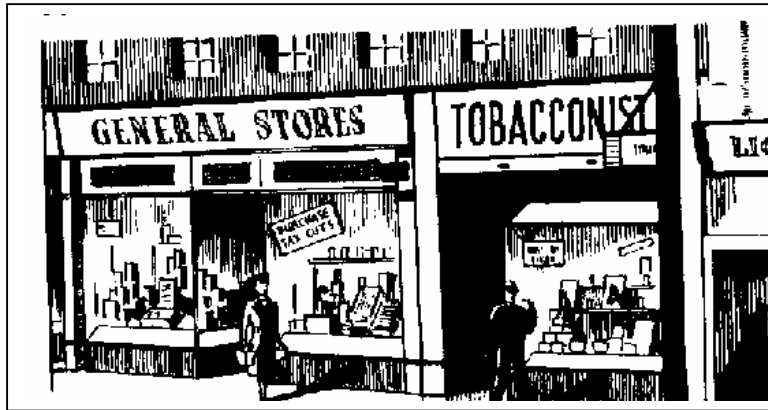
Hilary has lived in the Billingham North area for the last 23 years and has recently retired. She was employed for many years by a System Support Company in the IT field which gave her a good insight into computer systems. She has many interests which include the theatre, gardening, computing, walking and keep fit dancing.

Hilary said "I have joined the editorial team of the Billingham North "Focus" after being selected as a Liberal Democrat candidate for the forthcoming Stockton Borough Council elections in May". She has a keen interest in the environment which we need to look after and improve. She believes that the Forum Leisure Centre and Forum Theatre are our "Jewel in the Crown" and this is what a lot of people associate with Billingham. Now we will see the start of redevelopment of the town centre and this will be complemented by the improvements in John Whitehead Park.

Lynne, Colin and Hilary will carry on listening to the voice of the people and help to make things happen where we can.

Hilary believes that working with the residents of Billingham we can make it a place to be proud of once again.

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS
For Service And Action All-Year-Round



BILLINGHAM TOWN CENTRE RE- DEVELOPMENT

When the Gateway project for Billingham was first proposed Lynne and Colin had their doubts about it being the way forward to redevelop the Billingham Town Centre. We talked to Billingham residents to get their views and found that the majority agreed with us. Billingham Labour councillors were all in favour of Gateway and would have pushed it forward if there hadn't been such a public outcry. Hilary also agrees that Gateway was not the way forward.

We can now report that to enable a major redevelopment and reinvestment of the town centre, Stockton Council's interest in Billingham Town Centre and the Kingsway car parks now to be sold to Halladale. Halladale have already bought the Mars Pension Fund interest in the town centre. Lynne, Colin and Hilary are happy to support the proposal as Halladale now have the whole town centre to redevelop and we think that Billingham Residents will have a town centre to be proud of. Halladale will work with Stockton Borough Council to address the 2005 consultation priorities which were:-

a) Improvements in the quality of shops **b)** Extension of the range of shops **c)** Tackle problems of pests / pigeons **d)** Incorporation of cafes and restaurants **e)** Provision of new and better toilets **f)** Provision of secure parking **g)** Provision of play facilities e.g. pre-school and teenage village **h)** Inclusion of attractive landscaping.

There will be further public consultations taking place later in 2007 into the proposed design of the town centre.

Don't expect to see any regeneration work take place straight away as the approximate time scale is expected to be:-

Report to be taken to cabinet	4 th January 2007	Completed
Council Ratification	17 th January 2007	Completed
Commence Legal Documentation	January 2007	
Sale Completed	May 2007	
Commence detailed discussions regarding design aspects	May 2007	
Commence public consultation regarding public realm design	Autumn 2007	
Commence improvements / regeneration works	Autumn 2008	
Complete all aspects of regeneration / improvement	2013	

Lynne, Colin and Hilary will keep you informed about developments with the programme for the Billingham Town centre redevelopment over the coming months.

DARZI REPORT

During the last bye election in Hartlepool it looked as if Labour could lose the seat to the Liberal Democrats so the Labour government commissioned Prof Darzi to find a way to keep Hartlepool hospital open. His proposals to re-site Maternity & Paediatric services in Hartlepool caused great concern in the North Tees area. However, an independent reconfiguration panel has recommended that these services remain at North Tees, and a well situated location be found to build a new hospital to replace the present North Tees and Hartlepool hospitals.

There Is No Substitute For All Round Action And Service

BILLINGHAM ANHYDRITE MINE

When Colin read an article in a national newspaper about the government trawling around the country and offering inducements to councils to allow nuclear waste to be dumped in their area, the old ICI Anhydrite mine came to mind. So Colin, who took part in the demonstrations against the Nirex proposals last time, immediately alerted the local MP Frank Cook who took the matter up with the government minister. Lynne and Colin attended a meeting with council officers, local councillors and representatives from ICI and NPL Estates Ltd. to hear the proposals for an alternative use of the mine. We were disappointed that Billingham residents would not get any incentives out of the deal, only a very small number of job opportunities and an increase in road traffic. The really worrying thing is that if the mine was opened for use the present government could alter legislation to allow them to bypass the council planning system and dump nuclear waste as they want. Lynne, Colin and Hilary would like to hear your views on the proposed reopening of the mine for dumping.

BILLINGHAM FORUM



Stockton Council produced a leaflet in October/November 2006 with detailed plans for the bid to fund the redevelopment of the Billingham Forum complex. It was accompanied by a short questionnaire asking people to indicate their level of support. Lynne and Colin urged the residents of Billingham North ward, through the FOCUS newsletter, to show their support for the bid by filling in the questionnaire. The results showed up with the following responses returns per ward:-

Billingham North 914

Billingham West 386, Billingham Central 40, Billingham South 28, Billingham East 9
The condition of the Forum plant and structure is under constant review and the risk is currently being managed but remains a serious concern.

Since June, 2006, Stockton Borough Council have been working in conjunction with the Billingham Partnership to prepare a new bid for PFI (private funding investment) funding to redevelop the leisure facilities. They expect to bring a report to cabinet in the summer of 2007 with detailed, costed information and recommendations.

Lynne, Colin and Hilary await a positive outcome of the PFI bid.

JOHN WHITEHEAD PARK

John Whitehead Park NRF Steering Committee are working hard on plans to improve the park so it will compliment the Billingham Town Centre redevelopment. The plan to improve the lighting and fit a CCTV camera. Consultations will then take place and the plans finalised for the layout of the park to create an attractive garden and relaxation area.



GORDON BROWN TAKES MORE FROM PENSIONERS AND DESCENDANTS

After taking £5bn pounds from the pension funds each year The Chancellor Gordon Brown has now set his sights on more of the pensioners' money. In the Budget last year The Chancellor Gordon Brown altered the ruling so that people with a private pension fund, (not a works pension) did not have to buy an annuity but could take money out at a prescribed rate. Hidden in the small print of his latest autumn Budget it states that when they die and there is money left in their pension fund the government will take over 80% of that. What incentive is there now for people to save for a personal pension to supplement their government pension?

BILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Stockton Council have now received a revised draft order from Commission for Local Government, creating the Billingham Parish, which has been confirmed and agreed. Stockton Borough Council have also received the draft Electoral Arrangements Order on which they have provided some comments. The CLG had no comments on the draft order to create a parish council, but Stockton Council have not yet received the Electoral Commissions' views. So it is now looking hopeful that the Billingham Parish elections can take place with the Stockton Borough elections on the 3rd May.

LOW GRANGE COMMUNITY CENTRE
ACTIVITIES

Free computing classes run by Stockton-on-Line. Learn how to use a computer, improve your computing knowledge and learn about digital photography. The computing room is open Monday 9am to 12 noon & 1 to 4.30pm, Tuesday closed, Wednesday 10am to 12noon, Thursday 1 to 4.30pm and Friday 9 to 12 noon.

Leslie's Gentle Exercise class every Wednesday 6-7pm. For the older person who feel they should do more exercise.

Silhouettes Jazz band meet on Tuesday 5 to 7pm, Friday 5 to 7pm and on a Saturday 12 noon to 2pm. Any youngsters who enjoy meeting together and playing musical instruments can come along and enjoy themselves.

Billinda Dancing Class who perform at the folklore festival and meet on Monday 5 to 7.30pm & Thursday 5 to 7pm

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

We now have a dedicated anti social behaviour officer for the Billingham area. He is PC Steve Alstead and can be contacted by phone on 01642 527838 or 01642 301896. He can also be contacted by e-mail on steve.alstead@stockton.gov.uk. Our local beat officer is Mike Burns and he can be contacted by e-mail on Michael.burns@cleveland.pnn.police.uk. You can leave non urgent messages on his e-mail address which he reads when on duty. Any urgent problems should be reported to police headquarters on 01642 326326.

COMMUNITY SKIP DATES (2007)

14TH March
Low Grange Avenue/Wolviston Back Lane

YOUTH CLUB

There is a youth club every Monday evening in the Billingham Campus School, Marsh House Avenue. They run football and badminton coaching as well as other sports.

CORNER HOUSE PROJECT

Lynne, Colin and Hilary support the work done by the staff at Corner House in Stockton for the homeless youngsters up to the age of 25. The staff are always looking for good warm clothing, toiletries and tinned food. If you have any unwanted Christmas gifts or any of the above that you think would be of use to Corner House please contact one of us and we will arrange for its collection.

STREET NAMEPLATES

Lynne reported several street nameplates that needed repairing or replacing and these have been done. Bonnington Crescent is still the responsibility of the builders and they have been informed.

HIGH GRANGE AVENUE

Council Officers had looked at a scheme to make the crossing of the road safer to get to the children's play area. The cost of a pedestrian refuge was too high and the number of vehicles didn't justify a pelican crossing. Vehicle speeds were too high for a zebra crossing so Vehicle Activated Sign is to be installed to flash the speed limit for speeding drivers. It is hoped that these signs will reduce motorists speed enough for a zebra crossing to be installed.

WARD SURGERIES

The next two dates for our ward surgeries are:-
North Billingham Methodist Church
Monday 5th March 2007, 6:30 to 7:30pm

And

High Grange Community Centre
Monday 2nd April, 2007, 6:30 to 7:30pm

And

You can contact Lynne, Colin and Hilary at other times with their details shown below.

You can contact Lynne, Colin and Hilary by:-

Telephone **Lynne on 01740 645216, Colin on 01642 872896 and Hilary on 01642 564358**

e-mail lynne.apedaile@stockton.gov.uk

colin.leckonby@stockton.gov.uk

hilaryaggio@ntlworld.com

You can also write to **Lynne Apeadale at 1 West Hartlepool Road, Wolviston TS22 5LA,**
Colin Leckonby at 73 Tunstall Avenue, Billingham TS23 5LA.