

BISHOPSGARTH & ELM TREE

# FOCUS

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Number: 185

## 25 Years of Excellent Service LIBERAL DEMOCRAT ACTION - ALL YEAR, EVERY YEAR.

Suzanne Fletcher celebrated the 25th anniversary of her election to Stockton Council. In November 1981 she drove a thin orange wedge into the red/blue comfort zone of Stockton Town Hall, winning the Elm Tree ward by-election. She has been the first councillor in Stockton to put out a regular leaflet; run ward surgeries specifically for young people; provide e-updates to her constituents. She now shares an enlarged ward with Julia Roberts and together they continue to serve the residents who have elected them.



Suzanne celebrates with colleagues from around the region

**WEB SITE** You can now keep up to date with news from your local Liberal Democrats by logging on to [www.stocktonlibdems.org.uk](http://www.stocktonlibdems.org.uk). You'll find local and national news, past editions of Focus and much more. Do have a look and let us know what you think.



### MARSKE, FELTON and LEAM LANE TRAFFIC CALMING

Following on from the consultation of all of the Bishopsgarth estate, there were some concerns about the mini roundabouts proposed on Marske Lane, and some comments about the positioning of speed humps on Leam Lane. As a result a new plan has been drawn up replacing the roundabouts with speed humps, and slightly altering the speed humps on Leam Lane. Those living near to the alterations have been consulted about the changes. If they are agreed, the scheme will be put forward to ask for funds in the next financial year (after April 2007).

Julia and Suzanne wish everyone a  
**HAPPY CHRISTMAS**  
and wish for a peaceful New Year for all.  
Many thanks go to those volunteers who  
deliver  
**FOCUS** to every home in the ward

### DENTISTRY CRISIS

Julia has been part of the Council's Health Select Committee, looking at dentist provision in the town. Since the new dental contracts were introduced in April this year several practices are no longer providing NHS treatment and others are not taking on new patients. Many of you have complained to us about the problems it is causing you and your families. The all party committee were unable to come up with any answers that would make more dentists available – that can only happen by more money from Government.



6 months after the introduction of the new contracts Liberal Democrat Spokesperson, Sandra Gidley MP said "this is indicative of Labour's failure to restore the NHS to what it should be: a universal comprehensive service that provides ongoing health care to everyone who needs it".

### WE KEEP ON TRYING !

Here's Julia at the long promised hand rail at the bus stop on Harrowgate Lane. It did take a lot of reminders though!



**FOCUS - THE ORIGINAL AND BEST. NOW IN ITS 26TH YEAR!**

## LEADING THE WAY IN LIGHTING

There is going to be a trial of a new type of street lighting in the area – on Darlington Lane, between Elm Tree Avenue and Gentian Way. The lights will dim between about midnight and 6.00 a.m.. This is to save electricity, which saves both money and the environment, but it also has the benefit of any faults being notified automatically, and so be able to be put right sooner.

It will begin on about 13<sup>th</sup> December and boards will be put up to inform people. The result of this experiment will be looked at carefully before any decision is made to introduce something similar in low traffic and pedestrian areas. Julia and Suzanne will be very interested to hear people's views on how it works when it has been operating for a while.

## DURHAM ROAD / DARLINGTON LANE JUNCTION

Work is due to start here in the new year. We are told that the alterations are planned to make traffic flow easier, and the new traffic light system will be more flexible and allow more "green time".

## CHRISTMAS COLLECTION ARRANGEMENTS

There will be NO rubbish or recycling collections on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> December, but it will be collected on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> December instead.

Christmas trees will be collected for recycling on Monday January 8<sup>th</sup> if left out at the place you normally leave your bins.

Do make sure that you put all your Christmas bottles, cans and paper in the recycling boxes, and don't forget batteries in the special bag.

When we have been doing surveys we have found some people either no longer have a recycling box or bag, or have stopped putting it out because it was not being collected. If this was the case, then to get in touch with either of us or Care For Your Area on 391959 to make arrangements.

**FRADE** – not many people may realise that this valuable local charity actually began its life in the home of our very own Julia Roberts in the early 1990's. Set up to collect unwanted furniture and re-distribute it to those unable to afford to furnish their homes or replace worn out goods, the charity is still going strong today. At a time when many are buying new furniture in time for Christmas, or in the New Year sales, please consider donating unwanted goods to this very worthwhile cause. There is a free collection service available by telephoning 608791.

**SKIPS** The next skip for household waste is :  
Tuesday 19th December, Mosston Road, 24 hours



## Problems, Queries, Ideas & Views.

Suzanne and Julia will be holding their ward surgery at **Elm Tree Community Centre**  
Tuesday 12th December 6pm to 7pm  
Tuesday 6th January 6pm to 7pm  
Tuesday 6th February 6pm to 7pm  
Young people, same date 4.30 to 5.30 pm  
**Bishopsgarth School** (with local Police)  
Monday 8th January, 6pm to 6.30pm  
Monday 5th February 6pm to 6.30 pm

### Contact us by:

**Letter** - Julia Roberts, 22, Zetland Road, Stockton, TS19 0EQ  
*or* Suzanne Fletcher, 3, Hoylake Way, Eaglescliffe, Stockton on Tees, TS16 9EU  
*or* - Julia Roberts and Suzanne Fletcher, FREEPOST, NEA 765, STOCKTON-ON-TEES, TS16 9BR (no need for a stamp)

**Phone** - 01642 606732 (Julia) or 787652 (Suzanne)

**e-mail** - julia.roberts@stockton.gov.uk (Julia)  
or susanne.fletcher@stockton.gov.uk (Suzanne)



## FIRE SAFETY –

Christmas is once more upon us and every year we seem to hear tragic stories of fires caused by tree lights or candles left unattended. Smoke Alarms **DO** save lives and property by giving early warning of dangers.

If you have not already done so, please contact Cleveland Fire Brigade to arrange a **FREE fire safety check** for your home and **FREE installation of smoke detectors**. Telephone **01429 874063** or log on to [www.clevelandfire.gov.uk](http://www.clevelandfire.gov.uk)  
Both Julia and Suzanne have had fire checks done in their own homes, it didn't take long, and they gained useful tips.

## DARLINGTON BACK LANE

The first houses will be ready to occupy very soon. There are a lot of issues around the road works and information given to new residents that Suzanne and Julia have been chasing up, to make sure that the development is as was agreed when the land was sold, and planning permission given. We will continue to follow all of these up, and let us know if there are issues that concern you.

**There is no substitute for all year round action and service**

**“We need somewhere safe to play” is the call from young people all the time. Here is an update of what is happening so far :**

## **YOUTH BUS**

Julia and Suzanne have put in a request for the Youth Bus to visit the area to be able to begin to engage with young people in the area. We are expecting this to be able to come every other Tuesday.

The location and further details are yet to be worked out at the time of writing, but please do get in touch if you want to have more information, or have



## **NEWHAM GRANGE PARK**

Friends of Newham Grange Park are continuing to work hard at making big improvements to the Park. There have been a lot of delays, not the fault of this group, but we are all hoping that the play equipment will be installed and ready for use by mid January – weather permitting.

This will be a huge asset for the area, although Suzanne and Julia do appreciate that it will not help everyone as it is too far for some people to travel.

## **GOAL POSTS AND BASKET BALL**

Following on from a request by young people a request for a basket ball hoop on the Darlington Back Lane playing fields, and also a similar approach for goal-posts on the field between Meldrum Square and Bishopton Road West (both away from the houses !) has been turned down.

Both have not been agreed by the Council because of lack of funds, and will have to wait for the Play Strategy to report – and that could be a long time. So we continue to keep up the pressure – our young people need facilities now – not when they are on their way to drawing their pension !



## **PLAY STRATEGY**

The Council has set up a play strategy steering group to look at provision throughout the whole Borough. But this was many months ago, and we have had no feedback yet. Julia and Suzanne have made strong representations to this strategy, and also put in evidence collected by young people themselves. We will continue to press for some action to provide good, safe, clean play areas for our young people.

## **SURE START CENTRE**

There will be superb facilities for under 5 year old's here when it is built. Julia and Suzanne have been working with Sure Start from the very beginning,

encouraging them to use the Elm Tree

Community Centre, and helping to deal with issues as they arise. That work goes on, and they look forward to the centre being completed next year. There may be plans for After School activities too. If you are likely to use the centre and would like to be involved, do get in touch with us.



## **DARLINGTON BACK LANE PLAY EQUIPMENT**

Over the years all the play equipment in the Bishopsgarth and Elm Tree Ward has been moved because it was unsafe or vandalised – with one exception. There is some equipment on the field off Darlington Back Lane, just next to the cycleway and new building site. The Council want to remove this as it no longer meets safety standards, but a number of local people have complained that its removal means that there is nothing at all. Suzanne has asked for the equipment to be upgraded, so it is safe, but so far this has been refused and it is likely to be taken away.



Julia with the play equipment

Let Suzanne and Julia know as soon as possible what you think about this. Why not vote on the new website now ?

[www.stocktonlibdems.org.uk](http://www.stocktonlibdems.org.uk)

## **ELM TREE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

In the meantime there are some activities at the community centre. There is free football coaching for young people on a Monday at 4.30 p.m., and Julia is continually trying to get funding from organisations to keep this going.

There are various Martial Art classes for different ages at the Community Centre too. Contact 862090 for more detail.

**LIBERAL DEMOCRAT ACTION -ALL YEAR, EVERY YEAR.**

## MEDINA CLOSE FOOTPATH

The flagstones in front of the high numbered bungalows next to the Police Office are very uneven, and have to be levelled often. Suzanne and Julia have asked for them to be completely resurfaced, as this area is used a lot by elderly people. After some discussion it has been agreed that some money can be made available for this, but it will need to be tarmac and not paving stones. This could mean that the whole of the Council estate has its footpath's replaced with tarmac. Whilst some people do not like the look of tarmac as much of paving stones, it would mean that twice as much could be done. We think that safety comes first, but do let us know your views.

## ON THE BUSES—20 YEARS ON

It is now 20 years since the Tory Government deregulated the buses, causing the problems we have now, and over 9 years that Labour have had to do something about it. The only change has been for the worse though.



Lib Dem MP John Hemming tabled a Parliamentary Motion calling for better bus services.

He said, *"It is unfair on the country outside London to have a second rate bus system. We need the same system as that in London to improve bus services."* Julia says *"Extra bus use will be good for the environment, the economy and the people. What we need is to give local people more say over services where they live"*

## SAINSBURY'S JUNCTION

Work continues, to divert the services so there can be road widening to make the junction safer. There have been delays because of unforeseen other cables, but the NTL work should finish by the end of the year. BT and C & W then start! But they will not be as long as the previous work, we are told. It is inconvenient whilst it lasts, but should be much better for both drivers and pedestrians when done.

## POSTAL VOTING

Due to new Government rules **everyone** who has had a postal vote in the past, for whatever reason, is going to have to apply for one again. The Council will write to you in mid January if you did have one, or ticked a box asking for one on the electoral registration form. Do get in touch with us if you need any help with applying.

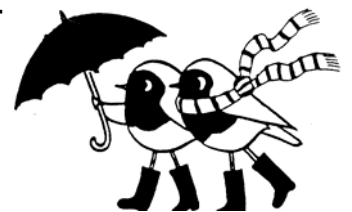
## DARLINGTON LANE / GENTIAN WAY ROUNDABOUT

An eagle eyed resident noticed that the chevron boards on this roundabout stopped proper visibility at certain angles. This complaint was passed on and the problem put right. A good example of a good result by residents getting in touch with us, and not just expecting someone else to do it!

## SNIPPETS - Unemptied litter bins on Meldrum Square have been dealt with, let

us know if there are other problems ..... Graffiti on bins has been reported and cleaning requested in **Mallaig View**, **Bishopton Road West**, and **Meldrum Square**, also lots of other places – let us know if you see more ..... The path from **Meldrum Square** to **Bishopton Road West** is to be cleared of overhanging vegetation and have uneven paving levelled ..... The beck in the **Elm Tree Valley** will be cleared as soon as it is safe to do so ..... a bus shelter on **Darlington Lane** near to **The Vale** has been asked for again ..... another request has gone in for a salt box on **Walsham Close** for the footbridge over the beck, but it has been turned down again ..... Following a nasty fall by one of the residents, Julia pressed for a stretch of the pavement on **Marske Lane** to be repaired after tree roots had caused the path to lift and crack. This has now been done and the path should be safe again..... **Gentian Way** – following a complaint, Julia arranged for the developer to carry out weed spraying on the footpaths which are still not “adopted” by the council....Suzanne has written to Sainsbury's about their

hedge overhanging the pavement on **Barlbrough Avenue** making it hard for people to pass it.



## SCHOOL PARKING PROBLEMS

There continue to be problems of people parking illegally where there are parking restrictions outside the schools in the area, and these are being enforced. Julia and Suzanne have asked the Council for residents parking permits around Whitehouse Farm School, and are waiting for a decision on that. Focus will keep you informed.

# WORKING FOR YOU ALL YEAR ROUND !